

**AN ADDRESS DELIVERED AT  
THE MUSIC HALL ON THE  
EVENING OF FAST DAY, 7  
APRIL, 1859; PP. 3-61**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649316748

An Address Delivered at the Music Hall on the Evening of Fast Day, 7 April, 1859; pp. 3-61 by  
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Cover @ 2017

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**ROBERT C. WINTHROP**

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AN

# ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT THE MUSIC HALL

ON THE EVENING OF

FAST DAY, 7 APRIL, 1859.

IN FAVOR OF THE

YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION  
OF BOSTON.

BY

ROBERT C. WINTHROP.

BOSTON:

LITTLE, BROWN AND COMPANY.

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## INTRODUCTION.

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THE following Discourse, delivered in Boston on the 7th of April, was repeated on the evening of May 5th, 1859, at the African Church in Richmond, Virginia, before the Young Men's Christian Association of that city. A few local references were, of course, modified in conformity with the change of place; but no alteration was made of any substantial principle, precept, or even phrase, to meet the variations of latitude or longitude. It was originally prepared with a view to delivery in both cities, and in compliance with frequent solicitations from both Associations.

It is now published in conformity with a united and only too flattering appeal from both Associations; and is respectfully dedicated to the young men composing them, with the earnest hope that they may cherish the interests of a common Christianity, which shall have but one voice for the North and for the South, and which shall promote the permanent welfare of all to whom it is addressed.

The occasion at Richmond was introduced by some eloquent remarks from William P. Munford, Esq., (the President of the Richmond Association,) of which no copy is at hand.

At Boston, the President of the Association, Mr. Franklin W. Smith, introduced the exercises of the evening, as follows:—

“The Boston Young Men's Christian Association, most gratefully appreciate the kindness of the honorable gentleman, who has consented to speak this evening, in behalf of the Building Fund. Several months since he manifested substantially his interest in the object; and now we have further proof of his kind and earnest desire for its promotion.

“It cannot be doubted, that this large audience, which has assembled so eagerly to listen to his discourse, will likewise sympathize

with its purpose; and it may be therefore desirable, briefly and practically, to explain the design of the present effort to raise a permanent fund.

"The only reliable income of the Association, has been from its annual memberships; which at present number about one thousand at one dollar each. The assessment is made thus moderate in amount, that admission may be available to young men of the humblest pecuniary means. During the seven years of its existence, the required outlay for rent, salary of librarian, for books, periodicals, and contingent expenses, has been about three thousand dollars per annum. The deficit has always been supplied by the ready liberality of its friends. But to avoid the necessity of an annual subscription to meet a constantly recurring debt, it was deemed expedient, at the commencement of the present year, to obtain a fund of twenty-five thousand dollars. Said fund to be held in trust by four gentlemen of the various denominations represented in the Association; the interest thereon to be applied to the rent of its rooms, or the principal to be invested in a building adapted to its use, at their discretion.

"Through the successful result of the late Fair, held in behalf of this object, and by a subscription prosecuted within a few months past, which has received a most liberal response, about sixteen thousand dollars of the amount desired, has been obtained.

"I have great pleasure in introducing to the audience, the Hon. ROBERT C. WINTHROP."



## ADDRESS.

I AM not altogether without apprehension, Mr. President, in rising to perform the service for which you have so kindly announced me, that an Address originally intended only as a plain and frank declaration of old-fashioned opinions, and more particularly as an earnest of my sincere sympathy with the Young Men who have honored me with an invitation to speak to them this evening, may fail of meeting the expectations of many of those whom I see around me. But I am here for no personal display, for no secular, rhetorical discourse. I yield the palm of eloquence without a struggle or a sigh, to those who already, during the present week, have waked the echoes of this hall, and of other halls in its vicinity, to a marvellous and magical music of words and thoughts to which I can make so little pretension. Coming here on the evening of a day which has been set apart in conformity with ancient usage for exercises of religion, and coming at the instance and for the furtherance of an association instituted for religious improvement, I shall not decline or evade the direct subject presented to me

by the occasion, the audience, and the object. And if I shall have succeeded in awakening a worthier motive, or kindling a nobler aspiration, or prompting a more generous impulse in any youthful heart, I shall be better rewarded than if I could have won the richest garland of the Olympian Games.

I know not, my friends, precisely by whom, or under what circumstances, the original idea of associations, like that which I have the honor to address this evening, was first suggested, or under what auspices that idea found its earliest practical fulfilment. It is said to have been in the city of London, in the year 1844, where some of the most eminent statesmen of the British realm have alternated with the clergy of all denominations, in delivering successive courses of lectures on moral and religious topics before a similar association. But I can conceive of few more enviable distinctions which any man, young or old, could claim for himself, than to have been the original founder or the original proposer of such an organization. Nor, in my humble judgment, could any city of our own land, or of any other land, present a higher title to the grateful consideration of all good men, than that city, wherever it may be, within whose limits and under whose auspices, the first Young Men's Christian Association, or Union, was successfully organized and established.

The ancient metropolis of Syria has secured for itself a manifold celebrity on the pages of history. It has been celebrated as the splendid residence of the Syrian kings, and afterwards as the luxurious capital of the Asiatic Provinces of the Roman Empire. It has been

celebrated for its men of letters, and its cultivation of learning. It has been celebrated for the magnificence of the edifices within its walls, and for the romantic beauty of its suburban groves and fountains. The circling sun shone nowhere upon more majestic productions of human art, than when it gilded, with its rising or its setting beams, the sumptuous symbols of its own deluded worshippers, in the gorgeous temple of Daphne and the gigantic statue of Apollo, which were the pride and boast of that far-famed capital; while it was from one of the humble hermitages which were embosomed in its exquisite environs, that the sainted Chrysostom poured forth some of those poetical and passionate raptures on the beauties and sublimities of nature, which would alone have won for him the title of "the golden-mouthed." At one time, we are told, it ranked *third* on the list of the great cities of the world,—next only after Rome and Alexandria, and hardly inferior to the latter of the two, at least, in size and splendor. It acquired a severer and sadder renown in more recent, though still remote history, as having been doomed to undergo vicissitudes and catastrophes of the most disastrous and deplorable character;—now sacked and pillaged by the Persians, now captured by the Saracens, and now besieged by the Crusaders; a prey, at one moment, to the ravages of fire,—at another, to the devastations of an earthquake, which is said to have destroyed no less than two hundred and fifty thousand human lives in a single hour. Its name has thus become associated with so many historical lights and shadows,—with so much of alternate grandeur and gloom,—that there is, perhaps,