

Oxford.

Professor Thomson to W.Cecil Bosanquet.  
Jan. 13th 1904.

My dear Bosanquet,

I am glad to hear from you and as I have expounded my views on the situation to Fairbairn at some length, may I ask you to drop round to the house and hear what I have said. There are however some points on your letter which require an answer. I cannot accept the view that the meeting referred to in the Times was representative. You say "We are all old and young, absolutely united as to the merits of the case" Now if I may criticise the proceedings from the statement which appeared in the Press the meeting consisted largely of seniors, very few of whom individually or collectively knew much of what is going on in Oxford. How many amongst those present are the product of the new regime since the introduction of the Medical statute of 1886. According to all of the past traditions the majority were right, but the conditions are altered now and I maintain that the old traditions no longer hold or if so only in modified form. You say we should "convert you first", well, I sincerely trust we may. We had no power to call a meeting of Oxford Graduates to discuss the situation, but it is a fact that some of us have approached individual members of his schools in order if possible to acquire some knowledge of their views. That I have not had an opportunity of discussing the situation personally with you I much regret, but I think I am justified in saying, speaking for myself and colleagues that we had no desire to thrust our schemes down your throats. We took the only course which was open to us to give expression to our opinions, opinions which were only arrived at after much and anxious deliberation of the facts. I am ~~unaware~~ that we are responsible for any of the bitterness which has been infused into the controversy. We have adopted a policy which all things considered we regard as the best. If any one has a better to propose I am still open to conviction, but we cannot be blamed for stating what we consider the best solution of the difficulty. Speaking for myself I am prepared to support loyally the nominee of the Crown if your views prevail I will do my best to support any policies the new man may initiate provided I think them for the benefit of the school, and surely no one can do more.

The gist of your letter is in the last sentence. You suggest a compromise, but you omit to say what the nature of that compromise is. Does it mean you wish us to withdraw from the position we have taken up? If so I cannot conscientiously do so for it is based upon what I perhaps erroneously consider to be to the best interests of the school. I trust I am not unreasonable or obstinate. Why not convert me? Name your man: prove to me that the benefits dependent on his appointment will outweigh the advantage which will accrue for the adoption of our scheme and I will listen to reason. But we want some facts to go on. A scheme which will work in practice not in theory. I fear all this reads somewhat argumentative, but believe me I cherish no feeling of animosity against those who differ from me in this matter. The prosperity of the school alone weighs with me and my present position is the outcome of my most deliberate judgment of what is best for the school under existing conditions.

Believe me,

Yours very faithfully,

Arthur Thomson.