REMARKS

ON SOME PARTS OF

MR THIRLWALL'S LETTER

ON THE

ADMISSION OF DISSENTERS

TO

ACADEMICAL DEGREES.

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REMARKS,

&c.

It is with extreme reluctance that I take up my pen on the present occasion. My task is one which I approach with profound regret. I should have thought it a great misfortune to be drawn to take part in the unhappy controversy which is at present raging among us: this I still trust in a great measure to avoid: but I think myself called upon to say a few words on a subject which, speaking as a member of a College, I may call a domestic matter: a question which has been made, unnecessarily I think, as well as unfortunately, to grow out of the general discussion. That the question is a domestic one, is reason sufficient for feeling oppressed and grieved at having to publish my opinions on it. There are other features in the question itself, which add to this oppression and grief; but I see no escape from the obligation.

A Letter has been published on the admission of Dissenters to academical Degrees, by a person whose arguments would be sure of general attention from his name alone, but whose opinions will probably be thought to derive additional weight from his station in our body, as one of the Tutors of the College. In that office I have the great pleasure and advantage of being his fellow-labourer: an advantage which I trust I shall long continue to enjoy. In his letter he has expressed some opinions which appear to me to affect materially the whole scheme and meaning of our common employments and situation, as well as to widen much the question on which he writes. I do not know how I can avoid being understood

to assent to these opinions, or to be unable to shew reasons for dissent, if I do not in some measure state my own views. If I might avoid this obligation towards other persons, it appears to me that at least the students committed to our care, and the persons who are interested in their welfare, have a right to know whether the principles on which his arguments proceed are those which we in our intercourse are to take for granted.

I shall therefore make some remarks on those parts of the letter which appear on this account to require notice. Mr. Thirlwall has expressed himself very decidedly against some of the rules which obtain among us. He himself would, I know, be most ready to declare that these opinions of his are not those on which the administration of our Colleges has hitherto been conducted, nor those which are entertained by a large portion of the governing body. He would allow that such opinions, promulgated in the serious, deliberate, and decided manner in which he has put them forth, and proceeding from a person in his station, are not only novelties, but must be felt by all persons who take an interest in the affairs of our institutions here, as very startling novelties. I would add, that they appear to have only a very remote and incidental bearing upon his main purpose in the publication to which I refer. This however, he may urge, does not exempt us from the obligation of considering his arguments, and either acknowledging their force or pointing out their fallacy.

It will be understood already that I speak of his arguments on the propriety and advantage of the usual religious service in our College Chapels, and of the regulations which prevail respecting attendance at this service. He believes that religion would gain by the abolition of this service or these regulations. Now it will obviously occur to any one, that to assent to this opinion is to acknowledge, not only that we are at present in error in the rules which we follow respecting this ordinance, but that all our predecessors, from the foundation of our Colleges, have been, without any exceptions which we know, in the same error. In both Universities, so far as we trace back their character

and management, in all their Colleges, daily religious worship has been established from their first origin; and their members have been enjoined by the instruments of their foundation and government, in many cases under penalties, to join in this worship.

This is an obvious consideration, and I cannot think it one which ought to be slightly dismissed from our minds. I will not however dwell on it here. I can easily suppose myself among reasoners with whom the argument from antiquity will have little weight: and though the argument from antiquity, when duly unfolded, is in many cases an argument from the most enlarged expediency, and the most rigid principle, I will proceed to a most particular examination of the reasons now adduced in support of the new doctrine on this subject.

The main reason which I find alleged in the Letter, for the opinion that a worship upheld by any penalties must be detrimental to religion, is this; that (p. 19.), "Religion, humanly speaking cannot be instilled into men against or without their will: we cannot even prescribe exercises, or propose rewards for it without killing the thing we mean to foster:" and again; that the opportunities by which religious impressions are strengthened derive their efficacy from the perfect freedom with which they must be enjoyed, and the full consciousness of this freedom which must accompany it. Now I cannot believe that these expressions may with justice be employed to decide such a question as that of the regulations of divine service in Colleges, when I consider what their obvious application is to far wider questions, which I suppose we may at present consider as entirely out of dispute. Such maxims as the above, do indeed appear to have a direct bearing upon the larger enquiries which relate to religious institutions; —upon the question whether religion can be advantaged by any institutions whatever;—upon the question whether or no an Established Church shall be maintained;—whether ministers shall be placed in every part of the empire, to force religion upon men's notice; whether those who profess one set of religious opinions, or conform to one set of religious observances, shall have any advantages over their

fellow-citizens: or again, whether public worship of any kind ought to be encouraged in the bosom of any Christian community; whether a set form of prayer shall be used; whether we do well in exhorting or urging men to share in the ordinances of social religion; whether we are justifiable in bestowing our approbation or disapprobation according to their conduct in this respect. If such questions as these were before us, it might indeed be to the purpose to tell us that religion cannot be instilled into men without or against their will; that we cannot prescribe exercises, or propose rewards for it, without killing the thing we mean to foster; that all human means must be enjoyed with perfect freedom, in order to have any efficacy. And so far as I can see the tendency of such arguments, it would be to make it seem, that religion ought to be entirely disconnected from all civil institutions; that all endeavours to introduce religious ordinances among men who do not first express a wish for them are futile and absurd; that all such opportunities which men do not procure by their own exertions will not be of any avail; that an Established Church is contrary to the essence and nature of religion, as being an attempt to instil religion into men without their will; and that all stated social worship, being a prescribed exercise, is inconsistent with the freedom of feeling on which religion depends, and must kill the thing it is intended to foster.

I need not say how entire my conviction is that Mr Thirlwall does not follow his principles to any such lengths; but I fear he would find it difficult to prevent others doing so. At any rate it is, I think, sufficiently clear that these maxims, thus broadly applied as the means of deciding controversies respecting religious observances, have a tendency altogether inconsistent with the general scheme of our national religion, and are therefore completely inadmissible in reasoning concerning the details of any of our established institutions.

Indeed it is, I should conceive, apparent to any one who looks at the constitution and structure of this or of any Christian community, that the whole of the human means which are employed with a view of fostering and

supporting religion, go upon principles altogether different from those which are here put forwards; and that the impossibility of instilling religion into men without their will, and the necessity of the full consciousness of freedom in order to religious feeling, are truths which must be understood in some way not inconsistent with the action of external influences. Christian societies have ever been in the habit of maintaining and strengthening their religious impressions by religious observances, of enjoining attention to these observances from their younger members, of enforcing regard to their injunctions by the exercise of authority. This indeed Mr Thirlwall himself assumes and apparently approves; for he supposes that the young men who come here have been accustomed to attend a weekly service at home, and he conceives that it would tend to the fostering of religion that they should, while at the University, have the opportunity of attending a worship which should remind them of that service. I presume it will be allowed that a large portion of those for whose advantage this was proposed, have been, at some period of their lives, habitually induced to attend places of worship rather by the influence of the authority of their natural directors and the current of social habits, than by their own religious affections;—influences undoubtedly most benignant and beneficial, at least in my opinion, and likely to lead to the developement of religious affections where these do not already exist; but influences which, according to the principles urged in the Letter, must be, I should think, contrary to the full consciousness of the freedom with which such occasions must be enjoyed in order to give them a chance of any beneficial efficacy. But if such influences, such "prescribed exercises," such authority and restriction of perfect freedom, may be advantageous in the domestic circle, why should not authority and restraint and prescribed exercise be admissible in the larger family which a College is intended to resemble? That a modification in the mode of exercising this authority is necessary I will soon endeavour to explain.

Nor is it any answer to this question to say (very arbitrarily as appears to me) that this rule is applicable only

to persons in the age of boyhood I do not ask when the age of boyhood ends, because I gladly claim for our students a participation in the thoughtfulness and responsibility of manhood. But these very persons who thus carry their children to the public worship of God in their own neighbourhood,—whose religious instruction Mr Thirlwall considers alone worthy of the name;—(p. 16.) what are their views? how far are they likely to be drawn to the place of worship by "an interest, a bias, an impulse," altogether pure from external motives; thoroughly refined from a regard to decency, from the influence of example, from the wish to be known to join in that which they acknowledge to be a good and pious usage, from the very desire to impress upon their children's minds the importance, not only of religion, but of religious observances? I conceive that no one can doubt that many persons of the most sincere and earnest religious feeling are swayed by such motives; and swayed in a manner which adds to their opportunities of religious thought and feeling, and to their use of such opportunities. If we endeavour to strengthen the religious impressions of our students by presenting to them occasions of worship such as they have attended while at their homes, and at the same time teach them that the perfect consciousness of freedom from all external constraint is necessary to their deriving any advantage from these, or any other occasions, we may find a new difficulty arise in our way: we may discover that we have taught them to doubt whether either they, or their parents and friends, by whom their religion has been taught them, have ever been in that condition which is an indispensable preliminary to any thing which we call religion.

Is it not, in fact, manifest, that all the ordinances of social worship, the whole system of the civil institutions intended for the maintenance of religion, goes upon a principle exactly the opposite of that of which we are tracing the consequences? Is it not manifest that the aim of all such ordinances and institutions is, not to reject, but to use external influences; not to exclude religion from every domain except its spontaneous range in our own thoughts, but to provide occasions which may bring it to our thoughts; not to draw a

harsh line of distinction between religious impressions and all that can be by possibility discovered to have a mixture of earthly cares and notions, but to throw a religious character, as far as it can be done, over all the business of life? Is there not a manifest purpose to combine religion with the important events of our lives, and the daily course of our employments,—not merely if we chose, if we are in the mood, if we happen to recollect it, if we have no objection;—but inseparably, necessarily, as a matter of stedfast institution, of inviolable custom? Surely it is in this view that the great events of life,—birth, and marriage and death,—are accompanied by solemn and affecting religious ceremonies; that prayers at stated hours, on stated days, are made in all civilized states; that our daily employments, our daily meals, are accompanied by petitions for the blessing of God. The object of these institutions, as rational as they are universal in the Christian world, is, not to give us "the full consciousness of freedom," not to avoid all "prescribed exercises," but to bind religious thoughts upon us by the strongest of all constraints, the constraint of habit; to teach us to connect the approval and sympathy of our fellow citizens with the acknowledgement of our dependence upon and trust in God; and to make us feel that there is a "reward proposed" even by men, for what they think to be religion; namely, the good opinion and goodwill which they gladly give to those who share with them the most solemn of their hopes and fears, and their reverence for a supreme rule of life.

It is with such feelings and views as these, according to my judgment, that Christian communities have almost universally shewn, not indifference, but solicitude concerning the maintenance of religious worship;—have employed that form of christian profession which they deemed most pure and true, as the instrument for urging and importuning all men to think of religion; and have given to the members of that persuasion temporal advantages. On such principles appear to me to rest the foundations of that national church of which all the officers of our Colleges are members, and so many are ministers. And, standing on these grounds, I am at a loss to understand how we can assert broadly that to

encourage religious worship by *any* external advantages, to impose *any* restrictions, to interfere with the consciousness of freedom of the worshipper in *any* manner, to *any* extent, is necessarily at variance with the essence of religious principle.

But it will be answered that the restrictions and rules which our Colleges impose, are very different from the kindly constraint of family sympathies and social habits, and the gentle monitions of a regard to decorum. If this argument is urged, it is obvious that we are supposed to have settled the general question concerning the unjustifiable nature of *all* restrictions, and to be examining only what kinds of restrictions and regulations are advisable. I willingly acknowledge that to treat this question in any general manner must be very difficult; but with any one who had cordially agreed to the necessity of maintaining our public College worship by the best regulations that could be devised—meaning by the best (as I believe the persons who have attended to this matter with us commonly have meant) those which most tend to promote real devotion,—I should by no means despair of coming to a satisfactory result. I conceive that the mode in which persons are urged to attend our social worship must consist in some expression of the disapprobation of the governing part of the society at the neglect of this duty. This indeed must be, I suppose, the way in which family worship is enforced, in cases where it is practised; and therefore in assuming this view as a guide, I should probably have the concurrence of Mr Thirlwall, who wishes all religion to be taught through the means of family intercourse. How this disapprobation is to be expressed, is indeed a difficult question. I am by no means bigotted to the present mode; and if any one can point out a plan more likely to have the effect which we have assumed to be our object, I would gladly recommend its adoption. One thing I think will be allowed; that in a body of between four and five hundred young men, mere personal remonstrance, and the influence of age and station on youth, would not produce the effect; though I am very far indeed from wishing to see such means disparaged or disused. If the effect ever were to be thus produced, I should think (as I believe most of those who

attach importance to College worship would think) that we should have made a most important improvement in our administration. I should not even despair, under happier circumstances, of seeing such a state of things attained or approached. But there are some features in our present condition, which leave us no room for hope on this subject. I refer to them with grief on many accounts, and would gladly pass them without remark, if I could do this without extreme injustice to the cause which I am endeavouring to defend, under a deep sense of its truth and importance. Indeed I need not employ many words in pointing out the circumstances to which I refer; for the mere fact of my having such opinions to combat from such a quarter, expresses the whole. It is an unseemly sight when those of the same household bring their differences of opinion before the world; and it is but a melancholy consolation to one compelled to appear in such a situation, that he was not the first to open a question little likely to edify by its discussion. It is however a real consolation, in such a case, to feel a strong persuasion that no difference of opinion will produce any estrangement in friendly feelings, and to be conscious that however much of sorrow may accompany the difference, it is free from all particle of anger; and this consolation I have the happiness of possessing. If any one seeks further reason why the attendance of students upon the College worship cannot be brought to pass, as in a smaller family, by the fear of disapproval and ill opinion from the society itself, I do not know how he can fail to recollect, that it is now manifest to the world, that the disapproval and ill-opinion of a part of the society would in no degree follow the student in consequence of his absence from our worship, however complete and resolute. The silent influence, the unforced authority, the power of persuasion, which we might exercise if we were unanimous on this subject, if we were all in earnest in wishing to make our service a religious office on the part of all, we cannot have; however much we may lament its absence, we cannot flatter ourselves that we possess it. It makes but little difference in what proportion opinions are divided; the division is fatal to our exercising the full authority of opinion

over others. For, even if those who have no hope of any religious good from our ordinances are silent, they are not misunderstood; their opinions must have been long divined, even if they had never been till now expressed: and if one instructor, impressed himself with the general advantage of daily social worship, attempts to convey his convictions to one of those who are called upon to attend a daily service, his persuasions are not only likely to find an averse and preoccupied listener, but they are chilled and stifled before they reach his lips, by his recollecting that his natural allies are against him; that those who do honour to the body by their talents and virtues, and who are called to exercise authority in it by their station, are known to have no sympathy with his earnestness, no wish for the success of his endeavours; that that common feeling of the body which all the institutions and statutes of his College might seem to entitle him to adduce, and the force of which could hardly fail to be felt, will be looked upon as a fiction or imagination of his own.

I will not dwell an instant longer on this ungrateful topic; but I may observe, that if, under these enormous disadvantages, our College worship has made any progress towards the seriousness and earnestness of Christian worship under other circumstances, this fact must, I should think, prove that there is no incurable vice in the practice; as I trust I have shewn there is nothing in the principle of our College worship, but what we all acknowledge as commendable. And if there should be reason to believe that our daily service is followed by a large portion of the persons present, with as much devotion as is found in the congregations of our parish churches, I suppose it would be allowed to be better than a mere weekly service which could claim to higher praise, which service Mr Thirlwall mentions as a means of religious edification, such as he would approve. I will not state my opinion on this subject any further, than to say that I respect the usual deportment of the members of our College congregation too much to make it a topic of argument; and that I agree with Mr Thirlwall's observation, that "in respect to the outward decorum there

observed, there is very little to complain of: indeed scarcely anything to amend." (p. 21.) But if this be the case, I do not readily apprehend on what ground he conceives that "the service of our chapel is the least impressive and edifying than can be imagined," while that of a parish church is "the best opportunity of affording instruction of a really religious kind."

It is impossible not to feel painfully, while I am writing, that the obstacles to introducing still further improvement of the kind which has, as I conceive, already been produced, are increased by the very circumstance of my having thus to refer to them; and that those who endeavour to tranquillize and elevate their thoughts in our house of prayer, will have an additional difficulty to struggle with, in the recollection of the unhappy discussion on which we are thus forced. For this however I know no remedy but to be more earnest in the struggle.

Even under the adverse circumstances to which I have thought it my duty, with extreme pain and reluctance, to draw the attention of my reader, I do not cease to hope that religious institutions and ordinances may lead here, as we all agree in trusting that they do elsewhere, to the furtherance of genuine piety. So long as we can any of us apply ourselves to this task in earnestness and sincerity, it would be inconsistent and wrong to yield to despondency or dismay. If this were not so, we might easily find discouragements from without which we might have hoped to have been spared. When our object is to employ the latent and silent agencies of habit, and association, and reverential feeling, as means of controlling and sobering the wayward and wandering impulses of human nature, and especially the impatience and levity of buoyant and youthful spirits, we cannot but feel how deep a wound is inflicted on our strength by hasty and sweeping opinions, delivered by persons who from their stations and character will not easily be supposed to have spoken without regard to principles and consequences. And in this way I cannot but deeply regret, that it should be understood that Mr Stanley has expressed himself on the subject on which I am now speaking, in a manner which seems to me so

unworthy of the high talents and wise views which I have often admired in him. He is reported to have spoken with scorn of the notion that our students should be summoned immediately from their convivial meetings to their religious services.* I would beg any one who allows that any rules or institutions of any kind are to be upheld, to consider what regulations could be devised, against which this style of argument would not be at least as forcible as it is against our present system. If convivial meetings are to be looked on as things of so paramount a claim, that no regulations must stand which may by possibility interrupt them in an unwelcome manner, or call the attention of our students from them to other matters which imply a very different tone of feeling, I do not see what office is left for us; for I suppose no one would recommend that we should, at the beginning of each day or week, inquire into the probable engagements of our students, of this nature, and ascertain how our pretensions to a share of their time, I do not say for religious, but for literary, or for any purposes, can be put in, so as to run the least risk of being thus precluded. And I must take the liberty of saying, that I see no incongruity in the course of our daily employments, if its offices, whether religious or of any other kind, are so distributed that they do not allow our students to forget for any large number of hours, that they have public obligations to attend to, as well as private amusements; that they are not here merely for the purpose of enjoying the society of their friends, according to the views which, at the moment, they may entertain, of the most desirable form of social enjoyment. On the contrary, it is, according to my conception, our duty to adjust our habits and theirs in such a manner, that the demands of study, and the duty of self-improvement, shall be kept constantly present, even to those who might otherwise be too frivolous or volatile to discover them; nor can I imagine any ground on which religious observances should be excluded from sharing in this claim. And if Mr Stanley, or any one,

* Lord Palmerston is reported to have expressed a similar opinion.

should again recur to the inconsistency of feeling which must prevail between intemperate gaiety and the observances which interrupt it, I must beg him to recollect, that the observances do not come in a capricious and unexpected manner; that the interruption not only may be looked for, but must be foreseen as a matter of course; and that if, notwithstanding this, any one chooses to cherish in his thoughts a petulant and impatient feeling which unfits him for the change of employment, it is impossible to devise any arrangements which will be likely to escape the same objection; as it is impossible to imagine any restraints, however necessary, against which the passions of young men may not be inflamed, by the same style of argument, proceeding from a similar authority.

If indeed it were possible that any reasoners should imagine the education of a large body of men, of the most various circumstances and characters, to be carried on without any restraints or any imperative regulations of any kind, one might sometimes suppose those whose arguments I am now combating to have formed such an imagination. Every one recollects probably the poet's indignant regrets at the change which he considered had taken place in our Colleges and Halls since those "ancient days," when there "dwelt there a sage called Discipline:" and probably most persons have been desirous to ascribe to the melancholy mood of Cowper the origin of the belief, that the old man, with his eye, mild, yet on occasion stern, had entirely departed from among us. Mr Thirlwall however professes himself unable to understand of what kind the discipline is, in the instance of which he speaks. I shall not presume to explain to him what the term implies, in that general acceptation in which it is found to be so necessary an object of our solicitude; but I may express my own conviction, which has been engendered and strengthened by every thing which has come under my notice, that in a body of young men, a regular distribution of time, a stated course of employments, institutions which bring them constantly under the notice of their directors and instructors, the daily

recurrence of occasions of a grave character in which all must join, are eminently conducive to a beneficial direction both of the temper and the talents: and social study and social worship, whatever may be the first great reasons for establishing them, are recommended to my mind by my firm persuasion that they possess these collateral advantages. I believe that such a course of discipline of the habits is the best guard we can erect, both against vice, indolence, and the misdirection of youthful powers. I believe that though great talents may sometimes be joined, especially in youth, with a capriciousness and self-will which makes all restraint appear intolerable, and all method seem pedantry, yet that persons of such a kind are in general great gainers in character by having to conform themselves to such a discipline as ours: and that the examples in which this cannot be effected, may very reasonably be assumed to be cases of a perverseness, or at least of a state of mind, on which no advantages which we can offer will be likely to produce any beneficial effect. I am confirmed in this belief, by knowing that in the instances, almost without exception, of all the students who have most won my admiration by their powers, and my regard by their character, they have been persons who cordially accepted our discipline as their guide, and our institutions as their means of self-improvement.

I make no apology for associating our religious institutions with those directed towards study in this assertion, for they are not only connected in fact, but, as appears to me, in principle also, on the very grounds I have had to consider. I cannot see why it should not, on such grounds, be urged, that *literature* and *knowledge* "cannot be instilled into men against or without their will;" that whatever opportunities of acquiring these accomplishments we offer, "the perfect freedom with which these advantages must be enjoyed, and the full consciousness of that freedom are indispensably necessary to their efficacy;" that therefore all that we can do, is to offer our instructions to those who feel so much interest ~~enough~~ in them that they seek them, and to assign rewards for the results of

voluntary study. How we should be justified in retaining among us the *students*, (as we have hitherto called them) those who might prefer all other employments of their time to study, or select any objects of emulation rather than that which implied thought and labour, would be a question on which I suppose we should, in that case, be expected to render an account to those who send their sons and friends here with the notions respecting a College which have hitherto prevailed among Englishmen. Such persons would indeed, I believe, be surprised, and probably indignant, if we were to tell them that our University is a place where a man may educate himself, and where the students, by their social intercourse, may enlarge and cultivate each other's minds. I do not even think they would be satisfied if we were to add, as we most truly might, that we offer to the student many teachers, many courses of lectures, such as no place in the world can surpass. Such persons would still, I conceive, expect that we should provide that peculiar advantage which, up to the present time, they have been able to reckon upon; the advantage of a settled method, an authorized and prescribed course of study, and an established system of means for its prosecution. They would know, if they knew any thing of young men, that,—when such a course and system are presented to them—assumed by all about and above them as a state of things with regard to which option on either side is never contemplated,—the student will, without hesitation, probably with alacrity, follow the guidance under which he is thus placed, and give the best powers of his mind to the task so set before him; but that if deliberation and consent are considered as preliminaries to community of study, if rejection and change of the plan are considered as familiar things, it can not happen otherwise than that caprice will be roused, the love of vanity and the dislike of restraint inflamed; and the courses of study will be as many as the real students, though certainly far fewer than the nominal ones. To avoid this evil, this utter extinction of instruction for the indolent and frivolous, this incongruity and confusion in the studies

of the best and most intelligent, our Colleges have employed, most happily I think, and wisely, the force of method and habit, of authority and prescription, in short, of system and discipline. Our course of study is not constructed for the year, it is not framed in an accidental and arbitrary manner, it is not that which one person, at a particular time, happens to have a fancy for; it is that of which the origin goes back to the origin of our College; which has been deliberately continued, deliberately improved and altered in detail, as literature and science have altered their phases, but with no change of spirit or principle. On this it is that we have hitherto relied for producing an effect which we could not hope from our own skill and zeal: under this discipline a community of study spreads along the innumerable lines of social intercourse and sympathy; the peculiarities of individual character and taste yield to the sway of the general movement; the caprices of individuals are borne along by the momentum of ages and multitudes; and we have a unity of purpose, which, produced by such agencies, is itself, in my judgment, a means of inestimable benefits.

I am aware, every one I suppose is aware, that though the effects of institutions, and the influence of past times upon our own, are most powerful and extensive, they are most subtle and impalpable; most difficult to trace into details, and exhibit in a tangible form. I would gladly have avoided touching at all on what I feel that I have so feebly expressed, if I could any otherwise have presented what I conceive to be a truth, always important, but now, and to us, most important. I am aware how much more pointed, on this account, the attacks on any long established institutions and habits may be made, than the defence of them can possibly be. And if any one were to stoop to use sarcasm and irony in such discussions, and were to take for his theme the influence of restraints and of antiquity, I have little doubt that he might, to the apprehension of a large part of the public, make many admirable hits; and much amuse those who did not think that such a subject, so treated at this time, was a spectacle too melancholy for a smile.

This is however a danger which I do not anticipate; I ought perhaps to apologize to the reader for speaking of it so gravely. And I hope he will not feel quite so much pleasure as I do, at my having said all on these subjects that I think it necessary now to say.—I wish it could have been less. One or two other points remain before me, which would not of themselves have induced me to come before the public, but on which I will say a few words, though they shall be as few as I can employ to convey my meaning. It is very far from being my intention to argue the great question to which Mr Thirlwall's letter refers.

A considerable portion of the letter is occupied by a discussion of the present state of theological instruction in our University. If I conceived our deficiency in this respect to be so entire as he represents it, I should differ with him much in the feelings which such a state of things ought to excite. I must observe however, that I should be sorry to see any change introduced, of such a nature that the evidence for it should be that which has been employed, namely, the examination-papers which refer to the New Testament. I agree entirely with what has been said by one of the writers on the side which Mr Thirlwall maintains, that it is undesirable that religious doctrines should be made a subject of emulation. But I certainly do not see the same objection to their being made the subject of instruction, if any method of doing this effectually can be devised; and I have repeatedly expressed my opinion, to friends whom I supposed to be interested in this matter, that our habits were in this respect defective. One obstacle to any attempt of this kind was the conjecture, that there might be among us a difference of opinion on this subject, and a wish to avoid the evil of bringing this difference to a controvery. Since that evil has now overtaken us, I conceive that one of the reasons against such a measure is obviated, and I should see no impropriety, and much advantage, in instructing our students in the reasons and application of the faith of that Church of which they are members, and we are ministers. This would of course have nothing in common with such a change in our Lectures as

Mr Thirlwall deprecates, with a vehemence which the pleasure of expressing a virtuous indignation in an imaginary case naturally produces.

I may observe, however, that I have not the same impression with him of the entire absence in our College occupations, as they go on at present, of all that implies an assumption of a common faith in the instructor and the students. When I consider the well-known earnest and pervading piety of the Lecturers on theological subjects, both in our own College and in others, I cannot suppose that all expressions of this feeling can be stifled (indeed who would wish they should be?) in treating of the Gospel, even if the leading points of attention be philological merely. I am informed that it is not so; but that on the contrary opinions are expressed and books recommended as from Churchmen to Churchmen. And with regard to the intercourse of the tutor and his pupils, I am very ready to allow (with sorrow) that what has been done in the way of inculcating religious impressions falls very far short of that which is desirable, and which probably ought to have been attempted; but I may state my full persuasion, founded on my personal knowledge, that the aspect of our College worship, of which Mr Thirlwall says, that in regard to decorum it leaves nothing to be desired, could not have been brought about, if those whose office it was to attend to this matter, had not been able, in conversations with the students on such subjects, to take for granted an habitual interest in and reverence for the same service on other occasions.

I have, however, said already that I shall not discuss the general question of the admission of Dissenters to the University. On this subject I cannot fully agree with either of the contending parties, and therefore cannot expect to obtain the assent of either. It is said that the common lot of persons so circumstanced is, to be misunderstood and treated as adversaries by both sets of combatants. Under this danger I should have been silent, as others are, whose opinions are of far more moment than mine can pretend to be, if I had not thought myself com-

pelled to speak, by a regard to interests which are of the deepest importance to the University, whatever be the issue of this struggle. One observation only I will allow myself. Mr Thirlwall has referred to persons of the opposite party, who consider the vital point of the controversy to be the question of the admission of Dissenters to our College endowments; and he conceives that it would have been the height of folly and presumption in the persons who petitioned for the admission of Dissenters to our degrees, to have expressed any opinion or offered any advice to the Legislature on that subject. I can easily believe that there may have been among the petitioners very different opinions as to the way in which the security of the Church was to be provided for, when the prayer of the petition was granted; but I cannot so well understand the entire absence, not only of all particular suggestion on this subject, but of all general principle; not only of all advice, but of all expression of a wish, and hope, that the welfare of the Established Church, of which the petitioners were members, might be attended to in making so serious a change. Though the University be a lay corporation, and a place of lay as well as clerical education, as has been urged by the advocates of the Petition, I presume few will so resolutely shut their eyes to the actual social structure of England, as to deny, that the Universities have hitherto been among the most important supports of the Church. Nor do I see how it can be questioned, that their effect in this respect would be thoroughly damaged, if our Colleges made no distinction between Churchmen and Dissenters. When the Petitioners are pressed with this objection, their answers are various, but to me most strangely unsatisfactory. By some of them the exclusion of Dissenters from fellowships by the effect of an existing law is referred to; as if that part of our laws could not be changed at the request of another set of petitioners: or we are told that such prospects must be left out of the question; as if those who are so anxious for this change were indifferent to any other; or as if men had nothing to do with the obvious consequences

of their acts; or as if those who have shewn that they hope to exert some influence over the present, did not, by that very power, also possess an influence on the future; and as if they could, by a word, shake off the responsibility which this implies: or we are told that comparatively few fellowships are held by laymen; as if at the present moment in our own College those who retain their fellowships because they have taken orders were not a minority of the whole body of the fellows; or we are told that the established Church will stand as long as it is the profession of the majority of the nation, and no longer; as if there were no instance of a smaller body of united and zealous aggressors overpowering a divided, or misdirected, or lukewarm multitude; as if the hope of new privileges and gratified passions could give no strength; as if disunion, vacillation, despondency, rash movements and unwise concessions could produce no weakness;—as if the army of Titus had been more numerous than the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

My predominant fears are not for the security of the Universities, but of the Church of England. I believe that Church to be the very heart of our social body; I believe that to its operation we owe the civilization, the dignity, the stability, the philanthropy, the liberality of the English character. I believe that its possessions, along with those of the Universities, are more available than all the rest of the wealth of the nation, in producing the good of the whole, in maintaining the prevalence of learning and science, piety and morality; in saving something from the barbarizing and selfish tendency of vanity and luxury; I believe that the Church is an inestimable benefit to the Dissenters, hardly less than to its own members: and therefore it is that I look with solicitude and dread to any thing which appears to threaten its welfare. If the Church of England should be extinguished, I hardly know how I should find grounds of gratification and hope in the name of Englishman.

I believe many of the petitioners whose act has led to these fears, feel the opinions I have expressed respecting

our Church, as strongly as I do myself. I believe none of them are indifferent to its welfare. I trust therefore that they, who have taken upon themselves the responsibility, deep, but with their convictions, it may have been, necessary, of bringing this question upon the Legislature in its present shape, will feel that they are sacredly bound to urge, with all the influence which their position, their great talents and high characters must command, the necessity of taking care, in every change which is made, (if change is made) that our commonwealth suffer no detriment in its most vital part, its religious constitution.

TRINITY COLLEGE,
May 25, 1834.

ERRATA IN MR WHEWELL's "REMARKS," &c.

P. 9. l. 7. chose *read* choose.
12. 7. from bottom, to *read* no.
17. 3. *dele* those.
23. 7. upon *read* before.