

ART. IV.—WARD AND THE OXFORD MOVEMENT.

William George Ward and the Oxford Movement. By WILFRID WARD.
London : Macmillan and Co. 1889.

THIS book is full of interest. Mr. Wilfrid Ward has discharged a difficult duty with great skill. The book will have an especial attraction for all who are interested in the historical development of the Oxford movement, and the contributions of the distinguished men who still survive, carefully printed in the appendices, confer distinction of a very unusual kind upon this remarkable record of a remarkable man. The real history of the Oxford movement cannot be written at present. Very shortly before his death Dean Stanley, in an article in the *Edinburgh Review*, gave a telling sketch of some part of William George Ward's career at Oxford. It was evident, however, that the Dean, much as he may have desired to do so, could not write with absolute impartiality the history of days when passion had been strong and party spirit high. No part of this volume is more interesting than that which tells how the pupils of Arnold, coming from Rugby with true loyalty in their hearts for the work and teaching of their great master, found themselves suddenly in the stir and din excited by the influence of a very different school of thought. The present generation has a keen relish for the history of mental conflict, and no more dainty dish has been provided for some time than Mr. Wilfrid Ward's clever account of his accomplished, wayward, and most attractive, though most provoking, sire.

Ward came to Oxford from Winchester after the long vacation of 1830. He soon took his place among the leading spirits of the Union Debating Society, then, as now, a training-ground for rising talent, and the place where warm friendships were made. Those were days of great earnestness. Oxford was not without representatives of the strong school of spiritual and devout men, who called Charles Simeon master. Whately and Arnold had a following, and there were also some who were attracted by the higher parts of Bentham's thought, which was lucidly expounded by John Stuart Mill in the *Westminster Review*. At first W. G. Ward found in the utilitarian school much that attracted him. He owed something also to the clear intellect of Whately; but Arnold's intense desire to treat the poor and the condition of England question in a truly Christian spirit, as well as his realization of our Lord's life and teaching, for a time completely mastered him. Although Ward was fond of paradox, he seems to have been entirely dominated by the enthusiasm of the moment, and there is a uniform testimony from his friends as to the personal effect of his sharp, logical incisiveness. The hatred of worldliness and the reality he found in Arnold's

method of dealing with Scripture produced lasting effects. Whatever may be thought of the ultimate tendency of some of Arnold's views, he must always be regarded as a true benefactor to English thought in the nineteenth century, on account of the noble influence he exerted over men so widely different as Stanley and Lake, Clough and Ward. Ward for some time had a strong feeling of repugnance to Newman's teaching. He was often pressed to listen to the sermons which were taking such hold of the consciences of the younger men in Oxford during the early years of Ward's residence as a Fellow of Balliol. An extract from notes of the late Professor Bonamy Price tells the tale of Ward's conversion. "What he heard of the nature and effects of these sermons revolted him. At last one of his friends had a plot against him. He invited him to take a walk, and brought him to the porch of St. Mary's Church precisely as the clock was striking five. 'Now, Ward,' said he; 'Newman is at this moment going up into his pulpit. Why should you not enter and hear him once? It can do you no harm. If you don't like the preaching, you need not go a second time; but do hear and judge what the thing is like.' By the will of God Ward was persuaded, and he entered the church. . . . That sermon changed his whole life." The disciple had at last found his true master; but although thoroughly in earnest and devoted as few have ever been to the teaching of a superior, the disciple soon found that the *via media* in which J. H. Newman for a time found rest was not at all to his mind. Froude's "Remains" seems to have captivated Ward even more than the sermons at St. Mary's. He came, as it were, like a free-lance into the midst of Newman's host; but he was soon a leader in every sense of the word, and became, especially among younger men, the champion of the movement within the movement. The whole account of the influence of Ward upon Clough is full of interest, and there is hardly anything in this book more touching than the regret expressed in a letter of recollection to Clough's widow for the baneful effect produced upon Clough by his contact with the strong spirit who was now going Rome-wards. Ward is speaking of Clough in the full vigour of his Oxford reputation:

What was before all things to have been desired for him was that, during his undergraduate course, he should have given himself up to his classical and mathematical studies; that he should have kept up . . . the habits of prayer and Scripture-reading which he brought with him from Rugby; but should have kept himself aloof from plunging prematurely into the theological controversies then so rife at Oxford. He would thus, indeed, have unconsciously grown clear of a certain narrowness of sympathy with which he naturally condemned his Oxford life, and would have acquired a general knowledge of what those points were which at that time were so keenly debated around him; but at the

same time he would have been saved from all injury to the gradual and healthy growth of his mind and character. It is my own very strong impression—though I cannot expect you, my dear madam, to share it—that, had this been permitted, his future course of thought and speculation would have been essentially different from what it was in fact. At all events, the experiment was not tried. I fear that, from my point of view, I must account it the great calamity of his life that he was brought into contact with myself. My whole interest at that time (as now) was concentrated on questions which to me seem the most important and interesting that can occupy the mind. Nor was there any reason why they should not occupy my mind, considering my age and position. It was a very different thing to force them prematurely on the attention of a young man just coming up to college, and to draw him, as it were, peremptorily into a decision upon them; to aim at making him as hot a partisan as I was myself. My own influence by itself might not have done much, but it was powerfully seconded by the general spirit of Oxford society at that time, and by the power which Mr. Newman then wielded throughout the University. The result was not surprising. I had been prematurely forcing Clough's mind, and then came a reaction. This intellectual perplexity for some time preyed heavily upon his spirits; it grievously interfered with his studies; and I take for granted it must have very seriously disturbed his religious practices and habits. I cannot to this day think of all this without a bitter pang of self-reproach.

Clough has recorded his own impressions of the painful separation between the two friends in a well-known poem of great beauty, but he never recovered entirely the buoyancy and spirit of his earlier day. Like many fine natures, in the troubled period of his thoughtful manhood he passed into a region of unsettled opinion. The close, however, of his noble poem on "The Resurrection" shows, at least, a desire to return to the simple faith of his Rugby boyhood. The whole story of Ward's connection with the leaders of the Tractarian movement is, upon the whole, fairly told by Mr. Wilfrid Ward. The sober spirit of Hugh James Rose ceased to have any hold over the writers in the Tracts for the Times. There was a shift of doctrine. The distinctive principles of the English Reformation were kept in the background. Ward, as was wittily said, "came like a hurricane upon the stream, and the water which had flowed sedately and clearly began to be troubled."

It is curious to see how Ward indulged himself in occasional attendances at Romish services, and how gradually a taste for mediæval divinity was acquired. Archbishop Tait, in his "Diary," declared that Ward "worried Newman into writing Tract 90," and however this may be, it is certain that from the moment of its publication a more distinct attitude was assumed by Oakeley and others, who formed the rank and file of the advanced contingent. It has been the fashion for some years for extreme writers to assume that Newman was harassed unduly by fidgety authorities. One result of such publications as that before us is to expose the utter groundlessness of such

assertions. We do not attempt to defend every position which Dr. Hawkins and other moderate men assumed, but surely it was high time for some such effort as was made by the four Oxford tutors in their remonstrance regarding Tract 90, when we consider the character of some of the articles in the *British Critic*, and the tone of Mr. Ward's defence of the interpretation advocated in the tract. A grave injury was inflicted upon fair and honest interpretations of formularies and articles, when it was admitted that subscription to the Council of Trent was not inconsistent with a formal assent to the Thirty-nine Articles. It has always been a matter of deep regret to many who desired to honour the noble efforts made by Dr. Pusey for the restoration of belief in Oxford, that he should have reprinted with an apologetic preface this celebrated tract, which certainly opened the door to a laxity of interpretation which still continues to vex and trouble the Church of England. Lord Sherbrooke, in a now forgotten pamphlet, brought the charge of dishonesty home to the writers of the tracts. His pamphlet and an article in the *Edinburgh Review* called Mr. Ward into the field, and the war of opinion was waged with considerable strength by disputants of various powers. Ward resigned his lectureships at Balliol, and during the next two years he seems to have been more and more attracted towards Roman teaching. He entered into friendly relations with Mr. Ambrose Phillipps, and proposals for union were laid before Bishop Wiseman. The extent of this disaffection was undoubtedly concealed from Cardinal Newman, who at the end of 1842 retired from Oxford to his seclusion at Littlemore. Ward became more of a controversialist, and the fairness and candour of his early days entirely disappears. It is pitiable to read the gross caricature of Evangelical Churchmen contained in his review of the late Dean Goode's "Divine Rule of Faith." To blacken your adversary and declare his absolute deficiency in all intellectual ability was a favourite device of the party of strong-willed writers led by Ward. There were limits to forbearance, and the late Sir William Palmer, who had hitherto endeavoured to defend much that had been uttered, as he thought, inopportunistly broke off from the movement and took a position of his own, when he was joined by many who were resolved to be no partakers in a Romanized movement.

The publication of "The Ideal of a Christian Church," a volume of 600 pages, was Ward's next work. It is in many respects a remarkable book. The style is heavy, but every now and then the author displays such an intense yearning after a high ideal of Christian life, that, in spite of its many blemishes, the reader is attracted towards the author, he can hardly tell why or wherefore. Mr. Gladstone in the *Quarterly Review*

dealt a heavy blow to the book, and popular indignation rose to fever-heat. The Oxford authorities determined to bring the book before Convocation, and the whole struggle is narrated in the pages of Mr. Wilfred Ward with spirit and dignity. Many who were utterly opposed to Ward's opinions strongly objected to the new test which the heads of houses thought fit to present for adoption. Professor Maurice and Dean Milman, then a Canon of Westminster, joined in protest against the impolicy of the whole proceeding. Seldom has there been any such manifestation of opinion upon a purely theological subject as the war of pamphlets and articles in the early part of 1845. The scene in the theatre, when the question of Ward's degradation was decided, has been graphically described by Dean Stanley, and Mr. Wilfrid Ward has given some telling extracts from the Dean's article. Ward was permitted to speak in English, and he astonished his friends by his able defence. Canon Mozley, writing two days after the scene, wrote: "After all, I really am astonished at the number of men, and tact of men, who supported Ward after such avowals as he made. It is really a phenomenon to me. If he said once, he said twenty times in the course of his speech, 'I believe all the doctrines of the Roman Church.'" The degradation was carried by 569 to 511. The proposal to condemn Tract 90 was defeated by the veto of the proctors, and, after such excitement as was seldom seen in Oxford, the vast assembly dispersed. The movement soon collapsed when it was known that Ward, who at one time advocated clerical celibacy, was engaged to be married to a lady who had for some time shared his opinions. On March 31st, 1845, Mr. Ward was married. He and his wife lived for some time in the neighbourhood of Oxford. Mrs. Ward was the first to announce her intention to join the Church of Rome, and her husband soon found his own position untenable. In September of the same year they were received into Roman communion. Many of Ward's old friends, who had thought his position absolutely impossible, were really delighted when he took the step which separated him finally from the English Church.

His genial nature made him a delightful companion. At Balliol he was a universal favourite, and many stories were told of his perfect simplicity, his ready wit, his powers of mimicry, and his intense interest in philosophy and theology. After passing some years in instruction and literary work—suffering, it must be said, from the real pinch of small means—Mr. Ward succeeded to the ample fortune of his uncle, and the remaining years of his life were spent in ease. The theological bitterness died away, and although to the last an ardent Romanist, Ward was fully alive to the increasing influence and life of the English Church.

"There is life still," he said on one occasion, after reading a sermon of the present Bishop of Manchester's, on the Bennett judgment, "when you Anglicans can show such men as Moorhouse, Lightfoot, and one or two others in your fighting ranks."

Upon the whole, this interesting volume produces upon the mind of an attentive reader a feeling of intense sadness. Ward and his friends demanded an ideal Church, which never had any real existence, as the panacea for all existing evils.

A writer in the *Times* has well said "that if W. G. Ward had studied history, or theology, or Christian antiquities, nay—we mean no offence—the Bible itself, he would not have written this book (the 'Ideal of a Christian Church'); not, at least, as it stands." We may carry this further and safely declare, that a true study of some of our own great divines, Hooker and Jeremy Taylor, might have wrought considerable changes in Ward's phases of faith. The lesson to be derived from such a book as this is by no means an unimportant one, and the students of theology will have no reason to regret time spent upon the consideration of the perplexities and puzzles of a mind like Ward's.

In a very beautiful passage in one of his later University sermons Dr. Pusey has spoken of the intense hold given to the mind by a personal devotion and loyalty to Christ. We do not wish to say a single harsh word, but in the bulky volume which created such a sensation there is an evidence of inability on Ward's part to appreciate the intensity of that feeling which kept many in those days of anxiety content with strife, and yet masters of an inward peace.

G. D. BOYLE.



ART. V.—SIR WALTER SCOTT.¹

SIR WALTER SCOTT holds that place among novelists which Shakespeare holds among poets. That is, he is supreme among writers of fiction. In the description of scenery; in the power of what is known as word-painting; in spirit-stirring adventure; in vividness of fancy and breadth of humour; above all, in portrayal and development of character, he has not been surpassed by any other writer in the language since Shakespeare gave to the world his immortal dramas.

¹ "Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott," by Lockhart; "English Men of Letters—Scott," by R. H. Hutton; "Great Writers—Life of Sir Walter Scott," by Charles Duke Yonge.