

a very good ground afforded me for calling on English Churchmen to aim at realising and appropriating the verities contained in them. But I did not conceal my belief, that in proportion as they did not conceal my belief, that in proportion as they did so, they would learn to be dissatisfied with their church's formularies as a whole, and distrustful of her authority. Nor should it be forgotten, that I maintained in my work that the true doctrine on "justification" is one sense more at the foundation of orthodoxy than any other whatever; and, moreover, that the most formally dogmatic statement on that subject put forth by the English Church, unless under a very "non-natural" interpretation, asserts the contradictory of that doctrine.

In thus disparaging the authority of the English Church, I am not at all forgetting that in a rightly disciplined mind there will be an inward response, which leads more and more, if exercised, to afford conviction on certain doctrines, irrespective of the authority on which they were originally received; and a Christian would be pursuing a mad course, if he were to allow his faith in these doctrines to waver, even though for a time (from whatever cause) he were unable to see his way to bow before some external authority. But it would be foreign to my purpose to pursue this subject further.

But by far the most prevailing argument of which I have heard in opposition to the views maintained in my letter, is grounded on the notes of life and sanctity within the English Church. "We who are in that church," it is said, "have the plainest proof before us that the sudden revival of strictness and orthodoxy has been from within, not by the influence of an external body; and the communion wherein God so visibly works must be a home of His in which it is safe for us to abide." Nay many seem to have thought that I myself advocated this view in the "Ideal," and that my own arguments might be employed against myself.

I trust that in what I have already said I have shown myself to be not unwilling to retract any opinion, merely because I have once expressed it. But I really have never myself seen the sufficiency of this argument. Surely it is quite conceivable that God should stir, from within, a schismatical body, in order to reinforce His church; He may work mightily in such a body, not in order to establish it, but in order gradually to dissolve it. And whether of these two be His will must be gathered from further considerations.

The arguments on which I formerly based the (supposed) duty of adhesion to the English Church (arguments, as I have said, which I do not now think valid) were as follows:—We cannot doubt of the vitality of the English Church, not only when we observe the sanctity which has been the witnessed fruit of her ordinances, but also when we think of the remarkable manner in which doctrine, handed down for two or three hundred years, has now germinated, and is so abundantly germinating, into "the whole cycle of Roman doctrine." First, so long as we are allowed free scope in our church so to develop the doctrines we have learned from that church, she is surely our national and legitimate home; the doctrines which might be considered a cause for leaving her are the offspring of what we have learned

from herself, and are permitted without authoritative check within her pale; and second, in proportion as those who are molested with doubts have lived a stricter life, and rested a greater weight on the ordinances of their church, their confidence in their position has been increased. Now, as I say, in my letter, both these reasons for remaining in the English Church have now ceased to exist; first, the free spread of Roman doctrine in our church has been authoritatively checked; and second, it is no longer true, as it is now very generally known, that a stricter life in our communion has lessened doubts in the quarter where doubts have been most acutely felt. Those, then, who thought the arguments adduced in my work in defence of our position satisfactory (as I now do not think them) cannot any longer rest upon them—for whatever force they once had is come to an end.

My present intention, then, implies no denial, nor could I honestly attempt any denial, of the undoubted fact, that there has been of late years a remarkable gush of life from within the English Church. Nor, indeed, considering the great benefit I humbly hope to have derived from agencies at work within her, could I bring myself to separate from her communion without careful thought and deliberation. But such thought and deliberation have not, I hope, been wanting. Even now I trust I may never forget how much I owe of those very convictions which have caused my present resolution to teaching administered in the name of the English Church; and I most earnestly hope to see the time when I may again be united in the same communion with, and be enabled again to profit by, the closer example of those many admirable persons whom I am quite unable to follow in regarding the English Church as a safe home for the Catholic-minded Christian.—I remain, Sir, your faithful servant,

W. G. WARD.

Rose-hill, Oxford, Aug. 28.

LITERATURE.

LETTERS FROM BELGIUM.

Continued.

LETTER V.

Belgium, ———, 1842.

My dear Madam,

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your very polite letter, and to apologize for not having sooner replied to a request which can only give me pleasure. I shall be very happy indeed to give you every information possible, regarding the Roman Catholic religion, in this wholly Catholic land; and by addressing my letters to you, instead of to my good old Thomas, and other neighbours, they will, as you say, have them read to them, and you will also have the power of reading them to any other friend or neighbour you may choose. There is no need for you to fear you are 'presuming on our very slight acquaintance' made a few years since, during your long summer visit to our mutual friends. It can only be a gratification to a Roman Catholic to find any one awakened to inquire concerning our