

CARDINAL NEWMAN AND MODERNISM

A PAPAL LETTER

The Right Rev. Dr. O'Dwyer, Bishop of Limerick, has received from the Holy Father a letter in recognition of the able pamphlet (noticed elsewhere in this issue) in which he disposes of the fiction that Cardinal Newman's writings give any countenance to the theories of the Modernists. The following is a translation of the Pope's letter:—

To Our Venerable Brother, Edward Thomas, Bishop of Limerick,

PIUS P.P. X.

Venerable Brother, health and Apostolic Benediction. We would have you know that your pamphlet, in which you show that the writings of Cardinal Newman, so far from differing from Our Encyclical Letter Pascendi, are in closest harmony with it, has Our strongest approval. You could not, indeed, have done better service alike to the cause of truth, and to the eminent merit of the man. There appears to have been established, amongst those whose errors We have condemned by that Letter, as it were a fixed rule that for the very things which they themselves have invented they seek the sanction of the name of a most illustrious man. Accordingly, they freely claim that they have drawn certain fundamental positions from that spring and source, and that, for that reason, We could not condemn the doctrines which are their very own without at the same time, nay, in priority of order, condemning the teaching of so eminent and so great a man. If one did not know what a power the ferment of a puffed-up spirit has of overwhelming the mind, it would seem incredible that persons should be found who think and proclaim themselves Catholics, while in a matter lying at the very foundation of religious discipline they set the authority of a private teacher, even though an eminent one, above the magistracy of the Apostolic See. You expose not only their contumacy, but their artifice as well. For if, in what he wrote before he professed the Catholic Faith, there may perchance be found something which bears a certain resemblance to some of the formulas of the Modernists, you justly deny that they are in any way supported thereby; both because the meaning underlying the words is very different, as is also the purpose of the writer, and, the author himself, on entering the Catholic Church, submitted all his writings to the authority of the Catholic Church herself, assuredly, to be corrected, if it were necessary. As for the numerous and important books which he wrote as a Catholic it is hardly necessary to defend them against the suggestion of kindred with heresy. For amongst the English public, as everybody knows, Henry Newman, in his writings, unceasingly championed the cause of the Catholic Faith in such a way that his work was most salutary to his countrymen, and at the same time most highly esteemed by Our predecessors. Accordingly, he was found worthy to be made a Cardinal by Leo XIII., undoubtedly an acute judge of men and things; and to him thenceforward, throughout all his life, he was deservedly most dear. No doubt in so great an abundance of his works something may be found which may seem to be foreign to the traditional method of the theologians, but nothing which could arouse a suspicion of his faith. And you rightly state that it is not to be wondered at if at a time when no signs of the new heresy had shown themselves, his mode of expression in some places did not display a special caution, but that the Modernists act wrongly and deceitfully in twisting those words to their own meaning in opposition to the entire context. We, therefore, congratulate you on vindicating with eminent success, through your knowledge of all his writings, the memory of a most good and wise man; and at the same time, as far as in you lay, on having secured that amongst your people, especially the English, those who have been accustomed to misuse that name, already cease to deceive the unlearned. And would that they truly followed Newman as a teacher, not in the fashion of those who, given up to preconceived opinions, search his volumes, and with deliberate dishonesty extract from them something from which they contend that their views receive support, but that they might gather his principles pure and unimpaired, and his example, and his lofty spirit. From so great a master they may learn many noble things: in the first place, to hold the magistracy of the Church sacred, to preserve inviolate the doctrine handed down by the Fathers, and, what is the chief thing for the preservation of Catholic truth, to honor and obey with the utmost fidelity the successor of the Blessed Peter.

Moreover, Venerable Brother, We give thanks from Our heart to you, and to your clergy and people, for your dutiful zeal in coming to the aid of Our poverty by sending the usual donation; and in order to win for you, and first of all for yourself in particular, the gifts of the Divine bounty, and also to testify Our goodwill, We most lovingly impart the Apostolic Benediction.

Given at Rome, at St. Peter's, the 10th day of March, in the year 1908, the fifth of Our Pontificate.

PIUS PP. X.

THE CHURCH IN NEW ZEALAND

MEMOIRS OF THE EARLY DAYS

(Contributed.)

WELLINGTON.

(Continued.)

Bishop Pompallier records in his diary a second visit he made to Wellington from the Bay of Islands in a hired schooner of 60 tons, dating his departure thence as February, 1844. 'I found there' (Port Nicholson), he writes, 'about two hundred and fifty white Catholics, the majority of whom were Irish. The care of their salvation was entrusted to Father O'Reilly. I added to him Father Comte, whom I specially charged with the spiritual care of the Natives. I spent about three days amidst the people at Port Nicholson, where I conferred the Sacrament of Confirmation. Then I sought the assistance of Father O'Reilly to visit Akaroa, the tribes of Port Cooper (Lyttelton), the English colonists of Nelson, and the Natives of Kapiti Island (the stronghold of the redoubtable Te Rauparaha and his warrior chiefs). On all these visits the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Matrimony were conferred. I took Father O'Reilly back to Port Nicholson, from whence I started alone on my return to the Bay of Islands.' This is the last recorded visit of the venerable Bishop to Wellington.

Father O'Reilly erected at Te Aro, Wellington, the first church in this district, and it was recently stated on the authority of one of the earliest settlers that the oldest house in the city now existing is that little cottage built and formerly occupied by him. For two score years he labored with untiring energy in Wellington and district. Across Cook Strait in an open boat, along the western coast and inland he travelled, bringing the consolations of religion to the scattered pioneers of the settlement. His first little church, dedicated to St. Mary of the Angels', in Boulcott street, had more than once to be enlarged, and through his exertions it was rebuilt in 1874.

At this stage of our memoirs, the following personal narrative from one whose recollections of Wellington extend to his boyhood days will prove interesting. 'The latter end of the forties found us, a lot of school-boys under the tuition of Mr. Fryer, in the school chapel on the site now occupied by the presbytery of St. Mary of the Angels', Boulcott street, Wellington. We were astonished one day at seeing two foreign-looking personages come in and accost our tutor. Mr. Fryer, who was the embodiment of politeness, at once entered into conversation with his visitors. We were greatly interested at hearing our visitors speak a strange language, and felt a certain pride at the versatility displayed by our good old teacher. The visitors were two French pioneer priests of the Marist Order, newly arrived from the northern capital in order to provide for the spiritual wants of Catholic residents, European and aboriginal, in the far-stretching wilds of the southern part of the Colony. These two priests were, if memory does not fail me, Fathers Petitjean and Garin. We were inclined, boy-like, to laugh at the peculiar appearance they presented, with their strange sombrero-like hats, so different to our dear Father O'Reilly. The visitors, however, had not taken their departure many minutes when our inclination for merriment at their expense was turned to deep interest and respect. Our master, evidently noticing the want of appreciation displayed, gave a short but most impressive lecture to all upon the trials and vicissitudes suffered by these holy men amongst the Maoris of the north in their endeavor to spread our holy religion amongst them and their children.'

A new period opened up, states a missionary record, with the advent of European immigration, and also new duties for the missionaries. In 1848 the progress of colonization decided the Holy See to establish in New Zealand a regular hierarchy. Bishop Pompallier exchanged his title of Vicar-Apostolic of