

THE LETTERS AND DIARIES OF JOHN NEWMAN. Vol. XVII, *Opposition in London and Dublin, October 1855 to March 1857*. Edited by C. S. Dessain. *Nelson*, 1967. xvi + 602 pp. 126s.

The opponents were the London Oratory with whom Newman was in 'painful controversy', Cardinal Wiseman who was treating him with 'extreme rudeness', and the great majority of the Irish bishops who were in such disagreement about the University of Dublin that 'a chronic state of things' had developed, with Dublin wearing him away and Tuam repelling him.

The outline of the controversy with Fr Faber and the London community is widely known. It all started over Fr Dalgairns' wish to be appointed extra confessor to the nuns at Stone. How easy to think of it all as yet another example of Newman's exaggerated sensitiveness and pessimism—I don't think anyone who knew him well ever accused him of those things—to think of it all as another storm in a tea cup. Controversies in which deep points of principle are at issue are only too frequently trivialized; for Newman, in his dispute with the London house, what was at issue was the nature of an Oratorian congregation—did the Oratory consist of independent houses or not? Because Newman was convinced that he saw clearly what was at stake, he was ready to go to any length, to suffer fatigue and indignity, to defend what he believed about his own house and life. Little did the London house realize the effect when it applied to Rome for a dispensation for itself and for Birmingham, and then stuck its toes in when told it was wrong. 'A controversialist of superb gifts, perhaps the most gifted in the history of English letters', to quote Professor Cameron, was out totally to rebut the position the London house had adopted. We can see him doing just that in the first part of this volume. Sometimes he was exasperated, sometimes, I expect, unfair; but here is a genius, whose 'senses, even the commonest, were exceptionally delicate' (J. A. Froude), showing us what commitment to an ideal and to a religious family can mean, even when the opponents were good Christian men, of the same religious family. Here is a living life; and it provides excellent spiritual reading, a real study of the development of a great person.

'He was the most transparent of men. He told us what he believed to be true. He did not know where it would carry him' (Froude). In fact, this commitment, in face of every sort of ecclesiastical obstacle, cardinals, bishops, priests—what he called the 'camarilla'—led him to the place he now occupies, the first teacher of the modern Church. But what determination, courage, sense of humour, integrity, were needed.

'One hears tales of men who cannot speak and are bound, and taken to and fro at the will of others. *Obmutui et non aperui os meum*. I go to Rome to be snubbed. I come to Dublin to be repelled by Dr McHale and worn away by Dr Cullen. The Cardinal taunts me with his Dedications, and Fr Faber insults me with his letters. I would be let alone, but I have no means of defending myself more than if my hands and tongue were tied. I cannot explain anything to friend or foe intelligibly. . . . I can only think of my own lines, tho' Christians are worse than heathens, "Sit in the gate and be the heathen's jest—silent and self-possessed". What enormous irritation Job must have felt when his friends came and prosed to him' (30 October, 1856).

All those who are in positions of ecclesiastical authority have had many excuses for the mis-use of that authority removed by Fr Dessain's vast undertaking. No one can meet Newman and remain the same; or see how he was treated, and how he treated others, and not be moved to reconsider his own position. The price is big, and the work quite hard. Both are worth while, for the future's sake. To Fr Dessain especially, if he will forgive my saying so, were the patriarchal hands of the old Father 'stretched with love and awe towards those, our unborn successors, whom on earth we shall never know'. This is the context in which this 'great undertaking' is proceeding. The T.L.S. has said that it compares in magnitude with the setting up of the Catholic University in Dublin. The publishers of these volumes, realize, I am sure, how great, how lasting and how honourable is their work.

BEDE BAILEY, O.P.

MORE POWER TO THE PEOPLE. Young Fabian Essays on Democracy in Britain. Edited by Brian Lapping and Giles Radice. *Longmans*. 21s.

The Young Fabians have devoted their first book to an examination of the workings of democracy in Britain. They have no difficulty

in pointing out that democracy—if by that word we mean a very full participation by the people at large in the process of government