

been written? One would give the answer that it is precisely because of Newman's towering greatness that no individual writer has been able to 'speak with authority' on more than one aspect of his life and work. Wilfrid Ward was able to deal in general with Newman the Catholic. Meynell, Barry and Lewis May were each able in their own incomparable ways to give an exquisite portrait. Mr R. C. Middleton has written recently on Newman and Bloxham; and now we have Maisie Ward's 'The Young Mr Newman'. The main literary productions of the Centenary Celebrations three years ago were volumes of essays. And one cannot help feeling that the long essay by a specialist is the best means of portraying one whose life and influence were so manifold. 'The whole Newman' can thus only be found kaleidoscopically.

Mr Sencourt has to our mind attempted the impossible. All the same, the Dacre Press has given us a handsome production to add to our Newman shelves and, apart from that, the book has its importance if only for the quotations from previously unpublished Pusey House and other papers. Our confidence is further established by the fact that Father Henry Tristram, of the Birmingham Oratory, without question the greatest living authority on Newman, has lent his support to the author. And whilst Mr Sencourt's line is too light and artistic to plumb the magnificent depths of the real Newman, he has done a pleasing work and perhaps fulfilled some purpose for the ordinary reader. Here, however, the absence of chronology, especially in the earlier part, has confused rather than clarified the issue. The whole setting up of the Oratory in England has been over-simplified; and in concentrating on the person of Newman himself, the author has to some extent minimised or vitiated the characters of those great Victorians who enter on the Newman scene. The gigantic mental and spiritual stature of men like Manning and Gladstone and Mark Pattison and Dean Church does not really emerge. We must congratulate Mr Sencourt on his intrepidity; but we still think he has attempted the impossible.

GORDON WHEELER.

THE ANGEL OF THE SCHOOLS. By Teresa Lloyd. (Duckett; 1s.)

Like many plays which depict scenes rather than tell a story, this little play needs to be *seen*, rather than read. The short episodes from the life of the great St Thomas Aquinas seem disjointed as one reads them. They give very little idea of the personality of the Saint; they seem not to hang together. But when produced—and the production should be very simple and dignified—it would surely strike one differently. The music especially, and the plain-chant rendering of the 'Ecce Panis' and the other liturgical hymns written by St Thomas would make the whole difference to the impression given by the play. The last scene, after the death of St Thomas, with the singing in plainsong of the 'Adoro Te', twice introduced as suggested in the

stage directions, would bring the little play to a beautiful close, leaving the audience with a wordless impression of the Saint himself in a way which the dialogue alone could never do.

This play is full of possibilities, and very well worth producing.

FFLORENS ROCH.

EXTRACTS

WHICH ARE THE ESSENTIAL SPIRITUAL BOOKS? *Témoigne Chretien* has been conducting an enquiry into spiritual reading, and in the course of it has interviewed leading French Catholics—Fathers Doncoeur and Daniélou, Paul Claudel and Daniel Rops among them. In the issue for May 14 Father Congar gives his list.

The books that have most affected me are those which concern my own vocation. But I have profited from the works of non-catholics, from the wonderful *Story of a Russian Pilgrim*, Hebert's *Throne of David*, Nygren's *Eros and Agape*, Wischer's *Das Christuszeugnis des Alten Testaments*. . . . Again there are books which are more literary than spiritual in the technical sense, such as *The Brothers Karamazov* or Claudel's *Annonce*.

If I were asked to name a list of books to take with me to a desert island, I would choose the Carmelites—the great St Teresa, St John of the Cross and St Thérèse of Lisieux's marvellous *Autobiography*. I should include the *Imitation*, for even though it be little adapted to normal life in the world, it would be suitable for such a monastic existence. It has, in any case, something to say—and that something is profoundly true—to every soul. The Bible; that goes without saying. Also the *Pensées* of Pascale. It was the only book, apart from a pocket Bible, that I was able to keep when I was taken prisoner during the war.

Other books that I should choose would be Martel's *Letters*, Légaut's *Prayers of a Believer*, Sertillange's *Notre Vie*. Then there are the great theological works—Mohler, and Cerfaux's *Theology of the Church according to St Paul*.

'SACRAMENTUM ORDINIS', the Apostolic Constitution on Holy Orders, is printed in *Nouvelle Revue Théologique* (Louvain) for May, together with a commentary by Père Delchard on the importance of this papal document.

'The tradition of the instruments does not constitute the substance of the sacrament, for otherwise the Church could not modify anything on this point. . . . The Pope affirms that the tradition of the instruments is not even necessary for the validity of the sacrament. And here we pass to the plane of the essential determination of rites so far as they are sensible objects and elements, which the Church can specify, because our Lord intended her to possess a real liberty of that sort'.