

than in criticism of Fr Gilby's book. Its very merits invite them, for the book is assured of being for many years to come the standard, for many perhaps the only, source in English-speaking countries for St Thomas's thought in his own words.

VICTOR WHITE, O.P.

ARISTOTLE'S *DE ANIMA*: WITH THE COMMENTARY OF ST THOMAS AQUINAS. Translated by Fr Kenelm Foster, O.P., M.A., PH.D., and Fr Sylvester Humphries, O.P. With an Introduction by Fr Ivo Thomas, O.P., S.T.L., M.A. (Routledge and Kegan Paul; £2 2s.)

Perhaps the first thing that strikes anyone who is acquainted with the methods of work of later Greek and early medieval philosophers when he reads St Thomas's commentary on the *De Anima* is that it really is a commentary in the modern sense, a sober and scholarly exposition of the text. The combination of a living and developing tradition and great powers of original philosophical thinking with an exaggerated respect for authority very often led the later Greek philosophers and their successors to use the form of commentary on the great ancients, above all Plato and Aristotle, for the exposition of contemporary school doctrine or their own original thought. No doubt they were generally quite unconscious that they were doing more than drawing out the inner meanings of the words of the masters. But in general (with the exception of the great Alexandrian Platonist commentaries on Aristotle, notably those of Simplicius, which are much more genuinely scholarly and less speculative) one gains more understanding of the philosophy of the authors, and of their contemporaries and immediate predecessors in the school, than genuine help in understanding the text commented upon by reading late Greek and medieval commentaries. The extreme development of this method of speculative commentary is to be found in the medieval *Commentaries on the Sentences*, which are certainly not primarily means to the understanding of the jejune theological textbook on which they are based. But St Thomas in his Commentary on the *De Anima* is simply concerned to understand, and to make his readers and hearers understand, the text before him. And it is remarkable how close he keeps, in most places, to the genuine thought of Aristotle in spite of the far from diaphanous medium through which he was compelled to apprehend him, the Latin translation of William of Moerbeke. As Fr Ivo Thomas points out in his excellent introduction, St Thomas by his method of exposition makes Aristotle appear a good deal more systematic than he is in the original: and on some important points, notably where the 'active intellect' is concerned, he draws out conclusions which may be legitimate developments of Aristotle's thought but are certainly not stated in the text and which modern Aristotelian scholars, with their neces-

sarily much wider knowledge of Aristotle's thought in its own proper contemporary setting, would generally be disinclined to accept as representing his real intentions. But on the whole there can be no doubt that the Commentary not only intends to be, but succeeds in being, an accurate exposition of the text, and one which modern students of the original are very ill advised to neglect (the greatest modern Aristotelian scholars do not). St Thomas was clearly determined that his judgment on and use of Aristotle should be based on the closest, most accurate, and most dispassionately objective, knowledge possible to him: and in nothing is he more worthy of imitation. He shows himself, as always, a thinker who respects other people's minds enough to make him want to know the exact truth about them as far as possible. This of course means that we shall not acquire a full and adequate understanding of his own thought about the soul of man from the Commentary. For that we must go elsewhere.

The volume is one of a series entitled 'Rare Masterpieces of Philosophy and Science', whose exact purpose is rather difficult to see. The books appearing in it are scholarly and well edited translations of works which are not easily accessible and in themselves important. But the price and the difficulty of the subject-matter will in most cases put them out of the reach of the general reader, and the fact that the original texts are not printed and the absence of any extensive commentary will greatly reduce their usefulness for the specialist scholar (one cannot hope to gain any real understanding of a philosophical text by reading it only in translation). They will probably have a career of limited usefulness in university and public libraries as source-books for moderately advanced students in the various disciplines concerned with the history of ideas. But within the limits imposed by the general pattern of the series the work in the present volume has been admirably done. The translation of Moerbeke's version and St Thomas's commentary is accurate and readable, and reasonably free from neo-scholastic jargon: and Fr Ivo Thomas's 24-page introduction provides much valuable help towards the understanding of the text.

A. H. ARMSTRONG

SATAN. (Sheed and Ward; 30s.)

A book of five hundred pages, written by thirty-two people, is not to be lightly reviewed; but perhaps this is the only way to do it, short of taking the whole of an issue of BLACKFRIARS and engaging several theologians to do it justice. This book is the result of one of those inestimably valuable annual Conferences sponsored by *Études Carmélitaines*, translated from the French, but with additions and emendations.

A bright red cover hides under a jacket on the front of which is Blake's Lucifer—a lovely drawing—and on the back a terrifying