

BOOK REVIEWS

THE SUMMA CONTRA GENTILES of St. Thomas Aquinas. The Fourth Book. Literally translated by the English Dominican Fathers. (Burns, Oates and Washbourne, Ltd. ; 12/6).

Again without notes, introduction or any other superficial and unnecessary adornment, there has appeared another volume of the translated works of St. Thomas Aquinas giving as before a literal yet scholarly and readable English rendering of the thought of the Angelic Doctor.

The *Summa Contra Gentiles*, though comparatively little read, holds in a certain sense the primacy amongst the works of this great Master. It was composed, not like the *Summa Theologica* for beginners (who but St. Thomas himself would dare to say this?), but for the grave and learned. It is a concise yet complete exposition of Catholic Truth, and of Thomism. Each of the four books which it comprises is, nevertheless, largely self-contained, and in this fourth and final volume will be found a discussion of questions of peculiar interest as well as of primary importance.

After a noble and inspiring Proemium, which contains a striking Apologia for Revelation, St. Thomas proposes to develop his theme under three main headings: 'We shall treat, first of all, of those things concerning God which are above reason and are proposed to our belief, such as belief in the Trinity. Secondly we shall treat of those things above reason that have been done by God, such as the work of the Incarnation and things that follow in sequence thereto. Thirdly we shall treat of those things above reason to which we look forward in man's last end, such as the resurrection and glory of the body, the eternal happiness of souls, and matters connected therewith.'

The treatise on the Incarnation pays particular and even detailed attention to the main heresies concerning this doctrine—heresies which, it may be remarked, are to be found as vigorous to-day, lightly cloaked under the diaphanous robe of science and pseudo-learning. The teaching on the Sacraments is expounded with a splendid clarity and brevity; the chapters dealing with the Holy Eucharist should prove of especial value to the layman. Finally no one could fail to be fascinated by the conclusions of so great a thinker and saint on the conditions and state of both body and soul after the general resurrection, and on 'the state of the world after the judgment' with which question the volume comes to an end.

H.C.