

volume, reiterates the character of *The Bridge* as a specifically Catholic undertaking, and seems to decline for that reason the suggestion that he should make room in it for contributions from Jewish writers. 'We could not in conscience', he says, 'open our pages to a dispute on the basic tenets of our faith.' But while it would doubtless be undesirable to make *The Bridge* a mere vehicle of controversy, like the correspondence columns of a newspaper, it is to be hoped that future volumes will contain papers by Jews about things Jewish. For not only could this be most useful for the Catholic readers of these Yearbooks, it would also be doing something to remedy a situation noted and regretted by Fr J. E. Bruns in two of his penetrating book reviews; the fact that the majority of Jewish writers judge and condemn Christianity by its Protestant, and in particular liberal Protestant, forms. If some of these writers were invited to contribute to *The Bridge*, it would be a means of directing their attention to Christianity in its authentic, that is its Catholic form, and thus of confronting them with it not as the anti-thesis but the fulfilment of authentic, orthodox, Judaism.

These two tentative suggestions are not meant in any way as a criticism of Fr Oesterreicher's methods in the two volumes before us. But he has started something of such value and so many possibilities, that its future development is a matter of keen interest. We look forward to seeing more of these handsomely produced books, and to finding their contents of an ever higher quality.

EDMUND HILL, O.P.

ORIGEN: COMMENTARY AND HOMILIES ON THE SONG OF SONGS. Tr. by R. P. Lawson. (A.C.W. Vol. XXVI: Longmans; 21s.)

This is another valuable contribution to this valuable series of patristic translations. The choice of work is judicious, presenting the reader with Origen not only at his best, but at his most typical; perhaps also at his most influential, for here we find the master images and ideas that have governed the Church's mystical tradition ever since. Not that Origen was the *fons et origo* of this tradition; but he is perhaps its earliest witness outside Scripture, and there can be little doubt that he stamped upon it the mark of his own peculiar genius.

The translation reads easily on the whole, better than a number of others which have already appeared in the series. But it is not entirely free from mistranslation, and in particular there is one rather serious error that should be pointed out. On page 108 Origen is made to say, in substance, that just as the Gentile Church had been unbelieving, and then had received mercy through the unbelief of the Jews, so one day Israel, which is now unbelieving, will receive mercy through the

unbelief of the Gentiles. But Origen in this passage is merely reproducing the doctrine of Romans 11, not falsifying it for the sake of an artificial antithesis. The error is one of punctuation, and of being misled, so it would seem, by the uncritical punctuation of the original; a speech is ascribed to Israel which Origen in fact put in the mouth of the Church of the Gentiles. The translator might perhaps have suspected that she was misrepresenting Origen, when she made him so crudely misrepresent the Apostle.

EDMUND HILL, O.P.

THE LITTLE BREVIARY. Compiled by T. Stallaert, c.ss.r., tr. by the Benedictine Nuns of Stanbrook. (Burns and Oates; £4.)

This breviary is designed for the use, both private and choral, of lay people and of religious who lack the time or the Latin to recite the full Roman breviary. It is based meticulously on the Roman breviary, but all the offices are radically shortened. Thus Matins consists of just one nocturn, and Sunday Vespers of Psalm 13 divided into five sections. Nearly all the hymns are reduced to three verses only. The lay-out and the directions are thoughtful and thorough, and the technique of using it should not take long to master. It could be quite invaluable in making the riches of the Divine Office available to those who are not bound to its recitation in Latin by strict obligation.

Two further observations may be permitted. Since there is no question here of public ecclesiastical obligation, there would seem to be ample scope for experimenting with this type of shorter breviary. This volume intentionally sticks close to the Roman breviary, and only departs from it by way of abbreviation. But one would like to think that here precisely is the field for controlled liturgical experiment. To take only one example, the choice of Scripture readings for the course of the year, particularly for the weeks after Pentecost; here is a chance, one feels, to try out a more equitable distribution of Scripture passages, and to withdraw from the Machabees their somewhat unmerited usurpation of the whole of October. A very valuable experiment that might be mentioned here is *Le Bréviaire des Fidèles*, by Père Henri, O.P., which it would be good to see translated into English.

Secondly a word about the translation. The Knox version has been used for the psalms and all Scripture passages. Once again one is made to reflect how unfortunate it is that this very personal *tour de force* has been so comparatively hastily thrust into the position of almost our official English version. Here again, surely, there is a good case for experiment, for encouraging a number of Catholic translations, in