

slight errors of grammar and language could certainly lead to bemusement, at times even serious misunderstanding. I hesitate to make too much of this, since it could suggest excessive pedantry: but questions need to be raised over the editorial process which allowed for such discrepancies. Wolfram Brandes' contribution in particular suffers from a lack of proper English-language editing.

In conclusion, Fried's book is certainly an important scholarly contribution, much to be welcomed. However, there is a sense in which an opportunity here has been missed. Publication in English offered the opportunity for presenting a specialist scholarly field to a wider academic audience – an audience which undoubtedly exists, given the importance of the subject. To a certain extent, Fried's book has achieved this: but it could have done so with less allusion and more structured explanation.

J.R. RYDER

**THE CTS NEW CATHOLIC BIBLE** edited by Henry Wansborough OSB, (*Catholic Truth Society: London, 2007*). Pp. 2264, £15 hbk.  
**LECTIONARY: REVISED STANDARD VERSION, SECOND CATHOLIC EDITION (two volumes)**, (*Ignatius Press: San Francisco CA, 2006*). Pp. 1044 & 2438, \$270 hbk.

It is slightly odd to be asked to write a book review of the Bible, but this new edition from the Catholic Truth Society is well worth drawing to readers' attention. It is explicitly aimed at the Mass-going Catholic who wishes to place the liturgical readings within a broader canonical context and benefit from the proposals biblical scholars have developed over the last century or more. Thus the translation is that used in the majority of lectionaries in the UK, the Jerusalem Bible, with the exception of the Psalter, which uses the Grail translation familiar from responsorial psalms at Mass and also from the Breviary. Although there are good reasons for having reservations about the JB translation, and we should look forward to the emergence of an NRSV-based lectionary in the fullness of time, the JB is for the time being the version with which most Catholics will be familiar, and an edition that does not purport to be a 'study version' but which rather is complementary to the liturgical function is most welcome. Indeed, it is something that would have been welcome when the JB lectionary came into use, and we may reasonably hope that Henry Wansborough, who is responsible for this edition and who has for the last two years been Executive Secretary of the International Commission for Preparing an English Language Lectionary (ICPEL), has realised this need and will respond to it with an NRSV 'New Catholic Bible' in the future.

In the meantime, this edition on the whole fulfils its avowed function more than adequately. It is particularly pleasing to note that the work is prefaced with a nicely-judged résumé of *Dei Verbum*, the Dogmatic Constitution on Revelation, thus placing the text of scripture within the context of the Church's understanding of its place within the life and liturgy of the Christian community. Following this we have a preface to the biblical text, with explanations of the Hebrew and Greek versions used and the origins of the JB. I would venture a mild criticism that the note on the OT books not found in the Hebrew Bible and rejected by Luther and the Protestant tradition speaks of them as 'Deuterocanonical' and fails to note that their canonicity is not a matter of personal preference but of Conciliar definition from the Fourth Session of Trent. Nevertheless, these books are placed in their canonical order within the text, rather than, as in some Catholic bibles, as an appendix after Malachi.

There are then helpful introductions to each major section of scripture – the Pentateuch; the historical and the wisdom books; the Prophets; the Gospels and

Acts; the Pauline Letters; and 'Letters to all Christians and Revelation'. Thereafter an introduction to each individual book typically gives a summary of the content, some historical-critical contextualisation, and an outline of the theology of the book. It is pleasing to note that this last predominates over theoretical reconstructions of the historical origins that can often leave the reader no wiser, but only more confused and bewildered.

After these parts of the introduction, and particularly valuable in fulfilling this editions purpose, is a 'liturgical note' on each book, detailing its occurrence within the Mass and Office, and noting the implicit interpretation of the book and its major themes that is proposed by the book's liturgical use. So, for example, of Isaiah we read that '...As we approach Holy Week and Easter readings from Isaiah are again prominent, now concentrating on the mission of the Servant of the Lord who is at the centre of the Paschal Mystery' (p. 1242). Brief summaries of scholarly views on the servant songs in 'Second Isaiah' have been offered, but in typically cautious tones that do not force the meaning of the text into narrow historical confines.

Accompanying the text of each biblical book are copious notes, some of which inevitably are more helpful than others, but they are for the most part well-balanced, avowedly open in the case of the Old Testament to Christian readings – christological interpretations of the psalms and prophecies, for example. Two small criticisms might be levelled at the Old Testament notes and introductions: one is the use of the divine name, which happily is replaced with capitalised 'LORD' in the text itself. This usage is a manifestation of arrogant supposition on the part of some scholars (and for that matter some hymn-writers) who think they know with certainty how the tetragrammaton was vocalised and pronounced, and who disregard the liturgical tradition of respect that stretches back long before Christ. The other, noticeably less marked in the New Testament section, is a propensity for technical terms from historical criticism which, though not particularly complex ('post-exilic', 'oral traditions' and such like), may serve to obscure rather than to clarify. By contrast the introductions and notes attached to the New Testament books are models of clarity, and where the text is difficult or obscure they elucidate without imposing a particular, perhaps contentious, interpretation upon the text. Indeed, especially in the case of the Pauline epistles, they sometimes undo the damage done to the Greek text by a translation which, presumably for the sake of ease of understanding, sometimes verges on paraphrase.

This tendency of the JB, and the New Jerusalem Bible, to over-translate and present the reader – or the Mass-going congregant – with the contentious conclusion of one school of historical-critical exegesis – is one of the reasons why I insist that my students in scripture use the RSV or the NRSV, with their far more accurate translations. It may be felt that such translations make for inelegant English, more suitable perhaps for scholarship than for liturgy, yet many of the Dominican churches in the English Province have used RSV lectionaries quite successfully, and it is excellent news that the NRSV, suitably amended to conform with the norms of *Liturgiam Authenticam*, will be the version used in the new lectionary to be produced by ICPEL. In the meantime, our RSV lectionaries having become unusably old in recent months, the Priory in Oxford recently purchased new RSV lectionaries from Ignatius Press, which use the Second Catholic Edition of the RSV; the text is recognised as being in conformity with *Liturgiam Authenticam* by the Congregation for Divine Worship and is, of course, identical to an already-available published Bible. It is in two volumes, the first containing the readings for Sunday, Solemnities and the Triduum, and the other covering the weekdays of ordinary time and the seasons, the proper and commons of saints, Votive and Ritual Masses and so on. The quality of the volumes is superb, with very clear print and an attractively decorated cover rendering the edition eminently suitable for liturgical use. This quality is, it must be noted, reflected in the price.

Aside from this attractiveness, two advantages these new editions have over our battered older ones are, first, that they are up-to-date in terms both of the prescribed readings and of the rubrics and the introduction from the 1981 second *editio typica* of the Order of Readings; and second that they contain the proper *Alleluia* verses in the right place rather than gathered together at various locations, a difficulty that has in the past led to a confusion of bookmarks and embarrassingly long pauses. The only disadvantage is that the RSV version is used also for the responsorial psalms; the RSV psalter is not entirely unpoetic, but it is less musical than the Grail as well as less familiar at least to clergy and religious who know the Grail via the Breviary. (The Breviary is of course very, and tiresomely, inconsistent in the versions it uses of all other books of the Bible). It will be interesting to see whether the new ICEL lectionary retains the Grail psalms, but in the meantime we continue to sing the psalm from the Grail in Oxford.

A final noticeable difference from both the old RSV and the JB lectionaries is the more extensive use of *incipits*: words and phrases such as 'Thus says the Lord', 'Brethren', 'In those days' and 'At that time' have been found striking by members of the community and of the congregation, bringing back for some – whether happily or not – reminiscences of former times. Both of these publications are to be welcomed, as in their various ways they will serve to render more attractive and more comprehensible the Word of God as used in the liturgy of the Church, in response to a need that was recognised by the Second Vatican Council and that continues to press urgently today.

RICHARD OUNSWORTH OP