

because of its subject-matter (p. 239), and that when studying Habacuc the canticle in Habacuc 3 is regarded as genuine work of the prophet (p. 111), and lastly, that considerable attention is paid to the position of Deuteronomy in the history of the Josian reform: it is maintained that while the book contains certain nuclei of the most primitive origin, traceable back to the time of Moses, these documents were worked over and expanded probably in the time of Ezechias and after, and that this was further enriched after its promulgation by Josias in the time of Jeremias and came thus to partake of his manner, receiving its final form only in the period after the exile (pp. 92-3). The concluding chapter of the book studies the composition of the Book of Jeremias as we have it now and indicates the part played by 'inspired disciples', writers influenced especially by the deuteronomic school, in supplying certain passages now included under the prophet's name.

SEBASTIAN BULLOUGH, O.P.

LE PROPHETE EZECHIEL. By J. Steinmann. (*Lectio Divina* No. 10: Cerf, Blackfriars; n.p.)

For some, Ezechiel is the greatest of the prophets, for others he is not worthy to be called a prophet; for all he is a puzzle. Not one of these three affirmations is without some support and all three are explained in part by the prophet's background. Ezechiel inevitably wears a double aspect: he straddles two epochs, two lands, two literatures, almost (we might say) two theologies. Doubtless this will bring variety and interest but it is sure to bring confusion, too. The oracles of Ezechiel date from the years before and after the destruction of Jerusalem in 597 B.C. After that fatal year Israel's feckless optimism yielded to despair. Now it is characteristic of the genuine prophet that the heart remains fixed upon the unchanging God amongst all human changes; he is neither pessimist nor optimist but realist. If, therefore, the voice of Ezechiel is the voice of threat at first and the voice of promise afterwards (chapter 25 onwards), the change is not in him but in his times: it is one and the same counterweight controlling the wildly swinging moods of Israel. If to this dualism of emphasis we add Ezechiel's excursion (in the closing chapters) into the realm of apocalypse; if we add also the prophet's almost complete silence regarding his own career, we shall readily understand the difficulties of interpretation and the varying evolutions of Ezechiel's work.

M. Steinmann's three hundred pages are an admirable guide to 'the baroque Prophet'. The French public has already appreciated his *Isaïas* and *Jérémie* in this series, as also his *Daniel* in *Temoins de Dieu*. His work is always a model of *haute vulgarization*: personal work on the text itself, easy familiarity with the great commentaries, shrewd perspective, humanistic and living presentation. We note with satisfaction the author's

own translation of a prophet who, as M. Steinmann significantly remarks, deserves a Léon Bloy for his translator. In view of our English discussions on this matter we venture to translate a footnote (p. 251): 'The translator has repeatedly asked himself while preparing this book if he had the right to sacrifice fidelity and precision to elegance. In the end he decided that he had no right to turn Ezechiel into a Frenchman.' This decision is symptomatic of the author's consistent integrity. He refuses to bring Ezechiel to us; instead he takes us back to Ezechiel.

A.J.

MARXISM, AN INTERPRETATION. By Alasdair C. MacIntyre. (S.C.M. Press; 8s. 6d.)

Unless I am much mistaken we can look forward to inspiring works from the pen of Mr MacIntyre during the coming years. His account of Marxism, and its significance for Christians, is no mere repetition of old arguments but a genuine re-thinking of the whole issue; even those for whom the subject is tediously familiar will see many aspects of it in a quite new light—and this light from Marxism throws the Christian mysteries into sharper relief.

I do not intend to say much about the book, because its central theme corresponds to what the present reviewer said about *alienation* in an earlier number (*THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT*, November, 1952), and because the book itself is worth buying or borrowing (there is a brilliant little excursus on prediction and prophecy (pp. 89-90), and a stimulating chapter on moral problems: 'The Consequences for Philosophy'). The only parts of Mr MacIntyre's work which grated were those where he himself seems alienated, echoing exaggerations now fashionable among certain Anglicans; page 12, where he says that 'among the fruits of the gospel may be an anti-clerical secularism and an atheism that rejects false gods, etc'; pages 101-2, where he falls into the fashion of using 'orthodoxy' as a swear-word (and completely misunderstands orthodox teaching on the act of faith); page 108, where he repeats the cheap comparison between Communism and Catholicism on the ground that many Communists become Catholics (no one ever seems to ask of what proportion of Communists this is true, nor to consider that hundreds more Anglicans than Communists come over to Rome). Also, it is rather tiresome to keep meeting the unqualified assumption that the Church in the nineteenth century neglected the poor. The thousands of heroic priests who laid down their lives in the cholera-stricken industrial towns of the North do not, it is true, find their way into the pages of G. M. Trevelyan; but they are in the Book of Life. And it is worthwhile occasionally to remember that in 1845, while the spoilt child of a wealthy manufacturer, Engels, was holidaying in Eberfeld with the mistress he had picked up in his Manchester factory, there toiling among the poor of Eberfeld was a working man become a priest, Adolf