

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

Kolping. That the Socialist, Engels, and not Adolf Kolping was the alienated person is scarcely to be doubted.

Certainly Kolping would understand better than Engels the inspiring paragraph with which Mr MacIntyre ends his work: '... this new community will be both human and Christian. For its prayer will be the classical prayer of Christendom. Paradoxically it is the contemporary study of Marxism which perhaps brings out most clearly what the classical methods of meditation have to say to us about the "dark night of the soul". It is a "dark night", an *ascesis* of poverty and questioning which must renew our politics. A community committed alike to politics and to prayer would serve in the renewal of the whole Church, for it would give to us a new understanding of the central act of the Church's life which is in humble thanksgiving to eat the body of a Lord who hungered and thirsted and to drink the blood of a Lord whom the powers of Church and state combined to crucify outside the walls of the city.' DONALD NICHOLL

CHOIR OF MUSES. By Etienne Gilson. Translated by Maisie Ward. (Sheed and Ward; 12s. 6d.)

M. Gilson here discusses the way in which great men, Petrarch, Baudelaire, Wagner, Comte, Maeterlinck, Goethe, were inspired in their work by women—women who for them were muse, not mistress, for if ever—as in some cases happened—the muse descended from her remote pedestal and became a mistress her power to inspire came abruptly to an end. M. Gilson writes professedly as a historian (and these historical vignettes are indeed fascinating—and the translation makes one forget that it is one, as it should); but in fact the discussion goes beyond the realm of historical statement of fact, and raises problems which it does not altogether attempt to solve. Why in fact does the Muse cease to inspire when she becomes a woman? M. Gilson glances at the idea of the *anima*, but he does not link it up with the immediately relevant remark of Baudelaire that psychologically speaking the poet is essentially bi-sexual, nor with his own insistence that in the last resort it is not the Muse herself who inspires the work, but the artist who infuses into her the inspiration to give him.

The last chapter, on 'The Artist and the Saint', raises another problem: 'the way of the artist is seldom a road to sanctity'. 'If I did not possess this marvellous gift, this strong power of creative fantasy', said Wagner, 'I could follow my clear knowledge and the élan of my heart: I should become a saint.' But why should the artist find it more difficult than other men? He idolises his art; but other men idolise a woman, or their work, or their country, or themselves; it is not only the artist who says 'I adore you' to something other than God. His absorption is deeper, the claims of art are more absolute? Yes, no doubt; but on the other hand he is already a seer, a contemplative; as M. Gilson profoundly says, 'Poetry even at its purest is not prayer; but it rises from the same depths as the need to pray.'