

REVIEWS

LITERARY AND PHILOSOPHICAL ESSAYS. By Jean-Paul Sartre. Trans. by Annette Michelson. (Rider; 18s.)

JOURNEY THROUGH DREAD. By Arland Ussher. (Darwen Finlayson; 12s. 6d.)

A TIME FOR TRUTH. By Jeremiah Newman. (Browne and Nolan; 18s.)

Sartre is a man of one idea, the idea of freedom, but he explores its ramifications with great vigour and persistency. The keynote of the present volume is struck by the essay on 'Cartesian Freedom', in which Descartes is praised not for his own conception of human freedom but for the notion of absolute divine freedom, creative of truth and of value as well as of things, which is the exemplar of the freedom which Sartre wants to claim for the human person. Giraudoux is condemned as a novelist whose characters have fixed 'essences' in the Aristotelian sense, and Mauriac is blamed for the limitations in the orders both of nature and of grace within which he perceives free will to work. Camus and some American novelists, on the other hand, are praised for portraying the individual who is completely a law to himself. In a lighter vein there are three essays containing vivid and striking impressions of the human atmosphere of the United States.

In a long discussion of 'Materialism and Revolution' Sartre proclaims himself a socialist and a man of the revolution because he wants to liberate humanity and to make all men able to exercise existential freedom. But that is precisely why he criticizes conventional Marxism. The Marxist, seeking to abolish the only class which has any real freedom, aims to extend to the whole of society the dreary determinism of the machine and the machine-minder. Here Sartre's point of view comes surprisingly near to that of the Christian sociologist and an insistence on the primacy of the human person. One might, of course, have expected that Sartre's general philosophy would have made him politically an anarchist. If it does not, it may be simply because anarchism is hardly a practical option in the world today.

Mr Arland Ussher makes interesting comments on Kierkegaard, Heidegger and Sartre, but his book lacks unity because his own point of view is not indicated with sufficient clearness. He approves of the existentialists for rejecting a too tidy intellectualism but criticizes their reactions to the fullness of an unexpected world as partial and arbitrary. The revulsion of dread is as inadequate an attitude as the complacent claim to comprehension characteristic of Hegel. He would have Kierkegaard reverse his stages and find salvation in the aesthetic sphere.

A kind of aesthetic quietism seems to be Mr Ussher's last word, but for the details he asks us to look forward to another book. It should be worth reading.

Although Dr Newman of Maynooth is well aware that existentialism is not a complete philosophy or an adequate substitute for the perennial tradition, he has sympathy with it as a reaction against both positivist materialism and rationalist idealism. He is chiefly concerned with its French representatives, Sartre, Marcel and Merleau-Ponty, and provides a useful introduction to their ideas for the student and general reader. Apart from an essay on Marxism as being more of an ideology than of a genuine philosophy, his other studies are of contemporary British thought. Here he betrays an occasional lack of familiarity. Wittgenstein was not 'ultimately driven . . . to take refuge in mysticism and religion'; his feeling for the mystical is already present in the *Tractatus*. Nor can his essentially independent position be at any time equated with logical positivism. And, as a minor detail, his posthumous volume is called not *Logical* but *Philosophical Investigations*. Dr Newman also seems to miss the note of mild irony in Lord Keynes's confession of the 'immoralism' of Moore's followers in ethics. In spite of these and similar blemishes, however, the student will find in this book a clear summary of the main lines of British philosophy in the present century. It is good to see that work of this kind is being done at Maynooth.

D. J. B. HAWKINS

SEEDS OF THE DESERT. The Legacy of Charles de Foucauld. By R. Voillaume. (Burns Oates; 16s.)

This very important book should be widely read. The drama of Charles de Foucauld's life is already well known, but the real value of his work has not been sufficiently understood, at least in England, as Archbishop Mathew points out in the preface. *Seeds of the Desert*, written as it is by the Prior General of the Little Brothers of Jesus, speaks with authority about the life of Charles de Foucauld and the spirit of the Little Brothers whom he founded. People often ask what the Little Brothers set out to do, and it is difficult to explain that they only try to *be* something and would be untrue to their vocation if they engaged in active works of religion *ex officio*. A Little Brother understands that his baptism has given him a share in the life and power of Christ, and for that reason alone he sets out to live the life of Nazareth *in the normal surroundings* of the twentieth century in order to bring Christ further into the world. So Father Voillaume insists strongly on the need to share the economic and social insecurity that most people experience today because that was part of our Lord's own experience and should therefore be a link between us and him. So he repeats