

distinguish, on the evidence of certain private letters and *obiter dicta*, a third period, 'the religion of the Holy Ghost', which would make Soloviev end up more of a Protestant than a Catholic. A further chapter examines what Dr Müller believes to be the paramount influence of Schelling on Soloviev; and there is a short appendix on the latter's relation to Judaism.

The remainder of the book is an important *Nachwort* by the Catholic Professor Wladimir Szykarski, of Bonn, who argues against Dr Müller's assumption of a Protestant period at the end of Soloviev's life and finds the evidence insufficient to support it. Soloviev indeed held that the Protestant revolt was partly justified by abuses of spiritual authority on the Catholic side, but he remained firmly attached, and his last work shows him firmly attached, to the Rock of Peter.

B.W.

THE PHYSICAL BASIS OF LIFE. By J. D. Bernal. (Routledge and Kegan Paul; 6s.)

This reprint of Professor Bernal's Guthrie lectures for 1947 is an account, in terms of physics and chemistry, of how life may first have appeared on the earth from non-living matter. Spontaneous generation of the simpler forms of life is an old guess (accepted by the medieval theologians easily enough) which is now being made respectable again by the physical scientists. Professor Bernal's is a most able essay in co-ordination that will certainly stimulate specialists in the subjects joining physics and biology; perhaps readers of a non-scientific journal should be warned that this is by no means 'popular science'. But Thomists, too, should be interested in the growing concern of scientists with problems of origin: it raises in an acute form the question of the meaning of the abstract notions used. Since scientists believe they are talking about reality they will use metaphysics of some sort to interpret results and direct research: and it will be Marx or Whitehead that provide it if we are content to dismiss science as 'without metaphysical foundations or implications'. It is to be hoped that books like this will be read by those whose philosophy claims to order the whole of reality.

L.B.

VENTURE WITH IDEAS. By Kenneth Walker. (Jonathan Cape; 10s. 6d.)

The stimulating book by Dr Walker is the history of his first meeting in 1923 with the late P. D. Ouspensky, and of the momentous results of that meeting in the author's own life. Ouspensky, a disciple of Gurdjieff, had been lecturing on the esoteric philosophy of Gurdjieff in London from 1923 until 1947. This book is an account of how these

ideas influenced the author, and of their power to integrate his various experiences of life into an organic whole.

Certainly the book is interesting from start to finish, the latter chapters which describe the meetings in Gurdjieff's hotel in Paris forming a fitting climax to the whole.

To a generation brought up on the Cartesian division of mind and matter, this esoteric monism of matter is described as a welcome cutting of the Gordian knot. To a generation which had been denied the Catholic tradition of mental prayer and self-examination, a tradition represented by schools of spirituality from Cassian and the Desert Fathers through St Catherine of Siena to St Francis of Sales, this new technique of self-examination seems like the key which opens the doors of a new life. This is really the most fundamental issue which Dr Walker raises. Can the technique of self-examination be detached from other strands, or is the 'system' a self-contained whole? To the modern non-Catholic, or non-Christian, it will appear as a welcome integration. To an informed Catholic who feels he has the principles of an integrated life in the Catholic tradition, the 'system' will tend to appear as not ultimately homogeneous and as a consequence something from which one may pick and choose much that is valuable.

DANIEL WOOLGAR, O.P.

WILLIAM TURNBULL, BISHOP OF GLASGOW. By John Durkan. (John S. Burns & Sons, Glasgow; 7s. 6d.)

It is remarkable that this should be the first biography of the founder of Glasgow University; and very gratifying that the lack should be supplied by a scholar who is both a Scot and a Catholic. Mr Durkan's little book is obviously a thoroughly decent piece of work. Scholars working in the same field will, no doubt, try to modify or expand some of Mr Durkan's conclusions; but his painstaking pioneer work will not, one may reasonably suppose, need to be done again. It is a definite addition to historical knowledge, and an important one. Its importance for us lies not only in the fact that Bishop Turnbull played a great part in the culture and politics of fifteenth-century Scotland, but also in the circumstances of its publication. Sponsored by the Scottish Catholic Historical Association, it first appeared in *The Innes Review*, and is therefore a first-fruit of the determined effort being made by a group of young Scottish Catholics to study and present afresh the history of their country. Of this effort, which, one need not say, deserves the warmest encouragement, Mr Durkan's work is the most solid single result so far.

It is a mass of carefully verified and organised detail. The Bishop's career as student, administrator and politician is minutely described. If the description is rather external, if Turnbull himself remains a some-