

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