

harnessing of the forces of nature. The rational procedure of philosophy, on the other hand, flouts experimental tests of verification and produces in effect a host of irreconcilable and seemingly sterile generalities. Still, philosophize we must; otherwise we have but a truncated vision of reality. Science replaces global natural perspectives with analysis and precision: it measures analytically the constant relationships among physical phenomena. But such an artificial breaking-down can tell only part of the story. The real is impregnated with a meaning that surpasses the scope of mathematical measurement, and it is the task of meta-physics to gauge the nature and import of that meaning.

Whitehead's philosophy of physics was orientated in that direction. His criticism of the bifurcation theory of nature which admitted only primary qualities as real attributes of matter, his rejection of the classical conception of matter in simple location, his own philosophy of organism seen as a theory of continuous succession, all illustrate the tendency of his mind towards a synthetic philosophic comprehension of the universe. In his own field of speciality and within the general context of his whole philosophy, a synthesis of that kind may be possible. But when it comes to the more remote problem of origins, special difficulties arise. That is particularly so regarding living matter. Biochemical analysis has reduced to such an extent the number of properties characteristic of organic matter, that the dividing line between living and non-living is no longer distinguishable. In which case any scientific theory on the nature and origin of life becomes a challenge to the scientist-philosopher.

NICHOLAS FOLAN, O.P.

ATOMIC RADIATION AND LIFE. By Peter Alexander. (Penguin Books; 3s. 6d.)

This is a full account of our present knowledge about the biological effects of radiation, whether direct or by genetic inheritance. In this rapidly expanding subject it is essential that any popular account should come from an expert actually working in the field; only he can hope to assess the evidence and enter the necessary *caveats*. Dr Alexander has produced an authoritative book which can be recommended to everyone, and which must be read by those who are prepared to make moral decisions in matters relating to the subject.

L.B.

GÉOGRAPHIE DE LA TERRE SAINTE. By M. du Buit, O.P. (Cerf; 1,200 fr.)

The work of Père Abel, *Géographie de la Palestine*, I and II, still remains the best synthesis on the Holy Land as background and cradle of our Scriptures. Our present author makes this point, and has