

fantastic interpretation is what can be expected from unprepared and untrained witnesses, especially when under the conditions of the 1954 "psychosis," even if the cause of the phenomenon is a purely natural effect of some sort.

8/It is our opinion, therefore, that nothing in

these descriptions can be retained by the investigator as a "proof" or even as a serious indication in favour of the reality and extra-terrestrial origin of these "entities" at the present time. But that the mere rejection of the cases would result in a loss of information on one of the most puzzling phenomena of our century.

FÁTIMA

THE THREE ALTERNATIVES

by Gilbert S. Inglefield

FÁTIMA is inescapable. There is no possible doubt that something occurred there; it is by far the best authenticated "miracle" of the twentieth, or for that matter, of any other century, and it was seen by at least 70,000 witnesses. You may find photographs in Gilbert Renault's *Fátima, espérance du monde* of their perplexity as spectators watch the phenomenon. I believe there exists a faded picture of the "thing" itself. There are articles in contemporary Portuguese newspapers and there are people alive to-day who were there. Lucia herself, now in a Spanish Convent, is still with us. The Fátima incident and the bomb on Hiroshima are, I venture to think, the most remarkable — perhaps the most significant — episodes of our generation. If you wish to read the facts there are many books in English, French and Portuguese on the subject, but nearly all have a religious bias. Yet how odd it is that so few people have even heard of Fátima!

I have used, for want of a better one, the word "miracle" which has been defined in the *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* as a "marvellous event due to some supernatural agency." The goings-on at Fátima on October 13, 1917, could not possibly have been a natural or even a meteorological phenomenon. The sun does not dance or detach itself from the sky. Neither could it have been a case of mass hallucination for the crowd was a heterogeneous combination of the pious and atheists, the curious and the inquisitive. It was therefore either some kind of UFO or a "miracle" of the same calibre as the feeding of the five thousand, the crashing walls of

Jericho, the raising of Lazarus or the changing of water into wine, explainable by the agency of Providence — an agency in which I am prepared, as a Christian, to believe (with possibly one or two minor reservations). But if it was a miracle of this order, why has not the Vatican, specialists surely in this line of business, freely admitted it as such? From their point of view Fátima offered enormous proselytising possibilities.

A strange effluvia

If the "dancing sun" was a UFO, then the evidence as presented and analysed in Paul Thomas' *Les Extraterrestres* (p.p. 89-91) is indeed startling. The author has compared in parallel paragraphs the description of the "dancing sun," taken from the most reliable account, with descriptions of sightings noted by M. Michel, Donald Keyhoe and other, mostly American, sources; even to the incidence of a fall-out of that strange transient effluvia which astonished the schoolmaster at Oloron but which the pious at Fátima thought to be snow flakes or white flowers. Fátima itself lies within 50 miles or so of the "Bavic" line and that is certainly worth remembering.

The Fátima story has two chapters; the first concerns the personal visitations and colloquies of which the three children were the principal witnesses, and the second recounts the public viewing of the "dancing sun" observed — without any doubt — by a huge crowd constituting perhaps the largest audience so far recorded as witnessing a supernatural phenomenon, if such it

was. Their evidence cannot be called in question.

What of the children? The story of visions, visits, and visitations is a long one throughout the history of any religion, particularly of Christianity. Such things usually happen to those of particular piety, like St. Paul or St. Teresa, or to simple unsophisticated children, as to the young Samuel or to Bernadette at Lourdes. They are not, so far as I know, manifested to salesmen, stockbrokers or journalists. My Protestant mind accepts this without much heart-searching, and I am prepared to believe the stories of Lucia, Jacinta and Francisco — even if the messages may have been rather childish. But such messages about rosaries and chaplets and all the rest, though a little tiresome, would be comprehensible to simple children educated by a simple and possibly sentimental parish priest. It would be on their level.

A curious incident

Then how does one tie up chapter two with chapter one? Here's the rub. Coincidence is impossible. The chance that a wandering flying saucer, a bit off its bearings on the "Bavic" line, could, at exactly the right moment of time, have put on a show is too far fetched. The explanation must be that a liaison existed between the visions and the final "sign." Was this liaison involved with the most vital of our religions — Christianity? Was the "sign" of the "dancing sun" a confirmation of the visions and their messages? Or was it — and this is a disagreeable thought — a gesture of mocking?

It is worth noting that there is a curious follow-up — if one may so describe it — in an incident reported by Renault and commented on by Paul Thomas. It appears that Pope Pius XII in 1950 confided to Cardinal Tedeschini (who put out the story) that he was much moved by a vision that he experienced in the gardens of the Vatican during the octave of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin. He saw an opaque disc which covered the sun and which seemed to adjust its

movements to keep the sun masked for a short period, so that for so long as he was on the axis of vision a kind of eclipse was evident and could only be visible to him. The behaviour of the disc was not unlike that of the disc at Fátima which was noticed at the time to come from the sun. This is an interesting parallel.

Lucia has in the course of time revealed the messages that she received from her visions. These concerned the necessity for prayer among the faithful to turn from our sinful ways and a curious reference to the dangers of Russian political theories to be thwarted by the conversion of that country to Christianity — not yet, alas, fulfilled. And there is another message that was to be revealed in 1960. So far as I know, this last message, written down and sealed in an envelope and entrusted to the late Bishop Correia da Silva, has not been disclosed. It has been hinted — but on what authority is not clear, and I have a suspicion that it may be just wishful thinking — that this last message deals with the acceptance of the theory of life on and communication with other planets.

A Challenge

In the meanwhile, where do we go from here about the Fátima enigma? You must accept one of three solutions and there is no escape. You must believe that the dancing sun was some phenomenon which science can explain, and in that case may I, with respect, ask the Editor of the FLYING SAUCER REVIEW to throw down the gauntlet at the door of Dr. Menzel. Or you can say that it was a pure miracle like the miraculous draught of fishes and leave it at that. Or that it was due to a UFO intervention either on its own (which makes the children's visions a more tricky problem) or with the liaison of Christian agency. In which case let the editor knock at the gates at the Vatican, and when he does so let him enquire about Lucia's last message. But I am prepared to lay a considerable bet that he gets no response from either.

MILLIONS OF INHABITED PLANETS

By Bruno Friedman

WE are grateful to our reader, Miss M. G. Duck, for having drawn our attention to the following article which is reproduced through the courtesy of "Unesco Features." It appeared in their issue dated January 10, 1964—No. 430.

It is, perhaps, a characteristic of our egocentricity that we should concern ourselves so largely with sending messages to outer space while refusing to consider that others may have been sending them to us—and meeting with no response. It is significant that whenever apparently intelligent messages are received, experts like those at Jodrell Bank immediately dismiss them as hoaxes. In this connection our readers are referred to the article "Message from Space?" to be found elsewhere in this issue.

ELSEWHERE in the universe, there may exist intelligent races of life, but how to find them? . . . how to communicate with them? Man's search for fellow life in the universe has already begun.

Look at the stars, those specks of light glimmering in the night sky. On planets revolving around many of those specks other eyes, intelligent eyes, are probably noting our own speck, the sun. Modern science says "probably," where not many years ago, science with equal vigour said "improbable."

Based on this "probably," an effort to make contact with other life in space, called Project Ozma, was made in 1960. For 150 listening hours an immense radio telescope (which is essentially a radio receiver tuned to pick up radio signals generated in space) of the U.S. National Radio Astronomy Observatory at Green Bank, West Virginia, listened for radio signals which might indicate transmission by sentient beings.

The search was completely inconclusive. Despite the very strong likelihood that there is intelligent life in the universe, there was actually very slight hope of success, since the "ear" used in Project Ozma — the radio telescope in West Virginia — is too small to reach out very far in space. Yet, just the very effort gives rise to many questions.

- What makes scientists so sure today that there is intelligent life in space?
- Where do we locate such living beings?
- Are they more intelligent, just as, or less intelligent than we are?
- How can we communicate with them, considering that they are likely to be completely different from us, to have a completely different kind of language, and even completely different patterns of thought?

Let us pursue the answers to those questions.

Not many years ago the most commonly accepted hypothesis for the origin of the solar system stated that some time in aeons past a vagrant star passed just close enough to our sun for its gravitational attraction to tear out a portion of the sun's mass. The flung-out mass of flaming gases, however, held near the sun by its own gravitational attraction, revolved around it, and eventually coagulated and hardened into lumps which are the planets we now know.

So unusual is such an event that it was computed that it had occurred possibly a few hundred times for all the hundred thousand million stars of our galaxy, the Milky Way. Moreover, only from one to ten of the planets so created would have the conditions necessary for the evolution of