

and moulding the modern type of man, Christian as well as agnostic and atheist. It determines his mode of thinking, and thought is followed by action. Human events are merely the outward expression direct or indirect, of what is going on in the minds of men.

All this indicates at least one good reason why we should try to be informed concerning the trend of modern evolutionary philosophy; because it is a practical force in the social, economic, industrial, and religious life of our people.

The fact that we are not doing more than merely acquainting ourselves with these problems, is exceedingly to be regretted. At present the Catholic biologist is a rare individual. We should have dozens of them in the country, authorities in their field, doing original work. Then perhaps the rather questionable policy of indiscriminate condemnation might give way to constructive efforts; then we might succeed in having twentieth-century philosophy transformed into a new structure, erected on the solid foundations of Christianity rather than on the shifting sands of human weakness; and instead of permitting it to become the symbol of error and ungodliness, we could dedicate it to the spiritual service of mankind and to the honor and glory of God.

This paper would be very incomplete without some reference to man's place in the evolutionary scheme. Briefly stated, it comes to this: science knows nothing about the origin of man, his soul or his body. There is absolutely no data to reason from. The half dozen bones found in Java or near Heidelberg are of such indefinite character that even some of the most enthusiastic evolutionists do not accept them as of any value. Prehistoric man as far as known was essentially what he is to-day.

Why then does an overwhelming majority of modern biologists take the evolution of man as an established fact? Because he is, from the scientist's point of view, an animal; his body is certainly subject to the laws of animal life in its functions and in its development from egg to adult. The student takes for granted the uniformity of nature; if the whole animal world is subject to the laws of evolution, one cannot except man without doing violence to nature.

The Catholic, in the presence of such arguments, need but keep the following points in mind. The human soul, intellect and will, are evidently excluded from any reasoning process that applies to the animal world. They belong to a different category. As to his body, Scripture tells us that it was made of the slime of the earth, and it seems, in the opinion of some, to encourage the interpretation that the body was completed before the soul was breathed into it. St. Thomas clearly emphasised the opposite nature of the material and spiritual elements that together constitute the single creature called a man.

At any rate the Church has not condemned the proposition that man's body is the result of an evolutionary process initiated and guided by divine providence; that in fashioning man's body to become a fit habitation for the soul, God made use of natural laws, just as to-day He makes use of natural laws in the creation of each individual body. The idea may not appeal to our imagination. We do not like the idea of brute ancestors. Of course not. Did you ever see a two-month old human embryo? Did it appeal to your sense of propriety that you were once such a creature? That those mysterious forces of nature that gradually fashioned my body may have also entered into the formation of the first man, is not an essentially repugnant conception.

I am aware of the fact that while the above proposition is not condemned by the Church, the best one can say of it is that it is barely tolerated. The Church has a higher and more important mission than the teaching of science. Whether or not evolution is true has nothing to do with the salvation of souls. And if the Church finds that the transition from the old ideas to the new is accompanied by extreme danger to men's spiritual welfare, she raises a warning hand. She is conservative in this matter because she loves the soul more than the body. In natural science as well as in the supernatural order we cannot put new wine into old bottles without danger to the bottles. The theory of evolution received a great impetus during the last century precisely because its acceptance too often meant the rejection

of revealed religion. The Church is not blind to this very significant fact, and therefore bids Catholics go slow. Prudence must temper our zeal. The ground must be prepared before such novel ideas can be sowed broadcast. Before that ground is prepared, we shall need a twentieth-century St. Thomas; one who can so combine sacred and profane learning that both will draw benefit therefrom; one, perhaps, who can make Darwin and Huxley become to modern Catholic thought what Aristotle and Avicenna were to the Scholastics.

Diocesan News

ARCHDIOCESE OF WELLINGTON

(From our own correspondent.)

September 16.

Efforts are being made by the general secretary of the Catholic Federation to cope with the housing difficulty, and for that purpose is compiling a list of Catholics who have rooms to spare and are prepared to let them. People seeking rooms or who have rooms to let should communicate with the secretary, Box 958, Wellington.

Miss Frances Cullen, daughter of Mr. W. Cullen, Island Bay, and a pupil of the Sacred Heart Primary School, Island Bay, was successful in passing the recent stenotypists examination, securing first place with 100 per cent. marks.

A garden party to raise funds for providing a chapel for the Seatoun Preparatory College, will be held at the College grounds on Saturday, October 15, and the Sisters of Mercy, who are working hard to ensure a success, invite all friends and sympathisers.

The bazaar in aid of the Convent of Mercy, Newtown, will be opened in St. Anne's Hall, on Saturday, October 8.

The half-yearly meeting of the Wellington Diocesan Council of the Catholic Federation will take place at New Plymouth in January next. This location was decided upon to give the Taranaki branches an opportunity of securing direct representation, and it is expected that there will be a large attendance of delegates.

Recently the Marist Brothers' Old Boys Debating Team (Messrs. J. Coleman, J. Boyce, and S. Hoskins) journeyed to the Hutt and there met the St. Peter's branch of the H.A.C.B. Society in a debate held under the auspices of the Wellington Catholic Societies' Debating Guild. The subject was: "That the present system of immigration is not in the best interests of New Zealand." The debate was awarded to the Marist Brothers' old boys by the judges, the Rev. Father Carmine and Mr. Hodgens.

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Wanganui

(From our own correspondent.)

September 16.

"Villa Maria" is once more a school and hardly knows itself. During the last few years this same old Villa has been the scene of many glad nights and days, for, within its gentle shelter, club rooms, lodge rooms, sewing rooms, garden parties, sales of work, socials, and the dear Lord only knows what else, have had their day. Now, only the library remains for general use, and all else has been given over to the children. Dividing walls have been removed to "make two into one," result, three fine class-rooms upstairs, and one downstairs. Airy, roomy, and light, and opening all of them onto the balcony or verandah, the rooms are ideal. White ceilings, brown (indeed it is fashionable "henna") walls, the latter decorated with the artistic and educational pictures the Sisters make so beautifully, are part of the scheme, and each floor is replete with its own cloak rooms. The improvements, absolutely necessary, will help to tide over until we can build the new school, and Father O'Connell has put to the best possible use every inch of available space. St. Joseph's School of happy memory, becomes a back number for the present. However, considering it has been threatened with annihilation "next earthquake," for the last — years and has survived, it may wake up some morning to find itself the Town Hall.