

And so here it is, the year before
'69. And in about two months, this
weekly fanzine will be entering its
fifth year of publication. As always,
it comes from Dave Van Arnam, 1730
Harrison Ave, Apt 353, Bronx, NY 10453,
and rides free (for the time being)
with Andy Porter's SF WEEKLY.

FIRST DRAFT #199

Vol. 34, No. 1

5 Jan 68

SF WEEKLY gets letters. Sometimes
these letters make reference to FIRST
DRAFT. Here are one or two (depending on how much I ramble on about
the one, which is only two sentences. We shall see...

BOB VARDEMAN :: Dec 7 ::

Dear Andy:

Enclosed is \$1 for 14 issues of SFW in renewal. Like Van
Arnam's First Draft even if he is a bit daft. ~~←(Everyone seems to say
that...)~~ How anyone could put down Christian Scientists but favor
Scientologists is beyond me (I'm not much of anything in the religion
line and most seem ludicrous - but his dichotomy...)

SFannishly, Bob Vardeman

Ahem. Christian Science is patently a swindle. Its theology is fogged
beyond belief by the incapacity of the Founding Mother, Mary Baker Eddy,
to truly comprehend the nature of the words and the concepts she attempted
to deal with. To read her prose is to find oneself imbedded in a kind
of subliterate imitation amber (now there's a stunning metaphor...).

Scientology began with Dianetics, as we all know, and Dianetics was an
attempt to provide a "new science of the mind" (I believe that's how
the phrase went). From the first article in ASTOUNDING and the first
publication of DIANETICS, it was surrounded with controversy, generally
handled on both sides with a fair amount of incompetence. I read that
first article in ASF not too long after it came out, and thought it pre-
sented quite a number of new insights into the possible workings of the
mind. Certainly psychiatry has come up with very little that can be put
on the line, and the reason, I thought, might very well be because they
have all been going at it the wrong way.

Still, it didn't overwhelm me, and as the years went by and those nutty
ads in GALAXY began showing up -- "Buy now! Only \$7.50! The history of
the human race for the last 75 trillion years!", or however it went --
and as Dianetics, transformed to Scn, began wrapping itself in the old
dull white robes of Revealed Religion, I decided that ol' Hellron had
finally disappeared down the pike for good.

Then Jack Harness stayed with us for a couple of days, enroute from LA
to England, where he was planning on taking the final course that wd
reallyreally make him a genuine Clear, and he and I and Cindy sat around
for long hours discussing Scn.

No, he didn't convert me. But he did show me what Scn had been doing for
the last decade or so, and it was by no means as dippy as I had supposed
(tho I warn you, as I warned him, I supposed it to be very dippy indeed).
For one thing, only in the last two or three years did they finally come
across the solution to the final stumbling block, or so I'm told. Jack

Null-Q Press

Undecided Publication #299

explained the nature of the problem, and it made sense to me (bear in mind that I knew a great deal about Dianetics, which still forms the first level of Scn, tho modified in many basic details). Not only that, the nature of the final solution made sense to me, at least in terms of Scn. It held together. (At least, as far as I then went into it.)

It held together. The first thing that shd strike anyone investigating Christian Science or Mormonism or Two-Seed-In-The-Spirit-Baptism or any such catchall for boobs is that they don't hang together. One prod of a stiff forefinger and their glorious trappings turn to rotted mummy wrappings (as it were). There is precious little distance between Moroni of THE BOOK OF MORMON, and Frangipangi of OAH SPE (not to mention Moses and his first five books of the BIBLE). To the non-religious-oriented person, it's all first-rate twit-work and nothing more.

But Scientology, like Zen, has the virtue most religions lack, in that it hangs together. It may still be completely wrong, but you can't just touch it for it to fall apart. I mentioned OAH SPE; perhaps I shd have also mentioned Velikovsky, who purports to have applied a new kind of science to various phenomena. Very much like Scn. But you can't get past the first chapter of any Velikovsky book without finding out that it's all twaddle, an incoherent mishmash, pretentious past belief. There is no need to put Velikovsky's theories to the test; they have long ago been tested and been found twaddle (those that were worth investigating in the first place).

Scientology has not been independently tested, either before it came into being or after. True, it makes grandiose claims that echo in their manner the tone of many another glorious swindle of the past, but if the foundations of Scn are correct as finally worked out by Hubbard and his institute two or three years ago, the claims are hardly exaggerated. It is true that, a number of times, so-called clears have been trotted out only to prove imperfectly cleared after all; but this cd be laid to the fact that the final problem was only recently solved. They have been put, after all, under enormous pressure to Produce Results -- but they have only been in existance for something like a decade and a half. As with LSD and the other psychedelics now being worked with (which Scn, by the way, will have nothing to do with), it takes a little while to shake out the bugs.

Most people that have bothered to take notice of Scn (and in the old days Dianetics) seem basically to be affronted by the fact that someone has come up with something which he claims may really solve our problems. (Note that Velikovsky has no solutions, nor do Christian Science or Mormonism if you look at them straight between the eyes.) This is earth that JWCampbell has of course been rooting in profitably for thirty years, but is nonetheless true. Engineers do dowse for lost pipes successfully; the phases of the moon do seem to relate meaningfully to planting; and most of us -- myself quite frequently included -- are only upset, irritated, angered, that such untoward things are conceivably true.

But our disbelief does not make them untrue. Sf writers and fans take a kind of special pleasure in knocking nonsense onside the head, but we can follow the herd as quickly as a steady reader of the READER'S DIGEST or RAMPARTS. Why? We're human. But just because we are human, we can try to get beyond our human limitations. And the worst way to go about that is to be put off by superficial oddities. Two pages on two sentences, and I am hoping you are the sane?...