

News from Venus: a flight of fancy

UNIVERSE

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THE Master Aetherius, who reigns on the planet Venus, will soon come down to earth. His strength will be greater than all the armies of the world, and those with a "negative" attitude to him will be "removed." This astonishing message was conveyed to a packed and fervent public meeting earlier this month.

Flying saucers, filled either with the servants or else the robots of this terrible being, apparently visit the earth regularly to prepare for his Coming, as they have done for the last 50,000 years. But now, we were assured, a New Age has begun, and his arrival is imminent.

During eight hours of speeches, in a London hotel, about 300 members of the Aetherius Society were repeatedly told two things about these flying saucers. They are real and friendly, but there is an inter-governmental plot to conceal their existence. These facts were "the single most important issue facing mankind today."

Mr John Holder, who holds a doctorate in biochemistry from Hull University and who works as a unit trust manager, set out the scientific "proof" of the existence of the space-faring minions of Aetherius.

His proof consisted largely of numbers. An incident last year in which a Japan Air Lines jet had been "bugged" by a mysterious object while flying over Alaska had generated 329 pages of official documents. Norad, the US Air Defence Command, had collected data on "no less than 10 million incidents" during the past 20 years. The British Ministry of Defence had records of 2,250 sightings in the last four years, and 15,000 of them since 1962.

To Mr Richard Lawrence, secretary of the Society's European head-quarters, these numbers proved a great deal. These aerial activities were caused, not only by Aetherius, but by the other "Cosmic Lords." It appears that every planet in our solar system is inhabited by these beings.

The fact that Nasa's space probes had found all these planets to be uninhabitable did not matter, since the Cosmic Lords consisted of pure mind. They had no bodies that would suffer in poisonous atmospheres. The true facts about their existence had now been "revealed."

Revealed to whom? To their prophet on earth, a resident of America, His Eminence Sir George King, who has inherited his knighthood from a Byzantine emperor. Sir George became advanced in the science of yoga, which in his case meant communing with God. Back in 1954, he "heard a voice."

"Do not smirk," said Mr Lawrence sternly. "St Paul also heard a voice. So did the prophet Elijah." He explained that Sir George had now received more than 600 messages from the Cosmic Lords, and they had appointed him the representative of their Planetary Parliament.

Sir George is now the medium through which the Cosmic Lords speak to the people of earth. His is the voice but theirs are the words. To let us hear them, Mr Lawrence played three tapes. I checked an impulse to laugh as he warned: "We regard these transmissions as extremely holy."

It was depressing to listen to this farrago of nonsense. The meeting had started in a fairly scientific manner. But as it proceeded the tone grew progressively more evangelical and intolerant. "Patrick Moore doesn't believe in flying saucers, but he's discredited," declared Mr Lawrence. The audience never laughed.

In further meetings of the Society to be held later this summer, Mr Lawrence and his colleagues will claim that the dimensions of the Egyptian pyramids reveal the precise distance between the earth and the sun, data which their builders could not possibly have known, but which the Cosmic Lords could have fed into their minds.

Then, as now, Mr Lawrence will pour scorn on the "debuggers". "Some people have such closed minds," he declaimed, "That they wouldn't even recognise a flying saucer if it landed." In this he is wrong. That is about the only circumstance in which we would recognise it. It is the absence of any artefacts that make it impossible to take these people seriously.