## THE RELIGION OF A HOBBIT

by Belladonna Took

"Religio Periani" - the religion of a Hobbit.

I just could not resist the glance at Sir Thomas Browne, and the temptation to see how a Hobbit would look in Latin.

I have often been asked what the religion of a hobbit might be. In the first place it must be remembered that Professor Tolkienis himself a Roman-Catholic; and though he never gives any indication of his faith in LotR, and unlike his friends C.S.Lewis and Charles Williams never attempts either allegory or the emploiment of religious mysticismyet he can ro more fail to convey his beliefs into his writing than a trained singer can sing out of time.

We are, however not shown the Hobbits practising any religion; yet, they being so like English country folk at their best, one feels their villages must surely have been incomplete without a church, and the church bells, and the solemn walk to church on the appropriate day of the week-and a churchyard? Surely theyburied Hobbits after their long lifespan with the proper "dim and decorous "mirth? But I doubt whether Tolkien thought out all details of Hobbit life to a complete conclusion.

The religion of the Elveswas a different matter: this is well set out in the Appendix to "The Return of the King". It is not a dogma but a history in it's earliest past almost amounting to a Genesis or a Theogony. the story of the relationship between Men and the Higher Race, and between the Higher Race and the Divine Powers, and the gradual separation of the race of Men.

The account, under the heading, "The Numenorean Kings" takes us back to the early days of the High Elves and the Half-Elven. The Eldarwere a race superior to Men having "immortality with the life of the world"; the Edain or Men were subject to the "Doom of Man", which is also called the gift of Men, that is, death. Both Men and Elves were under the rule of the Valar, who appear to be the Gods; but the Valar themselves were not supreme in power, since there were things they were not permitted to do. There are hints of a high overruling power, more purposeful than theDesling or Fate of the ancients- a provedential Will guiding with ultimate purpose the actions of the Valar as well as of Elves and Men.

The Valar dwelt in Valimar, the Uttermost West, and thither the race of Man might not go. In early times there were some who rebelled against their lot, desiring both to enter the "Deathless Land" and to win immortality; and from this time there arose the subsequent discords, and banishments, and dooms, that separated men from Elves and began the cosmic conflict. In some ways this resembles the Christian idea of "the Fall of the Angels" and the consequent "Fall of Man". It must be remembered that C.S.Lewisallegorises the Christian cosmic pattern from the creation to the Day of Judgement, in the "Narnia" stories, and suggests it also in Peralandra.

Opposed to the Valar is a collosal power of evil, Morgoth, an almost abstract evil of which Sauron is only the agent. Whence this evil comes and what is it's relation to the First Cause, Tolkien does not attempt to explain to us- it is a sufficiently overwhelming problem in terms of the world we know. No doubt the problem of theorigin of evil was well debated by the Inklings, but LotR was not the place for such a task. But there is no doubt whatever that evil exists, and that it is clearly defined- that it is the enemy and exists to be over-come- and that though the threat may be appalling, and the cost of victory terrible, yet in the end good must overcome evil- that which is higher than the Valar will not have it otherwise.

.. Among the Valar there is one who is nearest to Menand Elves, and most beloved - that Vanda " the Star-Bride", is Elberath Gilthoniel. or "the Queen of Heaven" sh who sows the stars in the sky. She is the CompassionateOne, who hears the prayers of Men and Elves in danger and need, and whose name, uttered with faith, can put to flight the powers of darkness, Her manifestation is the Evening Star.

But of all seem the Hobbits knowledge. Those Frodo, had met the Elves, these things infiltrated to custom observed Rangers of West in silence was strange we can be some simple homely piety. for the days of the these things, it would as such had little who, like Bilbo and and talked with had learnt all but not much had the rest. Even the by Faramir's turning to the before eating to them. But sure they had customs of - Their names week, though

corrupted from the Numenorean, suggest an observance of the natural powers: sun, moon, stars, the Two Trees, the sea, the High Omes. And some of them rad suraly a sence of protecting powers outside themselves. Sam, in his hour of extremity, could cry from his heart...

" A Elbereth Gilthoniel....A tiro min, Fanulios! "

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Why are there no wise men on Jersey? Well, it went like this: One day in the States of Jersey the Baliff said that the gallows had rotted away and needed rebuilding. One Deputy then stood up and said "Why not build a stone gallows and it will serve for us and our children."

Jersey has never recovered from the

resulting massacre.

Taken from "Folk tales of Guerns y" by a Lt. Governor about the turn of the century. Graham England.