

M.A.P.  
26 NOVEMBER 1910

**Mr. Aleister Crowley Defends  
Himself Against M.A.P.**

**OUR ANSWER TO HIM: WITH A WARNING.**

In the *Bystander* of last week, Mr. Aleister Crowley, our new prophet of the Caxton Hall (small room), sets out what is supposed to be an answer to *M.A.P.* Evidently he is of opinion that if there is "copy" in the Crowley Cult, then he, the one and only Crowley, should secure a not undeserved share.

I admire the prudence of his editor, who, while promising his readers an "entertaining article next week"—I hope more entertaining than this week—disclaims all responsibility for Mr. Crowley, Crowleyism, and the Crowley Cult. I envy this artful use of the best in both worlds.

Unfortunately for the hapless student of Crowleyism, the prophet's two pages contain not one photograph—not one! Epigrams against "morality" and "ethics"—these abound. They appear to be the literary scrapings of a leisurely lifetime. But what the public really wants is not amusing quips upon "the immanence of God"—that is very flat champagne. Photographs Aleister—these are the wares that would sell the *Bystander*—photographs, not of your clean-shaven but rather uninteresting countenance; no, I mean photographs of the orgies—the orgies, Mr. Crowley, goddesses included; Venus and Osiris—if Osiris was a goddess—and the rites, especially a flashlight in the periods of darkness, when by turning off a Bunsen Burner, you fondly imagine that you have blotted out—the Deity.

Some say that the photographs are printed for private circulation only; others suggest copyright. Anyway, Mr. Crowley, you are not beloved of editors—no, believe me, you are *not* beloved, for the charm of your antique and classic sentences.

We have on the staff of *M.A.P.* a candid, clean-minded, healthy-bodied investigator, a man of the world; no Puritan, in a narrow sense, but just the man to weigh up Mr. Crowley and his varied works. Our representative has visited Caxton Hall (small room) on two consecutive Wednesday evenings. He has come away quite unscathed, and he has handed us his impressions, some of which we published last week.

Our representative's descriptions of the Crowley Cult, verbal and written, are in a way, very curious. On the one hand, he was profoundly bored by the ordeal of whole evenings devoted to mummery, recitations of Swinburne, silences, and periods of darkness. On the other hand, he does not dismiss the business as mere chicanery.

Here us a passage from his description of the Rites of Jupiter and Mars:

The séance opened with a long and extremely dull harangue, every alternate line of which commenced with the words, "Oh God, my God." It meant nothing, and conveyed nothing, except a feeling of regret that the name of the Deity should be used so cheaply. The "Mother of Heaven" duly appeared, and gave some not very inspiring violin selections, and the gentleman with the intense American accent recited many lines of meaningless rubbish, such as "Life is the flaming of that flame, Death is the naming of that name."

There was the usual dance, something after the style of that common to the West African "juju" orgies, and finally the performance concluded with the words, "The secret of the Father is in the secret of the Son, and the secret of the Son is in the secret of the Holy Ghost."

The atmosphere was clearer than before, and it was possible to distinguish the faces of the performers. So much for the Rites of Jupiter.

At the Rites of Mars, the audience had again dwindled, but it was noticeable that familiar faces were present, showing that amongst both sexes those sufficiently interested had been found to re-attend. On this occasion the air was pungent with an acrid smell, which caused much coughing, and which was found to be due to the burning of a mixture of opopanax and sulphuric acid.

Such sentences were introduced as "Who is the Angel of the Lord, when Mars is a pagan god?" Then a gentleman with a strong Teutonic accent, who, by the way, has an apparently Russian name, but calls himself French, a peculiar combination, chanted the words, "Oh holy fire, I suck thee up into my mouth and nostrils." Immediately he had said the phrase, a squib exploded, and there was a flicker of blue flame, upon which he added, "Behold the flame of God upon the Altar."

Finally, a man in Egyptian costume put his head through a curtain, and all those present, who were taking part in the séance, knelt down and adored him, calling him the "True God."

Mr. Crowley apparently pays no attention to the charge that this ritual is blasphemous. He says that all prophets are ac-

cused of blasphemy, even the Founder of the Christian religion Himself. It seems strange, however, that one who is so anxious to deny the existence of an Almighty God should be so ready to set up a Pantheon of Eleusinian Deities.

Not that Mr. Crowley and his antics will injure either the Deity of the Christian religion. Both the Deity and the Christian religion are safe from such attacks as his. But people—ladies—with five guineas to burn, as the American say—are often very foolish, and the Caxton Hall, with its Bunsen Burner, its dark silences, its Abracadabra of mystic nonsense, and its gods and goddesses, may bring—who knows?—trouble of a very customary, sordid, and tragic kind into homes where Mr. Crowley's views of ethics and morality, as published by himself last week, have not as yet penetrated.

Our representative, who has thought out this strange phenomenon very deeply, adds to his report a paragraph which, we think, deserves attention:

An extremely well-known and erudite professor, a man who has studied occultism in all its phases, was asked what he thought of the rites, and his reply to his questioner, a grey-haired man of the world, was decisive: "If you are thinking of going—don't go!"

Asked why, he said as follows:

"From time immemorial there have been those who have tempered with the bad side of the unknown. This is no question of creed or dogma, it is merely a psychic fact. For instance, the Black Mass, as sacrificed by unfrocked Catholic priests, and attended by numberless depraved individuals, is nothing more or less than a homage to the devil or the representative of wickedness—call him what you will.

"It is, in fact, the worship of evil as opposed to the worship of good. After all, the generally accepted code of right and wrong is common to all creeds and to all races—it is instinctive,

"Now, this man Crowley is steeped in what may be called 'Black Magic,' and he is therefore a dangerous man. If you attend his séances in the expectation of finding anything beyond offensive formulæ—I will call it the utterance of phrases offensive to Christian belief—I am afraid you will be disappointed. It will merely appear as a somewhat dull and involved ceremony with no apparent meaning.

"But the danger lies much deeper. To the receptive mind of man or woman may *later* come certain suggestions, one might almost say mental waves, full of the most foul purport, and which will vary in power according to the susceptibility and mentality of the subject.

"Some temperaments will remain unaffected, others will become contaminated in which case, literally, God help them. Take my advice, curb your curiosity, and—keep away."

Now this is the advice of a man who has studied "Orientalism" and the still unexplained features of certain aspects of Oriental life common to the knowledge of those who have travelled with their eyes open. It is admitted that even to-day, in spite of scientific research, there remains much which is not understood in connection with the worship of many fanatic sects, and it is with this fire that Mr. Crowley is playing.

Doubtless it is a fascinating, and not wholly disinterested occupation; but it has a more serious aspect. At the rites of Mars, in the front row on a cushion, sat a young girl, at a hazard, not more than twenty—just the sort of subject to become a neophyte of any outlandish superstition.

Impressionable, high-strung, nervous, hysterical, if there is anything behind the apparent "mumbo-jumbo," what chance would such a girl have of forming a reasoned opinion?

Upon a man's private life we always endeavour to avoid comment. We are only interested in Mr. Crowley as a personage claiming public attention.

But it is stated that he is divorced, and we note his remark:

All the professors tell me that every form of emotion has its roots in sex.

He ridicules the morality, not of Christianity only, but also of honourable and sincere Atheism or Rationalism. His "orderly, decorous ceremonies" need not longer detain us, but it is Mr. Crowley's own fault if "wild accusations" abound. It is he who revived the term "Eleusinian," and he cannot surely be ignorant of the nature of the Eleusinian Mysteries when they flourished at the beginning of the Christian era.