

Letter to the Editor of the Occult Review

March 1911

To the Editor of the OCCULT REVIEW.

Dear Sir,—I hope I am not presumptuous in taking Mr. Wilmshurst's article as an attack upon myself, as I am the person chiefly responsible for popularizing the connection between the ideas of ecstasy and magic, and as Mr. Waite's book, on which this article purports to be a comment, has nothing to do with the former.

I am bound to remark that this type of attack is not original. In *Devil-Worship in France*, for example, Mr. Waite wished to refute attacks upon Freemasonry. But instead of confining himself to serious authors, he dragged a penny dreadful from the Paris gutter and in several hundred scholarly pages proved that its statements were improbable.

Now Mr. Wilmshurst ought to know that by ceremonial magic no educated man can mean the *grimoires*, which circulated only among the most benighted peasants in the darkness of the darkest age of history.

By ceremonial magic one means rituals, of which the Mass is the most popular surviving example; rituals of worship and will working through symbolic methods, rituals to which selfishness or impurity are absolutely foreign.

To compare such rituals with the silly sorceries of the fifteenth century is either ignorant or dishonest, and I am surprised that serious students can so far degrade controversy.

But I am well content to be attacked by any one who can dismiss the attainment of the Buddha as "contraband illuminism" and who implies in every phrase that he and Mr. Waite are the only persons in possession of truth and light. I had supposed that spiritual pride pushed to this pitch was the peculiar property of the exclusive Plymouth Brethren.

A friend of mine was recently interred at Woking. He has promised me to communicate his experiences of heaven, and the following is an extract from his second letter:—

"Peter took me round the sights yesterday. There were hundreds of different religions represented—every one seemed happy. By and by Peter said: 'Here's the most curious sight of all. Come this way, and don't make a sound!' We went down a

long corridor, isolated from the main building of the temple by a whole series of doors designed to exclude sound. Presently not the faintest echo of the celestial choir reached us. We went on, and in a little while the sound of singing began again, but from the direction in which we were going. 'What is that?' 'Hush!' replied Peter. At last he took me to a little spy-hole and there was heaven in miniature, but as bright and joyous as the main building. Having seen, Peter drew me away, always with the most impressive caution. 'Do tell me,' said I, inflamed with curiosity, 'who those people are!' 'Oh,' said the Apostle, 'they are the Plymouth Brethren.' 'And why are they shut off from the rest?' 'It is essential to their enjoyment. They think they're the only ones here!' "

Mr. Wilmshurst may then be confident that the Father of all will be attentive to his smallest necessities.

Your obedient servant,
ALEISTER CROWLEY.

The Equinox.
124, Victoria Street, S.W.