

# THE EQUINOX

VOLUME I, NO. 5

MARCH 1911

## WISDOM WHILE YOU WAITE.

### THE BOOK OF CEREMONIAL MAGIC.

By A. E. Waite. Wm. Rider & Son, Ltd., 15s.

It would ill become us to review this book; which, when it was called "The Book of Black Magic and of Pacts," was dismissed by the Editor of the "Goetia" as "a farrago of twenty-fifth-rate shoddy schoolboy journalism." And we are glad to see that in the new edition Mr. Waite has corrected his logic by that Editor's light. But the introduction is new, and deserves comment.

Mr. Waite still talks as if his mouth were full of hot potatoes. The length and obscurity of his archaisms renders him almost unintelligible to me, an affectation which I find intolerable. Such fools as it may impress are not worth having as followers, unless one is a swindler. In fact (let me whisper in Mr. Waite's ear) no follower is worth having.

Mr. Waite's central doctrine appears identical with that to which I personally assent; but I think he ruins its simplicity by his insistence on sectarian symbols and on the literalism which he would be the first to condemn in a Methodist.

As to the rituals of ceremonial magic which he condemns, he is right. But the Mass itself is a Magical Ceremony, and he does not condemn the Mass. The ceremonies which might be practised by, say, a neophyte of the A.: A.: would be as sublime as, and less tainted than, the services of the Church. Of such rituals Mr. Waite is ignorant, more ignorant than the author of "The King's Dole" should be, unless such ignorance be the result of envy, malice, and all uncharitableness.

Further, ceremonial magic, even of the low angelic order, may be a sort of divine trap. The utterance of the Logos is one, but he is heard by divers nations in divers languages. Cannot God deal with a soul even by allowing him to pass through the "Houses of Sin"? Mr. Waite blasphemes if he denies it.

As a practical example, I know of a man who took up the blackest magic from sheer hatred of God and Christ, a hatred Shelleyan and Thomsonian. What happened? He found by practice that to call forth an evil spirit you must identify yourself with the god that commands him.

He then saw no use for the demon, and continued with the god. Reason next said: "If with the small god, why not with the great God of all?" And in the upshot he found himself practising exactly the same method as Molinos, St. Teresa, Buddha, Father Poulain, St. Paul, Meredith Starr, A. E. Waite, Aleister Crowley, and the rest—and getting the very same results.

Oh, my dear sir, a man is a man, and if you give whisky to A, B, and C, they all get drunk, with minor variations for the personal equation; and God is one, and when A, B, and C pray, meditate, concentrate, invoke, chant, utter, watch, resign themselves, it is all one thing in different words. One is a little better, perhaps, for A; and another suits B. But God rewards all alike, in The End.

Mr. Waite's grammar is as slovenly as ever: "The said three persons will draw lots among each other."

Mr. Waite's scholarship is as slovenly as ever. He refers to Molinos as a Jesuit.

I. Biss.

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I am learning Scotch (for legal purposes) at present. I know the meaning of "lovite," "compear," "furthcoming," "reponed," "Edictal," "the matter libelled," "effeirs," "teind," "condescend-