

MYSTIC LIGHT

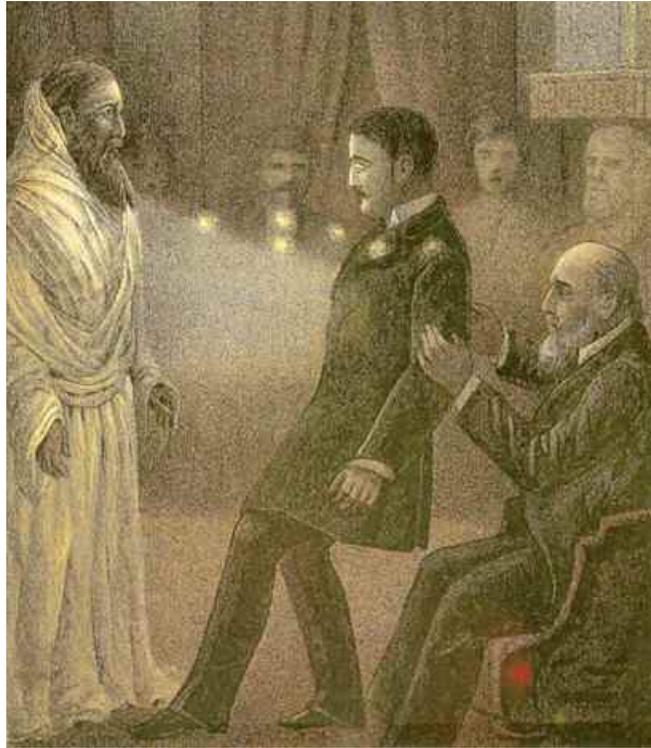
Magic, White and Black

Part 1

IN A RECENT MAGAZINE an article appeared which sought to prove that there is no such thing as Black Magic. The writer seemed to be of the opinion that for magic to be “black,” it must be malicious. The Rosicrucian Fellowship teaches that not only malicious but any selfish use of magical powers constitutes Black Magic. The selfish use of magic is all too common, although in most cases the wrong is done in ignorance.

Studying magic is like exploring the swampy country in certain southern states: It is very fascinating. You will see interesting scenery such as you can see nowhere else. It is also safe to explore, provided you either have a competent guide with you, or you yourself know the landmarks well enough to tell at a glance whether a certain section is safe, questionable, or outright dangerous.

In the study of magic, unfortunately, many teachers who are perfectly competent in their own fields, insist upon acting as guides in fields with which they are not familiar. In this case, the advice and information they give is seriously misleading. In the unknown fields they usually seem more interested in Black Magic than in White, probably because Black Magic is always the more sensational of the two. In the early twentieth century William James was probably the world’s best authority on religious psychology, so far as it dealt with the phenomena commonly taught in the orthodox churches. But he also made some investigations in the field of clairvoyance. Here he was off his own ground. He wrote an essay on “Psychical Research,” dealing at length with all



A representation of the materialization of a departed spirit through ectoplasm emanated from the medium's vital body. The sense centers of the medium's desire body spin counter clockwise (negatively) and the connection between the physical and vital bodies is "exceedingly lax." Mediumism may result in evolutionary retardation due to spirit controls retaining possession of the medium's desire body after death. Deprived of that vehicle, there is nothing to cause the ego to reincarnate.

the negative forms of psychic development—test mediumship, phantoms, crystal vision, etc.

On the other hand, in his *Varieties of Religious Experience*, he devotes only four pages to “the sense of a presence,” which is the psychologist’s term for positive clairvoyance. Then he dismisses the subject as “this false perception,” as if it were not even worthy of the investigation of a scientist, and as if his judgment of its “falseness” would never be questioned. In view of the thousands of cases which might be cited of this “sense of a presence,” James’ attitude is hardly scientific.

George Bartin Cutten was another authority on

the psychology of religion living in James' time. In his book *Psychological Phenomena of Christianity*, Cutten, an orthodox Protestant, devotes a chapter to the study of "ecstasy," a practice cultivated primarily by the Roman Catholic church and certain extreme Protestant sects. Therefore, as we might expect, he states that there are two kinds of ecstasy, and follows this statement with a very scholarly study of the lower form which is artificially induced. The chapter is twelve pages long, but contains only part of one paragraph—three sentences, to be exact—describing the higher type.

Mrs. Eddy, in her textbook on spiritual healing, included a chapter on spiritualism or clairvoyance. She seemed to be wholly unaware that there are two kinds of clairvoyance, one positive, useful, and good; the other negative, harmful, and evil. From her constant references to matter, electricity, and the physical senses, it is evident that the only forms with which she was familiar were negative. The following statements could not possibly be applied to positive clairvoyance: "It [spiritualism] is the offspring of the physical senses....The so-called dead would need to be tangible and material or the material senses could take no cognizance of them....Spiritism consigns the so-called dead to a state resembling that of blighted buds, and they return to their old standpoints of matter....How can it [spirit] communicate with man through electric, material effects?"

Anyone who has ever experienced positive clairvoyance knows that it is not dependent upon the physical senses, nor does it make use of electricity. Aside from the authority or the mistakes of teachers, however, there are certain landmarks in the field of magic by which even the layman can recognize at once the sound and the unsound. It has been said that the black forces often employ as their trademark the star with one point downward, while the white forces use a five-pointed star with two points down and one up. This, however, cannot be depended upon, as the black forces are not above counterfeiting. There are certain characteristics in the teachings themselves which will tell us instantly whether we are dealing with Black Magic or White.

Before describing these differences let us define the word "magic." Magic refers to the effects pro-

duced by the activity of the highest, or spiritual, part of the mind, called by some the "superconscious" mind. American psychologists make so many blunders on this subject because, as a rule, they posit a mind that has only two sections—conscious and subconscious. They are not competent, therefore, to explain phenomena which really come from the superconscious.

Magic is a process whereby we may accomplish certain results not achieved by means of laws ordinarily known....Both of them [White and Black Magicians] use and manipulate the same forces, the difference being the motive which prompts them. The White Magician is prompted altogether by love and benevolence. Although he is not actuated by thoughts of reward, a soul growth wonderful to contemplate results from his use of magic. He has put his talents out to usury and is gaining interest a hundredfold. The Black Magician, on the other hand, is in a sad state, for it is said that the "soul that sinneth, it shall die," and all we do contrary to the laws of God inevitably results in a deterioration of the soul qualities. —Max Heindel, *Questions and Answers*, Vol. 1 p. 279

In Scriptural language magic is the use of "the gifts of the spirit," which are described in 1 Cor. 12: "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit....For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirit; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues." In contemporary language magic includes such gifts as clairvoyance, spiritual healing, prophesying, the miraculous ability to speak or understand unknown languages. There is one other "gift" which may not properly belong to the field of magic but which we must consider because of the prominent role it has played in one particular ceremony—the condition the Roman Catholic church calls "ecstasy," literally, out of *stasis* or static body. The chief object of

the “witches sabbath” practiced during the Middle Ages was the (wrongful) induction of ecstasy.

A great deal can be learned about any philosophy from the moral character of its originating teacher. There is no more infallible rule than this: “By their fruits ye shall know them.” Magic is not a study for young souls. We have a right therefore to expect significant spiritual development in those qualified to teach it. The one who is competent to teach magic will be living in accordance with the highest moral standards known in his time and country. Not a high standard, but the very highest.

I once met a teacher who said he “had not tasted meat for several years.” Yet at the same time he not only smoked tobacco and drank liquor in moderation himself, but he made liquor and even gave it to minors! The teacher who considers himself so advanced as to be “above the law” is like a mathematician who has never had time to learn the multiplication table because he has been too busy teaching trigonometry.

Even Christ did not consider Himself above the law, but stated that He had “come not to destroy but to fulfill” the law. Concerning His own teachings He told the Pharisees, “These things ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.”

Many saints have written about the effects their visions and mystical experiences exerted on their personal characters: St. John of the Cross tells us that “they enrich it [the soul] marvelously. A single one of them may be sufficient to abolish at a stroke certain imperfections of which the soul during its whole life had daily tried to rid itself.” St. Theresa says, “A genuine heavenly vision yields to her a harvest of ineffable spiritual riches, and an admirable renewal of bodily strength. I alleged those reasons to those who so often accused my visions of being the work of the enemy of mankind....All those who knew me saw that I was changed; my confessor bore witness to the fact.... As for myself, it was impossible to believe that if the demon were its author, he would have used, in order to lose me and lead me to hell, an expedient



From Illustrations for Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Gustave Doré (1833-1883)

The Simonists

Dante reserves the plight pictured above for those who, like Simon Magus, show their spiritual blindness by seeking to buy occult powers—in Simon's case, the power to confer gifts of the Holy Spirit.

so contrary to his own interests as that of uprooting my vices.”

The final goal of the White Magician is to reach the “measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” The fate of the Black Magician, at least the one who practices Black Magic in its vilest form, is to become a “lost soul,” and we can see signs of gradual moral (and sometimes mental) disintegration in those who follow its milder forms. They are the sign posts which God has set out, marking certain practices “Dangerous.” I have known of two teachers who began by teaching apparently harmless, but selfish, philosophies. One, a woman, ended by teaching “free love” openly and frankly. The other, a man, became a sex degenerate.

We may establish, then, as our first rule:

Rule I. White Magic has a beneficial, and Black Magic an injurious, effect upon the moral charac-

ters of those who practice it for any length of time.

A second rule, to which we will not have to give much attention because it is already so well known and has been so widely discussed:

Rule 2. White Magic is never used either for money or for show. It is only used for some definitely good purpose. The Bible is the greatest textbook known on White Magic. We cannot do better therefore than to cite some examples from the Bible. The eighth chapter of the Book of Acts narrates the story of Simon the sorcerer, who sought to buy “the gifts of the spirit” with money. “And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles’ hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying, Give me also this power that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. But Peter said unto him, “Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.”

Many times the Bible condemns the use of magical powers for show, or seeking after “signs and wonders.” In Matthew 16:4 Christ speaks of the Jews of his day as “a wicked and adulterous generation, [which] seeketh after a sign,” and adds that “there shall be no sign given unto it.” The third of the three temptations presented to Christ by Satan was to cast himself from the pinnacle of the temple without harm, thus making a show of his power. Again when brought before Herod, the king asked him to perform a miracle, for entertainment, but Christ refused.

There are several instances in the Bible of the temporary suspension of certain physical laws, such as gravity and the conduction of heat, but never merely for show. Christ walked upon the water in order to reach the boat in which His disciples were being tossed about by a “contrary” wind. The lives of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were preserved in the “seven times heated” furnace. The “gift of tongues” was not given originally as a “sign.” It was given, as recorded in the second chapter of Acts, for a specific purpose; i.e., in order that the foreign-born Jews in the city of Jerusalem might understand the gospel when it was preached. One modern recorded instance of the gift of



Bartolome Esteban Murillo, State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia

Liberation of St. Peter

Technically, angelic intervention in human affairs is not magic because spiritual forces are not being directly wielded by the individual. Such manifestation is magical in the sense that laws governing normal physical processes have been suspended or superseded by higher laws relating to spirit worlds.

tongues concerns a man who was called as missionary to the Navajo Indians. Upon reaching their country he found that he could already speak and understand their language without previous study.

There are many instances given in the Bible of the visits of angels or the return of spirits of the dead, but it is always for some purpose, never merely to astonish or impress. In fact, in the parable of Dives and Lazarus, when Dives asked that the spirit of Lazarus be sent to earth as a “sign” to his brothers, the permission was refused because “if they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.” In 2 Kings 6, however, a whole army was sent to protect Elisha and his servant. In Acts 12 an angel was sent to deliver Peter from prison. Angels often appeared to comfort those in trouble. Elijah was so comforted in 1 Kings 19. Even Christ needed the ministrations of the angels after His temptation and in Gethsemane. An angel warned Lot to flee from Sodom. In Genesis 32 an angel directly

intervened to save a soul. There are many modern cases of the same sort of intervention. A woman left her two-year-old son in a high chair before a fire to go out into the yard to gather wood. As she started to pick up the first stick a voice said to her, "Go back and see if baby is fastened in his chair." She hurried in and found that the little boy was not fastened in and was just on the point of falling forward onto the red-hot stove.

On another occasion the same woman was working in a paper mill when one hand got caught in the machinery. She felt an invisible force seize her hand and snatch it out of the machine before any serious injury was done, although the end of one finger and the nail of another were lost.

White Magic always tends away from the physical toward the spiritual. This fact gives rise to the next two rules.

Rule 3. White Magic does not depend upon matter for its manifestation. Here we must consider the study of ecstasy. In the aforementioned book *Psychological Phenomena of Christianity*, George Bartin Cutten says: "There seem to be two distinct forms of ecstasy. The one is characterized by wild excitement, loss of self-control, and temporary madness. It is a sort of religious intoxication, indulged in largely for its delightful effects. This usually originates in dancing and other forms of physical manifestations. The other form is intense, but quiet and calm; it is usually spontaneous in origin, or else comes through mental rather than physical means. A certain amount of culture (and intellectual development) is necessary in persons experiencing this, and it shows itself in solitude rather than before a crowd, as the other form does. The former type is seen among dervishes and medicine men, the latter among the Hebrew prophets and Indian mystics."

In another part of the same work, Dr. Cutten discusses the artificial stimulation of ecstasy. "Literature of the orient, especially India, abounds in passages, extracts from which would form a working manual for the artificial attainment of ecstasy....Among primitive people more crass methods are in use, such as beating drums, howling, convulsive movements, dancing, flagellations, etc." It will be seen that all these artificial methods

depend upon some form of physical sensation, combinations of sight, sound, or physical exercise. They might be used by anyone, no matter what his moral character or spiritual development. We must therefore set them all down as objectionable. But the Black Magician goes farther and takes up the use of harmful drugs in an effort to induce a state of ecstasy. The medieval "witches' sabbath" was little more than an unusually wild "dope party." The "witches' ointment" with which those attending a sabbath applied on their whole bodies, was a compound of certain powerful drugs. This mixture was rubbed into the pores of the skin. Not so very different, you see, from our modern practice of injecting drugs with a hypodermic needle.

We remember that many witches claimed the ability to fly through the air. Aconite and belladonna would, as a matter of fact, when taken together, produce an irregular action of the heart which would give all the sensations of flying. It is probable that a great many of the witches were quite sincere in their claims and that they really believed they had flown through the air.

Some modern writers still recommend the use of drugs as an aid in receiving metaphysical revelations. William James cites some cases in which nitrous oxide, ether, or chloroform have been used for this purpose. That was then. Now the practice is even more common, only the variety of drugs has changed.

It will now be clear why the Rosicrucians discourage the use of incense and alcoholic liquors, as well as such material props toward clairvoyance as the ouija board and mirror and crystal gazing. Low entities in the Desire World often use the fumes of incense and alcohol as media through which to make contact with the living. Compare this with the description of positive clairvoyance, which uses no material aids, given by Elizabeth Stuart Phelps in *Beyond the Gates*: "No optical illusion, no tactual hallucination, could hold the boy who took all the medals at the gymnasium. The hearty, healthy fellow could receive no abnormal sign from the love and longing of the dead. Only spirit unto spirit could attempt that strange out-reaching." (Concluded next issue) □

—Sylvia Baker