

Pantacle and Pentacle

From *The Path*, New York, Vol. III, No. 3, June, 1888, pp. 98-99.

To the Editor of *The Path*:

In the May number of your valuable journal [Vol. III], on page 60, we read:

With much deference we venture to invite the attention of *Lucifer* to the grave etymological objections to its definition of pentacle as a six-pointed star.

The attention of our benevolent corrector is invited to *Webster's Complete Dictionary of the English Language*, thoroughly revised and improved by Chauncey A. Goodrich, D.D., L.L., D., late Professor of Yale College, and Noah Porter, D.D., Professor of Moral Philosophy and Metaphysics in Yale College, assisted by Dr. C.A.F. Mahn of Berlin and others. New edition of 1880, etc., etc., London.

At the word "Pentacle," we read as follows:

Pentacle — a figure composed of two equilateral triangles, intersecting so as to form a SIX-pointed star, used in ornamental art, and also with superstitious import by the astrologers, etc.

This (Fairholt's) definition is preceded by saying that *pentacle* is a word from Greek PENTE, *five*—which every school boy knows. But *pente* or five has nothing to do with the word pentacle, which Éliphas Lévi, as all Frenchmen and Kabalists, spells *pantacle* (with an *a* and not with an *e*), and which is more correct than the English and less puzzling. For, with as much "deference" as shown by *The Path* to *Lucifer*, *Lucifer* ventures to point out to *The Path* that, according to old Kabalistic phraseology, a *pantacle* is "any magic figure intended to produce results."

Therefore if anyone is to be taken to task for overlooking "the grave etymological objections to the definition of pentacle as a six-pointed star," it is the great Professors who have just revised *Webster's Dictionary*, and not *Lucifer*. Our corrector has evidently confused *Pentagon* with *pentacle*. "Errare humanum est."

Meanwhile, as *Lucifer* was already laughed at for this supposed error by some readers of *The Path*, the latter will not, it is hoped, refuse to insert these few words at its earliest convenience, and thus justify its colleague from such an uncalled-for charge of *blunder and ignorance*. Let us correct each other's mistakes and errors, by all means; but let us also be fair to each other.

Fraternally,
THE EDITORS OF *Lucifer*.
LONDON, May 21, 1888¹

Pantacle (*Gr.*). The same as *Pentalpha*; the triple triangle of Pythagoras or the five-pointed star. It was given the name because it reproduces the letter A (alpha) on the five sides of it or in five different positions — its number, moreover, being composed of the first odd (3) and the first even (2) numbers. It is very occult. In Occultism and the Kabala it stands for *man* or the Microcosm, the "Heavenly Man," and as such it was a powerful talisman for keeping at bay evil spirits or the Elementals. In Christian theology it refers to the five wounds of Christ; its interpreters failing, however, to add that these "five wounds" were themselves symbolical of the Microcosm, or the "Little Universe", or again, Humanity, this symbol pointing out the fall of pure Spirit (Christos) into matter (*Iassous*, "life", or man). In esoteric philosophy the *Pentalpha*, or five-

¹ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (LETTER TO THE EDITOR OF *THE PATH*), IX pp. 399-400



pointed star, is the symbol of the EGO or the Higher Manas. Masons use it, referring to it as the five-pointed star, and connecting it with their own fanciful interpretation. (See the word “Pentacle” for its difference in meaning from “Pantacle.”)¹



Pantacle (2003) Bradley W Schenck

¹ *Theosophical Glossary*: Pantacle. [See overview of occult symbols in: “Keys to the Mystery Language” in our Theosophy and Theosophists Series. — ED.PHIL.]

