

# Correspondence

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## ASTROLOGICAL SYMBOLISM

Sir,

I would like to call for some reservation concerning the astrological symbolism discussed in your recent article on the Symbolism of the Fish, by René Guénon, where the signs of Cancer and Capricorn were said to mark the extreme positions of the Sun's ascendent and descendent motion in the ecliptic. Cosmic symbolism is the last field in which one's data should be suspected of getting out of date, but unfortunately this is the exception which proves the rule. Owing to the precession of the equinoxes, the Sun at the end of each year always falls slightly short of the position it had reached the year before, and in the course of the past two thousand years, these small successive differences have added up almost to the extent of a whole zodiacal sign. In terms of observable facts, this means that on the 21st March at the present era, the Sun is actually just past the beginning of the sign of Pisces, and not at the beginning of the sign of Aries as it once was.

Consequently, whatever is referred to a sign in the (traditional) Zodiac must now be referred to the sign immediately before it in order, but if this is done in the present instance, none of the related considerations will still apply, as the signs of Gemini and Sagittarius call for quite different relationships. Now that the inherent meaning of each sign has been completely divulsed from its positional meaning in relation to the ecliptic, much traditional symbolism in this field must have only an historical interest. Modern astrology has sought to evade this issue by saying that the sign which the Sun is entering on 21st March is *by definition* the sign of Aries, no matter what it actually is, so that all the other signs exchange names accordingly. But anyone used to observing the unmistakable qualities of the real signs in the sky, however, will hardly be able to avoid the impression that modern astrology consists only in the manipulation of symbolic abstractions which attach to no concrete reality. The task of recasting the meanings of the Zodiac so as to accord with present-day cosmic conditions would call for a degree of wisdom and science far beyond anything possessed by Guénon himself, and is probably beyond the reach of Twentieth-Century mankind altogether.

At the present date, the Sun is rather more than half way through the sign of Taurus, and I will leave it to the reader to see if this news will serve to prevent an astrologer from awarding a "Gemini" horoscope to anyone born in the first three weeks of this month!

Coventry, 8.6.69

R. BOLTON.

*It is to be hoped that this interesting letter will receive a reply, although the questions raised in it have been asked and answered more than once during the last two thousand*

*years. Needless to say, Guénon himself was fully aware of the facts mentioned by Mr. Bolton—Editor.*

## CHANGES IN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Sir,

I have noted with great interest the letters in your journal with regard to "Changes in the Catholic Church".

As a practising Catholic I do feel in sympathy with certain points raised by these correspondents. The changes in the Mass are regrettable and in some ways it can be difficult to adjust oneself. However, I agree with the viewpoint expressed by F. W. McMorran, regarding exaggeration of some factors.

It is at this point I feel that one should examine various facts. The Mass itself is VALID. The celibacy of the priesthood has been affirmed, and the Sacraments of the Church available in their true essence for all the faithful. May I suggest that for anyone disturbed by "Progressives" in the affairs of the Church, that they will bear these things in mind.

It is in availing oneself of every rite and support that the framework of a Valid Tradition can give, that the earnest spiritual seeker will realise these truths.

Woodford, E.18, 21.6.69

MARIA WARREN.

## MAN AND THE PRESENCE OF EVIL

Sir,

I would like to reply to Mr. Sherrard's letter by saying firstly that I agree with his final conclusion that it is not proof but the firmness of our conviction that decides us for one doctrine rather than another. However, as I had no intention of questioning the truth of Christian doctrine, I was somewhat perturbed that Mr. Sherrard should also have concluded that I was representing one doctrine as superior to another, when my actual intention was to show that a contradiction between doctrines does not necessarily imply the falsity of either, as it would in purely rational questions. If metaphysics is the science of the ways in which universal principles relate to one another, it clearly cannot be Christian, (or Hindu, Moslem, or anything else), for the same reasons that physics cannot, so that it must needs appear defective from any purely theological point of view. There is in fact no reason why, from a "non-human" point of view, there should be only one right answer to a theoretical question, because if Infinity is "not-many", it is equally "not-one" either, whence a metaphysical pluralism can be as adequate to its nature as monism.

That, of course, does not imply that we can place our faith in a multitude of theologies, because man as a whole is subject to conditions which only the isolated intellect can escape, and that in a more or less symbolic manner. Theology is less universal than metaphysics by reason of its form, but it is equally universal by reason of its Origin, whence the two cannot be compared, least of all under such concepts as that of

relative "superiority".

This is not intended as a merely partial statement of orthodoxy, however, and in contrast with the position taken by *Studies*, may I say that if there is truly such a thing as an insoluble contradiction, it must surely be that of defending orthodoxy from a point of view not recognised by orthodoxy itself? To be joined to a tradition while implicitly denying its total adequacy seems to me a false and unintelligible position, though I have long tried to see how it could be otherwise. The traditionalist outlook itself, if taken beyond a certain point, would imply the truly profane assumption that our existence at a certain point in time is nothing but an accident to be met with remedial treatment. In reality, such things can never be accidental, being decided by the will of God, the justice of which rules that grace cannot be harder to obtain at one time than at another, and that if its means become weaker, so will the things opposed to it. Traditionalism would in fact seem to contain an element of caricature which detains it from its object immovably, whether at a very small distance or at a great one, depending on the point of view.

The last word on this subject could well be given to the eminent traditionalist who stated that man cannot hope to reach the truth while judging that which, by definition, judges him.

Coventry,  
ROBERT BOLTON.