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## **Valentine Weigel on Fate and Free Will**

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<http://www.new-library.com/zoller/features>

*A New Library Publication*

2nd Electronic Publication 2002

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# Valentine Weigel on Fate and Free Will

3<sup>rd</sup> Edition 2002<sup>1</sup>

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Many modern astrologers are confronted with a painful inadequacy when reading a horoscope. They can diagnose problems the native may confront but too often remain powerless to do anything about those problems.

At different times, people have attempted to empower themselves so that they could have an influence. Thus, for example in the Middle Ages, astrologers were often also magicians or physicians who attempted to offset the baleful influences of the heavens. Talismans were the astrological sorcerer's answer while medicines and diet were those of the physician. Of-course, there may have even have been a combination of both.

In pre-Christian times sacrifices, often bloody, were prescribed by the astrologer-priests for the propitiation of the ill will of the gods or goddesses. Once the Christians had taken over the scene they regarded such practices as satanic and they were strongly forbidden by the Church. This left Mankind in a vulnerable position, as the religious condemnation did nothing to eliminate the need for a way of escaping the rather cogent influences exerted by the stars. Theological and philosophical hair-splitting as to whether the stars compel or incline the will of man was and still is incapable of eliminating that force, which those practising Western Predictive Astrology know only too well.

The rise of humanism did not elucidate the issue at all. Indeed the 16th century Humanist position as articulated by Erasmus in his debate with Luther over the subject of Free Will is identical with the position held by the Medieval Catholic Church. Since the "Enlightenment" the irony is that, all contenders in the debate of Fate verses Free Will (including the astrologers) have cast in their

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<sup>1</sup> Former published as Valentine Weigel and the Problem of Astral Influence

lot with science. In what has proved to be the vain hope that reason and technology will ultimately triumph. Unfortunately, for all, this has not happened and there is little prospect of it happening.

Of-course, matters have not been helped in the modern era particularly when we are faced with the "New Age" <sup>2</sup> solution. This is simply to "rethink" or "transform" one's life through a kind of psychological sleight of hand or simply to deny that there is any force in the world capable of dominating our behaviour or the inner working of our will. This is the rankest hubris and self-delusion. It is possible only to those so totally captivated by the current intellectual fads that they have already yielded up the slightest capacity for objective self-observation. In short, the "New Age" is equally without an effective method for escaping the baleful and cogent influences of an often-hostile heaven.

However, for the moment let us turn back and look at what some of the esoteric Christians of the 16th & 17th centuries had to offer. From them we may still find direction that may be helpful in our dealing with this conundrum today.

**Martin Luther** and his followers argued that man was not free. Man was like a horse over which two would-be riders fought: Christ and Satan. All man could do was to choose which master he would serve. All assertions of one having a will of his own were delusion born of hubris, rebellion from God's Will and inspired by the Devil.

**Valentine Weigel** (1533-1588), a Lutheran Minister, who (like many Lutheran clergymen of the 16th and 17th centuries) was also an alchemist and an astrologer argues in his *Astrology Theologised* that the natural Adam (the average man) was unregenerate and that Man was wholly under the sway of the stars. According to Lutheran mysticism (for the most part identical to 16th & 17th century Rosicrucian mysticism) the stars themselves are in a fallen state because of Lucifer's rebellion and as such work on us as part of his kingdom. Weigel, knowing this,

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<sup>2</sup> For further reading see **Marc Edmund Jones and the New Age** – [www.new-library.com/zolelr/features](http://www.new-library.com/zolelr/features)

urges us to be wise and rule our stars rather than be ruled by them. Knowing that this is easier said than done, he offers a method for accomplishing it, which is of interest to us even today, as the reader familiar with esoteric training will immediately see in what follows.

In *Astrology Theologised* chapter VI, he tells us of the regeneration by which we may be freed of that which causes us misery and bondage. This misery and bondage to Fate may be transformed into joy and freedom.

This regeneration consists in what he calls "the exercise of the Sabbath," exploiting the term Sabbath, which in Hebrew means "Rest." The term comes from *Genesis* 2:2 which tells us that God, having created the world in six days, rested on the seventh day. For Weigel "keeping the Sabbath" means more than merely not working on the Seventh Day, though he certainly urges us to keep the Sabbath in this way, too. He wants us to set aside one day in seven to empty ourselves entirely of all thought and will except God's. His Sabbath is a kind of Christian Zen - an emptying of the mind. This term, "Sabbathizing of Astrology," he equates with the term "Theologisation of Astrology."

For Weigel the term astrology refers, primarily, to the Inner Cosmos of the Microcosm. What many modern psychological astrologers would refer to as the Unconscious replete with its zodiacal archetypes. These archetypes ceaselessly disturb the mind with their cycles and ever changing configurations. Possession by an archetype results in the individual being swept along in the acting out of the archetypal drama.

Weigel tells us that the term "Theologisation of Astrology," is "*an introversion of mind*" and "*to die to thyself and the whole creature; to offer thyself wholly to God, with all things which are within and without.*"

"*Take or gather,*" he says, "*all thy evil nature, and thy insincere affections, and unlawful lusts (all of which are, in modern terms, behaviour stimulated or even driven by the archetypes in the Unconscious), too much operating in thee;*

*I say, take and put them by the Sabbath, into the mind, or spirit of thy mind, which thou hast from God....and sabbathise {them} in a solid and constant abnegation of thyself, and of all things known to thee, which are within thee, as well as without thee, that thou mayest almost die there;*

*then will thy soul with all her adherent stores of concupiscences, fall down and be drowned in the depth of the supernal water, which is the Spirit of God infused in us; and the firmamental Will will more and more cease and be wearied in thee, and the ascendant stars of thy concupiscences will no more afflict, urge, drive, carry thee as before;*

*but from day to day, thou shalt ease thyself from that most hard yoke of the Zodiac, and of all the planets; thy youth shall be renewed as an eagle, and thou shalt be like an infant new-born, and shalt perceive in thyself new virtues, and affections to work and move in thee, arising, inclining, occupying, leading and governing you from the celestial star and influence of the divine Spirit.*

*So as where, heretofore, thou hast been the servant of sin, and hast given thy members weapons of unrighteousness and malice, now with trembling thou abhorrest the performances of thy fore-past life, and fraught with a new mind, heart, affections and desire, from the exercise of the Sabbath, by the Spirit of God, hereafter thou shalt serve God, and give up thy members weapons of justice, piety, charity, mercy, meekness, temperance, modesty, chastity, and so thou shalt rightly Theologise thy Astrology, so shalt thou best overcome, correct, amend thy nature, so shalt thou rightly tread the head of the Serpent under thy feet, so shalt thou well silence in thyself the assaults of the devil."*

This "Sabbathizing" is especially to be applied to the worshippers of Saturn. This is as much because Saturn, the seventh planet corresponds to the seventh day (*shabbtai* is seven in Hebrew) as because of the special relationship between Saturn and those the planet rules. Weigel prefers to represent those "ruled" by Saturn as those "worshipping" it. Possibly, this is because they love Saturn's gifts.

All men are in need of the regeneration provided by the Sabbathizing of Astrology but especially, he feels, the Saturnians who are given to an overly materialistic, concrete and hide-bound

view of the world. Saturn's worshippers he equates with farmers, artificers, miners, metallurgists, tradesmen of various kinds, those who work with their hands, those who amass great treasures and hoards of wealth, avaricious men, usurers, toll collectors, those who love this world (Mammonists), thieves, robbers, counterfeiters, hang men, false judges, enchanter and evil doers.

All these men love and pursue arts and actions which proceed, he tells us, from the internal invisible heaven in us and must be transformed into good through the exercise of Sabbathizing for by this alone is the "gate of Paradise" to be found and evil actions transformed into good.

Weigel's method is intended to slowly build up in the disciple what has been called by one 20th century non-christian esotericist "an abiding I," a centre of real consciousness and Will by which a man can "re-member the Self" --i.e. restore an integrity lost by ignorance and sin. The strength this "reintegration" brings is the only means by which the individual can escape from changing Fate to an interior Unity, Self Control, and Peace.

It would added that it is by this means that the Dignification spoken of by Agrippa in his *Occult Philosophy* takes place and by which the illusion of separate existence which gives rise to evil deeds and false competition may be eliminated from our lives.

It is clear that Weigel, like Jacob Boehme, wants us to be "born again" in Christ in order that we may have the *Word* born in our hearts, escape the rule of Fate, enjoy the blessed joy of Eternal Life and the benefits of Wisdom. Their teachings supply in a practical way, something sadly missing in profane astrology as currently practised in the West.

The method itself, as can be clearly seen in the sections quoted is nothing more or less than the surrender of Self Will to God's greater Wisdom. It is a kind of Western Laya Yoga aimed at aligning the will of the native with that of the Higher Self (which in this sense is Christ).