



G.W.F. Hegel

Hegel's
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Concerning the Relation Between Man and God in Hegel's Philosophy

Ken Foldes and Mike Marchetti

Introduction

by
Mike Marchetti

Ken Foldes and I agreed to present what we consider an important controversy concerning the actual interpretation of Hegelian philosophy as regards the nature of the relationship between Man and God. Ken wants to argue for the oneness of God and Man, with the unity and exclusive Being of God as the Absolute Truth, making all *being other* than God illusory. On the other hand, I want to show the simultaneous identity and difference of Man and God dynamically integrated as a variegated system that is chiefly characterized as pure negative activity, or self-thinking-thought, in which God and Man and the World each have a distinct yet harmonized relationship when considered in their negative or sublated significance with respect to God.

There are a few fundamental concepts that require being comprehended before anyone can claim to understand the relationship between Man and God.

1. Being-for-self, which is essential in order for Absolute to be Subject, i.e. God.
2. The Speculative Conception of a propositional statement.
3. The nature of the concrete Infinite.

Being-for-self

In order for the Absolute to be Subject, which is what we mean by God, there must be genuine Otherness [1] within the Absolute so that Being-for-Self may present itself. [2] The Being of the Self, in other words, is not the same as the Self; it is its negation. Likewise the Self is the negation of its Being. This negative or oppositional character of Self and its Being is what allows Being-for-self to exist. If Being were merely the same as Self then there could be no Being-for-Self, which essentially involves being-for-other, or pure difference. Being-for-other may never be zero or it would destroy the existence of Being-for-Self.

When Being and its Self are one and the same, we have the concept of Substance, i.e. being-in-itself, or that which causes itself or produces itself out of itself. Here the Self that is the producer produces Being which is only itself again, and thus this never reaches Otherness from itself thereby failing to become Subject. In order to be Subject it is requisite that Being be different from Self. However, since it is Being-for-Self that characterizes Subject, the Other or Being is negated, i.e. its independent Being-for-itself is nullified. Thus Being or the Other opposed to Self is negated as being independent, but its being as such is not dissolved, otherwise it could never be Being-for-Self or being for other than itself as being.

The question now arises, how does Self negate this Being opposed to itself in order to be Subject? It is here that we must recognize that a process is involved. Because Being must be different from Self in order for Subject to be, Being



must also be negated in order to become Being-for-Self. But the negation of Being is Self,

thus in Being-for-Self, Self is only for Self, yet there is still a distinction or negation that differentiates the two sides. On one side we have Self, and on the other negated Being, which may be Self but it is not the same as the unmediated Self. Self that is the negation of Being is different from Self that is unmediated. A person who travels out 10 miles and back to the same starting point, is quite different from a situation in which he remained stationed in one spot, although the end result in both cases is the same. In the same way, the Self that is negated Being is distinct from the Self that does not undergo mediation.

This distinction, which is essential for the Absolute as Subject, must be further understood: How is Being negated? Because Being is Other than Self, it is in the element of otherness, or being-other, and thus it is a multiplicity. In other words, Being as Other is its own negation - a multiplicity that in its totality is negated Being or mediated Self. This mediated Self is the same and different from the immediate or universal Self and returns to itself in that identity. The question that most concerns us here, however, is how do we understand from all of this the relation of Man to God?

An individual human being is one of the numerous individuals of the multiplicity. The being-for-self of each atomic particle of that Being or otherness is what we mean when we say "I." To then say that "I" am God or the original Self does not seem conceivable from this perspective.

The Nature of the Propositional Statement

In the proposition "I am God" or "We are God" thinking begins with the "I" in its difference from God (as a being-for-self opposed to the Being-for-Self of God) and then goes over into God through the copula 'is' or, in this case, modified forms of being such as "am" and "are." Ordinary thinking, which is abstract or formal since it stands as a subjective agency over against its object, allows the "I" to lose itself (its separated being-for-self) within God and thus proclaim itself to be identical with God. But this loss of self has not been made by any rational identification of its being-for-self with God Who has His own Being-for-Self. Speculative thinking destroys the propositional form of thinking because it allows thought to go forward from "I" to God, but then traces the movement back to the "I" upon the recognition or shock at the loss of itself. In returning back to itself it preserves its own being-for-self in the movement that connects it with God. The overall movement in its returning circularity is considered the Truth, not just the one-sided forward thrust and consequent loss. It is the dynamic movement as a whole that is the Absolute Truth, but this is not static Being that stands over and opposed to its moments, but a continuous Becoming. In this way the opposition between I and God is harmonized through the movement between them, or in the case of self-consciousness, the relationship they share. It is inherently both a oneness and diversity. [3] This whole process is concisely explained in the Preface to the Phenomenology. [4]

The Concrete Infinite

The concrete Infinite is not what is merely other than or beyond the finite. The finite, itself, grasped as the negation of itself is qualitatively infinite. To see the finite as merely what is opposed to the infinite (God) in its independence is what has to be eliminated. In other words it is not the being of the finite that is to be eliminated but only its *independence*. Thus there is dependence of the finite upon the infinite and that may be called the service of the infinite. The finite as the negation of itself is impermanent or vanishing, in the negative sense, as much as it is positively its connection with the true infinite as sublated by or surrendered to it. Thus it is said that "Die to live" is the nature of the finite or determinate negative activity of the true self. The Infinite is not something that IS, it is

Becoming or pure restlessness - Divine Life. One can call that God, but then it is conceived as an already existing One, which reifies the Deity. God simultaneously is and is not in that He is a becoming and not mere static Being. The Absolute is this pure restlessness or absolute negativity.

In order to make this clearer, the following quote from Hegel's Encyclopedia (§ 274) will be helpful,

"The Concept of the infinite as it first presents itself is this, that determinate being in its being-in-itself determines itself as finite and transcends the limitation. It is the very nature of the finite to transcend itself, to negate its negation and to become infinite. Thus the infinite does not stand as something finished and complete above or superior to the finite, as if the finite had an enduring being apart from or subordinate to the infinite."

The finite does not have a being that is *independent* of the infinite. It has its own being as finitude but no independence. In other words, it has being-for-self that is negated, i.e. a being-for-self that is for God, which is what is called the service of God. However, this is not to be understood as merely being subordinate to God for that would specify only a one-sided abstract relationship. The constitutional nature of the finite is to be for God, so there is no question of subordination in genuinely being what its true nature is, i.e. in being at home in its own true element. In this sense it is not servitude but the freedom of the sublated finite within the infinite.

Furthermore, God, as God, does not exist as mere or abstract Being but is Real or Actual only in His Becoming - literally in His own Activity. The Reality of God, of course, is what we are interested in, not the Ideality of His Being, which is mere universal indeterminacy. Thus the affairs of Man in his supercession of himself, i.e. in his qualitatively infinite life, is the real connection with the pure negativity or movement of God in becoming Himself. It is in this sense that Man or the finite "serves" the purpose or becoming of God in his qualitatively infinite or true constitutional position.

Why is God becoming? Is He not already perfect in Himself? God is alive or active Self-conscious knowing of Himself. It is His nature to find satisfaction only in Himself. But He can only know Himself in the full penetration of his Substance or what is Other than Himself. Thus He endures the struggle that is the manifest destiny of the finite living entities, in order to come to know Himself in History (His - story). The oneness of God and Man is not compromised by their difference from each other, rather it is vitalized by such difference, so that it is the eternal, ongoing systematic development of that difference as an organic whole that is the life of God.

The reader is asked to closely consider the two texts presented on the next page and draw his or her own conclusions as to the truth concerning this matter.

[Continued]

-----Endnotes-----

1. "That the Absolute is Subject means that there must be an OTHER to itself in order to be-for-itself. This other is not merely a predicate of which the Subject is the basis. Rather the predicate is the living soul of which the Subject is the body." (Enc. Logic §172 Zu.) [[back](#)]
2. "The true and positive meaning of the antinomies is this: that every actual thing involves a coexistence of opposed elements. Consequently to know, or, in other words, to comprehend an object is equivalent to being conscious of it as a concrete unity of opposed determinations." (Enc. Logic § 48 Zu.) [[back](#)]
3. "The actual is one: but it is also the divergence from each other of the constituent elements of the Concept; and the Syllogism represents the orbit of intermediation of its elements, by which it realizes its unity."(Enc. Logic § 181.) [[back](#)]
4. "[For ratiocination the] ... subject constitutes the basis to which the content is attached and on which the process moves to and fro. Conceptual thinking goes on in quite a different way. Since the concept or notion is the very self of the object, manifesting itself as the development of the object, it is not a quiescent subject, passively supporting accidents: it is a self-determining active concept that takes up its determinations and makes them its own. In the course of this process that inert passive subject really disappears; it enters into the different constituents and pervades the content; instead of remaining in inert antithesis to determinateness of content, it constitutes, in fact, that very specificity, i.e. the content as differentiated along with the process of bringing this about. Thus the solid basis, which ratiocination found in an inert subject, is shaken to its foundations, and the only object is this very movement of the

subject. The subject supplying the concrete filling to its own content ceases to be something transcending this content, and cannot have further predicates or accidents. Conversely, again, the scattered diversity of the content is brought under the control of the self, and so bound together; the content is not a universal that can be detached from the subject, and adapted to several indifferently. Consequently the content is in truth no longer predicate of the subject; it is the very substance, is the inmost reality, and the very principle of what is being considered. Ideational thinking (*vorstellen*), since its nature consists in dealing with accidents or predicates, and in exercising the right to transcend them because they are nothing more than predicates and accidents--this way of thinking is checked in its course, since that which has in the proposition the form of a predicate is itself the substance of the statement. It is met by a counter-thrust, as we may say. Starting from the subject, as if this were a permanent base on which to proceed, it discovers, by the predicate being in reality the substance, that the subject has passed into the predicate, and has thereby ceased to be subject: and since in this way what seems to be predicate has become the entire mass of the content, whole and complete, thinking cannot wander and ramble about at will, but is restrained and controlled by this weight of content." (*Phenomenology* § 60.) [*back*]

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continued

-- Ken Foldes --

1. THE "GOD-SELF" -- I AM GOD, WE ARE GOD

2. THE SOLUTION TO OUR CRISIS

3. In this section, since it constitutes in our view ... the solution to our postmodern world crisis, we will endeavor to shed more light both on the nature of this "New God," "New Self" or, as we shall also call it, "God-Self"-which contains the old God and old Man/Self but in a unity-and as well on the proper meaning of such expressions as "We are God" and "I am God" used to express the fundamental Truth. This is especially needful as there are certain risks involved if it is not properly understood. But the benefits far overshadow the risks. The real danger is that this fact that the teaching involves risks or dangers may prove to be an insuperable obstacle to its acceptance. But, as said, this will not happen given the nature of our situation and the need for deep healing-something which is amply confirmed by the fact that not only does the teaching have solid Biblical support but it has already entered into the arena of mainstream Christianity.

4. Now, as all Hegelians know, the propositional form, "A is B," is inadequate for expressing the Truth, which can be grasped only scientifically or "speculatively." This applies as well to the proposition "We are God" (which also has the nature of *Vorstellen* and Reflection). However, we maintain that in this case, though the latter is true, the propositional form is not only helpful but indispensable; for the reason that it permits the precise expression of the problem at issue and at once indicates its solution! That is to say, the elements of the proposition "We are God" are namely: "We" = the subject, "God" = the predicate, and "are" = copula. Thus, (i) while the "We" and "God" indicate that there are two things/entities, (ii) the "are" expresses that they are not to remain two or separate, but are to become one. -Behind this of course is the whole of Hegel's speculative Logic, i.e., the dialectic of one/many, finite/infinite, identity/difference, etc. Now, even though the Truth which "We are God" expresses or embodies (viz., that of the Idea or Spirit) can only be adequately understood in speculative Logic-and not via *Vorstellen* or

-- Mike Marchetti --

1. THE "SUBLATED SELF": I AM GOD'S SERVANT

2. FIRST UNDERSTAND THE PROBLEM

3. One of Hegel's main interests was to demonstrate that God is not an alien substance to Man or some monster in the background, and that Man could find himself at home in God - "in whom we live and move and have our being." The idea of being an eternal servant of God may seem foreign to the freedom-loving creature that is the essential character of modern Man. Therefore Hegel took it upon himself to demonstrate how this essential freedom of Man may be reconciled with the sovereignty of God. This is certainly one of **the** central points in Hegel's philosophy, and he clearly deals with this problem in his *Phenomenology of Spirit*. At the end of Chapter Five of the *Phenomenology* it is shown that Man is not free to challenge the Ethical Realm (*Sittlichkeit*), but to accept it as his own substance of which he is but the expression or predicate. By comprehending that this is his own Substance Man enters the kingdom of Spirit.

4. The copula "is" in the propositional form "A is B" does not mean that A and B are **one**; rather it implies that they are identical. This particular misinterpretation of how Hegel understands propositions, especially in regards to "oneness," will be found to be a recurring problem that colors all of Ken's conceptions. We want to take special note of this, and will keep track of it in this and his other essays. Essentially, there is a difference between "One" and "Identity." Twins may be identical, but they are not one. Electrons are considered identical in quantum mechanics, but they are certainly not one. Identity actually contains difference, if it is comprehended in its concreteness. In the proposition, A is B there is a movement of thought from A to B, a loss of A in B, a shock at this loss, and then a return or recoil back to A. It is this **movement** that is the important aspect. This is easier to understand if we use an example like "the swan is white." This sentence seems to merge the swan within whiteness, and says the swan is WHITE. But the swan is not whiteness, it is a swan. So thought regains the true

reflection-it is no less true, as Hegel says, that there are two ways the Truth can be accessed, viz., by Faith or Reason (Enc. §573). That is, because the human being is "Spirit," he is in fact capable of penetrating through the "letter" to the "Spirit" or Truth that the letter is intended to convey, a Truth which pertains to his innermost self, being, or essence.

5. However, if an expression like "We are God" involves risks or dangers why must we use it at all? As said, it is because the benefits outweigh the dangers. The main reasons, which will receive elaboration in the following sections, are these: (i) The bottom line is: If indeed the God-Man identity reveals who we really are and is the Truth-and there is overwhelming evidence, indeed conclusive proof, as we will see, that it is-and forms like "We are God" are not merely the best way but the only way to convey the Truth to the general public (or non-philosophers), then we have no choice but to use them and, if need be, overcome any problems connected with them. (ii) We must use such expressions because the reverse, "We are not God," as expressing the separation between the two and absolute untruth, keeps the Old Paradigm and dysfunction in place and prevents Kingdom Come, and a fully alive and healed humanity, from adventing. (iii) Another reason is that such expressions have "shock value" as they wrench one out of the stupor of one's Old Paradigm consciousness, and forces one to think of and look for God in a completely different way: i.e., not outside oneself, but rather inside oneself-where the Truth alone can be found. The other way keeps one in bondage to one's Ego or "false self," with all its problems.

6. Lastly, (iv) it is true there are certain risks involved, but they can be safeguarded against quite easily. The main danger involves understanding the teaching/expression in a one-sided and imbalanced way which leads to what is called the "sin of pride," self-aggrandizement and megalomania; i.e., the belief that the individual in his particularity is God. This problem is solved simply by recognizing and teaching (a) that the Truth about yourself, viz., the Idea, the God-Man, the God-Self, is an eternal Principle. It is first-while you (qua an empirical self that had a beginning in time) are second. Hence, you don't owe your Truth to yourself, thus "ego-trips" and "non-humility" are ruled out. -And (b) that you are not immediately God or God-Self, but only potentially so, a process of mediation or "transformation" first being necessary (which is to say that the God-Man identity is an "operative" not an "ontological" identity). This means that it is not your empirical, finite, particular, natural Self that is God, but rather your NEW-Universal, Ec-static, transformed-SELF that is. So its not "You" at all, it is a totally different self; rather what is called "self" is, as it turns out, really a type of "awareness" or "Knowing." (Language and semantics, here as always, seems to be a main stumbling block.)

7.

meaning that the proposition loses in its expression. This going forth and returning holds the secret to the entire movement of what is known as the Concept in Hegelian philosophy. There are two terms here plus the movement between them. To invoke an artificial oneness is thus unnecessary and misleading for understanding Hegel's simple explanation of thinking in terms of propositions.

5. The problem facing modern Man is that the "I" has replaced God to such a degree that he feels he doesn't require God, so much so that any actual God may be considered dead or zero. Thus the problem really lies in that he already thinks, "I am God," so it is hardly to be considered a solution to any crisis in the world. Of course, because God is often completely eliminated, one might think the concept "I am God" may serve as a ruse to bring one back to the thought of God. But why take such an indirect approach? Once we understand the problem, it can be solved directly.

For an abstract thinking, the propositional movement of thought starts from the "I" or ego and gets stuck in God. Actually it is the fate of abstract thinking to get stuck in either the I or God, i.e. either I am God or I am not God; identity **OR** difference, where for such thinking identity may only mean oneness and not manyness as well. On the other hand, the speculative philosopher comprehends the movement of thought between I and God as already healed and whole, objectively, just as it is, without withdrawing from the actual dynamic and reaching a separate, reductionistic, and thereby abstract conclusion.

6. The reason there is a risk in considering oneself to be God is because we are imperfect and everyone knows that. Thus we generally consider it insane to think of oneself as God, because such a concept simply does not conform to reality. We are completely dependent beings. What would we do without water, food, sunlight, air, etc.? The nature of a finite creature is to be dependent. We don't create the materials of our environment. The main difference between Man and God is that God thinks and it **is**, we can only think **about** what God creates in this way. To say that Man has the potential to one day create things the way God does is simply imagination. Science must be concerned with comprehending reality, not unrestrained imagination.

Furthermore, the nature of God does not allow for any type of transformation. The Absolute is the Unchangeable. Then how can there be transformation? God does not transform Himself into the finite living entity; He posits otherness, while retaining His original form. Hegel presents a philosophy of emanation, not transformation. God remains His own Self and creates the world by positing it, not by transforming Himself.

7.

8. I. THE NEED FOR A NEW CONCEPT OF GOD AND MAN: THE TWO PROOFS

9. We need to see clearly and distinctly why we are forced to use such an expression as "We are God" to convey the Truth and cannot remain with "We are not God".

10. The main reason is that "God" and "Man" cannot be two or kept apart, and thus there must be a point where they coincide. What is also involved is our seeing that a single term (e.g. "Spirit" or "Superman") and not two terms (viz., "God" and "Man") must be used to express and teach the Truth or the true referent of "God"-since God or Truth is a process in which one thing becomes another, or actualizes a potentiality within itself. In effect, both Man "dies" and God "dies," and what is and remains after this double negation is a single undivided thing, viz., "Spirit" (à la Hegel).

11. The fact is that as long as one holds "God" and "Man" to be two separate essences or Beings-each capable of existing in and for itself and conceivable apart from the other, i.e., each not involving the other in its conception-one cannot conceive their unity or coexistence (even more: one cannot conceive them at all!). For no matter how one defines the situation this "two-ness" or coexistence can not be conceived, that is, we are logically forced to conceive a "unity," that is, an Absolute and Infinite I or God-Self! Moreover this is the case whether one starts "theistically" with God/with an infinite being, i.e., in addition to Man or myself as a finite being, or "atheistically" with only Man as a finite being, i.e. without the assumption of a God or infinite Being. For as we will see, to be "finite" is to be limited by an Other, which situation yields to the "dialectic" or logic of the "finite" whose result is, here too, the One Infinite.

12. There are two ways to prove beyond doubt that this is indeed the case.

13. First Proof: We will start with the idea (Vorstellung) of the common consciousness: Thus, there are two entities, myself and God. I (as "Man") exist, am finite, and stand over here on one side, while God also exists, is Infinite, and stands on the other side and is, what is critical, "Other" than I am (other than Man). The problem is, this cannot be thought. That is, if God is truly Infinite, qua exhausting all of being, having no Other outside or beside Himself, then the following three scenarios occur, each equally untenable. (i) Only God is-for I (We) have disappeared into God, that is, I cannot and do not exist, since an infinite being leaves no room for any others. (ii) God disappears into me, has become me, and I am now infinite, that is, it is I who am really God Himself, though falsely believing that I am myself ("Ken") and different from God. (iii) I am a part of God, of God's Being.-But then, What does this mean? We are in fact back to the beginning! For to the degree that I have some being, and this being is mine, not God's, then God at once becomes finite and not God! On

8. A SCIENTIFIC COMPREHENSION OF GOD AND MAN IS WHAT IS NEEDED

9. Abstract thinking may be detected when opposing propositions like "We are God" or "We are not God" is posed as a choice rather than an existing contradictory actuality characteristic of Reason (antinomy).

10. God posses Otherness, and this Otherness may undergo transformation until the differentiated multitude of finite living entitles that inhabit the material world is arrived at. These finite living entities have a pure spiritual nature that is beyond their transformed material embodiment. A careful reading of the *Phenomenology* is required to understand the various levels or coverings that are involved. God, however, never becomes covered, or He would not be God - that is the difference between Man and God. Spirit is Divine Substance and is never superior to Divine Subject.

11. It is very easy to conceive how two things can be one and the same being and still maintain their difference. The head of a coin is different from the tail, yet they share the same being of the coin. The Sun is different from sunshine, yet they are inseparable from one another, just as the North and South poles of a magnet are distinct yet inseparable. Subject and object are similarly inseparable. A particular piece or section of a pie has the same being as the whole pie. In each case one or many things can share the same being without claiming to be the whole being itself. My finger is a part of my body but it is not the entire being of my body. These examples rely on the concept of being that is spatial or extended, but the same is true of pure Being. Pure Being is the same being as Determinate Being, but the later is negated Being, which is thus differentiated from Pure Being by that negation.

12. The key is to understand that "unity" means, not abstract oneness, but "union" - two united as one.

13. There are two things: the finite and the Infinite. They do not stand juxtaposed to each other since that would make the Infinite another finitude. They must therefore share the same being while yet maintaining their difference. This is possible if we understand what Hegel calls the true Infinite - not the abstract Infinite that the juxtaposed conception produces. In the true Infinite there can be nothing outside of itself. Yet the Infinite has no meaning without the finite because its being is the in-finite or un-finite, i.e. the negation of finitude. The Infinite IS as negating the finite, and this negation of the finite is the Infinite. Thus the finite is present within the concept of the Infinite. This negative of the Infinite is its self-determination - the Infinite limits itself. But the finite is also limited or that which is negated by its very nature, and this negation is the Infinite. The finite does not BECOME the Infinite. As negated it is already the infinite. But this

the other hand, if this being which I am or have is not mine, is God's (an "other" than I am), then we are back to (i)!-i.e., only God is, not me, or I do not exist-(let alone have a will of my own, responsibility, moral worth, etc).

14. The upshot is that one cannot think this two-ness, hence it cannot be! However, once it is seen that a logical category (and its dialectic) lies at the base of this Picture (= "Vorstellung") as its essence, it then becomes possible both to resolve the problem and as well see how "God" (and the expression "We are God") is really to be understood. -What Hegel does for us in the Logic.

15. The problem is soluble in that it reduces to the categories of Self (or something) and Other and their logical interaction (i.e., to the dialectic of the "finite" in Hegel's Logic). The concept "Other" is the key which underlies all the previous difficulties; i.e., the premise that "God is different from or Other than myself, and vice versa." The main point is that a Finite and an Infinite, when viewed as "two" things, cannot co-exist. That is, to the degree that I am and God is, or insofar as both of us are to be credited with "being," God, the Infinite, is not, or suffers a reduction of Its being and is rendered finite-since God's being stops where my being, no matter how insignificant, begins! That is, God ceases to be God! What we really have before us then, are just two finite beings, each limiting the other, none of which can be God. This is logically inescapable.

16. Of course what this also means, we should note in passing, is that much to his horror, the traditional "theist" who insists on maintaining a rigid distinction between "God," on the one hand, and "Man and the World" on the other-something in fact that makes both "finite"-turns out really to be an "atheist!"-For the God that he posits is merely finite, and a "finite God" is no God.

17. And now the question becomes, is this the last word? Can we remain here with "two finites"? The answer is No. For when we reflect on the given we see that what divides us and makes both of us finite-viz., the Fact that I am "Self" and God is "Other"-is an illusion and thus overcomeable. This is because God, as it turns out, has no determination that I do not have! I am the same as God is; we are identical! This is because these two determinations, Self and Other, cannot be kept apart or fixed (as "Understanding" or Reflection would like); each one becomes or turns into the other, or has its opposite within itself!

18. That is to say: I am Self, true. But-I am also Other! That is, to the Other (that confronts me), it is I who am the Other! So the result, as Hegel says, is that the "barrier-divider"-which confines me to one side of the whole that is present, and which confirms me (both of us) in finitude-has been transcended! For I am equally on the other side of the barrier. I have "already passed over into the Other"! And this-is the True Infinite; and the only one there is.

NEGATED FINITE is different from the Infinite activity of self-determination. It is because of this "negated finite" or sublated finitude, that we must refer to the finite living entity as a servant surrendered to God. A surrendered soul means that there must be both negated finite soul and God existing in harmonious unity or love.

14. If one cannot think two-ness then oneness is also unthinkable, because thinking as negative activity necessarily implicates its opposite. In marriage, man and woman become of "one flesh." This 'flesh' or being that they share is self-conscious ethical substance, which is Spirit, but they do not vanish as two individuals, rather such multiplicity is essential for self-consciousness.

15. That God is other than myself is not a problem but is essential to the whole concept of 'self.' Again, we must understand that any concept necessarily requires its opposite because we are dealing with negativity, which is thought, and which therefore absolutely requires both the concept and its negation. God never ceases to be God nor does God ever become finite. God may incarnate, appear to the finite, conditioned, atomic living entities, but He never loses His Infinite status. This is because God is identical with His Being, but different from it also, i.e. He never becomes conditioned. However, the finite living entity does become conditioned, even though it has its negated finitude, or infinite unconditioned side. God is the Absolute Unconditioned, and can never be covered by anything greater than Himself or that greater thing would be the actual God.

16. God contains the finite, the negated or determination, within His own Infinity, as explained above. This means that God or the Lord must include His kingdom and subjects. The idea of 'King' without kingdom and subjects is a mere abstraction. Thus there can be no such thing as only God or only Lord without that which is lorded over, both substantial and subjective.

17. The Infinite must coexist with the finite, the Self must coexist with the Other - there is no logical existence of one without the other. This oppositional nature is essential to the entire comprehension of the Absolute, which is pure negativity - self-thinking thought that we may call "the Mind of God." In this sense, we are simply a thought-determination in the Mind of God. A thought is not the Mind. Mind is greater than any particular thought. Self negates itself to become Other, and Other negates itself to become Self, but this mutual mirror activity does not destroy their difference. Again, we must understand that identity (or identical) does not imply oneness.

18. Self and Other are two, otherwise there would be no need to say "Other." Otherness is essential to reality because reality is other than ideality. Because of the negativity of the Absolute, Self is negated and Other is

This means not only, as Hegel says, that "only the Infinite remains and is" but that "Self" and "Other" as such-and-by extension "Man" and "God"-have vanished! Proven to be untrue! They have become "moments" of the Infinite. That is, in reality there is no "Self as opposed to and other than the Other," and no "Other as opposed to a Self"! Or: there is a Self which also contains an Other inside it (which is exactly the same as an Other which has a Self in it). That is, there is only one (dynamic and living) thing. Not "two." And thus, since this is also applicable to "God" and "Man," it follows that God and Man as such-as separated-do not exist. Only their unity and Truth does. That is, one thing; to be called-whatever one likes! For instance, Hegel calls it "Spirit", Nietzsche "Superman," and others yet other things. Two other points. Of course, this is not the whole story since what is, God or the Idea, is much more concrete than this, i.e., than the category of The Infinite or Being-for-Self. Indeed, the final category of the Logic (i.e., of God or Being) is the Absolute Idea qua Personality. Nevertheless, to the extent that "God," to be God, has minimally and necessarily to be conceived as "infinite" and not as "finite," these conclusions are absolutely valid and incontrovertible.

19. Second Proof: Then there is the "regress to the Absolute I" proof given by both Fichte and Schelling. It is based on the principle that "It is impossible to abstract from the I/thought/consciousness/the 'I think' and reach a Being or 'Thing' in itself or an Absolute 'Not-I' (whether as God, matter, or world)." As Fichte writes: "[W]e should long since been rid of the Thing-in-itself; for it would have been recognized that whatever we may think, we are that which thinks therein. And hence that nothing could ever come to exist independently of us, for everything is necessarily related to our thinking" (SK 71, and cf. 117, 98 and also BKE, "Aenesidemus" 144-150). The point is: "One cannot transcend the circle/sphere of one's consciousness or thought." Now, what follows from this is not that there are entities outside our thought and we are denied knowledge of them (and are trapped in a subjectivism)-but rather that there are no entities outside and other than thought! And because of this, thought (or awareness) is all reality and the only reality-or it is Infinite or Absolute I (and objective, or subject/object at once!). That there are no entities outside thought can be seen in that any attempt to transcend the sphere of thought just results in-another thought, and shows that there is nothing but thought or that this region is infinite, unbounded and unlimited. This is because one must always begin with and within thought-for "one cannot abstract from one's I." Thus to say, "I am thinking 'God' or 'Matter'-(as instances of 'Not-I' or Non-thought)-and by doing so I have left the sphere of thought," is a deception and untruth. For one has really only said, "I am thinking the thought of God, the thought of Matter!" And as just thoughts they fall within and not outside the region of one's thought!

negated. Thus the two sides are negated. In this respect each side is identical to the other. Yet they are two sides, not one. It is because there are two sides we can say "identical." But what is that identical ground in which these two sides are contained? This is a third term. We comprehend this by saying the Absolute is not one-dimensional (Universality). It is three-dimensional: Universal, Singular and Individual - all simultaneously must be if any one of them is to be. Hegel shows their relation to be the movement of the syllogism, and then he says, "everything is a syllogism" - because this is the fundamental nature of the Absolute. The category of being-for-self is essential for understanding the intrinsic difference that is necessary in order for the Absolute to be Subject. This difference, as we have repeated often enough now, is essential for its identity in difference or otherness. Because being-for-self requires an other than self, i.e. being, the principle of multiplicity or pure otherness is found here. Thus Otherness is the differentiation into multiple being-for-selves, each opposed to the other, as well as opposed to the original universality of being-for-self. Therefore we have the mutually opposed one universal being-for-self, and the multiple singularities of being-for-self. In this way the being-for-self of God is simultaneously the multiplicity of being-for-selves, i.e. a One that is Many (I that is We) at one and the same time.

19. Hegel considered Fichte and Schelling to be abstract idealists - abstract thinkers. Fichte was a subjective idealist who, like Kant, considered everything from within the perspective of the subjective Ego. Schelling was an abstract idealist by the fact that he considered everything to be one through his concept of essentially indifferent differences - differences that makes no difference - "the night in which all cows are black."

THREE TYPES OF THINKING

When we speak of the Absolute as being pure thought, self-thinking thought, Absolute Thought, etc. we must be very careful to distinguish three types of thinking:

Subjective

Objective

Absolute

Subjective thinking is thinking that the finite self or ego considers its own activity, outside of and about the world objectively given to it. It does not consider where in (or out of) the world this subjective activity is taking place, or how it is taking place, only that it is assumed to be one's own activity. Objective thinking considers thinking to be in the world - that the world is essentially given to the finite self as thinking being, and all we have to do is look on. This is the perspective that Hegel expects his readers to assume in the *Phenomenology*. Ultimately, by gradual development of the Concept, absolute thinking knows that the finite self has its substance in the Absolute and is not in a subject-object relationship with it but rather is its own finite determination, essentially a predicate of Absolute Substance, which has its own Absolute Subject.

20. Of course the main Problem is that most people, scientists etc, are steeped in "dogmatism" or "realism"-i.e. in the custom of habitually and illicitly abstracting from their I/consciousness-a "master illusion/deception" that, as Kant says at B544 (see Essay 12, Postscript), results from "hypostatizing one's ideas/representations" and forgetting one has done this. Because they have had little conscious exposure to idealism/speculation/criticism they are so used to thinking of sense-objects, e.g., pens, trees, cells, neurons, "electrons," as beings and not as, what they are in truth, appearances only, and thus have an extremely difficult time in grasping the true nature of the case. Indeed most scientists falsely assume that everything-including consciousness/ thought-is made of e.g. "electrons"-and that electrons (atoms, quarks) are the fundamental realities that support all else; which implies that they are regarded as Substance, self-grounded, and absolute Reality (of course, they are totally unaware of this fact and of the peculiar metaphysics that lies at the base of all their theorizing and in which they "live move and have their being"). But the fact is that it is the opposite that is Substance, etc, viz., Mind/ consciousness/thought! Hence they need above all to clearly and distinctly recognize what it is that true Being or Being in the strict sense is, and that sense-things are not Being, and as such are merely appearance, in fact = 0! They have to realize that what is conditioned cannot be a true being, something unconditioned (or self-existent); that "Matter" or sense-objects (percepts) are in truth and always conditioned by consciousness/thought, and as such cannot be Beings; as in Quantum Theory, there is no such thing as the "observed" as such, only the "observed-as-observed-by-the-observer." They must also see that because this is so, only Mind/consciousness/thought is true Being!

21. That is to say, they must on the one hand acknowledge the crucial difference between "Being-for-self" and "Being-for-another"-or that "all Sein (Being) is really Bewusst-Sein (Conscious-Being)." Only the first-Being that is aware of itself, of its Being-is Being, the second is not Being, in fact is nothing; or it has only a "Being-for-another," the "other" it exists for being consciousness. Only the I or Mind is "Being-for-itself" and true Being. For "Matter"/sense-objects/phenomena, the whole physical universe (the sum of all galaxies ad infinitum) is or has only a "Being-for-another," or as such and "in itself" = 0 (as Kant says, take away the subject and the space-time continuum vanishes, Kritik B59, and cf. Enc. §381). Moreover it is simply impossible for a "for-another" to be cause of a "for-itself," for the former is always object, pure and simple, and never subject.

22. On the other hand, they must grasp the following simple yet devastating logic (à la Schelling) which shows what alone has true Being and is absolute or is the Absolute, and reveals that beneath one's "empirical" self one has a pure/absolute Self which is one's True or God-Self: (i) Normal experience demands an absolute or

20. Most people get stuck in Subjective thinking, which is dogmatic because it relies on a finite thinking agent imposing limited and therefore imperfect thoughts ON reality, i.e. it does not come from Reality itself. The attempt to comprehend Reality means that Reality must be assumed to be rational, but then dogmatists do not give the rationality of Reality a chance to express itself. Thus dogmatists think they must tell the world how it ought to be. Religion and its teachings, as they are given, are already an expression of the Reason that is at its basis. Therefore, it is necessary to comprehend that basis, not to modify it. A scientist analyzes what is already there and must avoid imposing any imaginative ideas that do not come from the object of study itself. In other words, the authentic scientist sinks his attention into the subject matter and allows it to develop itself - to present itself in all its facets since it is intrinsically a rational, self-determining Truth. The real scientist simply tries to comprehend the changing world as it is.

The world is not a cipher, a zero, just because it is changing or non-permanent. What is temporary does not imply it is non-existent. It is only due to the one-sidedness of abstract thinking that it draws the conclusion that the temporary is nothing. The temporary means that which is *becomes* nothing. It is a process, and that process *is*. The moments of temporality must *be* in order for them to be negated, which is what process or change is: negative activity. It is the basic tenet of abstract idealism that only Thought is, and Matter or the World has no real existence. The World is real - there is no need to deny the obvious. However, it is temporary - everyone knows this also. Thus the proper conception of the World is that it is real but temporary, i.e. constantly changing.

21. Being-for-self and being-for-other are complimentary though contradictory aspects of every being that is there. Nowhere can we find Hegel state that being-for-other is zero. Both aspects are essential. A marble, for example, has its own being-for-itself, i.e. its own being. It also is related to other beings, or has being-for-other. Everything that IS has both its own being (for self) and relation to other beings. These two aspects MUST be present together. To be the cause of itself is a completely different category - that of substance (belonging to the Doctrine of Essence)- and does not apply to the category of being. A thing that is the cause of itself, that merely repeats itself in what is other than itself, is Substance (Spinoza) and lacks the level of being-for-self, which is Subject. Thus God can never be one with otherness otherwise He would become Substance, which is not Divine Subject or God.

22. Given a subject confronting an object we must consider a third element - that in which the two given elements are contained - that is neither subject nor object yet which grounds the two. This third element, which MUST be present given two opposing elements, may also

unconditioned ground in order to be. By "normal experience" is meant that of "the finite/conditioned/empirical subject or I in relation to the finite/conditioned object or world"; where subject and object are conditioned by each other, hence neither being unconditioned. (ii) However it is evident that this situation is impossible and cannot be unless at the same time something "unconditioned" exists, for conditioned beings do not have their existence through themselves and cannot maintain it by themselves, they are contingent and dependent on an other. (iii) Now, this unconditioned being that must exist for experience to be possible, must either be on the side of the object-as an "absolute Object or Not-I" (e.g. Matter or God)-or on that of the subject-as an "absolute Subject or I": there is no third possibility! Since an absolute Object must be ruled out there must then be an absolute Subject as ground of experience! The former is so because "one cannot abstract from or eliminate the I," and this rules out the possibility of their being an "object" that is "absolute" or not relative to an other (to an I)-not to mention that an "object" as a "Being-for-another" has no true Being and = 0.

23. This reveals something even more remarkable. For the conclusion is not that there is an "absolute I" that supports and makes possible experience (or "being-in-the-world") and thus implying that three things exist, viz., an absolute I, a finite I and a finite object. Rather, the absolute I or pure self-consciousness is all that is and exhausts all of reality! Indeed what has been demonstrated is that the "finite I/finite object situation" is a completely false one, an illusion or deception, a condition from which one is to be released via true education (as Plato pointed out long ago). Thus education-to put this in a different way-is the process whereby the "conscious" aspect of the universe/whole overcomes the "unconscious" and appropriates to itself all the "being" the unconscious was initially believed to contain. That is, normal or "dogmatist" consciousness views the whole of reality as apportioned between ourselves, the conscious part, and everything else, the unconscious or material part, which is (held to be) far more extensive than its counterpart. However, the incredible truth that idealism/criticism reveals is that all the "being" believed to pertain to this vast unconscious domain of matter/object, since it has only a "Being-for-another," is an illusion or = 0! (Note that we did not say that this domain is an illusion, but that the being of this domain is an illusion.) The result is that only the Conscious side is; the Unconscious side, stripped of its being (qua Being), having utterly vanished and been reduced to the Conscious: as said "Only the One Consciousness is."

24. Further important corollaries of this-which we cannot elucidate here-are (i) this unconditioned absolute I/pure Self or God-Self is eternal or always existed, hence consciousness as such, as Fichte and others say, had no beginning-and did not "begin" with our physical birth-and

be understood in the following way. If we make a diagram
SUBJECT | OBJECT

we can see that there must be a line separating the two which is the limit of Subject, or where Subject is not, and a limit to Object, which is where Object ceases to be. The line is the third element and its constitution is that it is NOT-Subject and NOT-Object. In other words, it is pure negativity: the negation of Subject and the negation of Object. Abstract thinking cannot understand that negativity also IS something. This being of pure negativity or negative activity is not only the ground but the production and dissolution of Subject and Object. All three of these moments must coexist if any of them is to exist, preserving the essential dynamic three-dimensional nature of the Absolute so that it never shrinks down to a static, dead one-dimensional point. This pure negativity of the containing Absolute also means that it is ultimately Subject or being-for-self. This Absolute Subject (pure negativity) is obviously different from the Subject that is opposed to an Object, yet identical with both in that it is their ground. Ken's incorrect idea that being-for-other is zero simply misconstrues this entire concept.

23. The statement that "the absolute I or pure self-consciousness is all that is and exhausts all of reality," or the "All is One" philosophy, naturally leads to the untrue conclusion that the reality of the world is an illusion. This is also characteristic of the Skeptical philosophy. Hegel was insistent that philosophy must resist the temptation of eliminating or ignoring the world rather than dealing with it positively. The hallmark of his philosophy is that his method specifically deals directly with objectivity and this is, in fact, what makes his work genuinely scientific.

Consciousness requires an object, or that of which it is conscious. Thus Hegel says in the *Phenomenology* (§ 174), "self-consciousness is desire." Therefore it is not the being of the object that is eliminated (or an illusion) in comprehending it, only its independence or being beyond reason. I doubt you can find anywhere in Hegel's writings that being-for-other is zero. If that were, in fact, true it would collapse his entire philosophy. Truth as the agreement of Concept with Object requires both existing for the other, without which Truth would be impossible. In the course of development of the *Phenomenology* the Object negates itself and ultimately shows itself to be the self-conscious Concept in which Being is essential to it. Being is the first concept in the *Science of Logic* and is retained as the initial basis of the whole development up to the Idea. The Logical Idea then assumes the shape of being that is there in order to establish the Idea of Nature.

24. Time is the empty intuition of the Concept that is simply there for consciousness. By comprehending this intuiting as the pure Concept, Time is thereby superseded. This does not mean that Time is an illusion. Time is the real being of the Concept for intuition. The Concept is

has no ending; and (ii) once one has passed beyond one's empirical I and accessed one's Pure I one finds oneself in or at the beginning of all things or in the Now, i.e. eternal Now or Present. Thus, one further realizes that one always existed and always will exist, that one can only be and never not be (= "Absolute Knowing," the knowledge that one's true self is the Absolute itself, the Unconditioned). Hence as "eternal" one realizes one is above time, or rather that time itself is an illusion, as it pertains to and is sustained by the finite I/Not-I experience and situation (cf. Fichte EPW 434, Schelling STI 14). Indeed, after successful regress to the Absolute I or God-Self, one clearly recognizes that consciousness as such is not in time.

25. In this way, in virtue of these two proofs, the most powerful objection that can be raised against us can be decisively set aside, namely: "OK, we will grant that all of this may be so, that we cannot escape the sphere of our thought, etc-BUT what if it really is the case that consciousness/thought is a product/effect of Matter (of neural/chemical/nuclear activity) and our situation is that we just cannot know or think it due to the limitations and nature of our cognitive faculties?" "What if Matter-viewed as the opposite of thought or as 'non-thought'-really is the cause of Consciousness?"

26. First, simply put, the statement "Matter is the 'cause' of Mind/thought/consciousness" is completely meaningless or a "non-statement" which says nothing. For what it does is to illicitly abstract from or ignore the ineliminable presence of the I/consciousness/thought and then asks us to conceive or "picture" what it calls "Matter" as existing initially by itself, unconnected to and unconditioned by Thought and thus capable of being a veritable Substance and Cause (of all else). The point is: this is impossible! For one cannot have the "thought of a Being that is to be out of relation to thought-or is not to be thought!" This is a "non-thought." It arises from or is constructed out of the erroneous dogmatist/Realist viewpoint whereby one takes one's perceptions/ presentations of e.g., this blue mug, table, sky etc-perceptions ineluctably attached to/accompanied by one's "I think" or consciousness-and then à la Kant "hypostatizes" them. That is, falsely regards what is one's own and in oneself as having an independent thing-like existence (ignoring the fact of its relation to my I). Then one finally subsumes them one and all under the "universal" or abstraction "Matter," something moreover that is not perceived (for I only perceive particular, unique items of sense such as this blue, this hot, hard, sweet, sonorous, etc, item), thus giving this "Matter" an independent existence it is not entitled to.

27. And it is of no avail to again repeat "But just because I cannot think of 'Matter' as existing independently of thought does not mean or prove that it in fact does not so exist or that there isn't such an entity as 'Matter'!" This is just another non-statement or non-thought. It is meaningless, for the phrase, "Matter (or one can substitute

real, so it's being there is also quite real. However, the mode of intuition is incomplete comprehension or only the beginning of comprehension. Because comprehension has a beginning, middle and end, although the beginning may be anywhere due to the circularity of comprehension, Time is a necessary part of the whole and thus has its place in the Absolute. That consciousness is not dependent on time depends on its forms - such as sense-certainty, perception and Understanding - which change with time. The being-for-self of the Concept, or its reflection into itself is pure self-consciousness. In so far as the Concept is fully comprehended, Time has its place within the Concept.

25. We must be careful here to distinguish between the three types of thought: subjective, objective and absolute. To make the statement, "we cannot escape the sphere of **our** thought" (emphasis mine) means that you are taking the position of subjective thinking that places you in the realm of abstraction, which, I claim, is the viewpoint of your whole presentation. Once it takes hold, abstract thinking colors one's entire perspective. But Science demands that we sink our own subjectivity into the subject matter before us and allow it to develop itself without interference from us (*Phenomenology* § 58).

26. Matter is a perfectly valid concept. According to Hegel, the concept of Matter is "the immediate unity of existence with itself." It is the "independent aggregate of the external finite." It has the same significance as Kant's thing-in-itself, except that in Hegel's development of the Logic Matter is related to Form, whereas the thing-in-itself is purely abstract and has no such relation. Matter is hardly illusory since the totality that is the integral unity of Matter and Form will eventually "come before us as the Concept." (The quotes here are from Hegel's *Encyclopedia Logic*, § 128)

As a concept, Matter is certainly thought, but it also possesses an objectivity or being. Due to its purely indeterminate nature, however, to say that something arises from or is constituted of matter, says nothing. Only by a thoughtful comprehension of its concept can it be realized that Form is intrinsic to Matter, and as such it exhibits a dialectical development that eventually results in the Concept. This does not mean that the Concept comes from Matter. Rather, by study of the logical development involved, Matter is presupposed by the Concept. As a result, Matter cannot be conceived as having an independent existence apart from the Concept.

27. To state that 'matter can not exist independently from thought' places one within the Berkeley camp of abstract idealism. Hegel clearly distinguished himself from that camp. The proper conception requires that one have a concrete comprehension of the Concept and from that understands that Matter can have no separate

here anything!) as existing independently of thought" simply cannot be thought! The speaker is asking us to comprehend or grasp what cannot be comprehended or grasped! -We thus remain ever within the domain of thought or awareness or Knowing-and there is nothing but this domain! -As Hegel confirms in his account of Absolute Knowledge as the "[Gestalt in which] Spirit ... realizes its Concept while remaining within its Concept [i.e., within the domain of thought] in this realization" (485). End of story.

28. Second, there is no such thing as "Matter" regarded as a Being in-itself hence as a Substance and Cause of other things (e.g. thought) for the reason that as conditioned by another and as a Being for another it cannot be in-itself. Indeed as we saw, "Matter" or Being for another = 0. Only Being-for-itself, or Consciousness/thought/Spirit, can be in-itself, and hence alone is Substance, Being, Cause (cf. Enc. §384 zus) and the Absolute. So "Matter" in the end and in truth-i.e., metaphysically speaking-is nothing but "the thought of matter," hence it is only a thought (as Hegel says, Nature and matter are only ideal, their truth is Spirit and thought) and as such incapable of being a "cause" or "ground" of thought, that is, thought cannot be "reduced" to matter.

29. Third, even if (per impossible) it were granted that there is such a thing as "Matter" and it was a Substance hence "Cause" of consciousness/Mind the dialectic of cause and effect (and substantiality and reciprocity) in Hegel's Science of Logic clearly demonstrates that the cause has no primacy over the effect, rather the effect or manifestation of the cause is the truth of the cause-which results in a reversal of the dignity and dependence/independence relation between the two. Indeed, the substance, in manifesting itself as thought, only manifests its essence, hence shows that thought/consciousness is the true essence and being of Matter-something that is further demonstrated in the Logic when it is revealed that the categories of Substance, Causality, Reciprocity and Necessity are inadequate and pass over into their truth, viz., Freedom and The Concept, which is another name for the Absolute I or Subject!

30. Thus, in view of the preceding two proofs it is clear that it is wrong, misleading, and damaging to use the terms, "God" and "Man," in their old meanings. So this is the reason we cannot stay with the old concepts and with the separation/"twoness" of God and Man, but must abandon them.

31. It is further necessary to remark briefly on the nature of the problem of "Vorstellung" (or "Image") and the critical need for today's "consciousness in transition" to transcend its inherent limitations. In ages past (before the advent of Science and The Concept) in order to facilitate connection with God the religious consciousness of Man had no other recourse than to use a "Vorstellung" or Image, that is, by placing it before his mind (Vor-stellen = "to

independence from the Concept. To then say that 'the Concept is only within the domain of Thought' fails to acknowledge that Being, the negation of Thought, is also within the Concept due to the pure negativity of its nature. Due to its absolute negative nature, the Concept requires that which is other than itself in order to BE as the negation of that otherness. Negation thus preserves as well as negates and this is what is called sublation (*Aufheben*).

28. Substance is Being-in-itself; Subject is Being-for-itself. Substance, as Spinoza properly comprehended it, is *sui causa* or the cause of itself. Being-in-itself means being that is its own cause. It produces itself from itself. Those who say, "We are God" imply that the Absolute produces only itself from itself, i.e. that it is Spinoza's Substance. Subject means being that is reflected into itself, therefore there must be a difference from itself in order to make such a reflection. This difference is being for other, so that being-for-other cannot be zero. Being-for-self is the absolute negation of otherness, thus otherness must be there (Substance) - it is presupposed. Thus the Absolute must be comprehended as both Substance and Subject - Reality is in-itself-and-for-itself.

29. While the Effect may be the truth of the Cause, we must also bear in mind that the Truth is the whole, not just the result. The whole process for arriving at Truth is not something outside the Truth. Truth would not be Truth without its proof. The Effect would not be an Effect without the Cause. To eliminate one is to eliminate the other. Therefore, being the Truth of something does not mean that the 'something' can be eliminated. Truth is pure mediation, and thus that which is mediated must also be there. If I am given a large list of numbers and the sum is 9476, the truth of that sum is established only by going through the process of adding the numbers, not merely by stating the result. Thus mediation or the process for arriving at it is essential to Truth. Every court of Law knows this principle, thus a judge considers a mere statement as truth to be meaningless unless proof is also submitted with it.

30. Truth is immanent at all times and it is up to us to discover it as Reason in its present and historical development. The distinction (not separation) between Man and God is essential to the dialectic of Reason in History. Thus to abandon that reality is to abandon all claim to scientific objectivity.

31. *Vorstellung* means representation. It may be an image or it may be a thought, or symbol, etc. It is the concept of representation that *Vorstellung* is meant to address - "to stand for" (*vor-stellen*) something that is obviously other than itself.

place before") etc. The problem this involves is that (i) the Image is not the thing Imaged. For what the Image does is to mediate between myself and God (the Imaged). In being in touch with the Image, I am not also in touch with God; or I am immediately in touch with the Image and only mediately in touch with God. In fact, God, the Imaged, is always taken to be "behind" or "beyond" the Image, and in a direction away from me (from my being, from what is in me), when in fact, it should be the reverse! For God (what the Image points to) is in truth-as we have shown-within me/us and one and the same as my/our innermost being, my/our pure certainty or awareness (cf. also, "The kingdom God is within you" and "God, as the still small voice within you"). (ii) So the Image really serves to separate me from, not unite me or bring me in contact with, God (from that which I desire to contact and know). (iii) Thus this shows the utmost importance of overcoming *Vorstellen* and Image thinking and replacing it with something else. It is a cause of alienation and involves complete untruth since it implies that what is really in us and pertains to us is not in us and does not pertain to us, but rather pertains to something outside us. At which point the problem becomes-what is the problem of the whole history of Christianity and religion-how to get (by coaxing, pleading with, badgering, etc) what is outside and separate from us into us! Thus the "*Vorstellung*" or "Image" keeps us from the truth. (iv) The problem, we would offer, is overcome and does not exist for The Concept or Thought and where the Truth is grasped by the same. This is because The Concept-and therefore the Concept's Object as well-is immediately one with ourselves, and hence the aspect of "separation" or "doubling" does not occur. Also to be noted is that, it is Hegel's view that though theological problems cannot be resolved at the level of *Vorstellen*, they can-one and all-be solved at the level of The Concept and the Logical.

32. Lastly, and all-too-briefly, as for the objection of the "atheist" who does not accept one of the premises of the first proof, viz., that there is a God or Infinite, and insists there is only the "finite," or only finite things, himself being one of them-it is met most adequately by the Hegelian rejoinder that, "the finite as such does not exist and is a self-contradiction, for its nature is to immediately sublimate itself and become the Infinite-the finite being only and in truth a 'moment' of the Infinite." Thus the atheist had better get to work, stop giving excuses, and begin his process of transformation into the Infinite and his True Self (Enc. §194 zus).

33. II. TWO OBJECTIONS ANSWERED

34. A reviewer of this book has made two important objections to our thesis that deserve a considered response, viz., (i) Who is the "We" in the "We are God" phrase? Does it include all men who ever lived and will live? Moral and immoral, spiritual and "carnal" alike? The concept is problematic, to say the least; and (ii) that it is impossible to us or any given individual to actually be

In Kantian philosophy the representation of the thing-in-itself was the only principle that knowledge could apprehend, which was called its appearance. The appearance of the thing and the thing itself were distinguished. Consciousness of God is inherently defective because it can only apprehend an appearance of God, i.e. if God is the object of consciousness His true being in-and-for-itself remains forever beyond consciousness' grasp. This defect can only be overcome if consciousness negates itself completely such that it becomes in effect the manifest determination of the Absolute. This negated consciousness is the infinite consciousness of the finite being. It is not God's consciousness but only a finite determination of the Absolute. The negated consciousness of the finite being does not vanish because of its being negated. It continues to exist in this negated state and is no longer a merely posited independent finitude. As negated finitude it is infinite, but it is different from the Infinite that negates itself as its own finitude and then negates that finitude or determines itself as the absolute negation of itself. Thought has to keep track of the moments that are involved here and not simply drop any of them or merge them into each other simply because they may be identical but distinct moments. It is because of the preservation of these individual distinct moments that the whole thing becomes a systematic development that can be rationally or scientifically presented.

Religion embodies Absolute Reason and is therefore said to be enunciated or revealed truth, as it is the nature of Absolute Spirit to reveal itself. It is therefore to be comprehended as Absolute, without modifying it. In the Sanskrit literature we find a similar conception expressed, *dharmam tu sakshat bhagavat pranitam* - which means that *dharma* or religion is the *pranitam* or enactment [revelation] of *bhagavat* or God (*Srimad Bhagavatam* 3.6.19).

32. In his *Philosophy of Spirit* (§ 573) Hegel writes, "Atheism presupposes a definite idea of a full and real God, and arises because the popular idea does not detect in the philosophical Concept the peculiar form to which it is attached. Philosophy indeed can recognize its own forms in the categories of religious consciousness, and even its own teaching in the doctrine of religion — which therefore it does not disparage." In other words, the atheist considers the thinking process to be extraneous to Truth, and does not understand that Religion is an embodiment of Reason that scientifically must be made explicit.

33.

34. I am the reviewer referred to in Ken's paragraph. The objection more philosophically presented is that "We" in the "We are God" concept is made fundamental - the basis of God. This means that "We" must be defined very concretely and carefully in order to be able to scientifically derive the existence of God from it. To determine if the

God, the Absolute, or the Totality of Being-rather only a "part" of the Whole. The reviewer calls this the "pizza-pie theory"-i.e., the whole pie is pizza, but a piece is not the whole pie, that is, "God is everything but not that everything is God." His main worry with the doctrine concerns the prideful inflation of our ego's that would result from its adoption, that is, the dangerous inversion of the proper relation between God and us that would exclude humility and a gratitude towards something higher than ourselves. As said, the "We are God" formula is primarily an "aid" to comprehension, but nevertheless needs to be clarified. In general, it is intended to "collapse the distance" between God-as traditionally and falsely conceived-and ourselves, and to indicate that God is not "up there" but rather in us, that "God" pertains to something within our being; what we hold does not destroy humility but realizes its true "agapic" form for the first time.

35. We will respond to these concerns in the course of a review of Hegel's position on this matter.

36. (1) Hegel's position is best captured in his statement that "Man is a moment in God's Being." There are two complementary sides to this. On the one hand, expressed in Hegel's dictum is the critical distinction between the "Idea" and "Spirit," that is, between the Principle and the actualization and actuality of the Principle; in virtue of which distinction all pride and arrogance is precluded! The simple fact is that we begin as a natural-empirical Ego or Self, and only under this condition do we then rise or come into our Pure, absolute God-Self (or Spirit, the One Consciousness). Thus, we are not and cannot regard ourselves as the First or Original, as that which has the highest honor and place, for we are derivative or second; we did not create the Idea, Spirit, God-Self-or the "goddling" process we are involved in as a "Moment" or ingredient (see Essay 3, on the discussion of the Trinity and the "negation of negation"). The Idea or Truth exists by necessity, by logic, by Reason. Thus as the reviewer also holds, it is we (qua our finite selves) that have to conform to the Idea and not vice versa or, as Hegel says, "one does not possess the Idea, the Idea possesses him." Thus, there is a definite and clear sense in which "Man is a moment in God's Being" means that he is not the whole of God, for as a "moment" we are, when completed and as Spirit, a "production," a "Son," or an "expression" of God or the Idea, and not the entire Idea itself.

37. Yet on the other hand, it is nonetheless true that we are equally God himself. For God-since there is nothing but God-can only do or bring forth himself. As Hegel says of the Idea as Life: the end is the same as the beginning, as the fruit or product contains nothing but what was already contained in the Seed or Principle (the Idea). The other aspect, according to Hegel the theologian, is that God only first comes to Know himself in and as the Son. For God, to Hegel, is not a lifeless static entity, but rather a "process," according to which He must first posit an Other, or second,

"We" refers only to present persons, all persons in history, all persons in the future, all living entities in general, etc. poses a problem concerning the fundamental concept of what "We" consists of. If "We" is to be considered the basis or ground of God, but it cannot be determined exactly what the constitution of "We" is, then the ground itself is problematic. The question of pride, and the fundamental loss of ethical grounding is something that comes up as a consequence of such a perspective. We feel a necessity to unite with the Divine so that it is not a foreign power over and above us, and in which we can feel "at home." This is not done by destroying God's Divinity by equating Him with the human community, so that really there is neither God nor Man. "We are surrendered unto God" accomplishes the task without violating God's divinity and disrupting the foundation of ethics. The separation is healed by self-abnegation, surrender (sublation), not oneness.

35. But the question arises, How can our freedom be preserved in surrender?

36. As explained previously, the concrete Concept of God requires the acknowledgement of His kingdom as well as His subjects. We have an example of this situation in a Nation that has a King or President and its citizens, and the overruling power of Law. The citizens must follow the Law, i.e. they must surrender to the rule of Law. In so far as they surrender to the Law they are free, i.e. although they are subject to the Law, as long as they acknowledge and obey the Law, they can act freely within that necessity. Thus freedom presupposes necessity. Without the necessity of Law, freedom would be pure chaos - the destruction of freedom, a freedom that would destroy itself. Thus surrender and freedom are not mutually exclusive of each other but rather essential to each other. I don't believe Hegel states anywhere that Man is a moment of God. The finite living entity is an essential and enduring aspect of God, only his empirical existence is impermanent. Hegel makes it clear that Religion is the revelation of God, the knowledge of Himself for Man, and God's own self-knowledge of Himself. It is to be comprehended by Man as Reason, and not modified according to finite misconceptions. It is neither produced nor grasped by subjective thinking but is revealed as absolute thinking - self-thinking thought - to one who surrenders or sinks his subjectivity into the Absolute's own self-expression (the word of God).

37. We have already explained the error concerning the "nothing but God" misconception. Knowing oneself in otherness requires otherness in order to be "knowing." The concept of knowing requires three distinct elements: knower, knowing and known. This is essential to the Concept in its universality, particularity and individuality. The movement of the Concept is comprehended in the syllogistic form. Thus to think that otherness is somehow

thus making himself into an Object, and then overcome this separation and individuation, by finding Himself in the Other or Son and thus becoming Spirit, that is, Love (agape). The real question is, can a balance be achieved between the two sides. We believe it can, indeed must be.

38. An important corollary of this that has just surfaced, is that it is Love (agape) that will constitute the core of our new God-Self and be the basis or spring of all thought, actions, and values pertaining to Foundation life. Love is the core of the God-Self because, when isolated lonely Selfhood and its problems are overcome, this isolated self becomes a Universal or "Ec-static" Self, i.e., a Self which includes the Other as an essential dimension of itself (see below). This provides additional confirmation that a God-Self can in no way be arrogant or "self-centered" and evil, i.e., since its essence or nature is agape-Love. Further, what scripture also confirms as it holds too that "God is Love" -for someone then to say that he is God, or aspires to be God, is not such a terrible thing as certain make it out to be! For it is to aspire to, or become, Love itself-and to live in community with others in that condition! (Surely the World needs more people like this!) Indeed, Love only and always desires the best for the Other (see Enc. §159). This also affords a touchstone by which to evaluate whether someone has in truth achieved the God-Self or is only deceiving himself in this matter.

39. (2) God (the Absolute)-and this is another element in Hegel's position-is not complete as such and apart from the process of producing an Other (Nature/Universe and Man) and then finding himself in this Other. As said, God or the Infinite is the negation of the Finite (Man/World) and hence presupposes the Finite or the descent into Otherness and limitation (and flesh). Hegel further holds that this process, and God Himself, only first became complete and actual in human History, particularly in Jesus Christ. It was at this "point" that the universe was ontologically "redeemed" and Christ's universal consciousness pervaded and thus canceled, by reducing to unity, Nature's entire multiplicity and externality-the One Consciousness or Spirit becoming actualized and permanently actual. Now, obviously when it is said "We are God" the "We," at this point, only refers to Christ, and can refer to other men only in a potential sense;-and thus what can only remain is for all other Men and Selves to raise themselves into this Consciousness, via Faith or Reason. It also follows that Christ and the One Consciousness, since-according to our general thesis and proofs-it is the Truth and Reality in an unqualified sense, is not "in another place or world" opposed to and distant from the "reality," consciousness and world we inhabit. Rather, it is fully here Now and in fact is the only and one true Reality. What our five senses reveal to be the case, viz., the separatedness, outsidedness, and multiplicity of natural individuals-"Cave" consciousness, à la Plato-and taken by most people to be Reality, is in fact only appearance and reflective of the same.

disposed of in the identity of knowing and known, is to fail to grasp that comprehension requires that which is comprehended, or knowing requires that which is known. Their identity does not and cannot preclude their difference, which is overcome only as the eternal process of that overcoming, or the "eternal return" in Nietzsche's phrase.

38. In this paragraph the sense of otherness resurfaces again, as it must. Love is intrinsically a "union" and not a oneness. A union is possible between two or more things or persons. It is never possible for oneness to express such unity. The proper conception of Love, however, entails the conception of separation. It is only in the unity of the contradiction that the concrete Concept can be found. Love is the finding of oneself in the other **as other**, thus separation is essential here. The saying that "God is Love" means that He is the negative unity that attracts the totality together as a whole. Just as gravity is conceived as the tendency of the totality of matter to find its center, so too Love is the attractive principle that draws all together toward their center, God. But with attraction, there must be repulsion or separation; otherwise there is no meaning to "attraction." Hegel criticized the Newtonian concept of gravity for not comprehending the necessary contradictory principle of repulsion within it.

39. God or the Absolute is complete if we understand God in His concrete existence, not as an isolated abstraction produced by the mind, but as Lord, kingdom and subjects, wherein the latter two aspects are sublated under the sovereignty of the Lord. It is thus a unity-IN-distinction. This unity-in-distinction is the same nature and structure as Love. Thus comes the saying that "God is Love."

[Continued in next paragraph.]

40. Thus, Hegel's position is that "We are potentially-not actually or immediately-God" and that the "We" that is potentially God is not our outer empirical changeable Self but refers to our inner being and Self; moreover-what is most important-that God exists in no other place than in our inner Being. This implies that "divinity" or "divine nature" is within us now and that we only need to, so to speak, "grow the Seed" or actualize the potency. True, at the same time, even before anyone has actualized his potency, God fully exists, i.e. qua Christ; however not "before" Christ; God "exists" only in Principle (as an "Idea") before Creation (cf. §381 *zus*; and see Essay 3).

41. (3) Hegel further says that Christ, the God-Man, the first "God-Self," is primarily an example of the Truth, "our Exemplar." He showed forth what God (as Spirit) is-namely, this process, or Love, as the negation of finite selfhood and the becoming of the Infinite (in *Vorstellen*-lingo, "I [Self] am in the Father [Other], the Father [Other] in me [Self]," and "I am the Son [Finite] of the Father [Infinite]"). It is a process or "history," for Hegel, "that every man has to accomplish in himself in order to exist as Spirit." Yet all the same, Christ is the One Being or Consciousness in a special sense qua being the first to do/be it. Moreover, Hegel says there is a sense in which it cannot be done a second time or "can only happen once" ; for as "all being" it signifies a being that cannot be added to, since this is what being a "Universal Self-Consciousness" means, yet it is a Being which nonetheless has "room" for all others, and for their individuality and intersubjective freedom as well.

42. As regards the reviewer's objection that we can only be a "part" of God or the Absolute and not the "whole" (the "pizza-pie theory") which leads to pride, etc, it also succumbs to the points discussed above. However, we will add two remarks:

43. (1) It is vital to grasp that Hegel, in the last analysis, holds unequivocally that God, Spirit, the Absolute Idea is nothing but finite natural-flesh consciousness-i.e., my own self-certainty-"transformed." To support this it is only necessary to make two points:

44. (i) It is self-evident, via text and logic, that the Absolute Knowing and Spirit that is arrived at at the end of the *Phenomenology* derives solely from the immediate Consciousness (that of the student's) with which the book begins. This is indicated by Hegel in many places, for example in the *Phenomenology's* Introduction: "The goal [of the *Phenomenology*] ... is the point where knowledge [i.e., the student's] no longer needs to go beyond itself (51)"-and in the Preface: "[The conclusion of the *Phenomenology* is that] Being is then absolutely mediated ... [it is] the property of the I, it is self-like or the Concept (21)." This is true also of the entire System that follows (See Essay 6). For example, the Pure Being at the beginning of the *Logic* that will ultimately become the Absolute Idea (God) at its end, is nothing other than, one

40. I have not seen the statement that "We are potentially God" anywhere in Hegel's texts, and no reference has been given for this. Also, one will have to weigh this new conception against traditional religious principles, as well as the fact that it seems to interpret Hegel excluding the principle of negativity that lies at the heart of his conception of the Absolute as pure negativity. The Absolute IS as the negation of Otherness, in which Otherness is preserved as negated (sublated, surrendered) in the Absolute. Surrender is perhaps a better term than sublated since the preservation of what is surrendered is more easily conceived. When you surrender to someone, you do not disappear. Your independence is negated, but not your being as an individual distinct from the other individual to whom you offer your surrender. This captures the true significance of *aufheben*. Of course, the Absolute is not fully comprehended from the perspective of the surrendered soul. From the Absolute perspective, the Absolute itself comprehends the finite as its own determinate manifestation. Although we are able to understand that stage as the Absolute Truth, it does not mean that we therefore become the Absolute or are the Absolute. All that is implied at that level is that Man's knowledge of God is God's knowledge of Himself. That much may be known to Man. But then the specific knowledge that God may have of Himself through a specific man is not the whole of God's knowledge of Himself. Man in general is different from a specific man. So even if we say that Man's knowledge of God is God's knowledge of Himself, we are referring to Man in general or all men, and not to just one specific man's knowledge of God.

42. Uncommented.

43. The finite is NOT transformed. As finite, it already includes its limit, its negation, or the infinite. In other words, the finite is already infinite, where both terms are true. The understanding does not like to deal with such a contradiction, so it thinks only the one-sided finite (or infinite).

44. The other extreme is to think only the one-sided infinite. The truth is: the finite is contradictorily both finite and infinite. So transformation is unnecessary since its truth is already infinite. But the infinite is the negation of the finite (in-finite = un-finite or non-finite). The limit or boundary of a finite thing is its negation - it is where the finite stops and is no more. But the negation of the finite is what we call the infinite. This infinite that is reached by negating the finite, however, is itself finite because it has a boarder - the finite along side of it. This boarder negates the infinite (non-finite), and thus it is the absolute negation (negation of the negation) of the finite. But the absolute negation of the finite is just the finite again. What this says

and the same as, the Absolute Knowing that is the result of the Phenomenology which, again, is just natural consciousness transformed. Hegel confirms this for us in the Science of Logic:

45. The beginning [of the Science of Logic] is logical in that it is to be made in the element of thought that is free and for itself, in pure [or absolute] knowing. It is mediated because pure knowing is the ultimate, absolute truth of consciousness. In the Introduction it was remarked that [the Phenomenology] ... has for result the Concept of Science, i.e., pure knowing. ... In the [Phenomenology] immediate consciousness is also the first ... and therefore the presupposition; but in Logic, is that which has proved itself to be the result of that phenomenological consideration-the Idea as pure knowledge ... [Further] in the said result, this Idea has determined itself to be the Certainty [that of the student] which has become Truth, the Certainty which, on the one hand, no longer has the Object over against it but has internalized it, knows it as its own self ... Pure knowing as concentrated into this unity has sublated all reference to an other and to mediation ... what is present is only simple immediacy ... or, in its true expression Pure Being [that is, ultimately, the Absolute Idea] (68-9).

46. Thus, it is my initial "sense-certainty" itself that becomes the "certainty of itself" (reached in section B) that ultimately becomes and is the very Absolute Spirit, Truth, and God (qua Knowing) which appears at the Phenomenology's-not to mention the System's-end. So on the contrary, there is clearly a definite sense in which "the part is the whole pizza"-and my own Self-Certainty, albeit transformed or purified, is the Absolute Itself, whole and entire. Yes, one can argue that the I or Self that is the Absolute at the end is not me, my particular empirical I, for it is a transformed version of it, however, it cannot be totally different, qua underived, from it, for there is nothing else present at the beginning from which it could have arisen!

47. (ii) The second point is expressed by Hegel's remark at Enc. §441, zus. To wit: "[F]inite Spirit is immediately a contradiction, an untruth. This struggling with the finite, the overcoming of limitation, constitutes the stamp of the Divine in the human Spirit and forms a necessary stage of the eternal Spirit. ... It is Infinite Spirit itself that presupposes itself as Soul and as Consciousness, thereby making itself finite; and it is Infinite Spirit that equally transforms into a moment of itself this self-made presupposition, this finitude, the opposition ... between Consciousness and Soul and Consciousness and an external Object." What this singularly means is that the Eternal, Absolute Spirit or "God" only arises from the "struggl[e] with the finite," that is, from Man or human consciousness and knowing (first completed in Christ).

48. (2) Nevertheless, the "oneness-in-twoness" aspect must not be forgotten; that is, the "dyadic" nature of the Truth.

is that by going beyond the finite we just end up with another finite, *ad infinitum*. But this is not a true infinite because we can enumerate it. This is called the infinite of the Understanding. The true Infinite, the Infinite of Reason, includes the finite (AS NEGATED) within the Infinite.

45. In other words, the finite does not lie alongside of the infinite, thus bordering the infinite and thereby making it finite, but the finite is overarched (embraced) by the Infinite so as to be taken up (sublated) within it. This means that the Infinite has the finite within itself as its own determination, i.e. as the negation of itself. Thus the infinite, which is already the negation of the finite, negates itself or is the negation of the negation of the infinite. This gives us the true Infinite of Reason. The Infinite is to be understood as the absolute negation of itself. This also gives the Infinite its dynamic quality as pure negativity or pure restlessness. It simultaneously is and is not every determination we care to give it or it gives to itself. To refer to this Absolute as a simple universality or the Idea is certainly indeterminate Being, but this one side is opposed by the other side of its mediate nature as pure negativity. In its concrete truth the Absolute is pure Becoming, which includes the *Realphilosophie* of Nature and Spirit as well as the Idea or its Being. The Absolute is the dialectic unity of Ideality and Reality.

46. The *Phenomenology* is not to be interpreted from a subjective idealist's perspective. Hegel is not a Kantian. From the beginning, his whole approach is directed toward an absolute perspective. Thus sense-certainty does not refer to "my" or "your" or "the student's" sense-certainty. Hegel is characterizing a universal form of consciousness that is called "sense-certainty." The development in the *Phenomenology* is a conceptual development, and the different forms of consciousness that the development passes through ultimately reach the stage of Spirit, which is the truth of its own appearing forms. Thus it is called the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. It is about universal Spirit, not about the individual or student, which are included within it.

47. In this paragraph you have reached the proper conception that Spirit is the topic of the *Phenomenology* and it is Infinite Spirit that "appears" as finite. The Infinite become finite! How can that be? Previously we explained that the Infinite is self-determining - it limits itself. It makes itself finite or determines something about itself. This determination takes the form of the finite self or consciousness. Thus the finite self is not God but God's determination (negation) of Himself. The finite self is as negated or belonging to God - being-for-God. The finite self is not the Being of God but a determinate being-for-God. This is the correct conception we want to try to comprehend. We are for-God, i.e. negated, surrendered, or sublated. Surrender is the best term because it clearly shows the existence of the finite self in God.

Spirit is not a sheer, amorphous, undifferentiated One. The "Other" is not done away with completely, but gets reduced to a "moment." That is to say, the I/Not-I structure, or my I or Self as opposed to and thus in relation to something else, Other, not-myself (i.e., to another person, hence, "intersubjectivity") always remains. As Hegel says, "[The Absolute Idea] contains the highest degree of opposition within itself" -but as resolved. Recall that Spirit is "knowledge of oneself in one's Other," and that the True Infinite only is through the positing of a limit, and the negation of the same. Thus, even though the other remains, I know as well that it is no true i.e. excluding, other, but one in which I can find myself, and which permits me entrance into its innermost being. The upshot is that all sheer egoism, egotism, and aggrandizement of the finite, particular, empirical self is made impossible; one must give up this self to become and experience the God-Self that is at issue.

49. As a further aid for those who are concerned about losing the "Otherness" of God, it is to be observed that the difference between the initial and final "inverted" consciousness (the God-Self) is so great-indeed requires the whole Phenomenology to achieve it-that it can truthfully be said to be the former's exact opposite or "Other." As Hegel underscores in the 1803 Critical Journal, "to common sense the world of philosophy [absolute knowing] is ... an inverted world," and in the Phenomenology as well, "Science on its part requires that self-consciousness should have raised itself into this Aether to be able to live with/in Science ... [T]he element of Science is for consciousness a remote beyond ... [R]elative to immediate self-consciousness [Science] presents itself as an inverted posture" (14-15).

50. To the person who still objects that our view really results in atheism in that it takes away the "personal God" that alone can be worshiped we offer this. We have seen (i) that since it is logically impossible to think of God as an infinite person separated from oneself we must think of God as personal in a different way, one in which our own being is understood to be in fact inside and included within God's, the Infinite's, Being; (ii) that prayer and worship are in essence simply methods for getting established in the Truth, the Unity or Agape-God-Self; (iii) that the "objective" (not-I) side still remains but as something that exists within one's Self. In essence one is made to understand what "God" really is, viz., a "process" which involves one's own being and self. One understands that oneself (one's Self) is absolutely essential to God's being God, in that oneself is the "subject" or "subjective" side of the whole that is God. For to be "in relation with God," with a second or Other, means that (a) one must exist or have Being (as the "particular"), and (b) that God, as Object and relatum, also has Being (as the "Universal"). Further, it is then seen that since God to be God must have infinite or all Being, and since oneself indeed also has Being, therefore one's own Being must be an essential

48. That there is negation or determination in the Absolute means that there is not only twoness but manyness, variety, differentiation. The Absolute is variegated - God, His kingdom or abode, and His subjects or loving servants, friends, etc. This is the original conception of the Absolute or Spiritual world. It is not only God. Everything is simultaneously one and different, [one in quality, not quantity], i.e. it is all spiritual. To see God within oneself does not mean the same as thinking of oneself as God. If I say, "the sun is in my room" it does not mean that the actual Sun is in my room - only the sunshine. In the same way, God is in everything by His effulgence or conceptual positing, not in His complete Self. The Government is within everyone by its influence, but not fully present in any one person. God may see Himself in us, and we may see ourselves in God, but there is no logical necessity that this implies identity. We can all understand this. If I see myself in someone else, "He is just like me," that does not mean that I am him. It is only qualitative identity that is implied.

49. The inverted posture is that we think we are God, that we are the positive infinite. In the true Infinite we are the negated finite not the positive Infinite God. Scientific knowledge inverts the inverted world of material existence. In the Preface to the *Phenomenology* (§ 26) Hegel writes that the ether of Science is knowledge of the Self in the antithesis of itself (the Other). This means knowledge of oneself in God as Other, and if one does not understand the necessity of this Otherness then scientific comprehension of the Absolute is impossible; one can only have an abstract understanding of it. Hegel vigorously rejected the "All is One" conception, the "night in which all cows are black." The All exists as system - a spiritual cosmos - not an undifferentiated *Brahman* or abstract Spirit.

50. We must not try to understand God by thinking in material terms of inside and outside. Knowledge of God and our relationship with God may only be understood scientifically by pure thinking, free of any material conception. Properly understanding the dialectical development of the finite and infinite will help in this regard. The dialectical method itself implies the movement between two opposed determinations. So it is essential that the opposed elements must be there, otherwise there is no question of dialectic. The Speculative aspect is positive Reason as the negation of the dialectic side, but if one tries to understand these divisions of logic as being isolated from one another this will produce only an inadequate or incomplete conception of them. God's knowledge of Himself in Man, in which Man is the vehicle of God's knowledge, does not make Man the same as God. If I get into a vehicle as a driver, it becomes an extension or instrument of my being. I do not thereby become the vehicle, nor does the vehicle become me. It may be mine - it is my possession, but it is not me, the possessor. Thus God may know Himself in Man, and the opposite

part/element of God's Infinite Being! -As Hegel says, God knows himself only in and as Man or oneself. Hence one realizes that God is really a process or a dynamic-that of the "infinite"-in which oneself is implicated. Moreover, there is still room for worship and love, i.e., for "God as an Other Person." For there is a whole of which oneself is the "particular" side or aspect and God the "Universal" side, which overlaps and includes oneself. The two sides "together" making up one Person-indeed, the nature of the Infinite demands and requires this. To express this in a more accurate fashion: there is really only one thing or being, not two, that goes through and is involved in this process which is God or the Absolute. My finite I or subject as, "part-icular," is the moment of difference, the "part-ition" or "judgment" (Ur-teil) of the whole, which has split itself into a subjective and objective side. Moreover, the "particular" as such is evil and in a state which must be renounced and in which one should not remain. Only when the Particular is in unity with the Universal, that is, when the Particular has become the Individual, i.e., the Spirit or One Personality, is the Good realized and the Truth actual.

51. III. ON THE INTERSUBJECTIVITY OF THE GOD-SELF

52. Here we will try to further clarify the universal or intersubjective nature of the God-Self. It is to be understood that this God-Self, this "We that is I," is simply a synonym for Hegel's "Spirit," which we shall also refer to as the "Ec-static Self"-all these names seem to be necessary to get at something which has never really been discussed before; this will change in time. That Spirit or the God-Self is not a "monadic" but rather an "intersubjective" Self that requires an Other and therefore involves the phenomenon of "Recognition," becomes clearer when we look at some of Hegel's definitions of "Spirit." First in the Phenomenology:

53. (1) "[Spirit is the] absolute Substance that is the unity of the different Self-Consciousnesses existing for themselves in the complete freedom and independence [Selbstständigkeit] of their opposition: I that is We, and We that is I." (110)

54. (2) "Absolute Spirit" [is a] "reciprocal recognition" ... "the existence [Dasein] of the I that has expanded into a duality [Zweiheit]" ... "it is God appearing in the midst of those who know themselves as pure knowing." (408-9)

55. (3) "It is Spirit which, in the duplication of its Self-Consciousness and in the independence of both, has the

perspective may simultaneously be present. From the perspective of Man, Man comes to know God. They are two different perspectives of one and the same thing, but the different perspectives are not lost in the "one thing" because that thing is multifaceted, not monotonous sameness. A diamond has many facets. From one perspective it appears red, from another green, etc. Because God is many-faceted, not just one Person, but God and His manifestations, His abode, paraphernalia, devotees, etc. then there are different perspectives from that of God's to those of his servitors. The World, therefore, is not an illusion. It is real, but its being independent of God is illusory. We are also part of God's world, but our independence from Him is illusory. This is not mere religious dogmatism but finds its rational conception within philosophy. The Universal, Particular and Individual are all necessary aspects of the Concept in its circular movement. As such it is a unity in difference. The word "universe" means a unity of diverse things. It is a one that contains difference. In the same way there is a variegated spiritual universe known to pure thought. The Universal, Particular and Individual are all required together in their circular dialectical development. To say that all this is God is to miss the point, viz. that there is God and what is other to God, and that leads to misconceptions like "We are God" or "I am God." There is a spiritual world in which God lives together and in harmony with all. That picture-thought provides the proper conception for philosophy.

51. THE CONCEPT OF INTERSUBJECTIVITY HAS NO MEANING IF THERE IS ONLY GOD.

52. The "We that is I" was previously explained as the nature of universal Being-for-self to also be the multiplicity of being-for-self as well. It cannot only be one or the other. It has to be both according to the logical necessity of the Concept of being-for-self. We may also try to understand this by watching the movement of thought in the proposition "We that is I." Here, thought tends to get stuck in the I, as if the We were lost in the oneness of I. But the We is not lost. It returns back to itself, thought moves back to recapture the multiplicity that seemed lost. There are two sides to this proposition, not just I.

53. This quote explains that there are different independent self-consciousness, but because they are all self-conscious they are identical - not One. Identical does not mean One. The universal is self-particularizing, negative activity, thus both We and I simultaneously.

54. Reciprocal means that there must be two sides. I know God, and God knows Himself in me. Both are simultaneously true. This can only be understood by pure scientific thinking, not by abstract thinking.

55. All this says is that the self-particularizing universal self-consciousness is simultaneously one and different. As

certainty of its unity with itself ... [Moreover] in its pure consciousness it unites all self-consciousness." (211)

56. (4) "[Spirit is] the Self-Consciousness that is recognized, and which has its own self-certainty in the other free self-consciousness, and possesses its truth precisely in that other" (212). "Within the universal Spirit ... each has only the certainty of himself ... he is as certain of the others as he is of himself ... I regard them as myself and myself as them." (213)

57. (5) And then there is Hegel's oft-cited definition of the Trinity which is a perfect expression of Spirit, namely as "knowledge of oneself in one's other," or "the Father knows himself in the Son," that again is best expressed in Hegel's account of "Person" in the Philosophy of Religion. There he writes:

58. [In the case of the Trinity, the problem is that three persons, as such, cannot be one. But] the solution is contained in the fact that there is only one person, and this three-fold personality, this personality which is thus posited merely as a vanishing moment, expresses the truth ... It is, in short, the nature or character of what we mean by "person" or "subject" to abolish its isolation, its separateness. [For example] Morality and love just mean the giving up of particularity or of the particular personality and its extension to universality ... In friendship and love I give up my abstract personality, and in this way win it back as concrete personality. It is just this winning back of personality by the act of absorption, by the being absorbed into the other, which constitutes the true nature of personality (III, 24f).

59.

60. We can bring all these definitions of Spirit or the God-Self together in the following way. My True Personality, as concrete and universal, is in its essence a Universal Personality, one that includes within itself the Other as such, hence all other persons. So construed it is the essence and basis of Love. For as Hegel says, it is the I expanded into a duality, a state where I regard all others as myself and myself as them, where I have my truth in them, and they theirs in me. The incredible implication of this is that this means that "you and I in truth are, constitute together, but one personality or person": recall the phrase, "I am in the Other, the Other is in me." This precisely is Spirit, the God-Self, the True God. It thus involves the renouncing/negating of one's separate self/ego/personality and, by so doing, making oneself a "Universal-(i.e., All-gemeine = All, all-common, embracing all; cf. Gemeinde = community; hence)-Communal, or All Self." In this way one also becomes an active participant in the One Universal Self-Consciousness ("The One Consciousness" for short). Of course the other important point that must not be lost sight of is that within or as this One Self or Person, one still retains one's independence and freedom; for Spirit is "the unity of the Selves in the freedom of their

pure negativity it simultaneously differentiates itself and negates or integrates that differential

56. I see you as self-conscious and free, and you see me the same way. I see my own qualities in you. Thus I regard you as myself. We are identical, but not one. Our qualities are universal; they belong to the universality that particularizes itself as us. It is the inherent nature of the concrete universal to particularize itself like this due to its negativity.

57. The Trinity is difficult to understand because there are three atomic individuals (Persons) who are ALSO one Person, not only One. If God were One, the Trinity would be destroyed, and with it Christianity. God is simultaneously three in one. This is a mystery for the Understanding but not for Reason.

58. It is not that the truth is only One. This may be the conclusion that the Understanding likes to reach because Understanding is not capable of comprehending contradiction. It operates on the abstract principle of Either/Or. Reason operates on the principle of simultaneous identity and difference. Thus the rational perspective is that God is BOTH three and one simultaneously. The "giving up" of personality in love is not annihilation of oneself; otherwise there could never be love. Two friends, two lovers, etc. require the presence of both sides of the relationship in order that there be love. The "giving up" of oneself is negation, sublation or surrender - not annihilation, not merging into one. That would annihilate love along with the disappearance of the two that are united by it.

59.

60. There is no such thing as One Personality. It has already been established that personality requires that there must be Other in order for Personality to be. So abstract Personality is no personality at all. It is mere abstraction to think that the universality of Personality has any more than formal significance. Particularity Individuality is required along with Universality. Particularity means multiplicity is also involved - automatically - due to the unity-multiplicity associated with being-for-self. These aspects are never isolated from one another in reality, but exist in their concreteness as eternal movement - as the Absolute. To describe this Absolute world as only God is a misconception. It is a spiritual universe, a spiritual world with God as the central attractive Supreme Entity or Lord, and as soon as the concept of Lord is grasped then the rest of the spiritual kingdom and its inhabitants is also included.

The language of this part of the paragraph sounds more in line with the speculative. "Identity-in-difference" is the correct idea, where one does not lose one's separate identity. This is the correct viewpoint. But one must not misunderstand this to mean that the Other is myself so that

opposition." Thus we must think "unity in opposition," "identity in difference"-something that can only be done speculatively. It may help if one thinks of the state of being "in love with someone." True, one is outside oneself and lives in the other, which is a great feeling. However, notice that one does not completely dissolve or disappear in the other, rather one maintains oneself while engaged in the very activity of giving oneself up! This experience of "ecstasy," of "standing outside oneself," of continually being and living both inside and outside oneself at once that is characteristic of the New Self or God-Self may be-and to the natural self will be-at first somewhat "weird" and disconcerting; one has to gradually come into it or "gently put it on," i.e., via the proper education, etc.

61. Finally there is the problem of the "One and the Many." If it is indeed true that "I am the Absolute," and "You also are the Absolute," and "Every I is the Absolute," How can this be or be thought-since, as all know (especially Spinoza), two Absolutes do not tolerate each other? Briefly: to solve this one must rise to "speculation" or Reason and not remain in Verstand and Reflection! Thus, the answer lies in (i) the dialectic of "Reciprocity," i.e., in the "move" from Necessity to Freedom and The Concept (and "Spirit"); and (ii) in securing the proper meaning of "the I" and "the Absolute," which latter is usually conceived as Substance, as self-grounded, -related, containing all determinacy within itself, etc. But, logic shows that one substance to be a substance demands a second substance, etc, the result being the identity of the two substances, i.e., "Necessity." Or, in Hegel's words, it is recognized that both are equally "in themselves" and "posited by the other." This further allows for a "One" which contains, and can accommodate, an indefinite diversity within itself. To express this in "reflective" form: On the Pure level we are One, sharing the same Universal Consciousness (cf. Fichte's "Absolute I"), whereas on the Empirical level we remain and function as discrete individuals. (iii) Also the "I" in question (in "I am the Absolute") is as we have seen not a particular exclusive I but a Universal inclusive I, i.e. a "We," an "intersubjective I." Let's not forget that it was the precise function of the Phenomenology to answer the question, What really is the "I" (or Consciousness)?-as well as "What really is "Being," the I's correlate? The answer given to both questions, is that the "I" is not an individual I but rather is "Spirit," a "community" or "commonwealth" of I's; and "Being" also reveals itself to be "Spirit."

62. IV. FURTHER CONCERNS ADDRESSED

63. Here we shall deal briefly with several vital additional concerns or apparent "dangers" connected with the teaching of the God-Self and the formula "I/We are God."

64. (1) Hegel would say that it is the extremes, the "left" and "right" construals of the doctrine (of the God-Man unity) that involve error and are harmful, while the mean or "center" interpretation is not and rather is absolutely

there is only One Self. The finite selves exist within the Absolute as negated, surrendered to God. This is the meaning of oneness. Not that All is One. All are drawn toward God and thus there is oneness of creation. Self-particularizing Universality (God) posits (emanation) creation and creatures (Particularity), knows Himself in that Otherness and thus returns to Himself out of that Otherness (Individuality). These are the moments of the Concept that exists only as this eternal movement, and is not to be conceived only as a result, or as any one moment in isolation from the others. This is not an artificially contrived theory but expresses what everyone already knows but may not be able to articulate. Only the "I am God" theory feels weird, because it flies in the face of reality.

61. One and Many is not a problem - it is very easy to understand. The universe is a unity-in-diversity that is what it means to be a uni-verse. The United States is a unity of diverse states. Any nation consists of a sovereign Law or government as the Necessity under which its many Free citizens must act. If they follow the Law then they are free to act. If they violate the Law then their Freedom is lost and they must be punished or put to death. The same is true in the case of those who are trapped in material existence. Material existence means that one has rebelled against the sovereignty of God and therefore lost his original freedom and is forced to die. To be rehabilitated one has to accept the death of his own independent life apart from God and be willing to surrender to the Lord where he can again be free. By dying to one's independent life one can live under the Laws of God. This is the dialectic idea expressed in language that anyone may understand.

Spirit is not a big slab, an amorphous One, like we see continuously reappearing in "2001: A Space Odyssey." Spirit means the spiritual world, and that includes the material world as its disappearing aspect. In order to be disappearing it must be real. Something has to be or appear in order to disappear. The inner workings and differential delineations of the spiritual world open up to the speculative philosopher, but we must be careful not to interject common habituated abstract thinking into that plane. Philosophy is Science and has the task to comprehend what IS. Religion is an objectively existing reality to be comprehended. Therefore, Scientific thinking means to comprehend the Reason that is there already in Religion, and not to create any new idea or new religion.

62.

63. By going beyond what is already given to everyone in Religion, into the "wild blue yonder" of imagination beyond objective reality is to fall into unknown danger.

64. Abstract Understanding can only pose the contradiction between Man and God in terms of Either/Or. Either we are God or we are not God. If we are God then

beneficial and a "God-send." The one extreme, "We are not God," keeps a fixed "gulf" between the two and by doing so denies Man access to the Truth, to God, and fulfillment; this results in alienation and the pursuit of merely finite ends. The other extreme, especially in the form of "I am God" and as largely construed by "New Agers" and contemporary "cultists" of all varieties, though inherently closer to the Truth can lead, as Hegel says -and if not supplemented with adequate clarification-to the false view that one's particular, natural, empirical I as such (as un-yielded, -negated) is God or the Absolute Being; which, according to Hegel, is precisely the standpoint of absolute evil. Thus it is the "center" alone that contains the True, viz., the unity and inseparability of the two; that is, so long as it is accompanied with the proper explanation that the "I" intended is one's universal (ec-static), and not one's particular I, and what this precisely means. The other well-known danger is the error of believing that one's own I alone and no one else's is God or the Absolute. But this can be easily avoided, viz., by recognizing the "universality" of human nature and selfhood (i.e., "what is true of You, must also be true of Me," etc).

65. (2) Of course religious extremists or "fundamentalists" such as the "Christian Right" will (perhaps) never buy the doctrine that "We are God" or that God did not exist "prior" to Jesus and the Incarnation as, for example, they insist on an "absolute distinction" between God and Creation (Nature/Man). However, good metaphysicians that we are, we, with our "heretical" doctrine, can accommodate their view. (i) We can say, e.g., that the key lies in how one interprets "God's begetting of the Son." First, they will of course grant that God, as Father, is not God without the Son. Now, since it can be said (on the metaphysical or true level) that there is no time (Enc. §258, PS 487, NM 366), it follows that the "time" of the "eternal begetting of the Son"-which "time" is instantaneous or eternal, i.e. logical (cf. "B must follow A")-is therefore the same as the time that "elapsed" from the beginning of the Creation (in Genesis) to the Incarnation of God in Jesus Christ! So in a sense God did exist "prior" to the Incarnation; rather, there was no "prior" to the Incarnation, that is, from the eternal or metaphysical point of view. (ii) We can also accept their "unscientific" picture (Vorstellen)-version of the story (of the Concept's movement), namely, "that Jesus, God's Son, pre-existed, was sitting on the throne in heaven with the Father and Holy Spirit, with angels, seraphims etc etc, then later, after the Creation and Fall, the Father turned to the Son and said, 'Now, go and redeem the world,' whereupon He entered Mary's womb, was born etc, etc." We can accept it, that is, not only because we can decipher it via the Concept, recognizing that it does in fact portray the Truth albeit in a different (perhaps for some inadequate) form, but because the final result is the same as ours, namely, the "divinization of Man" and the "re-locating of God down here and in us." That is to say, there is more than enough scriptural support for this à la Schelling "Church of John"

all is one and we have one absolute. If we are not God and there is God as well as us then we have two absolutes, which is unacceptable. This kind of thinking is characteristic of the abstract Understanding. Speculative thinking straight away considers the God/Man situation as involving simultaneous identity and difference. It does not take the "reductionistic" attitude characteristic of the abstractionist who tries to resolve everything at the level of Understanding. The contradiction is allowed to stand as it is. The Absolute is both God and Man, simultaneously and contradictorily. As Hegel says in his Encyclopedia Logic, "everything is a contradiction." Understanding refuses to accept that concrete truth and thereby creates a world of mental abstraction that allows it to ignore reality and live in a subjective mental world. To break out of that world is difficult because, as Hegel reminds us in the *Phenomenology* (§ 33) thought determinations get their substance from the Ego, and if that is fixed then so are the thought determinations. To fluidize the fixed ego requires it to relinquish its subjectivity and immerse it into the dialectical flux of the object. This is like death to the fixity of the ego.

65. This fluidization is the universality of the ego, its entrance into the pure negativity of the universality of Reality. It does not lose its character as a particular knower in that universality; only its perspective is inverted. It is no longer a particular knower in which universality has its location; rather it knows itself as a predicate of the universal that expresses itself in and as the particular individual.

Oneness means indeterminate or undifferentiated universality. It is the same indeterminateness as pure Being with which Hegel begins the Science of Logic. Because Being is only the **beginning** of Science it is a pure abstraction, i.e. one-sidedness, as is the nature of every beginning since what is to follow has not yet been explicitly developed. Being and Nothing are abstractions. To say that the Absolute IS, i.e. that it is Being, really says nothing about the Absolute. It is the merest thing to say that something IS. The determinate being of the Absolute requires that negation be present in it, and thus the first concrete determination of the Absolute truth is not Being but Becoming. Abstract Being is no doubt oneness, but that is an abstraction of the Absolute; that is not the genuine Absolute Truth in its concrete reality. The Absolute is not just Being, it is Subject as well as Substance, and therefore differentiated by its own intrinsic nature. This is the Speculative conception.

Thus the abstract universality of the Absolute is the aspect of indeterminate oneness in the Absolute. We can call this the all-accommodating aspect of the Absolute. Everything is overarched or embraced by this universality. The next aspect is its particularity. The Absolute not only embraces everything within it, it also permeates everything within it. Thus we can say that Spirit dwells within everyone. The third aspect is its Individuality, the aspect that attracts or

or "God-Self" teaching we are defending. For example: "I [God] will pour out my Spirit on them," "I will dwell and walk in them," "I and the Father will make our abode in you," "[we are to] grow up into the fullness of the stature of Christ [i.e. into God or Agape]," "be filled with all the fullness [pleroma] of God," "[we are] partakers of the divine nature [hence, are divine]," and "I said you are gods and goddesses." In other words, though the fundamentalists may not accept the doctrine "We are God," they will endorse the teaching that "We can be (or are) one with God"-that is, by participation in God or Christ's divinity.

66. (3) Another objection and possible danger is this: "If 'We are God' does this mean I can do and should attempt to do all the things God is said to be able to do?"-create worlds, control the elements, walk on water, raise the dead, heal the blind and diseased, read minds? Am I then omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, omnibenevolent, etc? This is a tricky and complex issue. Here we will simply say that this is an issue that we must discuss, we should keep an open mind and not rule out anything without prior investigation. It is by no means lightly to be dismissed; indeed, our discussions indicate that there must be some truth to this, seeing that God is or may be ultimately identical with our innermost self and being. The fact is that not only do all scriptures lend support to this, e.g. Christ says, "Greater works than these you shall do," but things like "faith healing" are nothing new and are well-documented; moreover today there is widespread interest in and "scientific" inquiries into such things as telekinesis, ESP, parapsychology, "out-of-body" and "after death" experiences, etc. However, it is nonetheless true that all great teachers do advise their students not to seek these "powers" or put a premium on them, as they can be dangerous if used with the wrong motives (e.g. self-aggrandizement) and lead to set-backs in one's spiritual development. Most say that love and service are to have priority over all else (see Hegel on ESP, etc, at Enc. §406 zus).

67. (4) Finally there is the objection of religious leaders: How can one teach this 'We are God' doctrine to our congregation? To children? This is also complex and is an issue that must be discussed. The simple answer is one does not teach it to children, and to adults only with care. The first point is this, if it does indeed express the Truth, it must be taught. The second point involves the fact that the spiritual education of the child or individual parallels that of the Race or World Spirit as it is presented in History. That is: at first the merely "natural man" recognizes a "higher power" above and outside himself; next he realizes that this higher power is inside himself; while the final lesson involves seeing that this higher power is really himself, i.e. his inner True Self-as Hegel says, "we must learn to know God as our true and essential Self" (Enc. §194 zus). This fact indicates a "three-tiered principle" for the formatting of religious/spiritual education

holds everything together as a systematic whole. In the *Bhagavat Purana* (Bhagavat means God, and *Purana* means "ancient" knowledge) the Absolute Truth is established in three features as *Brahman*, *Paramatma*, and *Bhagavan*. *Brahman* is the all accommodating, *Paramatma* the all-pervading, and *Bhagavan* the all-attractive Supreme Absolute Truth. Thus Hegel's conceptual system of the Absolute is in conformity with the ancient scriptures of India. This only confirms the universality or scientific objectivity of that system. It is not merely a Christian perspective.

66. According the system of Yoga, there are many *siddhis* or mystical perfections that one can attain. Simply by grasping the identity of thought and being, one can already be elevated to an extraordinary state of consciousness. As long as one remains in the consciousness that subjective thinking is being, however, one falls into the more primitive condition of ancient thinking. It is not the thinking that belongs to the I, but thinking that is simply submitted to, thinking that is already in the object but is petrified or reified for the subjective agent. By giving up subjectivity and recognizing thought outside of oneself, one comes to objective thinking - that I am part of a self-thinking rational reality, God. But here we still have the distinction of on-looking Subject opposed to Object. In Absolute thinking it is realized that the Absolute is the thinking Subject (God) and the finite I is the vehicle of such thought. At the same time the finite I has its own freedom (independent otherness) to relate to God as a thinking self-conscious finitude. Both are equally valid, simultaneously and contradictorily, in the Absolute. This kind of knowledge is much more significant than the development of any "powers" that keep the living entity in its separation from God in an exploitive condition. Material existence means egocentric exploitation of a hostile environment. Spiritual existence means God-centric dedication in a harmonious environment. Renunciation is the middle ground sought by liberationists.

67. There is already enough miseducation of the youth and adults going on in the halls of learning at all levels. We don't need another untrue doctrine based upon an abstract misunderstanding of Hegelian philosophy. This will only cause great harm to the natural spiritual development of human society because they will come to regard Hegelian philosophy, which can actually provide a solution to the spiritual decline in the world, as pure abstraction devoid of all spiritual interest and life, rather than as a concrete variegated organic system that is integrated only in the dynamic dialectical development of its differentiated content. That the finite living entity is constitutionally a servant of God does not imply that there is a foreign power over the living entity. Rather the homeland of the infinite truth and freedom of the finite is reached in its self-negation or surrender to God.

(corresponding to Schelling's division of Christian History into the Churches of Peter/Catholicism, Paul/Protestantism and John/Kingdom Come). According to this Principle, the child is to be taught and aligned to the initial concept of God (viz., as "Father;" i.e., here the "We are not God" formula has its place, etc), the adolescent or young adult to the intermediate concept of God (viz., as "Son;" "We are not God, but may become one with God"), and the mature adult-who has passed through the earlier stages-to the highest concept of God-viz., as "Spirit," "God-Self," or "We are God," and with proper explanation.