

Thomas Aquinas and Georg Hegel on the Trinity

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INTRODUCTION

The Trinity is reconciliation in itself, for it is affirmation, negation and negation of negation. To know that God is three is to know that otherness is in God himself, and that it is overcome there. This truth is the absolute truth in itself and for itself. It does not constitute a mystery, for 'what is directed towards rationality is not a mystery for it; it is a mystery only for the senses and their way of looking at things.'¹ All the activity and content of philosophy consists in knowing that God is the Trinity. We saw it earlier in the system, particularly the Logic, where this notion of the absolute Idea, of the God One-and-Three, was elaborated without express reference to religion. From all this we cannot conclude, except with much caution, that any philosophy, at any time, could have reached this conception. Philosophy is reflection on experience. And Hegel knows very well that the notion of a Trinitarian God is born of the experience of Christianity.² But for him the experience is not contingent. As with reflection, it is the work of Reason, the manifestation of Spirit in history. Each philosophy, as each religion, comes in its time. The privilege of Hegel is to have been born at the moment when absolute religion had reached maturity and to have been able from then on to reflect on human experience in its totality. Also, in his eyes, the affirmation of the Trinitarian God is neither a "theological" affirmation (in the sense of St. Thomas) nor a thesis of "Christian philosophy" (improperly rational, because inspired by faith), but it stems directly from the philosophical order, and the task of showing the truth of it belongs to philosophy.³

This passage from the late Professor Van Riet's regrettably neglected and courageous study of 1965 or earlier (it was first presented in Latin at a conference of Thomistic philosophers and theologians at Rome in the 1950's) suitably opens our theme and illustrates our purpose here. He might seem to be presenting an account of the differences in presuppositions of Hegel and of St. Thomas here. Without prejudice to Van Riet's other more general affirmation that "In Saint Thomas there seem to be two partial, complementary systems" one can ask whether Hegel and Saint Thomas are

¹ *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, Vol. III, p. 17; cf. SW, t. 16, p.233.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 99, - SW, t. 16, p. 308.

³ Georges van Riet, "The Problem of God in Hegel", Parts II-III: *Philosophy Today*, Vol. XI, Number 2/4, Summer 1967, pp. 75-105 (81). French original in *Revue Philosophique de Louvain*, Vol. 63, August 1965. Pp. 353-418 (i.e. incl. Part I).

not in close agreement nonetheless regarding this to many astonishing affirmation that the Trinitarian affirmation concerning God “stems directly from the philosophical order”, not least because “the task of showing the truth of it belongs to philosophy”.

Thus it is conceded that “Hegel knows very well that the notion of a Trinitarian God is born of the experience of Christianity”. But once born in this way it is up to philosophy alone to either demonstrate it or give reasons for not finding it demonstrable. We find in St. Thomas, it is true, repeated statements that the Trinity or some other doctrines are above or beyond “natural” or human reason. But how clear is this statement? Does it mean that we could never have found it out without the life and work of Jesus Christ and our assimilation of it? Hegel surely agrees with that. Or does Saint Thomas mean that the Trinity remains in itself an impenetrable mystery? I would submit that his treatise precisely on the Trinity, from the *Summa theologiae*, proves that he does not mean that, leaving us with the view defended by Hegel.

The difference here is rather that Saint Thomas is writing as a confessional theologian and just in that capacity he tends to content himself with showing the reasonableness of the doctrine, rather than with anything one might call proof. Hegel, however, arrives at the same position but from the opposite end. We can see this if we study his (posthumous) *Lectures on the Proofs of the Existence of God*, in an unfinished state though they be. Here he takes distance, for the reasons he supplies, from the idea as such of proof of God. Naturally this includes proof of the Trinity. But he does this by an appeal to the greater certainty of God in himself, as upholding the whole of his own system, “science”, of Logic mainly.

One may appreciate the force of this consideration better by considering how it is upheld a few pages on in Van Riet’s text, where one gets the very feel of *The Science of Logic* and related Hegelian texts.

The absolute truth, we have seen, is that God is Trinity, or again that the God-man died and rose again. To be acquainted with this truth is to conform it to oneself, to unite it to the self-consciousness is to perceive that “*in this truth, the relation of man to this truth is also posited*”⁴. In a word, it is to discover that not only God’s essence, but also man’s essence is to be spirit, reconciliation of contraries. On one side man is nature, finiteness, mortality; on another he is a going beyond nature, an aspiring to infinity and to eternal life. He is a being divided, contradictory, who endlessly negates himself, who never is what he is; from this interior contradiction come the sorrow and unhappiness of his conscience. In the “Kingdom of the Spirit” man finally

⁴ Cf. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, tr. J. Sibree, p.324.

understands that this contradiction is constitutive of his very being, and that it can be overcome (*aufgehoben*). He does not have to resign himself to it, as if it (contradiction) found its origin in an irreducible dualism (of being and nothingness, of good and evil). He does not have to wait for it to be lifted by another (as in Judaism) or in another life (as in the Platonic conception of heavenly beatitude). It *can be reconciled without being suppressed*, for it clings to the very essence of reality. True being is identity with oneself in difference. It is spirit. God himself includes finiteness, death, and surpasses them. Man is God's image, God's son, reconciliation. He knows that not only the history of Jesus, but also his own history, grasped in all the depth of their meaning, are the manifestation of the eternal history of the Trinitarian God.⁵

This passage breathes the atmosphere of, employs the concepts that Hegel first exhibits in *The Phenomenology of Mind* through analysis and employment of which he there arrives at his position, undoubtedly Trinitarian, as set out at length in Chapter VII C of that work. A question requiring immediate investigation, however, is whether dependence on the so to say home-bred concepts (but are they? That is also a question, perhaps the same one) gives us a Hegel using the language of Trinitarianism, and even of Christianity, for alien purposes, as some charge. McTaggart, himself a professed atheist and yet profoundly Hegelian, levelled this charge. The ground on which he and the others there stand, however, is that of an unspiritual adherence to the mortiferous *letter* of old texts concerning which they may express either belief or unbelief indifferently. They conspire thereby, I regret to say, in that "certainty against the spirit" that Hegel found almost the unpardonable "sin" (cf. the 1830 Preface to his *Encyclopaedia*). He himself does not say "sin" and I use the term in the first place analogically. The attitude, the procedure, is against the whole notion of the "development of doctrine" which, after Newman, the modern Church clearly espouses. Honest or covertly malicious disagreement can reign unchecked here and the only solution is to seek to demonstrate whatever can be demonstrated. It is, further, impossible or simply undesirable to attempt to judge between the so to say reflex atheism of McTaggart and this "certainty against the spirit" of those professing belief "against the spirit" in this way. Both have refused journey's "end", whether they get off the train earlier or later. Or, we may regard the atheism as a form of apophatic theology, in one who acknowledges the Hegelian Idea in its fullest force and speaks in terms of "heaven" where, according to him, we are now but without, in our regular system of misperception, realising it. "Realising" here has an inbuilt ambiguity in unity similar to that found in "end". Thus in Hegel the "end of time" and perfect achievement

⁵ Van Riet, *op. cit.*, p.82.

or, again, realisation, coincide, whether in fact or, for just that reason (the factual as normative), in sense.⁶

What we have so far achieved, then, is to point to a coincidence of approach in Hegel and Aquinas transcending the difference of method, scholastic or discursive. It may, more fundamentally, be seen as a transcendence (in “sublation”) by Hegel of the duality of systems and approaches in the medieval theologian, duality in the first place of theology and philosophy, the one being the other and conversely. This may also be viewed as an Aristotelian reintegration after the difference introduced by Christian theology, in fulfilment, it is claimed, of the latter’s own “grace”, philosophy having a dignity able to “hijack” also this seemingly most theological term. There is no other way, after all, of showing what, along with absolute idealism, is surely a quasi-dogma of philosophy, as it is of reason itself, namely that “reality is friendly”⁷.

*

But have we, after all, achieved this? Is the synthesis legitimate, i.e. true?

Among the historical religions Saint Thomas is only interested in Christianity or, more exactly, in Judeo-Christianity, i.e. Christianity understood as the extension and result of Judaism. If he directs his attention in an exclusive manner to only one religion, it is not from a rational choice, motivated by the specific content of this religion, but for a quite different reason: Christianity (or already Judaism before it) is the only true religion; it is “revealed” by God, due to a free and gratuitous initiative of God. All other religions – pagan religions – are only the work of men. Judeo-Christianity is therefore not formally considered as the best or the purest of religions, the one which would respond to man’s aspirations, but as the only one which takes its origin from God himself. Saint Thomas studies it formally as such, he studies it as a theologian, starting with an appropriate “first principle”: faith in a divine revelation.⁸

⁶ The apparent blindness of both Anscombe and Geach to this complex univocity of “end”, they did not so much deny it as fail to see it, is regrettable, showing however the limits, the shortcomings, of “fideism” as an attitude. Intended as putting philosophy in its (subordinate) place, it merely falls away from it altogether, not granting to it the perfect or “highest” form of “the content” as the Idea.

⁷ I borrow this phrase, as sharing its intention, from the Thomist metaphysician Leo Elders SVD, to whom I also owe much else.

⁸ Van Riet, *op. cit.* p.75.

Here we have the ground, precisely stated, for a discipline (is that really the right word?) held apart from philosophy as “sacred” theology. It would be false, however, to say that there is no recognition of this principle in Hegel’s thought, his philosophy if you will. Rather, he states, in all seriousness, that philosophy is *der höchste Gottesdienst*, the highest worship, while Christianity, Hegel claims, giving his reasons, is “the absolute religion”. Therefore it is incumbent upon him to identify this religion with the true philosophy or, if it is preferred, to thus, since maintaining its status as a religion specifically, present it as swallowing up human philosophy in its old sense. Precisely here, however, the doubt presents itself as to whether philosophy can allow itself to be thus finitely characterised. Was not, rather, thought from the first divine or absolute? How else does the Augustinian demonstration of God from truth as necessarily in the mind function? The connecting link is, precisely, **Necessity**, as is highlighted in Hegel’s development of the categories, where necessity is equated with the perfection of what is, consequently, divine or absolute freedom.⁹ In view of this connection, anyhow, we have equally to say, to concede, that true philosophy, as highest divine service, coincides with true religion, identified by Hegel as “the absolute religion”, i.e. with “religion itself” (Henri de Lubac, who prefaced this identification of Christianity with the disclaimer that it is, nonetheless, “not a religion”, with implicit emphasis upon the indefinite article. In Hegel’s case we have no right to judge this identification weakened by his procedural treatment of Christianity along with the other religions of mankind, since, again, he is explicit that it is “the absolute religion” and here the *definite* article might well seem to ask to be omitted, though this is scarcely possible in German linguistic usage. The absolute, namely, is absolute simply. Or, there is concealed here, but concealed as lying open, the characteristic resolution of Christian faith and practice into unqualified “spirit and truth”. Hence the saying (by the Son) that sins against the Son shall be forgiven, but not sins against the Spirit. Even such sins, however, are not easy to distinguish from simple immaturity, e.g. of the neophyte with his or her characteristic “certainty against the spirit” singled out by Hegel in the later 1830 Preface to his *Encyclopaedia*, as mentioned above.

So Hegel can be found to be professing faith as the highest, even transcendent principle, functioning precisely, however, as unlocking ever more truth or, in a word, *sophia*, listed by Thomas as an intellectual virtue, the highest, which faith, a “theological” virtue, perfects. Thus does Hegel announce his own ambition, his felt need rather, to transcend mere *philo-*

⁹ For **Necessity**, the category, cf. Hegel, *Enc. I* (“The Science of Logic”), 147 to 244 or end of the Logic.

sophia towards *sophia* itself. He clearly sees *faith* as the agent of this (*theoria*) as, for example, he saw it as the agent (*praxis*) cleansing Europe (and eventually, after his time, North America and those states involved in “the slave trade” generally) from the infamy of human slavery.

The universal in its true and comprehensive meaning is a thought which, as we know, cost thousands of years to make it enter into the consciousness of men. The thought did not gain its full recognition till the days of Christianity. The Greeks, in other respects so advanced, knew neither God nor even man in their true universality ... Man as man was not then recognised to be of infinite worth and to have infinite rights. ... the real ground why there are no more slaves in Christian Europe is only to be found in the very principle of Christianity itself, the religion of absolute freedom. Only in Christendom is man respected as man, in his infinitude and universality.¹⁰

Add to this, though, in confirmation of our general thesis of development, that, once proposed, this idea finds acceptance world-wide. Similarly faith both proposes the philosophical agenda and, as *virtus*, enables its fulfilment, overcoming “the world”, as it was said. Thus, whatever an individual’s capacity to know the truth of God’s being, as the Vatican Council of 1870 declared it can be known or “proved”, yet both the historic creeds enjoin belief, i.e. faith, in God as their first article: *credo in (unum) Deum*. Thus if any individual, or philosophy as such, does know the truth of the being of the incomprehensible God he may, as some of Van Riet’s expressions seem to indicate, in that respect have advanced from faith to the, analogously, heavenly estate, nonetheless the virtue of faith or, in religion, its precepting, is there to fall back on as also to enliven or possibly restore that knowledge, in old age for example. One may recall the words: “Because you have seen me you believe”, suggesting that faith and knowledge are compatible while adding, “Blessed are they who have not seen and yet believe”. A normal philosophy of faith as a virtue, necessary therefore to human flourishing, in “virtue” of the unity of the virtues, is quite compatible with this. Thus Peter Geach, in his set of lectures on the virtues, includes the three theological virtues with the four cardinals as one set, without demur or apology. Regrettably, however, he condemns the Thomistic thesis of the unity of the virtues as “a monstrous doctrine”. One should, I would argue, rather be prepared to see how the unconventional act, whatever it be, of a virtuous man might yet instance the virtue with which an opposite precept is, let us say, conventionally associated, just or rather as periods of inebriation, or even a compulsive habit the subject might wish to be rid of, patiently

¹⁰ Van Riet, *op. cit.* p.75.

suffered or whatever, might be included in the respective virtue, concerning which, anyhow, no mortal can finally judge. In general everyone thinks what he or she does is right (for him), though that is surely not the final judgment either. So much for ethics.

*

Van Riet continues:

This recourse to a new first principle distinct from reason brings about two important consequences. The first is that theology will form a closed system requiring its own intelligibility or its own light. Revealed truths stem from an order other than the natural order of reason; these are “mysteries” freely communicated by God and proposed to the acceptance or obedience of Faith. Their object is a gift, a grace, of a “supernatural” order. The fact of the Alliance, its content, its development in history, remain “contingent”, “irrational” (or more exactly, “supra-rational”) data, knowable solely by revelation, whose ultimate “reason” is found in the absolute freedom of God. Sacred History is a *history* that is learned *a posteriori* and whose principal author is God. Judaism paves the way for Christianity, for there is a continuity between the Old and New Testaments, such that it is a question of a single revelation which God progressively bestows according to his good will. Faith itself – Jewish faith as much as Christian faith – is God’s work in man, the realization by God of his mysterious purposes. Theology locks up and forms a system, it is only understood from the inside of the system, it is the intelligence of the believer.¹¹

The underlying point here is that faith too is a virtue and therefore, as does God himself (it is why we worship him), it falls under “right reason” as precisely what extends and further enlightens it. Grace, as perfecting nature, in *this* sense belongs to nature. Hence we speak of unregenerate nature, implying nature’s transcending destiny, to be “born (*natus*) again”. This position, in general terms, clearly belongs, however, with the stress laid by Saint Duns Scotus, he having now been “raised to the altars” of the Catholic Church, upon the *necessity* for man of divine incarnation, independently of any supposedly contingent “fall”, more clearly than we find in St. Thomas or St. Augustine. The reconciliation here should proceed by way of recognition that a *felix culpa* is not a *culpa* simply speaking as separable from finitude generally, i.e. it is not as such personally imputable. The “rebirth” of baptism is hence our true birth (a point stressed by Herbert McCabe OP, e.g. in his *The New Creation*¹²). This, of course, is Hegel’s

¹¹ Van Riet, pp. 75–76.

¹² He there points out, as I recall at least, that baptism is not the sacrament of

interpretation of the *Genesis* narrative of “the fall” at *Enc. 24*, the *Zusatz* (third part), from which it is difficult to dissent though it certainly implies a calling in question of traditional doctrine concerning the four “preternatural” gifts. There does not seem cause, however, to attach to this tradition greater authority than until recently was seen as belonging to that of Limbo, now “officially” discarded. Philosophy, anyhow, if it is regarded as heavenly, cannot import into its purity such extrinsic considerations. The *regula fidei* does not belong to it in its first quality, to “first philosophy”. Rather, faith itself tells the faithful one, the believer, to adhere to and exercise also the intellectual virtue of wisdom, *sophia*. Such considerations are in harmony of course with the assimilation, in *Aufhebung*, of religion, especially where “absolute”, to philosophy. It is quite natural, of course, that this is not understood immediately or, hence, by all and so “ways of behaving” in the Christian community, of faith, namely, continually arise, not to speak of individual acts, that are contrary to the Gospel. That community, nonetheless, cannot fail, appearances notwithstanding, and may not, just therefore, be abandoned. The gates of Hell may seem to be prevailing against it, wrote Hegel a bit despondently, citing Scripture¹³, during the flurry of “enlightenment” he so scornfully castigates, but only to affirm his faith that they will not do so, pointing out that it is our duty to turn, precisely to adapt this same philosophical “critical” current, to the movement of spirit and truth. This was precisely his achievement and it parallels the work of Thomas Aquinas in relation to the Aristotelian philosophy in what was a revolutionary confrontation with Augustinianism, Augustine remaining all the while his highest authority. Nowhere is this more apparent than in his virtues-based *moral* theology.

*

Van Riet continues (p. 76):

There is a second consequence. If faith is a first principle and, under this heading, source of a systematic insight, nevertheless it should be reconciled with reason which also is a first principle. Saint Thomas maintains the duality of first principles, the distinction of reason and faith, of philosophy and theology, of nature and grace. And he does not succeed in reconciling the two

membership of the Church; it *is* membership of the Church, I recall especially the stressing of “is”. One asks, then, what else it is a sacrament of, surely something after all, and this is doubtless not hard to answer. Birth or rebirth indifferently suggest themselves as candidates.

¹³ *Matthew* 16, 18 (the “Petrine” prophecy, in fact).

systems in a positive manner, but only in a negative way. They are negatively compatible, as two partial and complementary systems; they do not oppose each other, but neither do they invoke each other. No doubt, it is the same man who elaborates them and, in each of them, it happens that he is handling the same things. But, as systems, they each form an autonomous whole; neither englobes nor “takes up” the other. Let us insist on this, for it is important.

The clear implication is that Hegel, by contrast, does “succeed in reconciling the two systems in a positive manner”. Meanwhile Van Riet continues his critique and it is necessary to see it whole here:

First of all, it is certain that we do not find in Saint Thomas what would constitute a fundamental project for a philosophy of Christian religion, a “reprise” of faith in the system of reason. For him, the philosophical order is abstract in relation to the order of faith. It does neither include it nor exclude it, it simply makes an abstraction from it. The only philosophical affirmation that establishes a bridge between the two orders and assures the complementarity of the two systems is that of the natural desire to see God in his essence. Yet it is necessary to understand this well. If we reduce the natural desire, not only – as it proceeds from itself – to an inefficacious desire, but to a simple openness or to a non-impossibility, all anchoring of the supernatural in nature and all connection between the two orders would be suppressed.

I have changed “abstraction of” to “abstraction from” in the above text, suspecting a mistranslation of the French *de* or similar in context. The philosophical order simply abstracts from faith, for Saint Thomas, a clear difference from Hegel and what lies behind all the stultifying talk of philosophy as the handmaid, *ancilla*, of theology or even of faith, as if the latter did not of itself invite to contemplation, to study, and that with zeal, for its fulfilment. Avicenna, Ibn Sina, shall have given away all his fortune in thanksgiving to God for enlightenment upon a point of philosophy.

Van Riet’s singling out the “natural desire for God” as the only possible bridge “between the two orders”, assuring the complementarity of them, is interesting. It is, I believe, one of the most contested points of Thomism among theologians, for whom the supposed gratuitousness of God’s gift of participation in his own supernatural life must make such a desire non-natural, not to say non-existent. They reduce it, as he says, to an “inefficacious” desire, of which the souls in the now discredited limbo in particular were to be either kept in supreme ignorance or have the pain of its inefficaciousness lulled by this and that. But, as he says, the affirmation of this desire, in all its strength, in art, in religion, in philosophy, assures “the complementarity of the two systems” for anyone who would read them aright, reading Saint Thomas, for example, in, as we say, “the right spirit”. He touchingly laments

the anguish of the great souls among the “pagan” philosophers of old, who “sought in vain and with *angustia* for the true knowledge of God”, recalling his equally touching pages, in fact, on the state of the souls in Limbo, again. This means he admits to their having a natural desire here, though pointedly “inefficacious”, which is not unproblematic since there are plenty of passages in his writings suggesting efficacy, rather, of good will, which must surely include this desire, wherever found. Or what price “Abraham’s bosom”, say, or any who “rejoiced to see my day”, as the Gospel text has it. Yet one needs to take seriously the point Thomas or Augustine, though not the great philosophers mentioned, make about such souls, as having died without reaching the age of reason, say, i.e. as babies, so that they nowhere, it is assumed, made the necessary choice of the good and true. Yet that, too, is quite an assumption, to say no more.

Many commentators of Saint Thomas think that they find in him a “reprise” of reason in a single system, theology, whose first principle is faith. Theology, they say, starts with faith and resorts to reason to understand faith better. It uses reason to show the connection of the mysteries with the whole of philosophical truths. It uses reason, not only in its minor function as a source of coherence but in its power of taking hold of natural truths. In the heart of theology there is a philosophy that has its own value. Although its first principle is faith in revelation, it can “take up” with reason without the latter appearing as a foreign body, for revelation, as does reason, itself teaches that God is the author of nature as well as of grace, of reason as well as of faith.

The whole Humean idea of faith as somehow the contrary of reason seems absurd. Faith is trust in the teachings of one or more found trustworthy, than which nothing is more reasonable. Or how can theology resort to reason if theology, as a *logos*, theo-logy, be other than reason *in actu* or the reasonable? Thus acceptance of authority, understood as the “weakest form of argument”, is precisely this, argument.

But does it follow that Thomistic theology constitutes a single system that covers or assumes philosophy? To us it seems not. For if it were true that philosophy thus incorporated into theology maintains a specific value, it is also true that the ultimate foundation of this value is no longer found *in it*, but in faith. It is faith which assures that God is the author of reason, and that *consequently* the latter is valid in its order. It is clear that finally we say that we trust reason. We *believe* in reason. From then on, while still a value, reason no longer keeps all its value; it is no longer a first principle, it becomes a second, derived principle. Perhaps one will object that, guaranteed by faith, the value of reason is not only conserved, but confirmed, grounded in an even better way. But precisely, to “ground” reason is rather to contest it, to rob it of something of its own autonomy. In fact, in Saint Thomas, it seems that

reason is a first principle in the full sense of the word. If he holds that we cannot believe what we know, how could he concede that we *believe* in reason?¹⁴

But does he hold that, I ask again? Can one say both that we believe in reason and that it is reasonable to believe? What we say in fact is the latter, that it is reasonable to believe, while if we should utter the expression “I believe in reason” we, quite consistently, add under our breath, “because it is reasonable thus to believe”. If it were not reasonable to believe in reason there would be no virtue in doing so, supposing the expression to have sense. The sense, however, would be of the order of believing that my cat is a teapot. It is only that the former declaration is quite naturally recognised as *an idiom* merely or “figure of speech”. But because it is so natural we easily pass over the need for making explicit recognition of this. This, all this, is what has to be born in mind should we want to declare that all Christians, say, believe in God, even or especially those who know Him as truth, as the Idea absolute in Hegel’s phrase.

Behind this phrase, next point, lies recognition of the difficulties, which Hegel and others have brought out, in making of Existence the final category, something recognised in Neoplatonism, also the Christian variety thereof, already. In Hegel’s system of logic, for example, **Existence** is a finite category, together with **Thing**, in the intermediate “Doctrine of Essence”, mediating, that is, between the doctrines of being and of “the notion”. The final category, it is rather brought out, in the earlier *Science of Logic* particularly, viz. the Absolute Idea, is the true account of logic’s *initial* category, viz. **Being**, with which he says “science must begin” and, we there find, must end, but Being as now identified with the Absolute Idea. We can call it God, so long as we are clear that this is not pantheism of the “everything is God” type but rather the converse of this, that God is everything in the sense that being as such is “had” “in” God, sometimes called “panentheism”. As Aquinas had put it, every idea is divine as identical each one, with God and conversely.¹⁵ Hegel expresses this as that each idea is logically *aufgehoben* such that it is, in its difference, one with or the same, and yet not the same, as the divine or absolute Idea, “the world in a grain of sand” as the poet has it. The kinship with the “religious” or sacramental principle is obvious, while it underlies equally the precept of loving the other nearby, or far off, “as self”, though there, in that notion, it takes leave of any supposed world “of things”. It is thus supplemented, by way of explanation, by the Pauline “All things are yours”. Hegel’s thought,

¹⁴ Van Riet, *Ibid.*, pp. 76-77.

¹⁵ Cp. Aquinas, *Summa theol.* Ia, Q 15.

his philosophy if you will, may thus be viewed, and judged, as a thinking through, a reasoned “sublation” (*Aufhebung*) of these “religious” data. Hence his saying that “The business of philosophy is religion and nothing but religion”. Could he have said this of Art, the first in this trilogy of Absolute Spirit? I think we would have to concede this, although a comprehensive philosophy of what we call sense-cognition then calls for exposition, one that would entail, again, the necessity of incarnation. Matter, that is, is itself (a) *created* necessary being, along with angels, should they “exist”, and human souls, in the teaching of Aquinas, while it can well be claimed that this doctrine, of created necessary being, is implicit in the system of Hegel’s Logic as the “method” thereof. And yet if matter too *is* the Idea, as the Idea is matter, then there is no matter. The thought, idea, of it was a mere moment (of representation) in thought’s ascent, its unstoppable Advance, to the Idea as the true Being entirely, though yet again, and thereby, the Idea is *what Being is*. This is the truth, necessarily, behind as supporting what for religion at its abstract highest, was mere paradox, viz. the assertion that with creation we have *ens sed non plus entis* or, similarly, that *viventibus esse est vivere*. Yet it is not, being only itself or only thinking itself, as philosophy has it, life being found nowhere else, since there is nowhere else for it to be found. This is the final unity, but of being and nothing: i.e. it is not pantheism, since the “everything” that is supposed, absurdly, to be God has or is vanished. Rather, “in God we live and move and have our being” (*Acts of the Apostles*), “as even your own poets have said”, poetry being the highest Art, Hegel affirms.

Van Riet continues:

Further, rather than a single system, issuing either from reason or from faith, in Saint Thomas there seem to be two partial, complementary systems, negatively compatible with each other. This negative compatibility, this non-incompatibility, is expressed in the celebrated adages: faith does not contradict reason, but enriches it; grace does not destroy nature but raises it. One also finds it again in the methodological rules concerning relations between the two orders: although revealed mysteries always remain undemonstrable in their value as truth, they can be understood and even elaborated on by reason in their meaningful content; on the other hand, although they have been obtained by the work of an autonomous reason, philosophical statements that contradict a truth of faith must be considered as false and worked out again. This negative compatibility is finally expressed in the very strange case of certain statements that come materially from the two orders, but formally, for a given subject, from one or the other of these two. There are the truths that man can discover with his reason alone, but which God has revealed so that all may know them with certitude, without delay and without risk of error. Whoever does not know them from knowledge

has to believe them, but he who knows them can no longer adhere to them by faith.

I have touched on this supposedly “very strange case” above, expressing my doubt as to whether it is correct interpretation of Thomas to say that he or she “who knows” a given truth “from knowledge”, even though God “has revealed” it, can no longer simply believe it, as exercising faith, it is implied. Possibly Van Riet does not mean this, thinking or implying rather that one does not know anything and cannot ever know it with the same “certitude” as faith, here as a virtue primarily, provides, the “keeping faith” under difficulties, which might seem to conflict with the initial act of faith as breaking with previous habits, all of them even. Some of Hegel’s texts speak for this, although in general the problem does not arise with quite the same starkness within the outlook, the system rather, of absolute idealism. Faith as such is rather sublated towards *absolute knowledge* as being the “final” truth as to *what faith itself* is, viewed, like all ideas, “timelessly”. This after all is quite simply reflected in the Pauline statement that now I know in part but then shall I know as I am known, while “now” we “see as in a glass darkly”, *in aenigma*. This “now”, darkly glassed, namely, is there diagnosed as the very theatre of mere representation, the shadow-world of Plato’s cave virtually. The limitations within that world (i.e. “this” world) are not therefore attributable to faith, which is *itself* fulfilled in “the Idea” (McTaggart’s “heaven”) but to the object, this being an object in part concealed. By this it is faith itself which, by thought, wins through to absolute knowledge. Thought here includes the whole process up to and including that “entry into spirit” which is Hegel’s characterisation of our death. Here I take death, as thus conceptually employed, not to be without more ado read as a mere biological event or even as any sort of event at all, whatever we say of Hegel’s “entry”. *Media vitae in morte sumus*, sing the monks in Lent at Compline: in the midst of life we are in death, perhaps “devoutly to be wished” after all as being more than just the end of “heartache and the thousand natural shocks”, as if by sleep merely, of whom, after all, Shelley tells us, death is “sister”. But what a sibling!

Rather than a reconciliation in an authentic synthesis, here we find a kind of exchange between two partial and complementary systems. Duality prevails over unity. Also is it not amazing that those with a strong feel for synthesis have so often tried to transcend this duality by explaining one of the systems from the other? Here are all the attempts to reduce Saint Thomas’ philosophy to a “Christian philosophy” or to present his theology as a rationalisation of mysteries.

Van Riet does not say here (p.77) why he finds this amazing. Also, it is important to notice that the alternative he concludes this paragraph with is one between opposites, as one might overlook. People either invent the improper notion of a Christian philosophy, in saying which one does not mean to exclude a proper notion of this, as when we speak of Greek philosophy (though it occurs to me one could make a strong case for the impropriety even of that!), or they see St. Thomas as already on the Hegelian path, as they misconceive also that, of improper “rationalisation”, by which would be meant a making of concessions to the finite Understanding, just what Hegel sets himself to overcome.

Van Riet himself, then, claims that only the middle path, conceding a duality, is reasonable; amazing must be then that people who, so to say, more than admire Saint Thomas, compromising themselves in such great numbers by their denial of this duality. For Van Riet it is clear that this duality, the two as he calls them “partial” systems, exist side by side, without, he surely means to say, contamination of one by the other. We shall not enquire too closely for the moment into whether he proves his case, whether, rather, Saint Thomas is not actually more Hegelian than might at first appear, as I, for one, have argued elsewhere.

In reality, we think that there *are* two systems in saint Thomas, for there are two first principles, of which neither judges the other. Faith does not have intrinsic authority over reason, and reason does not establish a radical critique of revelation.

In saying this, one wants to ask, how far does Van Riet recognise, or recall, from the Hegelian thought he is presenting, such as that faith and reason are indeed there put as one principle. The child begins by believing his parents and that is his entry into “the true reason world”. He is, that is to say, from the first a member, an inhabitant of it, as he more and more comes to see these truths of faith for himself, see, that is, how reasonable and true they are. For that, after all, is the meaning, the intelligibility, of believing them. We will see how this works out when we come to consider the two thinkers on the Trinity. Meanwhile,

In each system we find a fundamental affirmation that limits it and which refers to the other system as to a complement. From the theological side there is the affirmation of one single God, creator and sanctifier, author of nature as well as of grace; from the philosophical side, there is the natural desire to see God in his essence. But they are both very undetermined in their content; the first guarantees that the conciliation of the two orders is possible since they proceed from the same source, the second assures that it will be realised at the

end of human life, in blessedness, when faith and reason will be surpassed in the vision of what we believe and know today.

We need to bear in mind that Van Riet is himself, following Hegel, saying that these two orders are one. Why, then, may we not acknowledge, find, rather, that equally for Saint Thomas these two orders are one, as Van Riet's words above rather strongly suggest? If we start with Saint Thomas then we naturally should go beyond him to the position of Hegel and on to whatever shall lie beyond in theology's and/or philosophy's development and even, I dare say, aesthetically.

This complementarity of the two systems is facilitated by the symmetry of the schemas of thought and the harmony of conclusions. The notion of supernature is traced onto that of nature, the notion of grace faithfully reproduces that of creation. From the two sides, we come to the same total independence of God, to the same contingency in the effects of divine action.

So here not, first, the "harmony of conclusions", in the plural, but the first-mentioned, viz. the schemas *of thought*. We will find in Hegel, namely, that it is thought, the Idea, that is the "Speculative or Absolute Idea" (*Enc.* 235) that holds all together, not merely as the "master category" but as having done with categories altogether, with "the advance", as the last which is a first and conversely. Here life has "returned to itself from the bias and finitude of cognition".

Thus the truth of the Good is laid down as the unity of the theoretical and the practical idea in the doctrine that the Good is radically and really achieved, that the objective world is in itself and for itself the Idea, just as it at the same time eternally lays itself down as End, and by action brings about its actuality. ... The Idea, as unity of the Subjective and Objective Idea, is the notion of the Idea, - a notion whose object (*Gegenstand*) is the Idea as such, and for which the objective (*Objekt*) is Idea, an Object which embraces all characteristics in its unity. This unity is consequently the absolute and all truth, the Idea which thinks itself, - and here at least as a thinking or Logical Idea. (Hegel, *Enc.* 236)

"This is the *noesis noeseos*, the knowing of knowing, Aristotle long ago termed the supreme form of the Idea" (236, *Zus.* In Hegel's text this Greek phrase is in Greek lettering, as we find also Aristotle's own Greek text from *Metaphysics* XII, 7 concluding or, for some editors, appended to, the final paragraph 577 of the whole *Encyclopaedia*). So we may note that Hegel was positing (and not merely aiming at) the same reconciliation of Aristotelian with Patristic or Scholastic thought as we, with Georges van Riet, attempt

here between the latter, in the thought of Thomas Aquinas, and Hegel. In this for that time (1830) final presentation of Absolute Spirit as thought, as philosophy, we find that creation, along with incarnation, features as representation, *Vorstellung*, of the Idea Absolute. In believing these, therefore, we believe what they represent, viz. God himself, the Idea Absolute, such as he would not otherwise be. There is therefore, despite first appearance, no presentation of a created world as eternal, as something eternally accompanying God, such as religion has rejected. Rather the world, though mentioned in Hegel's paragraph here, is negated, along with all else, inasmuch as ever put as something, anything, independently of the Idea, of God, and "objective" in that sense. This says no more than that Greek poet quoted, cited rather, by St. Paul, as by us above here, in *Acts of the Apostles*: "In God we live and move and have our being", i.e. only. Concerning incarnation, as considered in final *sophia*, things may seem a bit more complicated, but not more so than as presented in our Biblical and hence "religious" texts, to preserve Hegel's threefold division of Absolute Spirit (Art, Religion, Philosophy in ascending order), starting with the Christ's adopted title of "Son of Man", underlined by the citing, in a sense out of any original context, though attributed to Pilate, "Behold the man", *ecce homo*. To which I add that the implicit objection here, as if Hegel were subtracting from the uniqueness, the individuality, of the incarnation, is dissolved by Hegel's own logical theory, whereby all "categories", e.g. Part and Whole, Individual and Universal, ultimately dissolve as being taken up into, indeed identified with, the Idea, as we find Aquinas also teaching in his treatment of "the divine ideas" (at *Summa theol.* Ia q.15: there each and any such idea is "identical with the divine essence": Hegel goes no further than that if he even gets so far). Hegel anyhow insists, and even this on the plane of ideas, for him the ultimate plane, on the uniqueness of "the incarnation", of the Mediator, between God and man, as a necessity, of course of thought first of all, in every sense of "thought" as being, firstly, the most actual and, in fact, Actuality itself at one point (*Enc.*142) of or in thought's own Advance, an advance in or of what he calls logic's "method".

In short, orthodoxy has given no final verdict with respect to Hegel's philosophical system, which we may rather expect, with confidence, it will ultimately embrace in order, though, as follows from the same philosophy, to go, in thought, in contemplation, beyond it and ever on till we come to that heaven we will, and by our faith as "overcoming" the world, *do* realise in and with the Word, as our faith is required to confirm, as in the prophetic text: "I have loved thee from before the foundation of the world", which, this humanity of God, finds its final expression and confirmation in the historical phenomenon, of what is necessarily supra-historical, of

incarnation. It is supra-historical seeing as God as God does not take on or assume anything he did and does not have, actually, *in actu*, not merely before, but as having and being eternally human, just as Word, or as the historical, even as contingent, is necessary, the position most categorically defended in Hegel's last, unfinished *Lectures on the Proofs of the Existence of God*.¹⁶ As the liturgy has it, he "came down from the heaven he never left", held in the divine thought, of the Father, with whom he declared himself "one", eternally¹⁷. "He that has seen me has seen the Father" (this should be related to all Hegel says, of course corresponding to the "historical" or tensed mode of speech as such¹⁸, as to God's coming perfectly to himself in becoming sensible and/or touchable, actually the expression of eternal condescension, true home, necessarily, of history itself). That, and nothing less, is what is *revealed*, viz. everything, our sorrow "turned into" joy, in the Gospel phrase, and not merely replaced by it, this being the theme of the traditional "resurrection crucifix", of Christ who "reigned in triumph from the tree".

Hegel rejects all dualism. For him, there is only *one* order, that of reason, but of a reason which endeavours to make out the meaning, the intelligibility, the "necessity" of the total human experience, in particular of humanity's religious history. Hegel ... does not give preference to any religion at the outset. In his eyes none has the prerogative of proceeding from a special revelation of God; each, in its place and order translates the discovery that humanity makes, or which God makes in man, of what God is and what man is. ... It is necessary to describe, compare, class and judge the various positive religions, by showing how the "concept" of religion is realised and developed in them in a logical fashion. (Van Riet, *op. cit.*, p. 72)

This may be quite startling, in proportion, however, only to our grasp of Hegel's system as not, it may be, having as yet entirely "gone to the ground"¹⁹. God discovers himself in man; not, of course, that the Idea

¹⁶ Cf. our *Hegel on Thought and Incarnation*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 2020, *passim*.

¹⁷ Jacques Maritain, in *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus* (Herder & Herder, *via*, in translation, Burns & Oates, London, 1969) speaks, accordingly but not entirely satisfactorily, throughout this his virtually final essay, of (Christ in) "the heaven of his soul".

¹⁸ Compare the evangelical Prologue, for centuries in its entirety a part, viz. the concluding, o, the Latin or Roman Mass rite: "No man has seen God at any time: the only begotten Son, who dwells in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him" (*John* 1, 18).

¹⁹ I cite a tutor's remark to my first paper on Hegel in late 1967, which he, the late Joseph Kockelmans, nonetheless graded maximally. Here in 2020 I trust the

Absolute is in itself anything less than eternally perfect, that is to say infinite as being infinity itself, but that we who are discovering God are each ourselves yet one with him while “becoming”, in our imperfect or frankly *mis*-perception, what we are.

See what love the Father has granted us, that we should be called and in truth be the sons of God. ... and still it has not yet appeared what we shall be. Yet we know that when he shall have appeared we shall be like him, *because* we shall see him as he is.²⁰

This is the sense in which Hegel says that “spirit necessarily ... appears in time so long as it does not grasp its pure notion, i.e. *so long as it does not annul time*”²¹. “When this notion grasps itself, it supersedes its time character ... spirit’s destiny and necessity”. This means, has to mean, that our being in time is only appearance, as is time itself. “End is as such Realised End ... has been really secured” (*Enc.* 210-212 and *Zusatz*: “Within the range of the finite we can never see or experience that the End has been really secured”: cf. the *tetelestai* from the Cross as “last word”, indubitably present in Hegel’s mind here). Just so does *The Science of Logic* conclude with Spirit’s going forth, freely, “as Nature”, we having learned therein that Freedom and Necessity coincide, in God as we may say here, who “discovers himself in man”.²²

Hence Hegel is *bound* to show “how the ‘concept’ of religion is realised” in each of man’s religions, as far as he knows them at least, “in a *logical* fashion”, I stress. This “translation”, as Van Riet aptly calls it, instances the general aim of philosophy as such, according to Hegel, of rising from representation to concept and thence, *the* Concept, having set forth the grounds for this being there, as actual, to be found logically, again, or to be developed if not yet found. The System has “already” in fact established “the concept of religion”. This logical progression is found to end in

situation is the same. We remain beginners.

²⁰ *I John* 3, 1-2, stress added: I quote this as witness, simply, to the earliest Christian self-understanding rather than as in some way “authoritative”, which, however, anyhow simply means that later understanding, by the self-same community, endorses it. What else shall tell us what Christianity is, if we are to discuss it at all, as surely behoves us?

²¹ *Phenomenology of Mind* (Baillie), p. 800, stress added. The “so long as” is both a joke and a kind of temporal metaphor.

²² I refer here to the so-called Greater Logic of c. 1812, the final paragraph of which, preferably in the original, should be carefully studied as, indeed, a unitary whole as regards thought.

Christianity, according to De Lubac “not a religion but religion itself”²³, just as Hegel says it is “revelation itself”, consistent, and it is not an all that “finer” point, as we say, with as even entailing his denial of any religion’s being “a special revelation”. This is all an instance of his general view that behind history in its entirety, as behind natural phenomena as a whole, lies “logical progression” or “meaning”. How could it be otherwise? This is his unspoken Wittgensteinian question, in his case after having exhaustively shown this necessity, he claims. We need to be clear that he claims this before we ask if it can be so and not otherwise. His investigation discloses as established reality “*absolute, manifest religion*, where man is truly free, for God is revealed as He is, in his infinite phenomenality. This is the Christian religion.”²⁴

Revelation thus identified is set forth by Hegel as already a conceptual trinity, as three-in-one, of Trinity, Incarnation and Church, “now and forever” (Van Riet). We will concentrate on the first, Trinity as itself *pure thought* revealed in the “Kingdom of the Father” or first Trinitarian person, i.e. this, or he, is revelation’s “first form” (Hegel, in *LPR*), just conceptually, he means, as philosophy or pure thought reveals, reveals *itself*, namely, as Aristotle in his way had previously, but not quite firstly, if we recall, say, Anaxagoras’s words (“Mind has set all in order”), said, inasmuch as thought “thinks itself”, though further manifestation thereof lay then rather in the future.²⁵ Still, Aristotle thought, “a little of this” was “worth more than all the rest”, accordingly counselling a practice of death to all else, *athanatizein*, as John of the Cross, no mean philosopher in my view, will later confirm and further specify, Hegel concurring in this war on “the natural” as being “our affair”. “In order to come to that which you are not you must go through that which you are not” (John of the Cross), but you had better not be in too much of a hurry actively to try it, maybe. Count the cost, as the parable has it, though we are surely all bound to fail, in some sense at least, as in crucified God-forsakenness, not that one would lay flattering unction to one’s own or anyone’s “soul”. There are examples, though, besides this supreme exemplar, rather, of relative success.

The three kingdoms anyhow, Hegel insists, are, if more than just a figure borrowed from Kant, yet “not really separable nor even distinct” but “a single and self-same reality”. The Trinity then, thus indicated, God as “trine

²³ Cf. Henri de Lubac, *The Drama of Atheistic Humanism*.

²⁴ Van Riet, p. 78.

²⁵ St. Thomas refers to Plato and Aristotle as those who “sought in vain and with *angustia* for the true knowledge of God” (cited from my article, “The Resistance of Thomism to Analytical and Other Patronage”, *The Monist*, October 1997, Vol. 80, Number 4, pp. 611-617, final paragraph).

in his unity”, “is reconciliation in itself”. For “To know that God is three is to know that otherness is in God himself, and that it is overcome there” (Van Riet). Hegel, like Aquinas, is keen to play down any purely numerical aspect. *Numeri non ponuntur in divinis* (Aquinas). “It is useless to count” (Hegel).

This truth is the absolute truth in itself and for itself. It does not constitute a mystery, for “what is directed towards rationality is not a mystery for it; it is a mystery only for the senses and their way of looking at things”.²⁶

This is taken from the statement by Van Riet here from which we started our investigation. He summarises now the Hegelian message concerning the Trinity as follows:

The absolute truth, we have seen, is that God is Trinity, or again that the God-man died and rose again. To be acquainted with this truth is to conform it to oneself, to unite it to the self-consciousness is to perceive that “in this truth, the relation of man to this truth is also posited”.²⁷ In a word, it is to discover that not only God’s essence but also man’s essence is to be spirit, reconciliation of contraries. On one side man is nature, finiteness, mortality; on another he is a going beyond nature, an aspiring to infinity and to eternal life. He is a being divided, contradictory, who endlessly negates himself, who never is what he is; from this interior contradiction comes the sorrow and unhappiness of his conscience. In the “Kingdom of the Spirit” man finally understands that this contradiction is constitutive of his very being, and that it can be overcome (*aufgehoben*). He does not have to resign himself to it, as if it (contradiction) found its origin in an irreducible dualism (of being and nothingness, of good and evil). He does not have to wait for it to be lifted by an Other (as in Judaism) or in another life (as in the Platonic conception of heavenly beatitude). It *can be reconciled without being suppressed*, for it clings to the very essence of reality. True being is identity with oneself in difference, it is spirit. God himself includes finiteness, death, and surpasses them. Man is God’s image, God’s son, reconciliation. He knows that not only the history of Jesus, but also his own history, grasped in all the depth of their meaning, are the manifestation of the eternal history of the Trinitarian God.²⁸

²⁶ Van Riet, p. 81, citing *LPR* III, p. 17 (cf. *SW*, t. 16, p. 233).

²⁷ Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, tr. J. Sibree, p. 324.

²⁸ Van Riet, p. 82. I add that in Christianity, as claiming to fulfil Judaism, the Other lifting the burden turns out to be simultaneously self as, this other, grace *perfecting* nature in the sense of making it become what it is, “I in them and they in me”.

CHAPTER ONE

AQUINAS'S ACCOUNT

I turn now to the classic theological account of the Trinity as presented by Thomas Aquinas and its points of comparison or contrast with the above. We have noted there being no question but that Hegel's Trinitarian philosophy had to be preceded by its teaching "in religion", as revealed "from above". That is, however, the *only* sense, and a valid one, in which it is "above" reason, i.e. above human reason, not above mind or spirit as such. In the same way, after all, if also differently, knowledge of the Absolute Idea is dependent upon the logical process, by way of dialectical analysis necessarily, as is also demonstrated, as much in *The Phenomenology of Mind* as in "the science of logic" and the treatises of that title themselves. Hence he declares that Trinitarianism, as against deism in particular, is the only reasonable account of God. Hegel

wanted to translate Christianity into terms of freedom. But did he succeed? Or, by translating it, did he betray it and thus favour atheism? If he is not atheist, is he Christian? Christianity being indisputably the religion of freedom, would Hegel have betrayed not only Christianity but also freedom along with it? In particular, by wanting to comprehend everything in a "system" which, in spite of its breadth, remains a "closed" system, did he sufficiently respect one of the essential dimensions not only of Christianity but of human freedom, that of openness to a future hope?²⁹

One thing is certain, philosophy, knowledge, however "absolute", takes its first rise in faith. Hence in children, without it having to be only they, Hegel *identifies* their faith, in their parents first of all but thereby in God supremely as including or requiring, rather, the latter, if they are well brought up, *as* reason, *as* instancing "the true reason-world". Nothing, in fact, speaks against this identity remaining, even in the mature Hegel himself. What else does it mean when he declares himself to be "a Lutheran" and hence Christian without qualification, unless as supplied from outside by those,

²⁹ P. 101. Van Riet appends as a footnote: "It is one of the questions raised by existentialism: it is often recalled in the work of P. Ricoeur".

rightly or wrongly, of a contrary view. Liberalism anyhow, declared a Pope of the time, with clear disapproval however, “overthrows the nature of an opinion”, of the “mine”, as Hegel would say. He “knows very well”, we noted, “that the notion of a Trinitarian God is born of the experience of Christianity” (*LPR* III, p. 99), i.e. as “the manifestation of Spirit in history.” It is no contradiction of this, therefore, that Trinitarian affirmation “stems directly from the philosophical order”, to which it thus belongs to show the truth of it. St. Thomas’s whole treatment of the Trinity shows him doing this, which argues for interpreting his affirmation of its being “above reason” as open to Hegel’s interpretation of this. “Each philosophy”, maintains the latter, “comes in its time”. Implied, however, is that for that time the moment reached by thought is its window on truth. Failure to appreciate this lies behind the Enlightenment’s or post-Enlightenment’s not well knowing how to treat the long period we call, as instancing this shyness, “medieval” merely. Hegel, of course, was himself not immune to this. How else explain his “seven-league boots” when running over that period in the history of philosophy?

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One should also look at the difference of ways, and the similarities, in which the Trinity is introduced in the two *Summae* or systems (insofar, which is doubtful, as either of these alternative denominations may be assimilable to the other). I propose, however, now to turn to the presentation in Aquinas, comparing with Hegel throughout.

We have previously studied about the unity of the divine essence; we now study about the trinity of persons in God. And since the divine persons are distinguished by their relations of origin, the order of our exposition is completely outlined; we shall have to consider: 1. The origin of procession; 2. The relations of origin; 3. The persons.³⁰

One notes that for the dogmatic theologian and teacher the agenda is pretty well laid down for him as it was not for Hegel, though he doubtless had in memory some of the catechetical procedures he would have been subjected to. Hegel, in fact, totally avoids the name “Trinity” throughout *The*

³⁰ Aquinas, *Summa theol.* I, q. 27, Prologue: *Consideratis autem his quae ad divinae essentiae pertinent, restat considerare de his quae pertinent ad trinitatem personarum in divinis. Et quia personae divinae secundum relationes originis distinguuntur, secundum ordinem doctrinae prius considerandum est de origine, sive de processione; - secundo de relationibus originis; - tertio de personis.*

Phenomenology of Mind in what has all the signs of having been a deliberate decision.³¹ At page 767 and following, though, it is clearly discussed, while its presence haunts much of the foregoing of that chapter. “There are thus three moments to be distinguished: Essential Being”, he says, the “thus” taking up the profound reflections of the previous paragraph introducing the topic; second, “explicit Self-existence, which is the express otherness of essential Being ... “. We will come back to these extremely compressed paragraphs, central to his account as they are. “The essential Being beholds only itself in its Self-existence, in its objective otherness”. Daringly, if deliberately, he next transfers the term *kenosis*, (self-)emptying, from its use in Scripture, i.e. by St. Paul or an associate, to denote the act of the Son in becoming incarnate, to mean the Father’s uttering of the Word, a self-emptying that is “merely within itself”, making thus of *kenosis* a general theme or characteristic of divinity, as surely, we then see, it must be if it is characteristic of the Son, as taught. All this “movement within expresses the absolute Being *qua* Spirit”, the *third* person grasped, necessarily, “as this process”. So these three moments are “notions in restless activity” as he further develops this.

This necessity, conceptual, of Trinitarian thought, is precisely what is not made explicit, very often at least, by the relevant communicators, either to themselves or those to whom they proclaim. We tend to find, in terms at least of expression, a kind of practical tritheism, which McTaggart seems to mistake for or insist on seeing as the actual Christian teaching, which he thus accuses Hegel of misrepresenting.

³¹ Cf. Baillie’s translation (1967), p. 767 f, or p. 772, where one finds the words “Quaternity” and “Quinity” but no mention of Trinity, the term. Nor does one find it elsewhere in this text where one might expect it, e.g. p. 253 or the note to page 555. Things are different, of course, in the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, nor is he above mentioning it in *Enc. I* and *III* though in *I* he almost defiantly, one might think, speaks of God as “the absolute Person”, rather than, say, Absolute Personality (151, *Zus.*). But at 143, *Zus.*, his allegiance is explicit: “After all there is as good reason for taking everything to be impossible, as to be possible: for every content ... includes not only diverse but even opposite characteristics. Nothing is so impossible, for instance, as this, that I am: for ‘I’ is at the same time simple self-relation and, as undoubtedly, relation to something else. The same may be seen in every other fact in the natural or spiritual world. Matter, it may be said, is impossible: for it is the unity of attraction and repulsion. The same is true of life, law, freedom, and above all of God Himself, as the true, *i.e.* the triune God. – a notion of God, which the abstract ‘Enlightenment’ of Understanding ... rejected on the allegation that it was contradictory to thought.” So, “the true, *i.e.* the triune God”; “triune”, what could be clearer? In “The Philosophy of Mind (*Geist*)”, *Enc. III*, the treatment will be more systematic, as it is in the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*.

This, though, is simply false, while bordering on the merely populist (not surprising, given McTaggart's tendency to view Christianity as popular religion merely). I am hoping myself here to relate Hegel's utterances to those of Saint Thomas Aquinas, or even Augustine and the Church Fathers generally, who were anything but populist. In the thought of a later age, in my tentative opinion, say twenty centuries from now, Hegel may well come to be seen as one of them, with Boethius, Anselm, Hilary, Maximus and the rest, along indeed with Thomas Aquinas. Today we tend to end the list with St. Bernard, with the twelfth century.

So I will just mention that Trinity receives properly extended treatment in Hegel's "The Philosophy of Mind", i.e. in *Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* III. The Trinity, it here appears, "is a "self-closed, circular process", while every page of Hegel's section VII C of the earlier *The Phenomenology of Mind* is concerned with it more or less directly.

CHAPTER TWO

RELATIONS

Aquinas continues:

On the topic of procession (number 1 above, i.e. in this prologue to Q.27) five questions come up: 1. Is there any procession in God? 2. Is there in God a procession that can be called begetting? 3. Besides begetting, can there be any other procession in God? 4. Can this procession be called begetting? 5. Are there only these two processions in God?³²

“Procession” here correctly translates *processio*, i.e. there is no question of *processus* or process, which would be a time-bound movement from potentiality or possibility to act or the actual. This movement “within” God, as *actus perfectus*, is not therefore equivalent to or synonymous with change, Aristotle’s “imperfect act” (Latin *motus*). It is perfectly straightforward to read Hegel’s text too in this way. It is only that Hegel endeavours to see this, as it must be, necessary configuration, in some measure, simply as or because put into a finite and translatable language, as in an equally necessary connection (to use the Humean phrase) with creation, which is necessarily of the contingent, as will be shown. Thus Hegel continues in his thought to develop this insight, towards, it turns out, the conclusion previously made explicit by Duns Scotus, now a *beatus* and titular *doctor ecclesiae*, it may be helpful to point out, when speaking of the incarnation specifically, as himself developing the thought of his predecessors, that it was and/or is unconditionally necessary³³. This again, this transference of

³² *Ibid., eodem loco: Circa processionem quaeruntur quinque: 1, utrum processio sit in divinis; 2. utrum aliqua processio in divinis generatio dici possit; 3. Utrum praetor generationem aliqua alia processio possit esse in divinis; 4. Utrum illa alia processio possit dici generatio; 5. Utrum in divinis sint plures processiones quam duo.*

³³ I find in *The Catholic Encyclopaedia* (1908 edition) this summary of Scotus’s doctrine here: “God would have become man even if Adam had not sinned, since he willed that in Christ humanity and the world should be united with Himself by the closest possible bond.” The Hegelian ring here (or, hence, the Scotist ring in him, is

an idea from Incarnation to Trinity, noted above already, evokes the identification in difference that Hegel makes of the processions “of” the Word with creation “through” the Word. All three thinkers will doubtless have had the Prologue to John’s Gospel in mind, in a two-way *logical* relation, *i.e.* one of identity, between learning from and *re*-thinking it, just as Hegel describes for **Cause** and **Effect** generally or, rather, conceptually (Cf. *Enc* 153). “Having in mind”, then, exemplifies (or is) the **Reciprocity** of cause and effect. So it is with the processions in God. The Father is not Father unless through the Son as “cause” of this. This leads us on to the classical account of the divine persons as themselves relations, whether or not Hegel in his turn makes this explicit. A further pointer to the depth of penetration of his thought is that of itself, since in unity with itself, it leads on to the account of “the self-opposed thought of good and evil” in *man*, God’s image as created “male and female”, according to the most recent theology (Karl Barth as taken over by the Roman authorities³⁴).

As for the mysteries properly so-called, he (*i.e.* Hegel) consecrated long treatises to show their intelligibility or probability. When Hegel takes the mystery of the Trinity as the centre of his reflection he intends less to “prove”³⁵ this mystery than “to show the meaning of it”. From this viewpoint would it not be necessary to applaud his attempt rather than censure him? When it is insistently declared that the Christian mysteries surpass the power of reason, what is meant exactly? And, in particular, what kind of reason is at issue? What Hegel refuses to call by this name, and which he calls “understanding” or rather “speculative reason”? In traditional formulae, without any doubt, it is a question of the first: it proves, by way of syllogism, and it seems that it does not perfectly succeed except in the formal domain, in mathematics for example. One has no trouble seeing that the mysteries of faith surpass this power. But speculative reason wants to be the mental equivalent of the concrete. In the domain of history, of religion, it “proves” nothing, constructs nothing, but simply discovers a meaning. The rigor here is not mathematical. Also, it cannot be identified with the “reason” that tradition contrasts with faith.³⁶

unmistakeable.

³⁴ Cf. Fergus Kerr OP, *Twentieth Century Catholic Theologians*, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford 2007, pp. 193-201 especially.

³⁵ Note, for a fuller understanding of Van Riet here, the extended critique of the concept of proof, especially perhaps as applied to God, but without recourse to the notion of “mystery”, running throughout Hegel’s posthumous *Lectures on the Proofs of the Existence of God*.

³⁶ Van Riet, *op. cit.* pp. 98–99. He adds the following note: “For Hegel, the ‘necessity of the concept’ does not dissolve the ‘historical contingency’ of the facts; it reveals their meaning. There is therefore a double reading of the Christian

Passing over for the moment the second *question* here, concerning begetting (of the Word or Son) as a procession, we will consider the second *procession*, eventually found to be the only other possibility, and whether this too can be called begetting. In fact we have only considered the Prologue here to Aquinas's treatise (on the Trinity), so the first question, on procession as such, is also passed over here for the moment. Article Three, then, opens by declaring that there are two processions in God, "that of the Word, and another". That of the Word, begetting, we may just note, is one of being begotten by the Father on the analogy with speech (word), here necessarily of *one* "word" expressive of infinity as a whole and hence itself infinite and hence divine also, ultimately one with its begetter, thus, incidentally, preserving, as consonant with the divine or absolute, concrete, i.e. not abstract, simplicity, to use Hegel's distinction among identities, in a measure anticipated by the Scholastic distinction between *per se* and *secundum quid*, which, however, admits infinite gradation, as when one asks if a given use of *per se* is itself *per se* or *secundum quid*.³⁷

In God, St. Thomas notes, as we touched on above, "the only procession is the action remaining in the agent himself", while "in an intellectual nature, this immanent action is realised in the act of knowing and of willing". So after the procession of knowing we consider "the will's action", on which this procession is frankly modelled, such being the assuredness of thought as such, of which will is the inclination. This also remains within us, is immanent. This, then, is "the procession of love". Why not of hate, we might wonder? An answer seems to be that hate is itself a kind of love (of something else), though the converse hardly holds as we might want to add *immediately*, and yet it does hold. Love and hate are identical, exist together *as one*. "Do I not hate those who hate thee?" "Lord, how I love thy law ... I hate all false ways", and that "with a perfect hatred", and so on. Here we are at once on Hegelian ground.

mysteries. Thus, Hegel can say regarding the Incarnation: "It is the notion of the reality or fact itself, the divine notion, the notion of God himself, which determines itself to enter on this development, and has set its goal before it" (*LPR* I, p. 85. - *SW*, t. 15, p. 100). But he also recognises that, for the singular conscience, "it is thus altogether a contingency, a mere chance event that the unchangeable receives the form of particularity; just as the particular consciousness merely happens to find itself opposed to the unchangeable, and therefore has this relation *per naturam*" (*The Phenomenology of Mind*, Baillie 1967, p. 254).

³⁷ This, though, whether formalised as a "theory of types" or simply endured, is but the finite and hence contradictory nature of language as such, against which "God has spoken only one word" (John of the Cross, praising the virtue or grace of silence).

The procession of love, anyhow, “makes the beloved be in the lover just as the procession of the Word makes what is said or known be within the knower”. For Aquinas, as for Hegel, we seem to consider God and these ideas in tandem or simultaneously, raising the question as to whether God in some sense vanishes. “God is love”, we read in Scripture. But if he vanishes as a particular it is because he is the universal. This is Hegel’s constant, in a sense fundamental scheme, on which the whole wheel of his Logic turns.

Knowledge and love as experienced in man have been made the basis for investigation of the divine nature as disclosed in the Gospel since at least the days of St. Augustine, especially in the Christian West, many think, perhaps forgetting Saints Paul and John “the divine”. This can only rest upon a previous apprehension of man as himself divine, what for Hegel the Incarnation precisely discloses, man as the “measure” of things in general, expressed briefly in the proposition, *ratio est ad opposita*, thus contrasting with Nature specifically as *determinata ad unum*. This is implicit in our unswerving reliance upon reason, by which alone we adhere firmly to, say, the paradigm of evolution, sometimes not noting the contradiction entailed in defining this as a chance development. This, though, has its pitfalls, e.g. when it is not noted that the watchword “survival of the fittest” is an empty “analytic” statement when used propositionally, therefore itself expressive of our rationality inasmuch as it may say anything at all. We have to ask *why* those most capable of survival in fact do so and the only possible answer seems to be that they do so because they are here now, i.e. have survived, which, once again, bears out Hegel’s speculative identification of cause and effect. From here we pass on to Nature’s phenomenality and consequent self-alienation, leading eventually to the submersion of man in Spirit, as “the rational creature” (Kant), only rescued from this by the mediating self-particularisation and consequent adoption of all into himself on the part of the Idea.

So, then, whether we anthropomorphically transfer human to absolute categories or, on the contrary, understand ourselves in the light of the latter or whether there is difference between these two views is not so much anybody’s guess as an utter refusal to see the wood for the trees and there I rest this question for the moment.

The procession of the Word belongs to the act of knowing. As to the will’s action, it is within us the case of another procession: the procession of love, which makes the beloved be in the lover just as the procession of the Word makes what is said or known be within the knower. So that besides the

procession of the word there is in God another procession: This is the procession of love.³⁸

The “within us” might just suggest that also for St. Thomas this distinction, between knowledge and love, of which McTaggart made so much, might eventually be seen as no more than phenomenal, as is in many ways often suggested by how Trinitarian thought is developed, such as leads Hegel here or there to speak of the distinctions as “of play”, something having nothing to do with Sabellianism or reduction of the divine persons to “aspects” of the nature merely. The play of Wisdom, as developed mystically in Scripture, has nothing to do with pretence. Quite the contrary!

In elucidation of this, however, we have only a not very conclusive³⁹ reply to the third “objection”, concluding thus:

... Although in God will is one with intellect the procession of love keeps a distinction of order from the procession of the Word, because it is essential to love to proceed from an intellectual knowing.⁴⁰

It was just this order of which we were questioning the limits. For Thomas, after all, the divine knowledge is reckoned causal as of necessity. It is difficult in context not to see this as equally a loving act. What do we say about God’s willing of himself, given the ever maintained, immemorially even, “God is love”? He *is* that, just as loving himself entirely or, rather, constitutively, which has to mean He *is* not that, or, rather, *does* that or, inevitably, both in one, *is act*, in other words, and that his own act uniquely and absolutely. This can only mean, entail, again, that creatures, rational or other, have their being “in” God, this preposition being a clear metaphor for

³⁸ Aquinas, ST I, 27, 3: *Processio autem Verbi attenditur secundum actionem intelligibilem. Secundum autem operationem voluntatis invenitur in nobis quaedam alia processio, scilicet processio amoris, secundum quam amatum est in amante, sicut per conceptionem verbi res dicta vel intellecta est in intelligente. Unde et praeter processionem Verbi ponitur alia processio in divinis, quae est processio amoris.*

³⁹ It seems conclusive enough, however, to indicate a harmony of Thomas’s thought with Hegel’s characterisation of the Trinitarian distinctions as “make believe” or as “distinctions of love”. They give the separate *rationes* of what are not *alia*, not “faculties”, for example. Yet they distinguish “processions” that are of “a certain order” among themselves, and so the account differs, as, one presumes, does Hegel’s, therefore, from the Sabellian heresy of old. Thus even in God love succeeds upon, *est in ordine ad*, knowing, Aquinas writes here.

⁴⁰ ST I, 27, 3 *ad* 3: ... *ita, licet in Deo sit idem voluntas et intellectus, tamen, quia de ratione amoris est quod non procedat nisi a conceptione intellectus, habet ordinis distinctionem processio amoris a processione Verbi in divinis.*

identity of some kind. We cannot have our being “in God” as in a box. I see no third alternative, nor does Hegel. Therefore this is the conclusion, the terminus of a process (*processio*) itself finally without parts, of *reditus* or return to what can never have been left, the externality of this *processio* being necessarily, which is the same as conceptually but without reduction, expansion rather, internal to the Infinite, which any externality would finitise. Hence Hegel’s thesis that End as such is achieved, *tetelestai*, this last word from the Cross being put, coming down to us, in the Greek and suitably reduplicative, as suggesting by analogy eternal achievement, perfect tense, as in “I have loved you from before the foundation of the world” of which, if one would but consider, “I saw (or knew) you under the fig-tree, before Philip called you” is a variant, only thus eliciting Nathaniel’s reply, in whom was “no guile”: “Rabbi, you are the (definite article in the Greek) Son of God”.⁴¹

So we come, anyhow, to Article Four, as to whether this procession of love cannot also be called “begetting”, to which Thomas’s reply is certainly “spirited”:

... Hence that which proceeds in God by way of love does not proceed as a begotten term, nor as a son, but rather as a “spirit”: this word evokes a kind of *élan* or vital impulse, insofar as we say that love moves us and urges us to do something. (*ad 3*)

It looks very much as if he is not doing more here than making apology for the traditional language. And yet the third person of the Trinity has to be presented as a reality, a real (if logical) relation as reason is our reality here, *given absolute idealism*. Again, the image of play can come to mind, or Hegel’s remark that “it is useless to count” (his fantastic quaternity/quinity speculation), seemingly in tune with Aquinas’s *Numeri non ponuntur in divinis*, though here and there each thinker may appear to put or posit them.

⁴¹ *Gospel of John*, 1, 46-49.

CHAPTER THREE

AQUINAS AND HEGEL

We pass to the question of Trinitarian or divine relations, i.e. “relations of origin”, the second of the three divisions of Trinitarian study here, between that on processions and the third on persons. “Relations really exist in God”, St. Thomas begins by affirming. They exist, though, because we have found that the archetypal processions of knowledge and love exist there. They exist there “because” no other type of divinity, lacking knowledge and love, could be a worthy object of worship for the human and hence intellectual or spiritual nature. Any such worship would be the senseless *idolatry* with which the ancient Jews, taught immemorially by men of insight (Abraham, Moses), were confronted and which they have ever after rejected. It was therefore but logical for them to expect that from among themselves would arise “in the fullness of time” the one in whom all nations and generations would be blessed, who would himself *be* “salvation”. One cannot simply presume that they excluded as impossible that this one, as figure, might be a “she”. They would have had no right to do this. Rather, the idea, the possibility, simply did not occur to them. Hence, in the iconography, of thought or of art, the feminine takes up its harmonious position as “bride”, representing the total community of us male and female human beings or mortals, if we wish to include some others of animal nature.⁴² The pure spirits of tradition we may leave out of account for the moment.

These relations of knowledge and love, therefore, are frankly based upon a duality of intellect and will, even though will, Saint Thomas in particular brings out, is in essence the inclination of mind itself and that ultimately *to* itself. It is thus quite in accord, interpretatively, with Aquinas’s or similar positions, e.g. he posits wisdom, *sapientia*, as the highest intellectual virtue, superior to *scientia* or the other two, as a knowledge “connatural” with its object, be this Nature or God, that Hegel puts will or love *after* as, in his

⁴² See further on this our own *Thought and Incarnation* in Hegel, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 2020, pp. 18-19, along with the further reference given there.

system of his Logic as set out, thus superior to inasmuch as absorbing, in *Aufhebung*, the prior and still abstract “cognition proper”, puts will or love therefore in penultimate or immediate place before the Absolute Idea to which as “the true being”, viz. *das einfache Beziehung auf sich, welche Sein ist*, the succession of categories constitutes “the Advance”.⁴³ Thought as thinking itself is thus the ultimate or *only* knowledge, that of *sophia* (as distinct from mere *gnosis*), as Aristotle had brought out and which the Gospel will identify as “knowing God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent”, the “matter”, say rather form, of “eternal life”, which Hegel sees as the unspoken premise, ultimately promise, behind the Delphic advice to Socrates to seek *only* to know himself, there being no other object. The “only”, that is, was in no way restrictive.

Interpretation of this inclination, of will, however, should be kept clear of any investigation in search of a priority between these two “faculties”, in the case of God we should rather say conceptions. Each seems to originate the other, as theory practice. Indeed the parallel is virtually complete, suggesting synonymity. Mind conceives mind and mind conceives will. But we cannot say will wills itself and will wills mind, or could we? Boehme, who figures largely in Hegel’s background, speaks of an original so to say naked will. Of course we cannot *say* it, since saying, the word, Word, belongs to mind, not will. Yet to say is, all the same, to remove oneself, in adopting a particular operation, from operation as such, which is spirit or, again, mind as Act. The duality in synonymity remains, therefore. The solution, the only one available, lies in the identification Hegel, for one, makes between **Cause** and **Effect**, neither of which are found in God in that state of abstraction from one another which, like time, so conditions our finite thought but which speculative intellect, Hegel shows, is capable of overcoming, though there are plenty of indications in Aquinas’s writings too of a corresponding awareness, such as indeed we show ourselves sharing in the measure in which we assent to Hegel’s position, or even before we may have become aware of the latter. Thus the Son as being the Father’s effect causes the paternal cause to be effect and so on for ever. Mind, anyhow, as “I”, knows no limit, has nothing to do with “mine” (*mein*) or “me” or what I might choose simply to “mean” (*meinen*). We may wonder whether Hegel simply plays upon these German and/or Germanic terms and their so to say visible analogies or whether, in addition at least, there is not some underlying spiritual (mental) connection between them, meaning (*meinen*) as intention being after all an affair of the subject, of “me”.

⁴³ Cf. G.W.F. Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik, II*, in *Werke*, Volume 6, Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt-am-Rhein, 1972, the two concluding pages 572-3.

God, that is, is a God of man, essentially, this word meaning that man can only worship himself. “Acknowledge, o Christian, thy dignity” (Augustine’s word, Pauline in origin, now used in the Easter liturgy at one indeed ecstatic point, should it be sung at least). So, in Christianity, man does finally worship himself but as this, though, can only rightly be done, viz. in personal embodiment, which itself can only go through if all can eventually be found *in* or “one with” that embodiment, a process Hegel begins to sketch and/or analyse in the section “The Unhappy Consciousness” of *The Phenomenology of Mind*, to which we have referred above. We call it *ecclesia*, all the same then “called out”, or “Body of Christ”. Each thus must “come out” from himself *in abstracto* (badge of finitude) in order to be himself.

So it is these relations as being required *in* God by the very notion of infinity as requiring also divinity, the notion from which religion, as distinct from philosophy, starts, that determine Trinitarian self-revelation, as is implied by this choice of them for initial analysis by Aquinas and predecessors or successors *in aeternum*! Philosophy, rather, uncovers the process, conscious or unconscious indifferently, but essentially two-way, again, between these two forms of absolute spirit, religion and philosophy (or theology), or divinity and infinity, and what they signify, leading to this and these identification(s). They are the first category required by the uncovering of “processions” in God, vital movements of spirit, as being required, entailed, by that very first requirement, that God, as discovered or uncovered by Aquinas’s immediately preceding treatise on the one God (*De Deo uno*), must, to be God as disclosed by “the five ways” in series⁴⁴, be possessed of knowledge and love, however we may relate these to our conceptions of “forms of consciousness”.

At the same time this discourse is properly theological in the sense of a “sacred” or one might say “docile” theology. Its philosophical strength, therefore, or nonetheless, is direct testimony to the credibility of this teaching instance, let us call it, claiming descent from those to whom it was said, “Go and teach all nations”. Hegel, in his turn, will claim theological warrant for his philosophy of matters absolute, inasmuch, however, as he has been led to identify these two ways of thinking (disciplines), to take them up into (*aufheben*) Absolute Spirit as manifest in the three forms of Art, Religion and Philosophy, placing all the same theology rather within the third than the second form, that of Religion, *Gottesdienst*. Theology is not as such or in general *Gottesdienst* but rather, as philosophy (of God),

⁴⁴ Cf. Lawrence Dewan OP, “The Number and Order of St. Thomas’s Five Ways”, *The Downside Review* 1974, for an unsurpassed analysis.

höchste Gottesdienst. On his analysis the thread connecting theology and philosophy in this way is History, by way, again, however, of his philosophy of history and, in particular, of historical time. There is, if we consider, an enormous faith involved in this. That is, he does not compartmentalise or set apart sacred or Biblical history from a surrounding profanity. The Temple veil has been torn, in, by and at the “death of death”. The pro-fanity, rather, is now just null, since all, inclusive of “unjust stewards”, when or where, is and has to be included in divine providence or plan. So an appointed time, for the incarnation of God in particular, is set as governing all, right across the board as we say. Hegel is thus very Biblical but with no trace of naïve and/or anti-spiritual (his “certainty against the Spirit”) “fundamentalism”. All writing, that is, all letters, are in sand, only in their privileged “moment” seeking to *aufheben* as being *aufgehoben*. Thus philosophy *must* assume theology, in Aristotle as in Aquinas and, reintegratively, Hegel, metaphysics absorbing ethics (Nietzsche’s point after all), “formal” logic and all that is finite, as eternal love, absence of which, as seen in Plato’s *Phaedrus*, merely excited Socratic contempt.

So we find that it is from consideration of the relations thus implied to be found in divinity, in God, that we come, step by step, or right away rather, upon a Trinity of “persons”. Relations are thus the next category to be considered, beginning at *Summa theol.* I, 28, 2. We pass, then, to that part of Hegel’s work, his *Phenomenology of Mind* put as first part of his system, where he first takes up the free and self-conscious *relation*, with Stoicism and ancient Scepticism forming a kind of preliminary, of man to the unchangeable, to God. This is the section on “The Unhappy Consciousness”.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE UNHAPPY CONSCIOUSNESS

Christian experience itself is part, even the crowning part, of human experience or life in general. Hence Hegel places treatment of it after or within his presentation of historical human phenomena in general, as succeeding in fact, within consciousness, upon the hitherto omni-present fact of lordship and bondage, in turn eliciting Stoicism, as a widespread societal attitude before itself engendering scepticism, more or less radical, thus preparing the ground, the theatre, into which Christianity, or first the mediator himself, was born. The statement of St. Thomas, and orthodoxy in general, that the Trinity is a “mystery” undiscoverable by unaided human intellect, is thus true in this sense, that it was undiscoverable without the supreme aid of the Christian event or revelation. Once revealed, however, its truth lay plain to view, so that Hegel could declare that it is the only reasonable or rational account of God. It will be seen as we progress that the whole doctrine unfolds out of the Christ-event specifically. It is primarily for this reason that, as we have noted, Hegel states that it is here “useless to count”, hence his motivation for actually postulating a quaternity or even quinity, still under the rubric of absolute unity, as if to show that “it is useless to count”, or the motivation for Aquinas’s more formally theological axiom that we don’t posit numbers in matters divine. The Trinity thus belongs to the philosophical order precisely as the ultimate truth of unity, sameness even, in otherness, “I in them and they in me” at the highest level, as supreme philosophy of the I, of intellectual consciousness, however participated or not by animals. About them we know so little, as Hegel stressed, love them though we may. And of them too we can say, what Augustine said of the highest and which so caught and held the attention of Jacques Derrida: “What do I love when I love my God?” What, we had better ask, is love? Is to be in love with love, as was said of Romeo, to fail to love or to love truly? – a trinity of questions to be held in mind precisely as unanswerable. “Heaven is here where Juliet lives”, declared Shakespeare’s

Romeo, as (but here it is Romeo's Shakespeare⁴⁵) mouthpiece of true poetry or art. Love that is, is universal because particular and contrariwise, ultimate resolution of reason's opposites (cf. *ratio est ad opposita*, thus itself opposed to nature, as to the "understanding", which is *ad unum*. Both nature and the understanding, namely, are in a state of self-alienation, of finitude. As such, Hegel reasons, they are the starting-points, to which, it should be noted, in thinking as in action (practical truth) we ever return, but, as it were more and more, "knowingly". The beginning, that is, remains, all things returning upon themselves as the all returns upon itself perpetually as Trinity, inevitably a figure in some recognisable respects, just inasmuch as we get to speaking of it. Thought, however, is not ultimately a mere reversal inwardly of such speaking but takes it up into its higher mode, rather. This, the difference between study and contemplation, which some are pleased to stress, was nonetheless treated under one concept by Aristotle and his followers, to say nothing of Plato, for whom, again, the puzzles of this dialectic are resolved in love, so that he has Socrates, in *Phaedrus*, reserve his utmost contempt for the non-lover.

For these reasons, together with those cited earlier, Aquinas's account, abstracting as it does from the phenomenological course of events eliciting Trinitarianism, unless perhaps one gives special attention to the Scriptural citations to be found in the course of his exposition, can fail to "come home" to the reader and in fact this treatise has been rather neglected in comparison with a more popular reception of other parts of his *Summa*. He is even criticised for beginning with an apparently more lively and comprehensive and far longer treatise *De Deo uno*, on the one God, in apparent complete abstraction from Trinitarian ideas (they are scarcely if at all mentioned), the thought of these critics being that Trinitarianism, since it is of central importance as the core of that revelation which is the incarnation, should, along with the latter, be involved from the first moment. This, though, would be to forget or falsify the order of the human experience of religion, typified in Scripture, for instance, from Adam, Noah, through Abraham, the patriarchs of Israel, Moses and the later prophets up to and beyond Jesus, in a beyond yet professing immanence within Him as the now fulfilled promise, or as charted in the developments of Hinduism, Buddhism and other parallel religions high or low. Islam one may rather regard as a later Christian or part-Christian variant, one of several which yet cannot be regarded by the main body as genuine developments specifically but rather the converse, unless seen, in Hegelian spirit, as negative moments set to further elicit the

⁴⁵ I.e. in similar sense as, for Hegel as for Aquinas, the Idea, God, is first principle of self's actions, i.e. in final analysis all of them.

constitutive since ever-active development of the main truth, just as the Apostle asks, rhetorically maybe, what wonderful thing would or will correspond to the final taking in of the first children of the promise, the Jews (a denomination set to include, as in oblique reference, “Judaism”, with which of course individual persons thus denominated either more or less, or not at all, may fail to identify, though outsiders, easily blinded by negative passions, may think to see deviousness or worse there). Concerning, though, modern secularism or atheism within the Christian sphere of what was once called Christendom the judgments made by believers vary as of course do the forms of this “modern” phenomenon, as it seems to be.

We might begin this presentation of Hegel’s treatment of the theme (of the emergence of Trinitarianism), in order to understand it better, by considering the long section in *The Phenomenology of Mind*, viz. IV B (IV A dealt with “Lordship and Bondage” as a phase in the development of Self-Consciousness as self-certainty, of the Ego). This is entitled “Freedom of Self-consciousness: Stoicism, Scepticism, and the Unhappy Consciousness”.⁴⁶

Coloured though it may be with Hegelian Lutheran prejudice, unavoidable and not entirely unjustifiable, to say the least, this “unhappy consciousness” section, thus naming a somewhat unhappy attempt at characterisation of the earlier and even in a measure primitive period, but especially the “medieval”, of what we may best style “the Christian movement”⁴⁷, is Hegel’s account of Christian life in its most typical earlier manifestation.

That he calls it “unhappy” has given to many the impression that he rejects it, as he might not reject, say, Stoicism or scepticism. But there is no justification for this view. Just anyone’s encounter with Christianity, if authentic or finally fruitful, involves unhappiness such as must be bravely faced in order to win through to insight, faith and the rest. In Christ’s words, with his so to say intense death in mind, “where I am. there shall my servant be”, this “there” however being finally represented as “overcoming the world” and, indeed, as resurrection, a figurative happening, like all happenings in this, as contrasted with “the unchangeable” of our present text, of “the death of death”.

⁴⁶ I am following the Baillie translation of 1967, pp. 241-267, but with the original close at hand.

⁴⁷ For a more nuanced or less one-sided account of this historical phenomenon cf. Christopher Dawson’s *The Historic Reality of Christian Culture*, Harper Torchbooks, New York 1960. Dawson gives six stages of this phenomenon (“ages of the Church”), in place of Hegel’s three (the second and third pivoting around Luther), the last beginning in 1789, to which it is easy to add a seventh as initiated by the Roman Council of 1962-4.

Hegel presents Stoicism and Scepticism, of the total antique kind, as necessary stages of mind as it has appeared, so to say, phenomenally. In itself, of course, mind and the phenomenal are antithetical, mind being the intentional dispersal of the phenomenal, illegitimately but habitually substantivized to “phenomena”, as if a thunderstorm, say, were a “thing”. Scepticism in fact duplicates what was previously “divided between two individuals”. The lord and the bondsman, master and slave, become “concentrated into one” in the mind of the sceptic, his own slave and master. This seems to be the typically *self*-conscious, absent from mere slavery as such. There is a certain parallel here with self-consciousness itself as arising out of the most radical negation, rather as mind or spirit, in its full human sense, is later found to arise out of the principled negation which is evil, personalised as, Hegel there suggests, a thinkable fourth divine person, since “it is useless to count”.⁴⁸ The product of this duplication, this reflecting back of variety upon self, which is in fact thinking, is a certain self-constituting unhappiness, the *Unhappy Consciousness*. He thus seems to make of just scepticism not only the immediate but so to say the *proper* precursor, in thought’s history, of the Christian Gospel, where we are indeed urged to “hate” our life in this world, to be unhappy in a measure therefore. This is the soil for the later, i.e. later in this his book or system generally, view that it is “our affair” specifically to *war* upon nature, i.e. upon our nature. Given all this the equation, by some commentators, of unhappy consciousness with an unacceptable or uniquely execrable world-view, whatever echoes of Voltairism, natural in or around 1800, may appear in Hegel’s in the main objective presentation, seems less than objective or disinterested.

So this phrase Unhappy Consciousness shall name “the Alienated Soul, which is the consciousness of self as a divided nature, a doubled and merely contradictory being”. We will try to see how this leads on, through a process into which the Christian event is first *inserted* rather than given the leading or determining role from the beginning, as Hegel nonetheless insists that it has in the Concept as ultimate actor, to the more modern developments. This is itself, it seems, something of a unique insight on Hegel’s part. Christianity arises *out of* the tragic fatalism and scepticism of the ancient Greco-Roman world but is nonetheless divinely ordained (activity on the part of the Concept as Hegel puts it, again) for that. The role of the Jews and their

⁴⁸ This might be thought “Sabellian” but it is rather a more general application of the anti-enumeration principle imposed by “identity in difference”. Similarly the eternity of resurrection differs from the historical claim that it had already occurred once condemned by St. Paul.

religion, as originating Christianity on the human plane, is here somewhat neglected, as Hegel seems later to have realised.

Man is become here the battleground where “flesh” and the spirit strive together in one consciousness, what we call today a “no win situation”. This is the (in the first place at least) Christian unhappiness, so to say, which Hegel attempts further to analyse. Victory over the enemy “really means being worsted”, man can take credit for nothing. If there are remedies Hegel hardly touches upon them here, those such as to “cast one’s cares upon the Lord”, to abandon oneself to providence, to “accept everything” and so on. He is careful to point out, though, that all this unhappiness, to repeat, is the work of the Concept pursuing its omnipotently unruffled course, where, all the same, the **End** is as such realised (*Enc.* 210-212), i.e. there is no trans-phenomenal “temporal” course. He is not, that is, functioning as an external critic. This all has to be gone through, rather. “Consciousness of life ... is merely pain and sorrow.” Consciousness is of its own nothingness while elevation beyond this “is itself this same consciousness”. One can take credit for nothing.

Hegel refers all the time to the “unchangeable” by which he plainly means God but God as Christ, first apprehended as an external particular, something, this particularisation namely, from one aspect only making the situation of self-hatred more acute. The unchangeable, that is, is “affected by particularity”. “Instead of particularity having been abolished in the consciousness of immutability, it only continues to appear there still” (p. 253).

In this process, however, consciousness experiences just this appearance of particularity in the unchangeable, and of the unchangeable in particularity. Consciousness becomes aware of particularity *in general* and in the immutable essence, and at the same time it there finds its own particularity. For the truth of this process is precisely that the double consciousness is one and single. This unity becomes a fact to it, but, in the first instance the unity is one in which the diversity of both factors is still the dominant feature. Owing to this, consciousness has before it the threefold way in which particularity is connected with unchangeableness. In one form it comes before itself as opposed to the unchangeable essence, and is thrown back to the beginning of that struggle, which is, from first to last, the principle constituting the entire situation. At another time it finds the unchangeable appearing in the form of particularity; so that the latter is an embodiment of unchangeableness, into which, in consequence, the entire form of existence passes. In the third case, it discovers *itself* to be this particular fact in the unchangeable. The first unchangeable is taken to be merely the alien, external Being⁴⁹, which passes

⁴⁹ God as Judge (translator’s note).

sentence on particular existence; since the second unchangeable is a form or mode of particularity like itself⁵⁰, it, i.e. the consciousness, becomes in the third place Spirit (*Geist*), has the joy of finding itself therein, and becomes aware within itself that its particularity has been reconciled with the universal.⁵¹

Since this “threefold way” is a plain progression towards some more comprehensively satisfying goal, from the point of the speculatively logical in particular, now at one, in sublation of lesser more finite aims, with our human quest, itself that of Spirit itself now (i.e. the specifically human in self-sublation), it is hence necessary to investigate and/or explicate it further, as Hegel now does. In the course of this our contact with the Thomistic and Trinitarian texts, with our main Trinitarian but especially here Incarnational theme, seeing now the two as one, will be renewed.

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He states firstly here, then, that

What is set forth here as a mode and relation of the unchangeable, came to light as the experience through which self-consciousness passes in its unhappy state of diremption. (Baillie, p. 253)

This repeats the identification of the particular with the universal, constitutive of Christianity, which we have noted above and which characterises Hegel’s System of Logic throughout. This identification is “a mode and relation of the unchangeable”, just in its being what occurs in consciousness, ours, anyone’s or as such, at the same time as it forms a part of the establishment of this truth in the close-locked dialectical circularity of true philosophy which the various practically or finitely motivated ideologies are pleased to imitate in their “sham-being”, taking Hegelianism, Hegel rather, stupidly, dishonestly or both, to be one of themselves as “like unto them”.

⁵⁰ Christ (translator’s note).

⁵¹ The religious communion (translator’s note). To regular Bible readers this passage may appear as not much more than Biblical paraphrase. It is nonetheless first class philosophy, *sophia* even, for that, smoothly refining and completing, while surpassing, what we have from Socrates or Plato, say, on the theme (I omit the many-faceted body of Jewish Testamentary texts, which might take us perhaps further still, as art, religious or non-religious, often can and does, both as reporting and commenting, a more assured term than “interpreting”, than Hegel and since they are not formal philosophical science).

Hegel next warns against “one-sidedness” in this, since this identification is at the same time, or consequently, he would have to say, not pure property of the first-known or phenomenal self-consciousness of “ours”,

for it is itself unchangeable consciousness; and this latter, consequently, is a particular consciousness as well; and the process is as much a process of that unchangeable consciousness, which makes its appearance there as certainly as the other.

He here plainly anticipates what he will say on the next page, more explicitly maybe but still in a veiled way, of Christ, God made man, the unchangeable as changeable rather. Hegel is concerned here and throughout to present the contingency of the Christian story typical of religious proclamation, as appearance only *of* what is in itself of the deepest necessity, as his philosophy is set to show, not apologetically merely but in the service divine of the highest truth. This, in fact, is his general perception of contingency, gone into most thoroughly in the *Lectures on the Proofs of the Existence of God*, for all their unfinished state. As “under God” through God’s own act contingency acquires its own necessity. Possibility, taken merely or abstractly, is thus impossible, is nothing rather, actually what he says of evil as well, in some way just one of those contingencies, after all. This is what must be born in mind when we find him claiming that there is, must be, “evil in God”. This anyhow, the rescue of absolute narrative from its apparent contingency, explains far better Hegel’s veiled mode of writing, since aimed at walking on two levels at the same time, than does the supposition of mere coyness or embarrassment at more directly involving Christ in his philosophy, as Findlay and other commentators freely read into him. The involvement is anyhow clear enough. If, namely, as, we noted, Scotus especially argued, the incarnation of God is necessary to creation and not a mere *post hoc* remedy, a position I have argued above is entailed even within the superficially opposed *felix culpa* idea (the necessity extends rather to this too, to the *culpa*⁵²), then this is not separable from the logic of

⁵² Cp. *Enc. 24, Zus. 3*, on the “Mosaic legend of the Fall of Man”. We may have here a clue to how Pope John Paul II Wojtyła, himself no mean philosopher, was not merely able but chose to “beatify” Duns Scotus, doctor of the Church, recently beside the routinely opposed Thomas Aquinas, who, with Augustine, stresses human sin, even a “fall” (discountenanced in its notion by Hegel), as immediate motive for incarnation as remedy. There is also less suggestion of divine action being evoked by human acts. Of course Aquinas, when not commenting a religious representation, is as clear as anyone can be on this point of God as unqualifiedly first mover in and of *all* acts, as himself *actus purus*. This truth in no way affects whatever truth creaturely responsibility bears, a point on which McTaggart (for whom, too, there

necessity as such, of the changeable in relation to the unchangeable bringing it forth. By this it may be seen, as already implicit in Hegel's view of a "fall" of man as mere representation of his finitude⁵³, that the Augustinian *felix culpa* is by no means mere paradox.

For that movement is carried on in these moments: an unchangeable now opposed to the particular in general, then, being itself particular, opposed to the other particular, and finally at one with it.

Hegel here sums up his wider or more general threefold metaphysical view, though it is a matter of logic, while commenting that it is here "out of place" as anticipatory. Here "we have only had to do with unchangeableness as unchangeableness of *consciousness*". This is not "true immutability". One must note that this is what he is after, in view of all the attempts to reduce his system to a "process theology" where nothing abides. It, consciousness, is "still affected with an opposite", not giving us therefore the unchangeable by itself. What has come to light is, firstly, "merely" that "to consciousness ... the determinations above indicated appear in the unchangeable", viz., the first unchangeable, God as judge, the second unchangeable "a form or mode of particularity like itself", viz. Christ, and, the third unchangeable, spirit or the religious communion as "having the joy of finding itself therein" and becoming "aware within itself that its particularity has been reconciled with the universal" as Baillie paraphrases the alien external Being first as sentencing "particular existence", itself (since there is one unchangeable, not three) then secondly unchangeable "as a form or mode of particularity like itself", again, and thirdly, spirit (*Geist*) as the finding of oneself in the unchangeable as or in "reconciliation with the universal". This is, again, deliberately posited as that universality at which Christian doctrine essentially aims rather than this positive doctrine itself, on which, however, he will also insist in its place, as in his critique of Jacobi. The truth, however, is that the positive doctrine, where preserved unalloyed, itself yields, promotes and enshrines universality.

were no real, i.e. eternal, events, no change) too was perfectly clear, giving good reasons for it. It is, says Hegel, simply the philosophical viewpoint, that of "realised end" (though the past participle even here is representation. One should rather use some variant of "In my beginning is my end", "alpha and omega", etc., or even "All times are His", the personal pronoun, according to Hegel too, not being representation. "God", he says, "is the Absolute Person". It is from this truth, fully grasped, that the Trinitarian relations can be found to follow.

⁵³ It would follow from this that the "praeternatural gifts" of theological tradition are or were so to say lost in their inception, necessarily trans-historical at least.

Self-consciousness, he unwaveringly insists, accordingly, “is itself unchangeable consciousness”. Yet it passes through an “experience” of change as in “an unhappy state of diremption”. Implied here is a critique of experience as such, we should note. This experience therefore is not self-consciousness’s “own one-sided process” as if external to the divine or infinite being or, as we say, life. Consequently, all the same, unchangeable consciousness “is a particular consciousness as well”, i.e. it has an opposite, even if this is so as nothing is opposite to true being or conversely. One of the two, say change, is or at least appears “as certainly as the other”.

“What is set forth here as a mode and relation of the unchangeable, came to light as the experience through which self-consciousness passes in its unhappy state of diremption.” This experience, that is, is itself the delusion of an autonomous or separate world existing apart from God. It is constitutive misapprehension and accordingly constitutive unhappiness. “Call no man happy until he is dead”. Hegel, though, will have opposed this Greek saying, so confirmatory of the Scripture, inasmuch as life and death are still taken in the natural way there rather than sublated. This experience, however, is not merely one-sided, “is itself unchangeable consciousness” as *our* reality, which we do not escape through not living in the Middle Ages. It thus makes of the latter, in common perception, “a particular consciousness as well”, man treating God as some kind of an alarming individual, as is apparent in all the usual religious exchanges, prayers etc, and supremely in the offering of sacrifice. The two processes, of finite and infinite consciousness, turn out to be one. But, again, unchangeable *consciousness* “is not true immutability”, by which we do not mean the latter is *unconscious* but that it transcends both particularities rather.

So what Hegel says here is that “thus far” we have not been doing more than phenomenology, not doing metaphysics but asking what we are conscious of, even if especially with respect to our own minds, viz. “an unchangeable now opposed to the particular in general, then, being itself particular, opposed to the other particular, and finally at one with it”. This might invite criticism of Baillie’s Christian identifications cited above as premature. They are defensible, however, inasmuch as they follow Hegel’s method and intention of basing his analysis upon historical development, inasmuch as, for example, Stoicism and antique scepticism *were* followed by the Christian era in Europe. What does emerge from this, though, is that according to Hegel the Anselmian ontological argument does not (without modification or addition, which it gets insofar as Hegel goes on to establish philosophical Idealism “as in fact the philosophical expression of the

principle of reason”⁵⁴) go through *as argument* except for those already conscious of the God to be proved, which was Aquinas’s verdict upon it too, viz. that it is phenomenological rather than, precisely, ontological. In connection with this same point Hegel will in later work, especially the *Lectures on the Proofs of the Existence of God* as he left them, call in question, from a logical viewpoint, the very notion of proof as such.

So we have here what mind, within human nature and experience, finds, how things must appear to it. They appear, namely, as contradiction without possible resolution and just this is the unhappiness. What is lacking is final identification of what is at first abstractly distinguished. Just here this is shown with regard to what can be called a dialectic of consciousness as unchangeable between man and God or, equally, *his* God, emerging from his mind not, of course, without external instruction in the typical case. Hence it can also be read as an indictment or at least criticism of the posture of *faith* as provisional because finite.

What Hegel says, a trifle ambiguously with regard to the point I am making, is that “what is set forth here as a mode and relation of the unchangeable, came to light as the experience through which self-consciousness passes in its unhappy state of diremption”. Just therefore it cannot be posited as the unchangeable as transcending the unchangeable consciousness *tout court*, for the reason that this intention contradicts its being established just by self-consciousness *in this state*, one of making its appearance, namely, “as certainly as the other”. This, in fact, is the reason for that “threefold” *development*, for that is what it is, cited above, “in which particularity is connected with unchangeableness”, a connection, then, *as* a development, leading to both the (further) development of Hegel’s system of logic but also to its “mystical” resolution which Hegel identifies with speculative reason at, for example, *Enc. 82, Zusatz*. Here, however, it leads to “the unhappy consciousness” as a state of rational suspension which he goes on to illustrate at some length with reference to especially medieval Christendom. Any further discussion, in fact, of nineteenth century Neo-Scholasticism, the scholastic “revival”, ought best to start from here, as the Neoscholastics themselves did not.

Hegel adds that this experience itself points beyond itself as not just “its own one-sided process”, as if consciousness were itself a “veil” of *perception* (to take this phrase from Jonathan Bennett’s writings on Kant) rather than a pointer further forward, meanwhile itself unchangeably self-aware, which makes it particular “as well” without denying, or actually in this state affirming, “the other” unchangeable consciousness which, Hegel argues, is

⁵⁴ Baillie, p. 271, prefacing IV C, AA.

thus or so far made particular too or just “as certainly”. For the “movement” of the latter, in the *thinking* of the unchangeable (the translator’s avoidance of a capital letter for this term has to be a refinement, or else a distortion, of the German, where its positing, unless a mere adjective is intended, is linguistic routine), the “process”, “makes its appearance there as certainly as the other”. It is carried on namely as one, this process, “in these moments”. The phenomenal, that is, is not entirely distinguishable from the actual, a position that might well be taken as Hegel’s whole theme, caught in the immediate absurdity of his very title, proposing a phenomenology of *mind*, the supposed or otherwise posited redactor of phenomena. On the other hand the overcoming of this indistinction can fairly be seen as the proclaimed superiority of absolute over “subjective” idealism. In fact Hegel resolves this doubt or problem in his specifically logical treatises, sublating both subject and object in one, just what is already implicit here, however. He is, so to say, “all of a piece”. Implicit here, incidentally, is an extensionability, however finally characterised, as it is, to cite the supreme examples, in St. Paul (“members one of another”) or in the Fourth Gospel (“may they be one in us ... I in them and they in me”), to all who make up “the spiritual community” (and perhaps all do, perhaps not), an aspect the criticism of which by Fr. Daniel Jamros SJ formed a major topic of our *Thought and Incarnation in Hegel*.⁵⁵

For that moment is carried on in these moments: an unchangeable now opposed to the particular in general, then, being itself particular, opposed to the other particular, and finally at one with it. (p. 254)

The same triad appears again and yet again, in ever-varied form, here. Hegel here confirms the distinction, between the phenomenal and the actual, by saying it is “out of place here” as looking ahead. Unchangeableness of consciousness, again, is not “true immutability”, which he here signals as his intended destination as “realised end”, though many of his readers have wished to deny this intention. He would not otherwise, I venture to affirm, speak of “true” immutability, any more than he speaks of “true” crime. This true immutability would not be, cannot be, affected (infected) with an opposite, by which he does not only mean “in its expression” but as such, rather, as what “we have not had before us”, which implies that if we can’t speak of it (he does not directly say this, though) then we had better or should not, Wittgenstein’s point of termination too. Hegel, however, continues nonetheless, saying we do not know how “the unchangeable *per*

⁵⁵ *Thought and Incarnation in Hegel*, Cambridge Scholars Publishers, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 2020.

se ... will conduct itself”, a continuance of the contradiction he might have avoided here (e.g. if he had said, written, “will be found to be conducting itself”). What we know so far is that the indicated determinations “appear” in the unchangeable, now at length spoken of as indifferent to the two instances, human and divine, in itself and as experienced, etc.

This, anyhow, is why also the immutable, the God, “also preserves, in its very form and bearing, the character and fundamental features of diremption and separate self-existence, as against the particular consciousness”, i.e. until we overcome these. This is why, too, it appears to the latter as “altogether a contingency, a mere chance event, that the unchangeable receives the form of particularity”. Just here, though, in this phrasing, Hegel is beginning, without warning, as if meaning to include the two, if we include Trinity, under one form of consideration, to refer to Incarnation. This, however, precedes Trinity as itself revealing it, in Hegel as in “Scripture”.

God keeps diremption and separate existence as against man, i.e. in his concept as this is with us. He thus seems like a contingency, a funny idea, as of “some god” as this phrase is used by “some” people. Here begins the Hegelian conflation corresponding to the birth of God in man, his incarnation in and as man as showing what he is and has to be eternally, and hence, with equal immediacy, what we are. We at once recognise the New Testament flavour. “If God is for us what can be against us?” Had we even begun previously to see the depths of this utterance? Now, though, God and man change places in a consistent whirl around one still point, true Being, logical method, the Idea.

What has here so far come to light is merely this, that to consciousness, which is our object here, the determinations above indicated appear in the unchangeable. (p. 254)

The one-page paragraph (Baillie p. 254-5), immediately following this last citation above, “For this reason, then, the unchangeable consciousness ... and absolutely remote it remains”, is crucial for the understanding of “the unhappy consciousness”, at least in the character it assumes as a Christian phenomenon, which accords best, at first glance at least, with the historical method pursued consistently in this book in particular. This is not to deny a potential application to other lines of what would still remain, in the first instance however, a stage in a historical development. If reversed then this is to say, to find Hegel saying, that the Christian phenomenon is of universal application as “the necessity of the concept” which, all the same, does not dissolve the “historical contingency” of the facts; it reveals their meaning. In the *Lectures on the Proofs of the Existence of God* this is applied

systematically to contingency as such in relation to absolute or divine necessity as the ultimate freedom.

There is therefore a double reading of the Christian mysteries. Thus Hegel can say regarding the Incarnation: “It is the notion of the reality of fact itself, the divine notion, the notion of God himself, which determines itself to enter on this development and has set its goal before it” (LPR I, p. 85 – SW, vol. 15, p. 100). But he also recognises that for the singular conscience, “it is thus altogether a contingency, a mere chance event that the unchangeable receives the form of particularity; just as the particular consciousness merely happens to find itself opposed to the unchangeable, and therefore has this relation *per naturam* ...”⁵⁶

... as the history of religions shows, Hegel might have added.⁵⁷ Here, anyhow, is where we are in our reading of this section of *The Phenomenology of Mind* (p. 254 to 255), the crucial paragraph as we said above. Here Hegel comes to the surely underlying or fundamental point as regards his account of “the unhappy consciousness”, thus, in termination of the same paragraph:

In point of fact, through the unchangeable assuming a definite form, the “beyond”, as a moment, has not only remained, but really is more securely established [established *as* beyond, he means]. For if the remote “beyond” seems indeed brought closer to the individual by this particular form of realisation [incarnation as man], on the other hand, it is henceforward fixedly opposed to the individual, a sensuous, impervious unit, with all the hard resistance of what is actual. The hope of becoming one therewith must remain a hope, i.e. without fulfilment, without present fruition; for between the hope and fulfilment there stands precisely the absolute contingency, or immovable indifference, which is involved in the very assumption of determinate shape and form, the basis and foundation of the hope. By the nature of this existent unit, through the particular reality it has assumed and adopted, it comes about of necessity that it becomes a thing of the past, something that has been somewhere far away, and absolutely remote it remains.⁵⁸

What Hegel says here, recalling again St. Paul’s censure against those who claim that the general resurrection has “already” occurred (they can only do this as regarding the temporal order as more real or “fixed” than Hegel would grant, however), is precisely the ground for the constant advice given by ascetical or “spiritual” writers in the main tradition to believers when

⁵⁶ Van Riet, *op. cit.*, p. 105, end-note 77.

⁵⁷ Van Riet, *op. cit.*, *eodem loco*.

⁵⁸ Hegel, Baillie pp. 254-255, parentheses added.

arrived at a certain point in their spiritual or inner life, at which, just as believers, it is generally maintained, not without some disputes about it having occurred, that they should, in some form, conscious or unconscious, desire to arrive. This advice, often given in a form appropriate to monks or nuns but of general application *mutatis mutandis*, is that in our search for God, for contact with God (“what the spiritual man desires is contact”, states a modern Carthusian abbot⁵⁹, just as Hegel is confirming in his own case here) we, or Christians specifically, should at a certain and in general recognisable point leave off constant meditation upon the “past” life of Christ in, say, the Gospels and practise some form of direct or contemplative prayer, once for Aristotle itself a form of “study” in the Aristotelian sense, such that Aristotle himself pairs it (in *On the Parts of Animals*) with a practice of death or mortification, *athanatizein*, principally of the mind as consciousness.

That is to say, Hegel is not here making a point against Christianity *tout court*, though he is bringing out the difficulties of a life of faith and hope, such as Christ is put as enjoining upon those believing in him, in the final discourse of John’s Gospel, for example. It is all of a piece. This confirms what I said above, that the positing of an “unhappy consciousness” is not as such a criticism of Christianity by someone crediting himself with enjoying a superior happiness. “Call no man happy until he is dead”, to cite a pre-Christian Greek. Meanwhile, let’s just get on with it, as Mr. Boris Johnson found himself recently bound to say and which, in fact, faced with the deed, even or especially murderers feel themselves bound to do, hide or destroy the corpse and so on. Such are the duties of life, “life that is no life at all” according to Teresa of Avila and many others, or “only the idea immediate” in Hegel’s words.

It should thus be no surprise when we find Hegel identifying speculative thought with supremely speculative mysticism, as I have noted above. It is “all of a piece”, especially as part of Hegel’s main project, that of overcoming abstract thinking as that which on the disciplinary surface at least typified Scholastic thinking. We have even referred to this in connection with our presentation begun above of Thomas Aquinas on the Trinity and to which we shall return.

But speculative reason wants to be the mental equivalent of the concrete. In the domain of history, of religion, it “proves” nothing, constructs nothing, but simply discovers a meaning. The rigor here is not mathematical. Also it cannot be identified with the “reason” that tradition contrasts with faith ... According

⁵⁹ Cited in *They Speak by Silences*, Darton, Longman and Todd, London (1950s, date uncertain).

to Hegel traditional speculative theology considers the genuine content, but it does so imperfectly to the extent that it resorts to two distinct first principles, faith and reason, or rather faith and understanding. On the one hand it admits that the truths of faith constitute mysteries for the understanding; but on the other hand, by the understanding it wishes to show the connection of the mysteries among themselves and their compatibility with the system of understanding. Indeed sometimes it engages in endless discussions, where it holds the two extremities of the chain, but not the chain itself (as is seen in the opposition of grace and freedom) or it tends to enlarge endlessly the part of understanding at the cost of faith (as is seen in the *Aufklärung*, where fundamental dogmas such as those of the Trinity, the divinity and resurrection of Christ are rejected). As for Hegel, he hopes to overcome this dualism by resorting to a single first principle which is neither faith, nor understanding but speculative reason. In this way he establishes not a new “theology” in the traditional sense (where his own philosophy would have replaced that of Plato or Aristotle), but a “philosophy of religion” which fully merits its name of philosophy, and which, in its conviction, respects the Christian faith since it only “thinks” it.⁶⁰

Van Riet adds a pertinent remark about “modern theology”, confirmed during the half century or more since he wrote his remarkable essay:

As we have already said, we do not intend to judge if, indeed the Hegelian philosophy of religion respects the Christian message or not. But, if it respects it ... it seems that it escapes those criticisms which can be formulated against philosophies of religion which ... claim not to judge the faith and judge it all the same. Hegel also escapes the criticism brought against those who, by having recourse to a more limited reason, less careful about the concrete and about history, want to bring all Christianity under the limits of this reason. On the other hand, if it is considered in its project or intention, Hegel’s philosophy surely differs from the theology of Saint Thomas or that which Hegel criticised in his contemporaries. But it is important to notice that it differs less than is thought from theology as it is effectively *practiced* today. Today, indeed, one tends to conceive of theology as a “science” in its unity of method, in the sort of critical renewal of its “first principle”, i.e. of revelation as it is contained in Scripture and Tradition. One recalls that Tradition is not an autonomous “source” of revelation, juxtaposed to that of the Bible, but that it refers itself entirely to the “revealed deposit” which it keeps living. The Bible itself is not a dead letter, but a word of God expressed in human language, which can and ought to be understood. Positive theology with its refined and complex methods, “has recognised more or less consciously that it is necessary to *surpass* the thought of the biblical author, that it is necessary to interpret it, that it is necessary to try to understand its religious message even

⁶⁰ Van Riet, *op. cit.* p. 99.

better than he understood it” (A. Vanneste, *Introduction à la théologie*, Cours et Conférence, 9, Leopoldville Kinshasa: University of Louvain, 1963, p. 11). Speculative theology prolongs this first effort of comprehension. It is no longer presented as a deduction from “undemonstrable principles” which would have been established and fixed by positive theology. It deepens the understanding obtained by positive theology, and it also exercises a “judicatory function” for “to understand is to judge” (*Ibid.*, p. 15). Remarking that the most profound mysteries of the faith “relate less directly to the internal nature of God than to the way in which he communicates himself to us”, it is ultimately “a much more anthropocentric science than is generally thought” (*Ibid.* p. 14). Thus conceived, theology seems to rejoin the intention of the Hegelian philosophy of religion in many regards.⁶¹

Paradoxically, though, for Hegel this negative moment of the “beyond” is precisely what enables Christianity to be, as a religion in its religious fullness, so to say, where the first are last and the last first, a or the religion for all men and women. The majority cannot and do not conceive what I claim acknowledgement of Spirit, of God, strictly entails, namely what Hegel calls “absolute idealism” in some form. This much is entailed, taken properly, by the otherwise glib Scholastic adage, referring to the world or “creation”, *plura entia sed non plus entis*, more beings but not more Being, for how could this otherwise be said to be so without contradiction, if one would but consider? So, for example, when we try to consider “the end of time”, if we do, we should not be forming notions of an *after*-life, for then we are as much in time as ever. Hence “eschatology” is either not a science or it is the science of things eternal, quite simply, though “put” in religion as succeeding upon one another in time. For believers this is so patent or obvious that the most highly educated among them mostly do not bother to make the philosophical translation when speaking among themselves, just as Hegel did not bother to correct his saying that time is real for *as long as* Spirit needs it. This need not have been a joke, though it may have been, but more likely humorous and in earnest at the same time. But as he himself puts the main matter here: “Within the range of the finite we can never see or experience that the End has been really secured” as, he means, it has, or is. “The consummation of the infinite End, therefore, consists merely in removing the illusion which makes it seem as yet unaccomplished”. Merely? Since he cannot mean we do this thus by thinking good philosophy, just before lunch perhaps, this “merely” must have the function of modifying our more immediate notion of salvation, redemption or happiness simply, which, however, is entered, he states, insofar as happiness is and must be spirit, by death specifically, “e’en though it be a cross, that raiseth me”, of

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 99-100.

one kind or another. This must be so even if we enter into nothingness, the intuitions of Philip Larkin notwithstanding or, if these are valid, then this is not an option for thought. Hegel is notably discreet on such matters, to the discomfiture of his follower McTaggart who rather claims that we are, *mutatis mutandis* (or not even this), in heaven now or “already” in some sense. One at once sees that there must be some truth in that, that this is what thought is, as indeed it is reflected in liturgical belief and practice of “the religious communion” who, after all, call themselves Christ’s “mystical body”. Add to this that there is in fact not two, three or more bodies of Christ but one supremely and this is what we find Hegel saying, without any intention of making a reduction of faith’s hope, nor does he. The “spiritual community” or Church *is* Christ, the body. “Where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I”: this says just as much and more, as does the command, “Remain in my love” or the saying that “He that eateth me shall live because of me”. This is not a promise as to the future especially but a statement as to now, in and around the eating (in which the future is included as swallowed up), whereby a mutual compenetration is proclaimed, as of “members of one another”, “I in them and they in me”, a mutual indwelling. St. Thomas’s *sumit unus sumunt mille*, in his *corpus Christ* poem, says the same, more cryptically perhaps, as does the Salvation army’s “We are not divided, All one body we” or at least it is open to such an interpretation, such a faith.

The hope of becoming one therewith (i.e. “with all the hard resistance” etc.) must remain a hope, i.e. without fulfilment, without present fruition; for between the hope and fulfilment there stands precisely the absolute contingency, or immovable indifference which is involved in the very assumption of determinate shape and form, the basis and foundation of the hope. By the nature of this existent unit, through the particular reality it has assumed and adopted, it comes about of necessity that it becomes a thing of the past, something that has been somewhere far away, and absolutely remote it remains. (Hegel, *op. cit.*, Baillie, p. 255)

Precisely so, and “where I am there shall my servant be”, viz. on the Cross and yet, by faith, in heaven as “crucified to the world” and it to me (St. Paul). That is, this is the way I want it and by this, your faith, is the world overcome, as, in Hegel, the truth has to “emerge”. Of this Christ says, “I have a baptism that I must be baptised with”. Why this must be so is doubtless an additional and also a philosophical question indeed. “Pain is evil”, I recall the late Professor Harald Ofstad propounding in seminar at Stockholm as the one indisputable truth. Hegel, however, claims to set forth the uses of evil in the general scheme of things. One might also consult Ofstad’s younger

colleague and pupil Ragnar Olsson's thesis *The Moral Import of Evil*, a title I found merely perplexing until recently. This, in fact, is also precisely why we must say that the "threefold way" Hegel outlines, already on this first page (253) under two forms, is in reality an ascending series, paralleling Hegel's "three kingdoms" in the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* which he declares are not really separable nor even distinct but pure thought, phenomenal representation and subjectivity as such. The final one, the community of faith, absorbs the preceding two. When we realise this, which is Christianity at its highest pitch, we are at once thrown into the disputes as to its relation with the various competing notions of human or social progress and destiny. There is suspicion of a certain coincidence, at first here in the West, now in the whole world virtually, to the mutual elevation of both sides as already occurring⁶², though this must, in the nature of the case, be simultaneously viewed as an absorption into one of the various strands of community consciousness, though people go on gaily prattling about "competing ideologies". Whatever else it is, Christian faith is *not* an ideology, nor is any philosophy, any *sophia*, worthy of the name.⁶³

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So Hegel continues his account of the unhappy consciousness in its particular acuteness within the Christian religion, all *because of* the Incarnation in phenomenal history:

If, at the beginning, the bare notion of the sundered consciousness involved the characteristic of seeking to cancel it, *qua* particular consciousness, and become the unchangeable consciousness, the direction its effort henceforth takes is rather that of cancelling the relation to the pure unchangeable, without shape or embodied form, and of adopting only the relation to the unchangeable which has form and shape. (p. 255)

This form and shape, as Baillie notes, is that of "the historic Christ as worshipped, e.g. in the medieval Church" in the relatively barbaric, hence naively realist, West, relatively abstracting therefore, as does history itself and all temporal consciousness, from his nonetheless professed divinity, as if worshipping Christ *instead of* God rather than as the focus where just God, the Absolute, is to be found, just "the unchangeable" having "form and shape". This is the negative or miasmal force of "historic". It explains why

⁶² Cf. Van Riet, *op. cit.* p. 81.

⁶³ This was well and truly established by Hannah Arendt in her *Origins of Totalitarianism*, 3 vols., back in the 1950s.

it came to the more deeply thinking devout as a relief when they were advised by whomever to leave such forced attempts at or “exercises” of imaginative realisation behind, whatever “aridities” were to come instead⁶⁴, until we come to the rather Hegelian-sounding declaration of Thérèse of Lisieux (d. 1897, aged twenty-four), “My only consolation is to have none”. Yet it’s a constant of absolute religion. “E’en though it be a cross, That raiseth me”, runs the hymn. In other words: *Ave crux, spes unica*. We learn by experience to put the stress on the last word here, learning to “hate one’s life in this world” as stated (by Christ) condition for discipleship as, therefore, for “resurrection”, for life in and as the Idea. “O death I will be thy death”. Hegel well catches this Biblical note, which is therefore well caught in his writings and thought, whatever one’s speculations re his personal position when taking holiday from “the beam in one’s own eye”.

For the oneness of the particular consciousness with the unchangeable is henceforth its object and the essential reality for it, just as in the mere notion of it the essential object was merely the formless abstract unchangeable and the relation found in this absolute disruption, characteristic of its notion, is now what it has to turn away from. (p. 255)

Hegel immediately adds to this, though, having it both ways,

The external relation, however, primarily adapted to the formed and embodied unchangeable, as being an alien extraneous reality, must be transmuted and raised to that of complete and thoroughgoing fusion and identification. (pp. 255-256)

This latter need we have just noted, Hegel making contact with the tradition of mystical initiation. At the same time, in our first quotation just here, his words “For the oneness of the particular consciousness with the unchangeable is henceforth its object and the essential reality for it” seem to anticipate the union in identity Hegel finds to be the “work of Christ”, pointing both ways as we said. The “particular consciousness”, namely, has become, who knows how, ambivalent as between Christ and disciple. What Christ accomplishes in his own, as St. Thomas teaches, individualised nature he accomplishes in each of us. It becomes “our affair”, in a common task or rather end between or of the two. There are no tasks for Christ as God, as universal provider, here of an opportunity that Hegel refers now to a triple process, again, in accordance with the threefold character noted above. It more or less takes up the rest of this long chapter.

⁶⁴ Outstanding here is the fourteenth century classic, *The Cloud of Unknowing*, which has lost none of its actuality.

The process through which the unessential consciousness strives to attain this oneness, is itself a triple process, in accordance with the threefold character of the relation which this consciousness takes up to its transcendent and remote reality embodied in specific form. In one it is a pure consciousness; at another time a particular individual who takes up towards actuality the attitude characteristic of desire and labour; and in the third place it is a consciousness of its self-existence, its existence for itself. We have now to see how these three modes of its being are found and are constituted in that general relation.

The aim throughout, we need to keep in mind, is the necessity Hegel speaks of, as somehow established by this point in his treatise, to transmute the “external relation ... primarily adopted to the formed and embodied unchangeable”, i.e. to the historically in some sense contingent Christ of Gospel or other narrative, and raise it “to that of complete and thoroughgoing fusion and identification”. How far this might accord with historic Lutheranism I am not competent to pronounce on, nor do I find it of more than marginal relevance, i.e. for those interested. Probably Lutheranism, like most “isms”, has never been entirely consistent. Consistency, rather, is the vice of ideology. Or, as Hegel needed to show, and did show with full logical underpinning, consistency in inconsistency is the way to go, the narrow path, not an ideology over again. It is thus hard to see, for a non-expert, how the determinacy of any account of “artificial intelligence” that I know of can ever be reconciled with the indeterminacy discovered in quantum or micro-physics. We can of course determine (can we?) that the latter belongs to the object, the former to the subject (can we, though, in view of Hegel’s deconstruction of this dilemma?). What it shows, rather, is Hegel’s determination of true self-consciousness to oneness, again, “with the unchangeable” leaving behind any “alien extraneous reality” deemed by universal reason to be chimerical. Being is entirely rational; as such it is the Idea, is necessarily one with the infinite since it could only be limited by itself over again *ad infinitum*, ever renewed as of mind itself thus constituted. Hegel has not budged from these traditional insights.

The ever recurrent threefoldness or triplicity is not to be taken just numerically or “materially”, as Hegel indicates more than once. It is, rather, a kind of shorthand for what has often been called, not quite accurately, differentiation and reintegration as corresponding to immediacy’s yielding to mediation. We might go further, pertinently, and see the triplicity as the mediated form of the original and absolute oneness, with duality, twofoldness (du-plicity!), constituting the negative challenge eliciting this needful conversion.

In the first place, then, regarded as pure consciousness the unchangeable embodied in definite historical form seems, since it is an object for pure consciousness, to be established as it is in its self-subsistent reality. But this, its reality in and for itself, has not yet come to light, as we already remarked. Were it to be in consciousness as it is in itself and for itself, this would certainly have to come about not from the side of consciousness, but from the unchangeable. But this being so, its presence here is brought about through consciousness only in a one-sided way to begin with, and just for that reason is not found in a perfect and genuine form, but constantly weighted and encumbered with imperfection, with an opposite. (p. 256)

Only God knows God, in other words, this being precisely the misery of “the unhappy consciousness” who or which will thus become happy through the remedy manifested in the Good News, in Christian proclamation, in this threefold way as identified. We are after all and at bottom dealing with the work of a simple believer, giving of his utmost for the community, the level upon which he works being, from that perspective, a universal one, indifferent. The initiative must therefore come from the unchangeable, Hegel says, and this is his window upon the doctrine, the dogma, of grace, which, out of principle, he scarcely if ever mentions by name in his main works at least.

Hence it is precisely eternal life to know God, it was said, since eternal life is by definition the life of God himself, is indeed God, there being no other eternity, despite such expressions as “eternal punishment”. Hence the most recent papal attempt speaks of the lost, if such there be, as just fading away, if I recall him rightly. Must one eternally fade, can one? We have that significant saying, in a parable, “I *never* knew you”, stress added. Doctrines of “the elect” doubtless take their origin in these or similar waters we would fain call murky, though they seem fairly clear.

The unhappy consciousness, he goes on, has, as deprived of this “actual presence”, *ipso facto* “transcended pure thought”. This is a definition of what *faith* is, provisional no doubt. It overcomes thereby both Stoicism and Scepticism, latest abstract products of such thought. “It has gone beyond both of these”, a notice of achievement not much publicised by yesterday’s Hegelians of the Left. It “brings and keeps together pure thought and particular existence, but has not yet risen to that level of thinking where the particularity of consciousness is harmoniously reconciled with pure thought itself”. The transcendence mentioned, if we reflect, would have to at least begin in “unhappiness”:

It rather stands midway, at the point where abstract thought comes in contact with the particularity of consciousness *qua* particularity. Itself (*viz.* the unhappy consciousness) *is* this act of contact; it is the union of pure thought

and individuality; and this thinking individuality or pure thought also exists as object for it, and the unchangeable is essentially itself an individual existence. But that this object, the unchangeable, which assumes essentially the form of particularity, is *its own self*, the self which is particularity of consciousness – this is *not* established *for it*. (p. 257, parenthesis added)

This recalls to me the story of that peasant of modern times who, when asked by a visitor how he prayed, said, after a moment's thought: "Well, I look at him and he looks at me". This easily suggests, though, that he was on the way to establishing, for himself at least, that object of prayer as its or his "own self", classically expressed in Augustine's affirmation: "There is one closer to me than I am to myself", *intimior me mihi*. Lovers the world over come to feel their intersubjectivity, as it is unattractively called; one should rather, Hegel shows here, speak of their oneness, "I in you and you in me", "that they also may be one in us", as the Johannine Christ prays.

This "first condition" of the unhappy consciousness, in a sense, at least where a relationship to thinking, to thought, is sought, the first consciousness properly speaking, Hegel would identify with Devotion (*Andacht*), a kind of thinking that is not thinking, it would appear, but "a kind of thinking in terms of music, that does not get the length of notions, which would be the sole, immanent, objective mode of thought". Somehow, in this passage, we are led from such musical thinking to the grave sought by the Crusaders. Note that as a *human* condition (not a word that Hegel uses here) with respect to "the unchangeable embodied in definite historical form", also a human condition (in a sense, then, everything is "human" here, yet everything is "of mind"), this state responds (and not merely "corresponds") to "an unchangeable now opposed to the particular in general", the first in the list of three "moments" of *relation* (of the unchangeable) viewed from either side, which he mentioned a short while back (p. 254). It is as though we were already within the Trinitarian "situation" in all its inwardness, which, however, we are not, properly speaking, i.e. it would be "out of place" so to view it. In other words, phenomenal method requires that one state be considered and this state itself reflects or indicates a certain truth, that we are, whether "musically" or in some other way, wrestling (like Jacob) with God and/or God with us. In a sense that is what happens when we start to read any book of substance, due to the nature of the Concept.

In the mention of bells and incense as warm and discordant we may sense something of Hegel's response to the burgeoning "romantic" music of his just post-revolutionary day as recognising thought in it, a state properly of mind for the listener to, say, the "Eroica" symphony, just about to appear, or earlier music either for piano or transcribed thereto, as was frequent practice then, if I may join him in making an "out of place" consideration,

“so far as it is our affair” (p. 254). His point is that there is a kind of inchoate thought in the unhappy consciousness of the typical worshipper, a wrestling maybe or a yielding to “devotion”, which yet “is not that of thought” (p. 257). One might legitimately pair it with his “first form of absolute spirit”, first of yet another trio which is also triad, in the sense of quasi-syllogistic development. For this is the “thinking as such” of a certain transient type of consciousness, the “sole, immanent, objective mode of thought”, typical of a teenager maybe, but not only. Devotion has “indeed its objectivity”, not conceptual but “something external and foreign”. Here he plainly thinks of the figure of Christ as historically dwelt upon, in imagination primarily as must be the case then. Some of us may recall the kindergarten pictures of flat-roofed houses, people in funny clothes and robes, covered heads and the like. When consciousness tries to “disalienate” this, in view of promises etc., its emotion must still include, at least, “the bitterness of soul-diremption”, against which Hegel surely fights. There is “an infinite yearning” within particularity, which devotion, like music, can palliate. This yearning has faith, “is certain”, that it will be “recognised by this object” since “this object thinks itself as particularity”. This state he is describing corresponds quite a bit to what spiritual writers have called “devotion to the sacred humanity” in, it is implied, an imperfectly abstract mode (of devotion). It perhaps especially characterised medieval Christendom through the bulk of believers not having, even by ear, much access to the Scriptures, not yet printed after all, pointing as they do to mystical interpretation and where we find St. Paul saying that “even if we have known Christ after the flesh we know him so no more”, which simply wipes away the conflict Hegel here describes, the unhappiness seen as entailed by Christ’s bodily removal, though he himself heralds this as necessary. One cannot avoid the reflection that Hegel was after all closer in time to this medieval period than we are.

This external and foreign “nature”, then, is the “beyond”, essentially. It “is in part the unchangeable, thinking itself as particularity”, an arresting phrase surely, “and consciousness, therefore, attains itself”, i.e. only, but as “something opposed”, this, Hegel returns to this idea, being itself an apparently negative consequence of incarnation, opposed as it is, or at this point seems, to essentially *immediate* attempts, Hindu or Buddhist, say, to search within and surely find something at least, even the “risen Christ”. Hence Eckhart’s “If I were not, God would not be”, can begin to “make sense”, like talk of “becoming the path” as surely then the destination equally.

It, or Christ-God, or Jerusalem, though, is beyond itself and so consciousness feels only itself again and so falls back, laying hold of the “unessential”. Its

unhappiness or “divided state”, faith apart, is precisely what it finds, this giving poignancy to that whole movement of unbearable nostalgia for the ancient Greek immediacy which came so close to Hegel and the friends of his youth, Hölderlin particularly. This consciousness, this piety even, cannot grasp the other as “concrete”, since it remains always other, since it “cannot be grasped where it is sought”, any more than the Crusaders might have found it in Jerusalem itself. If I put not Jerusalem, runs a Davidic psalm all the same, “above all my joy”, then “may my tongue cleave to my mouth”. Everything, that is, within itself points beyond itself, the end and guiding light of Hegel’s thought, as it is of Scriptural interpretation, the “mystical sense”, its legitimacy, inseparable from its being “inspired”, though it be acceptance by the community that both locates and guarantees this, that *is* the inspiration, as Karl Rahner argued, unnecessarily reductively, of inspiration as a notion, however. Without this the daily or perpetual recitation of the Psalter, or reading and re-reading Scripture, publicly and privately, as laid upon those “in orders”, clerical, monastic, etc., would be and would have been senseless. This also means that the Crusaders, or pilgrims generally, cannot *simpliciter* have confused such an act as that of getting to Jerusalem with ascending to heaven!

It, then, Christ-God or Jerusalem, is “meant to be” just a “beyond”, as it surely isn’t, but so the unhappy one concludes. But it is, in this way at least, “that which can *not* be found”, *except* by “taking the Cross”. “I, if I be lifted up, shall draw all men on to me”, as Moses, it is added lifted up *the serpent*, now “made sin for us”, in the wilderness. If this is Hegel’s own emphasis, on “not”, on the moment of “forsakenness” (cp. *Psalm 22*), then this bears out our finding autobiographical background here, the difficulty and conflict about the inherited faith.⁶⁵ “When looked for as a particular it is not universal”, as he nonetheless, in all his later philosophy, insists that it should be and hence is, as notion namely, not as “an object of immediate sense-consciousness”. As such it “has disappeared”. Pure subjectivity! This is the point of the classic identification of Christ as risen with the body of believers, also in intention “risen” as “members one of another”, I “in them and they in me”. Hence, we can only come upon the *grave* of its life, as is anyhow the destiny of all flesh, like grass. That, of course, was merely a “source of trouble”, “contrary to the nature of actuality” as not “lasting”, still less with what was here an *empty* grave, above all for believers themselves. “Why seek ye the living among the dead?” Indeed, but by baptism life is sought in death nonetheless, “in a wondrous conflict” (from the classic Easter sequence, *Victimae paschali laudis, immolant Christiani*), of which resurrection

⁶⁵ Cp. J.H. Newman: “Ten thousand difficulties do not make a doubt”.

precisely as “death of death” (“O death I will be thy death”) is the eternal, in Hegel’s extended sense conceptual, outcome. That particular fight, then, and those like it, this seeking the living among the dead, “must be lost”, is mere striking off the high priest’s ear which spirit itself at once cancels, *in order to be won*, a trans-dialectical truth highlighted by Newman in entitling his novel, one of them, *Loss and Gain*. The key to this is the nothingness of “the world”, of one of the dilemma’s *non-existent* horns, hence no dilemma, hence hatred of this present “life that is no life at all” (Teresa of Avila), again. There is no point in pretending to pontificate about Christian faith while fighting shy of these perspectives intrinsic to it as giving the key also to the Buddhist “No life, no death”. This also is the key then to the baptismal vow to “renounce the world”, however we stand with “the flesh” and, yet more starkly, “the Devil”, who, like evil in Hegel’s treatment, “just is not evil” though we must, with equal energy, he insists, but beyond his own powers of explanation, there and then at least, insist that it is evil indeed. Yet, as he also repeatedly asserts, evil just is itself a mirage, a would-be actual non-being or present absence, at one here, all the way indeed, with Thomas Aquinas.

The grave then, that grave, even all the historical aspects in general, “has no concrete *actuality*”. Even, the “particularity *qua* vanished is not true particularity”, is nothing. Consciousness, therefore, and this is the positive aspect, “will give up this search”, will pass to the second stage of “desire and labour”, in a “return into self” (p. 259):

In this return into self, we find appearing its second attitude, the condition of desire and labour, which ensures for consciousness the inner certainty of its own self (which, as we saw, it has obtained) by the process of cancelling and enjoying the alien external reality, - existence in the form of independent things. The unhappy consciousness, however, finds itself merely desiring and toiling; it is not consciously and directly aware that so to find itself rests upon the inner certainty of itself, and that its feeling of real being is this self-feeling. Since it does not in its own view have that certainty, its inner life really remains still a shattered certainty of itself; that confirmation of its own existence which it would receive through work and enjoyment, is, therefore, just as tottering and insecure; in other words, it must consciously nullify this certification of its own being, so as to find therein confirmation indeed, but confirmation only of what it is *for itself*, viz. its disunion.

This cancelling of “existence in the form of independent things” is what Hegel later finds typifying what he calls “the moral outlook”. This does not happen here, however, it seems because the unhappy consciousness has a “feeling of real being” distinct from its “self-feeling”, i.e. it has not attained to absolute idealism, necessary for a consistent religious outlook. This,

anyhow, is the second of three things that happen specifically to the unhappy consciousness in its passage therefrom. Meanwhile, though, the desire and work mentioned are in themselves “a reality broken in sunder”, as they must be “in a consecrated world”, presumably because implying a “realist” or objectivist outlook upon reality, a direct reference to the medieval condition of Europe, which Hegel nonetheless intends, in view of the place of this discussion in just this phenomenal study of mind itself, as universally applicable simultaneously. It thus corresponds to his account elsewhere of the “I” itself, concretely universal in its universal particularity.

This reality is a form and embodiment of the unchangeable, for the latter has in itself preserved particularity; and because, *qua* unchangeable, it is a universal, its particularity as a whole has the significance of *all* actuality. (p. 260)

Here there is a “universalising” approach to the particularity of the world, the creation, as mirroring the particularity of Christ as the Word (cp. the Pauline ultimate, “Christ is your life”), which led some⁶⁶ to suspect him, wrongly, imperceptively, of mere pantheism. It corresponds more, what he says, to the Johannine view, stressed particularly by Bonaventure, Thomas’s Franciscan contemporary, that “through” the Word “all things were made”, if this “through” is to mean anything. The following paragraph relates the whole problematical discussion so far to the necessity of Absolute Idealism (as developed in the next section of Hegel’s book, C(AA)) for the religious mind *qua* mind, of its ascent to philosophy, in this world or eternity indifferently. In eternity it is rather unqualified *sophia*, however.

⁶⁶ Including the wonderfully thorough expositor, Joseph Gredt OSB (*Elementa Philosophiae aristotelico-thomisticae*, Herder, Freiburg 1929), Thesis XXXVII (“*Deus est ens distinctam a mundo*”), paragraph 816.2, ignoring Hegel’s remark, in a powerful passage, re “the charges of Pantheism and Atheism brought against the doctrines of Spinoza ... the system of Spinoza was not Atheism but Acosmism ... A philosophy which affirms that God and God alone is, should not be stigmatised as atheistic ... Human nature, not much to its credit, is more ready to believe that a system denies God than it denies the world” (*Enc.* 50: McTaggart, by contrast, denied both). However, Gredt also condemns as “partially pantheist” (?) both Eckhart and the now sainted Rosmini (some eighty of whose “propositions” were once, in the 1880s, condemned by the Roman “Holy Office”). Note that the wording of the thesis does not exclude the world’s nothingness (the traditional “dust and ashes”): Gredt calls the world our intellect’s “immediate object” (compare Hegel’s stress on constant mediation as a logical need). This nothingness, however, which implies our own as “abstract” (Hegel’s term) individuals, is something more than the recently adopted phrase “ontological discontinuity”.

If consciousness were, for itself, an independent consciousness, and reality were taken to be in and for itself of no account, then consciousness would attain, in work and enjoyment, the feeling of its own independence, by the fact that its consciousness would be that which cancels reality. But since this reality is taken to be the form and shape of the unchangeable, consciousness is unable of itself to cancel that reality. On the contrary, seeing that consciousness manages to nullify reality and to obtain enjoyment, this must come about through the unchangeable itself when it disposes of its own form and shape and delivers this up for consciousness to enjoy. (p. 260)

This last sentence refers to incarnation as “already” sacrifice. Viewed by Hegel as necessary it “must come about” with all its beneficent consequences, as one with the Absolute Idea or Mind as knowing only itself, in Aristotle’s words, i.e. that is how necessary it is. God does not start to know something else, which would be the alternative, in knowing himself, the unchangeable, as “disposing of his own form and shape”, since “Mind knows *only* itself” anyhow and always. This is the objection to the phrase “the pre-existent Christ”, which Herbert McCabe OP, in his study *The New Creation*, once put to the Scripture scholar Raymond Brown against the latter’s use of this term. Similarly Socrates, in being enjoined by the Oracle to know himself only, was really being told that himself is all there is to know. This suggests an identification between the individual thinker and Christ, in difference, which Hegel does not hesitate to make, not merely through having full Scriptural backing but through the requirements emerging from his achieved logical system (wherefrom Brown or anyone might indeed reply that “existence” is to be taken as but a moment, logically, in “The Doctrine of Essence”, of true Being, here identified with this more, even, than with just a “cosmic” Christ as the Absolute Idea⁶⁷).

What does Hegel mean by consciousness being internally shattered, in this unhappy state? He uses the expression at least twice here. Only absolute idealism could enable consciousness to identify God and self in the way Hegel, we have on record, has learned from, or found confirmed in (great minds think alike) Eckhart. Only this preserves or creates self-consciousness proper, or what consciousness is “meant” or set to be, wherein family or social requirements are cancelled or relativised, the enemies being then “of one’s own household”, where a prophet has no honour, as was always recognised. Just as shattered, then, consciousness “shows itself ... to break

⁶⁷ But compare McTaggart’s use of the phrase “the Hegelian Cosmology” as compatible with, denoting rather, Hegel’s cancellation of the cosmos as normally taken, material, extended etc. (1901, *Studies in the Hegelian Cosmology*).

up into a relation to reality”, instead of being reality, “or existence for itself”, and “into an existence in itself”.

That relation to actuality is the process of alteration, or acting, the existence for itself, which belongs to the particular consciousness as such. But therein it is also in itself; this aspect belongs to the unchangeable “beyond”. This aspect consists in faculties and powers; an external gift, which the unchangeable here hands over for the consciousness to make use of.

It is, one might say, our natural or immediate attitude, opposing *Diesseits*, our “active present”, and *Jenseits*, the “passive reality”. But “they are only opposed at the surface, and the play of opposition, the one to the other, takes place there”. Just in saying that, of course, Hegel dives below this surface. But while the active extreme can sublimate the “passive” it itself is sublated, if at all, “by its own changeless essence”. It becomes more and more a case of which, or even what, is which here, as is surely the intention. The final conclusion, after all, will be that it is in fact the individual that has “its own changeless essence”, without prejudice though, quite the contrary in fact, to essence itself with which the individual is thus in deepest relation, as Hegel had found expressed, if he had not thought it out for himself, in Eckhart, viz. that “the eye with which I see God is the eye with which God sees me”, which neither for him nor for Eckhart was denial of God but, rather, overthrow of Objectivity as the last idol. God is subject in self-knowing only of himself as himself Absolute Knowledge and more, always, this being, as far as Hegel’s vision was concerned, the last *representation*, to date, of the Absolute Idea (this in turn being the last *name* to date for God as itself “the name that is above all names”, yet both proper and of a nature, as God and godhead simultaneously).

Nonetheless it is just here, before coming to the third moment of the threefold attitude or relation to the transcendent which consciousness “takes up”, that Hegel’s opposition to alien objectivity gets its most vivid expression, the *giving of thanks* being made chief target for criticism, as opposed, however, as finally turns out to be the substance of the criticism, to this very transcendence of Being over Nothing. As he says later on:

There is something in its object concealed from consciousness if the object is for consciousness an “other”, or something alien, and if consciousness does not know the object as itself (the third moment of the threefold relation). This concealment, this secrecy, ceases when the Absolute Being *qua* spirit is object of consciousness. For here in its relation to consciousness the object is in the form of self; i.e. consciousness immediately knows itself there, or is manifest, revealed, to itself in the object. ... To be in its notion that which reveals and is revealed – this is, then, the true shape of spirit; and moreover, this shape,

its notion, is alone its very essence and its substance. ... The divine nature is the same as the human, and it is this unity which is intuitively apprehended. ... This shape is itself a self-consciousness; it is thus at the same time an existent object; and this existence possesses equally directly the significance of pure thought, of Absolute Being. ... The absolute Being existing as a concrete actual self-consciousness seems to have descended from its eternal pure simplicity; but in fact it has, in so doing, attained for the first time its highest nature, its supreme reach of being. For only when the notion of Being has reached its simple purity of nature, is it *both* the absolute abstraction, which is pure thought and hence the pure singleness of self, *and* immediacy or objective being, on account of its simplicity. (*The Phenomenology of Mind*, pp. 759-760, parenthesis added)

Only thus is it true, as Aristotle had said, that “mind thinks only itself”, Socrates knows only himself. What’s more, as Hegel shows in the continuation of the above quoted passage, this reveals itself supremely in incarnation as “the simple content of Absolute Religion”, while that “the Supreme Being is seen, heard, etc.” in “what is called sense-knowledge ... is, in very truth, the culmination and consummation of its notion”.

Meanwhile, the individual’s or, rather, actuality’s “own changeless essence” gets sublated as repelling itself from itself, handing over to the mercy of the now “active extreme what is thus repelled”. “Active force appears as the power wherein actual reality is dissolved”. Hence Hegel elsewhere calls this “force” thought, as “pounding” experience into concepts, and contrariwise, though such *Kraft* he refuses, as against Herder, to see as characterising God. But just for that reason, its dissolving of “actual reality” (in the “worldly” sense), “this consciousness, to which the inherent (as opposed to the ‘actual’) reality, or ultimate essence, is an ‘other’, regards this power (which is the way it appears when active) as ‘the beyond’” (*Jenseits*) or remote from itself. Therefore consciousness puts back all action into the other instead of returning into self, representing the other as “absolute might”, “purely universal”, from which all movement starts as the essential life of everything, including all changes, itself unchanged, Hegel might in consistency have added.⁶⁸

This is precisely the traditional picture or notion of God, a shape it retains also in the analysis of Aquinas. It follows therefrom, however, through

⁶⁸ This whole “moment”, also of Hegel’s thought (about thought) might profitably be considered in relation to Duns Scotus’ claim, apparently opposed to that of Aquinas, that theology is a *practical* science, though not, clearly, or merely, in that it helps us attain our end. But then thinking as forceful doing will in general be this, viz. practical, a taking of the Kingdom of Heaven “by storm”, as an evangelical text has it, the final *ascesis*.

Hegel's unique emphasis upon the finitude of all the terms involved, of terms as such or, *a fortiori*, propositions and arguments, the three instruments (*organa*) of reason for Aristotle. In this way he renews contact with the paradoxes of Scripture, the last as first, strength in weakness and so on.

In that the unchangeable consciousness contemns its specific shape and form, and abandons it entirely, while, on the other hand, the individual consciousness "gives thanks", i.e. denies itself the satisfaction of being conscious of its independence, and refers the essential substance of its action to the "beyond" and not to itself: by these two moments, in which both parts give themselves up the one to the other, there certainly arises in consciousness a sense of *its own* unity with the unchangeable. (p. 261)

Hegel can seem to have a special animus here against the idea of giving thanks, a requirement probably once drilled into him in some displeasing way. He sees through it, so to say, as being a means of denying one's own part. But this, with some originality, he points out as paralleled by the renunciation posited as *constituting* the incarnation, that God, Christ, "emptied himself", contemned his "specific shape and form" without regret ("thought it not robbery" an old text has it), though he omits here the "for our sakes" which is surely essential to its intelligibility. What he says is that Christ or "the unchangeable consciousness" and ourselves perform the same self-abandonment one to another, a fact or situation, he notes, leading as of its own momentum to "a sense of unity" in consciousness, i.e. on our part, with the unchangeable. This is his account, part of it, of the Pauline "I live yet not I, but Christ lives in me", or, in the words of Newman's hymn,

And each word or thought unruly
Do to death as he has died,

this being part of the "giving thanks" he fastens upon. A certain activity is evoked, elicited even, if one is to speak of "grace", a concept fitting quite naturally into this scheme though it is not mentioned. One cannot help wondering what is the key to all this, this particular picture of our inherited mode of consciousness, in the case at least of his most immediate set of readers back then, that he draws forth for us.

So he calls the opposition between God and man "superficial", a play of the same. "Active force", again, "appears as the power wherein actual reality is dissolved." For force read thought. This recalls a corresponding passage in the later *Encyclopaedia* Logic, especially concerning the active power of thought. This power consciousness has "handed over" to "the

active extreme” which, however, under another description just mentioned, is itself. Turn and turn about. But, seeing it nonetheless as “the beyond”, like “grace” again, means that it “lies remote from itself”. So it, consciousness, cannot “return out of its activity into itself” “as a fact for itself”, giving thanks, rather, as in the saying “There but for the grace of God go I”. All “might” gets put as on the other side and so it has ever been viewed, in a constant waiting until “the spirit of the Lord is upon me”, there “from which the movement in every direction started”. This is the life of what turn out to be “the disintegrating extremes” which are really one.

For it is the unchangeable consciousness itself that has set the example here, for “giving thanks”, namely, in its most absolute obedience, “unto death, even the death of the Cross”. Consciousness of independence is a false consciousness, action must be referred rather to “the beyond”, the “first mover” who, it was argued, must exist. Yet again,

By these two moments, in which both parts give themselves up the one to the other, there certainly arises in consciousness a sense of *its own* unity with the unchangeable,

as we noted above. The autobiographical tinge is unmistakable, for those at least sharing something of it. But “out of this unity there once more comes the opposition of universal and particular”, just insofar as Christ is *my* life, as it is put. This may be play, yet it is in earnest, otherwise play is not play, as every chess-*player* knows. For, says Hegel, consciousness *has enjoyed* what it now renounces, has willed, has acted, otherwise, or at least hoped or tried to; otherwise there would be no renunciation! Further, its self-cancellation in thanksgiving is its own act and it knows it, just as it is with the other. Here Hegel says, if obscurely, that the unchangeable only yields “its superficial content” to consciousness, while the latter, giving thanks, “gives up ... its very essence” and hence “does more thereby than the other, which only renounces an outer surface”. There is suspicion here of dropping into a kind of absurdity of incommensurables, as we find it in the poem by Kingsley Amis, “New Approach Needed”:

Should you revisit us, Stay a little longer,
And get to know the place.
Experience hunger,
Madness, disease and war. You heard about them, true,
The last time you came here:
It's different having them.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ First printed in *The New Statesman*; also in *Writing in England Today*, ed. Karl

Against this suggestion we find Van Riet remarking, while arguing for negativity in God, that of course there could be no question of a divine identification with “actual sin”, even though being himself “made sin”, “a curse” even, for us (*sic* St. Paul, Apostle), no question even, in fact, that “a bone of him shall be broken”, unlike the case of many of His martyrs, burned, mutilated and so on. So the unbrokenness seems rather a figure for, again, sinlessness amid the curse. Hegel continues:

Consciousness feels itself therein as this particular individual, and does not let itself be deceived by the semblance of its renunciation; for the real truth of that procedure is that it has not given itself up. What has come about is merely the double reflection into both extremes; and the result is to repeat the cleavage into the opposed consciousness of the unchangeable and the consciousness of a contrasted opposite in the shape of willing, performing, enjoying, and of self-renunciation itself, or, in general, of self-existent particularity. (p. 262)

A deeper rationale of giving of thanks than is usual must and therefore will be sought. This brings us to “the third stage in the movement of this consciousness”, following from the second either in logic or in psychological time, so to say:

In the first situation we had only a “notion” of actual consciousness, the inward emotion, which is not yet real in action and enjoyment. With the return out of this stage, however, it is that which has got to know itself as a real and effective consciousness, or that whose truth consists in being in and for itself. (pp. 262-3)

To understand what he says about “the first situation” here we need to recall that this whole triplicity is a “threefold relation” precisely to the appearance of Christ in and for mind in its finite condition, as it were for you or for me, the *relation* as what is analysed, namely, that “which this consciousness takes up towards its transcendent and remote reality embodied in specific form” (p. 256). Since this is philosophy and not “positive” theology the possibility of some other “embodiment” is not theoretically excluded here and one may, if one will, stretch Hegel’s notion of embodiment to make this possibility more thinkable or of wider application, though one scarcely knows if that would be still *his* notion. The whole thing is anyhow initiated by an identifiable historical event or epoch, under whatever limitations we may admit such idealities here, just as his introductory scheme, Stoicism,

Miller, Penguin Books 1968, pp. 166-167.

scepticism and what, under Constantine or before, followed, is fairly unambiguous.

Straightaway, in any case, the constant causal interchangeability is indicated when Hegel speaks of “the unessential consciousness” here and its “transcendent and remote reality embodied in specific form”, again. This specifically is what we are dealing with. Implied, therefore, is a notion of the Christian phenomenon as able to stand for something of relevance to humanity as a whole, precisely, however, or so Hegel reasons elsewhere, even later in this same book, because it *is* that. Those wishing to put Hegel to other uses, to use him, in a word, are thus bound to look for rebuttal of this in the texts. To a certain extent they are aided in this project by the so to say “Miltonic” character of Hegel’s own speculative logic.

So the first moment here might be likened to a first moment of pure faith, of course conceptually considered. There is no point in looking for such a state “in time”, as if it must have “existed”. The second moment is a reflection upon the first in a “return into self” in *self-feeling*, the “what am I doing” stage, but more positively as “cancelling and enjoying” the external world, rather as does the “moral” outlook, Hegel finds, though the aspect of enjoyment rather drops out there. Now this third moment, “wherein this general reality is one term, consists in so relating this reality to absolute universal Being, as to show it to be mere nothingness” (“it” here referring to “this reality”). This could be seen as the sober Hegelian equivalent to the “spiritual marriage” of the mystics; it certainly may seem less remote, for better or worse. For in fact it is simply a state of mind in the human thinking progress towards reality or truth, and one may indeed ask whether prayer or the “life of prayer” is anything other than this, though viewed under a certain specific formality. Then one must choose whether to see this as assimilation of philosophy to “ascetic” mysticism or, rather, to see the latter as assimilation to philosophy. By this the remark of the dying Aquinas that all he had written seemed now to him as pure straw would be a moment, a crowning one perhaps, reminiscent of Wittgenstein’s famous *conclusion* to philosophy rather than its dismissal, though (cf. *Tractatus* 7). Philosophy, that is, would simply be a speaking of that whereof one cannot speak, a critique of language, rather, as is so clear in Hegel and after all confirmed by Wittgenstein, too, speaking of “the bewitchment of intelligence by language” against which one must “battle” and not keep silent (that text in fact then contradicts *Tractatus* 7, though of course one battles by or “within” language, even there). It becomes, then, a matter of style of discourse merely, or is this so mere? Is, rather, Being itself not mere? That’s an important and not merely rhetorical question. But either way one cannot begin at the end. “In order to come to that which you are not you must go through that which

you are not” (from John of the Cross’s counsels for beginners). This happens to be also a fair characterisation of the motive for and task of studying Hegel’s philosophy – a form of prayer, then? Hegel indeed speaks of it, of philosophy or those in zealous study of it rather, as “a select priesthood”, the ultimate one he seems to mean (*LPR* III, near the rather desperate end). In that case, though, it is hardly a mere career option, we must suppose even for Hegel, any more, in my judgment, than were his earlier tutorial occupations, the motive of material need being irrelevant to this, and that is indeed the classical theory of the teaching profession and why what it brings cannot be paid for but only acknowledged by an *honorarium*, big or small indifferently.⁷⁰

Hence, as regards consciousness “its actual performance thus becomes a doing of nothing at all” or, more startlingly, “its enjoyment becomes a feeling of its own unhappiness”. But Hegel is not, at this point anyhow, extolling this state; quite the reverse. We are led into a scornful repudiation of traditional asceticism as he here characterises it:

In consequence, activity and enjoyment lose all universal content and significance; for in that case they would have a substantiality of their own: and both withdraw into the state of particularity, to which consciousness is directed in order to cancel them (*viz.* activity and enjoyment). Consciousness discovers itself in this concrete particular in the functions of animal life. These latter, instead of being performed unconsciously and naturally as something which, *per se*, is of no significance, and can acquire no importance and essential value for spirit, - these latter, since it is in them that the enemy is seen in his proper and peculiar shape, are rather an object of strenuous concern and serious occupation, and become precisely the most important consideration. Since, however, the enemy creates itself in its very defeat, consciousness, by giving the enemy a fixedness of being and of meaning, instead of getting rid of him, really never gets away from him, and finds itself constantly defiled. And since, at the same time, this object of its exertions, instead of being a universal, is the merest particular – we have here before us merely a personality confined within its narrow self and its petty activity, a personality handing over itself, as unfortunate as it is pitifully destitute. (pp. 263-4)

Yes, consequently one had to go through with it, and this is Hegel’s point or part of it, even though, looking back, it can and does seem rather silly in its way. The above passage seems transparently directed in perhaps angry contempt against an earlier stage of his own development. The “enemy”,

⁷⁰ Cf., on this point, Joseph Pieper’s *Leisure the Basis of Culture* (original title, *Musse und Kult*).

mentioned several times, seems clearly to be what he later identifies as the personalised (perhaps not by him, but in the earliest development of thought, as he puts it in Chapter VII of this book, part C) Satan, necessary to or at least very much at home in religious iconography. In the perspective of absolute idealism, anyhow, there is no difficulty in attributing personality or a plurality thereof in the direction found most suitable for communicative representation at the phenomenological level. Christ in the Gospels speaks in terms of Satan, frequently, while Hegel himself seems ready to consider the latter as one of a hypothetical “quaternity” at one point. Thus Christ also speaks of persons being *in* one another, as does St. Paul. In this way particularly, with this in mind, the Fourth Gospel acts as a kind of bridge from the *vita Christi* to the Apostolic writings making up the “New Testament”, as it is called. So Christ is put, himself posits himself, according to the text we have, as in the Father and the Father in him, and many similar relations (of identity, defensible as *the* logical relation⁷¹). These are things we will have to return to in our project of comparison with Aquinas, as part of an attempt to find out what is really meant by the Trinity when proposed as an object of belief or, still more perhaps, when arrived at in philosophical analysis.⁷²

It is, anyhow, a stage coming after, and, again, consequent upon, Stoicism and antique scepticism, and Hegel stresses it, thus giving it positive meaning, as we have found him doing, as against the contemporary passion to *écraser l’infamie*, to forget all about it (still a potent passion today). It, rather, or they, this feeling of misfortune allied with “the poverty of its own action” as this consciousness is described, “are points of connection to which to attach the consciousness of its unity with the unchangeable”. The “its” here seems to refer to “a personality” in the previous sentence and paragraph.

For the attempted immediate destruction of its actual existence is affected through the thought of the unchangeable and takes place in this relation to the unchangeable. The mediate relation (i.e. this one) constitutes the essence of the negative process, in which this consciousness directs itself against its particularity of being (asceticism), which, however, *qua* relation, is at the same time in itself positive, and will bring this its unity to light as an objective fact for this consciousness itself.⁷³

⁷¹ Cf. our *Hegel’s System of Logic*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle-on-Tyne, 2019. On identity as *the* logical relation, central to Thomistic Aristotelianism, consult Henry Veatch’s logical writings in general, beginning with “Concerning the Ontological Status of Logical Forms”, *Review of Metaphysics*, December 1948.

⁷² Cf. Van Riet, *op. cit.*, *passim*, on Trinity as object and obligation of philosophy.

⁷³ *Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 264, parentheses added.

In a word, it is what is and was often referred to in spiritual or “mystical” literature as “the purgative way”.

This mediate relation is consequently a connected inferential process (*Schluss* or “syllogism”), in which particularity, establishing itself as first in opposition to the inherent essence, is bound together and united with this other term only through a third term. Through this middle term the one extreme, unchangeable consciousness, has a being for the unessential consciousness, in which, at the same time, is also involved that the latter likewise has a being for the former, solely through that middle term; and this middle term is thus one which presents both extremes to one another, and acts as the minister of each in turn in dealing with the other. This medium is itself a conscious being, for it is an action mediating consciousness as such; the content of this action is the destruction and annihilation, which consciousness has in view in dealing with its particularity. (*Ibid.* pp.264-5)

“I in them and they in me”. The middle term here is clearly the devotional life or, as “a conscious being”, the (holy) Spirit or, one might equally say, Trinity, or, come to think of it, *the* mediator, the Son incarnate. Consciousness gets thereby freed, “puts away from itself” its will and “proper freedom”. Hegel even refers to a “ministering agency” here, meaning the Church or priest mediating in Christ’s name. A cynic might say that he is having an eye to a possible Catholic readership (though Lutherans also have ministers). The point is, though, that it fits into this Janus-like account as it progresses. Consciousness throws on to the Church its guilt as it is thrown on Christ, become “a curse” for us. Thus our acts cease to be “our own proper deed(s)”, whether before or after we have committed or performed them. There is anyhow truth in this independently by the canons simply of absolute idealism that Hegel concludes this chapter by unconditionally espousing. Thus the point of this “ceasing” is that no act ever was anyone’s own, which in the end leads to the denial of action as *event* as such, along with time and the rest.

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So this consciousness “gets freed from action and enjoyment” of its own.

It puts away from itself, *qua* self-existent extreme, the substance of its will, and throws on to the mediating term, or the ministering agency, its own proper freedom of decision, and herewith the guilt of its own act.

Here we might want to give up, seeing Hegel as after all engaged in nothing more than an anti-Catholic polemic. Yet he only says “*or* the ministering agency”, precisely the Catholic view in fact, that the Church, here the priest

at “confession”, a “sacrament”, and/or Christ *the* mediator, are here identified: “forgive one another as I have (or your heavenly father has) forgiven you”, though this text, especially as seen in terms of contemporary discussions about priests by theologian such as Hans Küng⁷⁴, clearly transcends a too rigid sacramental view. But in this case, of course, Hegel’s critique would apply to the “religious” view as such, or at least to a certain, perhaps degenerate or anyhow finite version of it, inasmuch as for him, and in truth, God never acts *instead of* man, making of the latter in himself no more than a misconceived representation (*Vorstellung*) of the divine. “This also is thou, neither is this thou”, a paradox overcome precisely by speculative logic, which is to say by logic, thought, itself, standing above anatomising “analytics”, whether “prior” or “posterior”. Thus when writing his *Metaphysics* Aristotle takes up a ground quite unrelated to these supposedly earlier texts.⁷⁵ But this needs supplementing, as when we add that man never acts instead of God, that “consciousness is, in its particularity, inherently and essentially absolute, or is all reality”, these being the final words of this chapter of Hegel’s on “The Unhappy Consciousness”. Note, though, this is said within a system denying the truth of abstractly finite action as such, as if thus set against “reality” as such, again, the latter thus becoming, rather, as the final actuality, not, as if the only alternative, the passive Platonic form but all-encompassing Act as such, *actus purus*. As Being (true Being as Absolute Idea, as set forth at the end of Hegel’s “Greater Logic”) nothing escapes God, not even, or least of all, rather, Pharaoh’s “hardened heart”. What difference does this make, or does it annihilate all finite systems in which alone such abstract difference might occur? “Be still and know that I am God”, i.e. God precisely, ultimately unspeakably, and not some finite construction. “My words are spirit and life”, says Christ, all the same, and later, “I will not speak with you more”. If I write only in sand. I speak, analogously, only into the air, answering “not a word”, i.e. they are not words, for, says the mystical Doctor, “God has spoken only one Word”, made flesh, i.e. that is not a word either. Words are *Vorstellung*. That’s the tie-up, whereby philosophy *sets itself* intrinsically to become Absolute Spirit or *sophia*, as the man Hegel set himself to become or achieve, he tells us. The believing communicant does no less, consumed in consuming, a process initiated, Hegel claims, in the work of art, thus visualised not merely

⁷⁴ Hans Küng, *Why Priests? A Proposal for a New Church Ministry*, New York/London 1972.

⁷⁵ Cf. Fernando Inciarte, “*Die Einheit der aristotelischen Metaphysik*”, *Philosophisches Jahrbuch* 1994, Halbband 1, pp. 1-22. English translation as Chapter 5, “The Unity of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*” of Inciarte’s posthumous book, *Substance and Action*, Verlag George Ohms, Hildesheim, Germany, 2002.

fortuitously in “history” as properly of all as much as of the individual thus like himself, or Christ as mediator of all mediation, possessed in possessing, as also alone consumed as consuming. Implied is that it is possible to “know not of what spirit you are”, i.e. when you presume, again, to condemn. Thus for Hegel religion, as succeeding upon art, turns absolutely upon its moment, indispensable, of forgiving. Writing a book, then, even a “Koran”, even this present one, is thus distinctly analogous to the vain attempt to enumerate the infinite number of names for God.

This mediator, being in direct communication with the unchangeable being, renders service by advising what is just and right. The act, since this follows upon obedience to a deliverance enunciated by another, ceases as regards the performance or willing of the act, to be the agent’s own proper deed.⁷⁶

“I live, yet not I”, as the Apostle defines things, for him a resplendent truth, as Hegel thus acknowledges here, all such “moments”, though, transfigured in their inmost as “realised end”, we have to add, our medium too being as sand. Meanwhile the subordinate consciousness “casts away as well”, just as St. Paul too says, “the fruit of its labour, and enjoyment”, counting all such things, it is clearly indicated, as so much offal merely.

It renounces these, partly as being the accomplished truth of its self-conscious independence, when it seeks to do something quite foreign to itself, thinking and speaking what, for it, has no sense or meaning (in Church, our translator interprets); partly, too, as being external property – when it demits somewhat of the possession acquired through its toil (a clear reference to “medieval” Church tax or “tithes”). (p. 265, parentheses added)

All this is just part of a general self-denial, denial *of self*, transcending mere asceticism, “its fasting and its mortifications” that “it had”, which, Hegel seems to say, says in fact, “it also gives up”, that too being an “enjoyment”. Here we have a certain “coming to the point” of that literal *self-denial* of the Gospel, the death to “the world”, “hating” one’s “life” in it, which is “entry into spirit”. “For you are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God”, to cite the Apostolic version of this evangelical injunction to “hate” one’s life in this world as condition for “saving” it to “life eternal” as, equivalently, “my disciple”, i.e. by not seeking to save it, however this be taken. Rather, “where I am, there shall my servant be”, i.e. born by the Cross as bearing it. By this, though, everything becomes a sacrament and not just the traditional “churchly” seven, the “hate” being the obverse of this seeing of God and hence nothing else everywhere. Compare the Canticle of Francis of Assisi:

⁷⁶ Hegel, *Phenomenology of Mind* (Baillie, 1966), p. 265.

“It is in loving that we are loved”, somewhat alarmingly rephrased by the activist, in style at least, but saint all the same (or the more so?), Ignatius of Loyola: “Teach us, Lord, to serve you as you deserve”, not to “count the cost”, not to “heed the wounds”, nor “seek for rest”, in our giving or fighting or labour without demanding reward “save that of knowing that we strive to do your will”, keeping at the humble beginning, so to say, of a knowing that in itself has no limit. Whether or not the self “trembles” and “fears” at having to make such assertions, so contrary to one’s spontaneous praxis, does not, however, belong to this wisdom in itself, since this is just what absorbs self. Likewise, this Kierkegaardian paroxysm, admire it or not, cannot yet be that “holy fear of the Lord” counted as one of the sevenfold gifts of the Spirit and hence inseparable from Spirit’s self-giving as such as also knowing no limit, i.e. to the knowing. In the Third Part of his *Summa* St. Thomas acknowledges this objection to the sacramental system, when we say “Everything becomes a sacrament”, as a wish not to constrict (*arctare*) Christian freedom. He does not deny the objection’s truth, replying only that we should respect the covenanted system as enjoined by spirit itself (the Holy Spirit) in the course of “revelation”, i.e. these are supra-natural sacraments although or hence based upon nature’s own sacramentality, so to say, as being “whole in every part”, the Leibnizian hall of mirrors in infinite “reflection”. These, that is, are *the* means of grace, an assertion routinely evaporated by the obviously true assertion that “God is not bound by the sacraments”. St. Thomas, anyhow, does not seem to envisage practices as able to be enjoined, even divinely, for a time, something the Church’s own praxis in history might seem rather to qualify, in accidentals at least, also for him. Thus in another place, defending the military orders, he says that the Church has permitted or encouraged these in our (i.e. his) time or for the present, so to say. His task was not easy, nor is it mine to pronounce upon the sacramental system unless to say that it is essential to Christian proclamation, withstanding or surviving even the Lutheran reduction of both system and proclamation, as claimed to have been in existence *potentially as actually*, though nothing is actually just potential, as Hegel is at pains to establish in his *Science of Logic*, even “before”, as in independence of, the texts recording the institution of the eucharist, say, just as a baptism was to be found even “before” or as independently of Christ’s death or our union *thereby* with it and *in it* as reflected in the evangelical statements of, thirdly, Christ’s “having” a baptism he must be baptised with (as if having it “before” he had it!). Wider application of the term, then, as of effective sacramental signification in general, was manifested even before that “baptism of desire” so in vogue today as replacing the need for water (just as wine is not everywhere

available) and indeed applicable without respect to anything temporal, such as living before or after Christ as *appearing*, let us not forget, in history. By this the crucifixion itself represents, *shows* forth, the eternal Trinitarian relation of filial self-abnegation of the Word proceeding. “I do everything that pleases him”, i.e. and nothing else, the pleasing being the everything. Hegel continues (p. 265):

Through these moments – the negative abandonment first of its own right and power of decision, then of its property and enjoyment, and finally the positive moment of carrying on what it does not understand – it deprives itself, completely and in truth, of the consciousness of inner and outer freedom, or reality in the sense of its own existence for itself. It has the certainty of having in truth stripped itself of its Ego, and of having turned its immediate consciousness into a “thing”, into an objective external existence.

It might seem that Hegel has here confirmed the view of him as championing human rights against the universal self-alienation of the historic religion and its “infamy”. But not a bit of it! The unhappy consciousness has its role to play in the developing evolution of the idea, of man as man, not known or understood “by the Greeks”, and it plays it. “It could ensure its self-renunciation and self-abandonment solely by this real and vital sacrifice” of its self, of the false self of finitude, fighting against Reason, against the Idea, in a self-impooverishing self-assertion.

For only thereby is the deception got rid of, which lies in inner acknowledgement of gratitude through heart, sentiment, and tongue – an acknowledgement which indeed disclaims all power of independent self-existence and ascribes this power to a gift from above, but in this very disclaimer retains for itself its own proper and peculiar life, outwardly in the possession it does not resign, ... (p. 266)

The “real and vital sacrifice” is that of Christ, in which the “subordinate consciousness” (referred to as “it” over a whole page or more) participates, no doubt, by faith and all that that entails: “But in the sacrifice actually accomplished, while consciousness has cancelled the action as its own act, it has also implicitly demitted and put off its unhappy condition.” Hegel is here, it seems, attempting to give an account of redemption and atonement without surrendering the spiritual gains of a conscious absolute idealism in which, while reason “in its particularity ... is all reality” yet reality, for the same reason so to say, is particular just in absorbing all particularity into itself, “I in them and they in me”. There is no other explanation of Hegel’s otherwise apparent planetary wandering around the Ptolemaic sky here, unless one recognises in his mind this new, post-classical Copernican centre,

at one with the circumference or, simply, whole, within which he sets the birth of the unhappy consciousness as instancing “the old man upon the new way”, ultimately, of “the Idea of Reason, of the certainty that consciousness is, in its particularity, inherently and essentially absolute, or is all reality” (p. 267). Immediately thereafter he begins the section “Free Concrete Mind” with about ten pages entitled “Reason’s Certainty and Reason’s Truth” leading into five forms of rational “observation” prior to acknowledgement of the at least phenomenally separate “practical” reason (Aquinas’s “reason directed to a work”) leading into “Spirit” followed by “Religion” and terminating in “Absolute Knowledge”, all of this falling under “Free Concrete Mind”, again, which comes third after, firstly, “Consciousness”, secondly “Self-Consciousness” (beginning with “self-certainty” as “Consciousness” begins with “sense-certainty”). So we have a development of consciousness and its certainties concluding in “Free Concrete Mind”, which the section we have been studying introduces already as the final of three sections of which the whole book (minus the historic Preface) is composed.

It can be seen that the intention of the book is to present or include *theology* within not merely philosophy but rather, Hegel’s desire and/or intention reaching further, within a final *sophia* which would or will be “absolute knowledge”. The suggestion put out by Gregor Moder in his recent *Hegel and Spinoza*, subtitled “Substance and Negativity”⁷⁷, and having many antecedents, that Hegel’s final chapter, “Absolute Knowledge” is no more than grammatical, the putting of a full stop (*sic*) or “period”, is thus refuted by the systematic architecture of the whole work as reflected in these headings just listed here. Hegel himself sums up as introducing the next section, “Reason’s Certainty and Reason’s Truth”, the advance of this section, “The Unhappy Consciousness”, towards “Absolute Idealism”, replacing “subjective” idealism, as *the* “dogma of philosophy” as found in Aristotle, he will finally claim. He assesses the section thus:

There appeared two aspects, one after the other; the one where the essential reality or the truly real had for consciousness the character of (objective) existence, the other where it had the character of only being (subjectively) for consciousness. But both were reduced to one single truth, that what is or the real *per se* (*an sich*) only is so far as it is an object for consciousness, and that what is for consciousness is also objectively real. The consciousness, which is this truth, has forgotten the process by which this result has been reached; the pathway thereto lies behind it. This consciousness comes on the scene

⁷⁷ Gregor Moder: *Hegel and Spinoza*: “Substance and Negativity”, Northwestern University Press, USA, 2017.

directly in the form of reason; in other words, this reason, appearing thus immediately, comes before us merely as the *certainty* of that truth. It merely gives the assurance of being all reality; it does not, however, itself *comprehend* this fact; for that forgotten pathway by which it arrives at this position is the process of comprehending what is involved in this mere assertion which it makes. And just on that account anyone who has not taken this route finds the assertion unintelligible, when he hears it expressed in this abstract form – although as a matter of concrete experience he makes indeed the same assertion himself. (*Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 274-5)

This project is legitimate and properly finite. It identifies theology as final reason, itself included yet as transcended within an ultimate *sophia*. It is itself the fullness of *sapientia*, i.e. *sophia*, the highest intellectual virtue, simply, or, rather, following the classical Aristotelian scheme (as Hegel interprets), the self-cancelling fullness of *scientia*, the second of the four (or five, if art is included) intellectual virtues yet here as become *sapientia*, just as *scientia* itself acknowledges as if from a distance, e.g. in philosophy and its “sciences” (Hegel), that this should occur⁷⁸. This legitimacy is verifiable without or before going all the way to accomplished “absolute knowledge” or to an identification *tout court* with this arguably mystical quest of which it is, so to say, a first or in general preliminary step. This would qualify philosophy itself rather than just Hegel, implying that some philosophers have yet to grasp what they are about in two related but distinct senses of “about”, “actually doing” or “theoretically concerned with”.

For these reasons a successful philosophy of religion of this kind cannot fairly be characterised as a “reduction” of religion and its mysteries to rational philosophy. It includes and endorses the practice of religion, as of art, as imperfect (transitional?) forms of “absolute spirit”, the adjective indicating that what is meant here is spirit as divine or infinite, with which philosophy as employing linguistic or other representation (*Vorstellung*) can never be unqualifiedly identified, as can *sophia*, however. The view leaves fully in place the doctrine, the dogma, that all such activity (of reason) is God’s, is act without limit and hence, one act in actual unity. This is the sense, one sense if extended a little in interpretation, of “Let both grow together until harvest”. This harvest or end, however, philosophy teaches, cannot, as infinite, be the last member of a temporal series, is, rather, ever achieved. It is “our affair” simply to catch up with it, overtaking ourselves in the process or even casting ourselves away, rather, as the proverbial ladder to the height we, in unknowing, yet never left. The end is as such

⁷⁸ Cp. our own *Thomas Aquinas on Virtue and Human Flourishing*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle-on-Tyne, 2018, pp. 51-53, especially Note 6.

accomplished (Hegel). From this perspective the claim, by both Anscombe and Geach in their respective works, to identify a confusion in traditional thought between end as finish and end as purpose is at least suspect.

Still, if we return now to Hegel's text where we left it, sunk as it is in a kind of nausea against traditional pieties and attitudes, possibly the chief characteristic of those going further, of the heroes of the faith one might say, kind though their implicit reproaches may be, while the Mediator himself, in his attitude to and yet within contemporary Judaism, is the prime example here, what do we then find? Hegel seems to see, again, a contradiction in the perpetual giving of thanks for what one nonetheless takes as one's own, "under God" as it is often put. What he means, context shows, as I have already suggested, is that this cannot but be inauthentic as falling short of the sacrifice, the "obedience unto death", of Christ. This was true under pre-Christian forms and remains true now. Within Christianity, however, as he does not fail to note, this truth is mystically or spiritually acknowledged, is even expressed and enacted whether in the sacrament of baptism or in the "mysteries" of faith such as the communal reception of the divine bread, whole in each fragment, it is believed or taken, such that each therewith dies with and for each of the others or all for one another, just as is implicit in the self-proclaimed atheist Hegelian McTaggart's picture of heaven as present, though from us concealed, actuality. On all this the Apostle comments, "For you are dead and your life is hidden with Christ in God". This does not apply exclusively to the mentally handicapped, as Wordsworth inadvertently seems to suggest, unless we include the faithful as such under that category, "fools for Christ's sake" and so on. The point is that by this Hegel's identification of particular consciousness, of individuals, "with all reality" (p. 267) is well and truly anticipated.

So Hegel ends with a kind of *apologia* for "the unhappy consciousness ... of its own self-constituted content which it has not exchanged for a content coming from without", as it would profess, he means, "and filling it with meaningless ideas and phrases", this last interpreted by Baillie and not only him, I note again, in a footnote (p. 265), as "the use in the Church services of Latin instead of the vernacular: religious processions etc." Myself I would stress rather Hegel's further-reaching overall critique of this consciousness, "when it seeks to do something quite foreign to itself". Otherwise the criticism has had the rug pulled from under it by the Church's endorsement of vernacular worship since the 1960s and we no longer have need of grounding and cancelling the imperfect form that is religion (an attitude already implicit in the historic preaching of the Mediator, "what Jesus attacked" says Hegel, as regards Absolute Spirit), in a philosophy

whose sole concern, as the perfect *Gottesdienst*, is “religion and nothing but religion” (Hegel).

His statement of his conclusion is somewhat tortuous all the same and needs to be read in the light of the whole book. The unhappy consciousness is “put off ... in the sacrifice actually accomplished”, on the Cross he must surely mean. Hence he goes on to distinguish implicit and explicit. The implicit taking place, implicit as far as the particular unhappy consciousness is concerned, is effected by “the inherent and ultimate reality” as the “other term” of the syllogism (*Schluss*) mentioned earlier. Baillie fights shy of translating this term as “syllogism”, merely citing this German term for it and speaking instead of “a connected inferential process” (p. 264) merely, which obscures the functionally crucial role in Hegel’s thought of minor, major and middle terms (mediation) respectively.

The unhappy consciousness’s own self-sacrifice, consciously “cancelled” as its own act, in effect *by* the supreme “sacrifice already accomplished” as in its power including all its applications and effects, is thus “not a onesided action; it involves the action of the other”. Baillie would identify the “demission” mentioned, “of its unhappy condition”, with “absolution”, not necessarily “sacramental” I take it, and that is in fact the effect of the “one, true and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world”, while Hegel himself refers to advice, a counselling “mediator” (i.e. not merely “minister”) and so on, as it were telescoping the mystery, salvation, happiness contemplated along with its consummation in particular praxis. This is in harmony with Hegel’s general intention here, viz. that consciousness “is, in its particularity, inherently and essentially absolute, or is all reality”, again.

Sacrifice and sin are of course particular religious terms, as belonging to a positively finite theology, and Hegel cancels, sublates or, so to say, “fulfils” them in other parts of this book and his *oeuvre* generally. This may well be regarded as genuine interpretation of the saying that all sins will be forgiven except that “against the spirit”, i.e. one may say that just one sin is no longer sin as legalistically categorised but something else, worse even. Thus Hegel speaks, rather, of a “certainty against the spirit” apparent in some religious loyalties, the main force from the human side behind Christ’s own crucifixion, by such humans, ourselves, after all. Hegel sums up:

For giving up one’s own will is only in one aspect negative; in principle, or in itself, it is at the same time positive, positing and affirming the will as an *other*, and, specifically, affirming the will as *not* a particular, but universal. This consciousness takes this positive significance of the negatively affirmed particular will to be the will of the other extreme, the will, which, because it is simply an “other” for consciousness, assumes the form of advice, counsel,

not through itself, but through the third term, the mediator. Hence its will certainly becomes, for consciousness, universal will, inherent and essential will, but is not itself in its own view this inherent reality. The giving up of its own will as particular is not taken by it to be in principle the positive element of universal will. Similarly its surrender of possession and enjoyment has merely the same negative significance, and the universal which it thereby comes to find is, in its view, not its own doing proper. (pp. 266-267)

For this reason, if we return to “the mediating minister”, the unhappy state of the believer, uniting his self-sacrifice with that of Christ, is only *implicitly* reversed, e.g. in confession to whoever “mediates”, priest, friend, etc. in our immediate world and consciousness thereof. The “unity of objectivity and independent self-existence which lies in the notion of action” stands in the way. We have to continue to confess our abstract finitude, so to say, our state of becoming. The certainty is thus “halting” as regards “blessed enjoyment”, consciousness’s action “pitiable”, even if implicitly (but only) “absolute” since, in fact, by Hegel’s diagnosis, “action is only really action when it is the action of some particular individual”. This statement highlights the fact that “reality”, this term, is here, as often in Hegel, used negatively. How things really are, actually are, is different from such “reality” which includes particular actions and events. These, it is implied, do not ultimately survive. “I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me” is the unspoken motto for this whole section, while the “creeping” quality of time itself is then seen to confirm it:

But for its self, action and *its own* concrete action remain something miserable and insignificant, its enjoyment pain, and the sublation of these, positively considered, remains a mere “beyond”. But in this object, where it finds its own action and existence, *qua* this particular consciousness, to be inherently existence and action as such, there has arisen the idea of Reason, of the certainty that consciousness is, in its particularity, inherently and essentially absolute, or is all reality. (p. 267)

CHAPTER FIVE

AQUINAS ON RELATIONS

We return now to St. Thomas on divine relations specifically, having considered Hegel's presentation of the relation of man to "the unchangeable". He also there, as we have just seen, appears to find a reciprocal relation of the unchangeable to man such as Aquinas with good reason denies. We find, nonetheless, a harmony between the two presentations (harmony used here, as by McTaggart, as synonym for Hegel's "identity in difference": i.e. it is a closer relation than the musical analogate, harmony itself, from the world of sense). For Hegel God and man, in his self-consciousness, are one, as we find in Eckhart: "The eye with which I see God is the eye with which God sees me". Identity, however, is not a real relation but a "relation of reason", though Hegelian "concrete identity" transcends this dilemma. Only relations "of reason", anyhow, can be predicated of God to what is thought of, wrongly, as outside of God, since "in God we live and move and have our being". They are "of reason" only⁷⁹ since, in the case of God the character of their positing annihilates what is posited along with its object, "created out of nothing" as it is truly said. Hence creation, theology teaches, implies no change in God (this engenders questions of logical scope⁸⁰). God, accordingly, "only" knows his own ideas as being thus omniscient, sea-battles notwithstanding.⁸¹ Mind, as Aristotle put it, knows nothing but mind. Each of these ideas, further, is identical with "the divine essence", as Thomas reasons, from the divine simplicity, at Ia 15 (*op. cit.*). In that sense

⁷⁹ For relations of reason, cf. Robert W. Schmidt, *The Domain of Logic according to Saint Thomas Aquinas*, The Hague, Netherlands, 1966, where they are called for convenience, neologistically, "rationate" relations.

⁸⁰ For the act of creation in this regard cf. Peter Geach, "Causality and Creation", in *God and the Soul*, RKP London 1969, p. 83: "There is but one A; and God brought it about that (Ex)(x is an A); and for no x did God bring it about that x is an A; and c is an A." Geach comments (pp. 83-4): "The part of this proposition that expresses the creative act (namely the first three conjuncts) does not mention c, and explicitly denies that in creating God acted upon any individual."

⁸¹ Cp. Aquinas, *Summa theol.* Ia 15.

God loves me in and as loving himself. So here is no reduction of God on Hegel's part but reduction *pro parte objecti*, the object being the "ladder we kick away" (Wittgenstein). The "I" is absorbed and even, he says, cancelled, as consciousness become self-consciousness proper, in the Idea, the Infinite, as Absolute Ego. There are thus not two elements, not even a second one of "dust and ashes" (the traditional figure for this nothingness or for finitude indifferently). The many are one, the part the whole and so not "longer" a part, the exemplar for all of which is the Trinity, threefold in one, one in three.

Regarding divine relations St. Thomas says they "really exist in God" (*Summa theol.* I, 28, 1: *relationes quaedam sunt in divinis realiter*), i.e. he says there are real relations and not merely relations "of reason" there. This means that they are the relations constituting absolutely real mind. This, in fact, is the foundation of absolute idealism as the basis of sound philosophy. Thus Hegel reads Aristotle, as when he says that mind knows only itself. See here the cited paragraph, in the Greek, from Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, with which, as significantly as anything can be, Hegel concludes his threefold *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*. As the constitutive relations of mind (*das Denken, die Vernunft*), but not of "reason" in the Scholastic sense of the Understanding (*der Verstand*), the reality of the divine relations tends to the overturning of the dilemma, again, between "rationate" and real relations. Further, they can, thus considered, be nothing less than the *only* real relations, from the standpoint of absolute idealism, that is. Consistently, therefore, Hegel treats relation, as contained within Aristotle's list of **Accidents**, along with **Substance**, as *one* of these ephemerally finite categories in the Doctrine of Essence, to be sublated (*aufgehoben*) in the Idea (*Enc.* 151). For this is indeed in a real sense the fate, even, of relations within the Trinity inasmuch as while *ipsae relationes sunt personae* the converse holds equally, is in a sense prime. The only relation left standing in the system, in fact, is that of identity, such as that of predication just posited by use of "*sunt*", called accordingly concrete, ultimately of all in or with regard to all, "and this we call God" (Aquinas): i.e. this is not pantheism, which would reduce God, ridiculously, as Hegel comments. Compare here *Enc.* 159:

The passage from necessity to freedom, or from actuality into the notion (*in den Begriff*) is the very hardest, because it proposes that independent actuality shall be thought as having all its substantiality in the passing over and identity with the other independent actuality. The notion, too, is extremely hard (*das härteste*, i.e. the *ultimate* extreme), because it is itself just this very identity. But the actual substance as such, the cause, which in its exclusiveness resists all invasion, is *ipso facto* subjected to necessity or the destiny of passing into

dependency; and it is this subjection rather where the chief hardness lies. To think necessity, on the contrary, rather tends to melt that hardness. For thinking (*das Denken*) means that, in the other, one meets with one's self, - it means a liberation, which is not the flight of abstraction, but consists in that which is actual having itself not as something else, but as its own (i.e. thought's) being and creation, in the other actuality with which it is bound up by the force of necessity. As existing in an individual form this liberation is called I; as developed to the totality it is free Spirit; as feeling it is Love; and as enjoyment it is Blessedness. ... the notion itself realises for its own both the power of necessity and actual freedom. (*Enc.* 159: parentheses added)

Necessity is its *own* being in the *other*. So substance has its substantiality in this necessity of passing over, this force of necessity (which is not force, unless logically) being thus the Notion or itself a passage from itself to Freedom, called I, Love or Blessedness. It is Hegelian self-consciousness, namely, but equally that attained to by Moses, according to Rudolph Steiner in his essay on him (1922), in his vision of I AM that changed history. The above passage, anyhow, is a full and complete statement of Hegel's Trinitarianism, in which his whole system, as here stated, thus consists. For what else could it be? Or what else could the Trinity as a doctrine be but the reconciliation of necessity with, its revelation as, freedom in just this way. The Father is nothing, concretely, apart from his generating that other as himself yet "independent" or free, to the highest degree, the Word; "as developed in its free totality". Just this, "this liberation", *of* rather than from necessity, "is free Spirit". Just this is the procession of the latter from both Father and Word or Son. McTaggart thus errs in claiming that this is not the Christian Trinity since Father and Son are made to be mere prerequisites to the emergence of spirit as dialectical mind. Dialectic may indeed mirror Trinitarian process but here it is stated for itself although without the familiar representation of Father and Son as it has passed into dogmatic formulation, where nonetheless it is normally recognised, by the guardians of faith themselves, as precisely representation within the ambit of discursive and hence (our) finite thinking. For they nonetheless admit the Pauline correction or relativisation of that thinking as compared with faith in the "Father" "from whom all fatherhood in heaven and earth is *named*" (I stress).

To see this is to see Hegel as a kind of new *Athanasius contra mundum*, required and supplied for our times and probably productive of schisms, by those not comprehending, as was the first-named. The early Church's adoption of Greek thought was as bold as it was unhesitating and needed for the situation then. Eventually the monophysites and Nestorians will come to understand it, if indeed they do not already, as precisely capturing, as an instrument, revelation. Recall here that concepts, propositions and

arguments themselves were called by Aristotle *instruments (organa)* of reason, of thought, which is thereby put as transcending them *in* thought as *Vernunft, das Denken*, Greek *nous*, knowing only itself. The whole development of thought concerning *verbum* moves in this direction, as is encouraged by Scripture itself: “In the beginning was the Word”. That whole passage (*John* 1, 1-14, for centuries, I repeat, solemnly recited at the end of every celebration of Mass) demands and repays careful consideration, implying translation into genuinely philosophical categories, theology as it is called, “sacred”, as philosophy indeed is, as *sophia*, if it is *der höchste Gottesdienst* indeed, a further point, however, which may be left aside if found offensive as, say, just too uncongenial or “weird” in the vernacular. Athanasius, it is plain, knew he had it right.

CHAPTER SIX

AQUINAS ON PERSONS – DIFFERENTIATIONS

Behind the system clearly stands the Johannine discourse, even the Pauline, “I in them and they in me” along with “you are all members one of another”, the bearing of one another’s burdens being “the law of Christ”, not merely therefore morally but metaphysically. Thus “the category of relative predicates is the only one that is founded merely on reason and not on reality” (Aquinas, *loc. cit.*). So Aquinas writes:

This is not the case with other kinds; those like quantity and quality signify formally and properly something inhering in a subject, while relative predicates signify formally and properly only a relationship to another thing. This relationship sometimes exists in the very nature of things, namely, when realities are by nature ordered to each other and tend toward each other. Such relations are necessarily real. So a heavy body tends and is ordered to the centre of the earth; consequently there is in the heavy body a relationship to the central place. It is the same in other similar cases. But sometimes also the relationship signified by the relative predicate exists only in reason’s apprehension, which establishes a comparison between one thing and another. It is then only a relation of reason, as when the mind, comparing “man” and “animal”, considers it the species of a genus.⁸²

⁸² Aquinas: *Summa theol.* Ia 28, 1: *Respondeo dicendum quod relationes quaedam sunt in divinis realiter. – Ad cuius evidentiam, considerandum est quod solum in his quae dicuntur ad aliquid (i.e. relations), inveniuntur aliqua secundum rationem tantum, et non secundum rem; quod non est in aliis generibus; quia alia genera, ut quantitas et qualitas, secundum propriam rationem significant aliquid alicui inhaerens. Ea vero quae dicuntur ad aliquid, significant secundum propriam rationem solum respectum ad aliquid. Qui quidem respectus aliquando est in ipsa naturam rerum, utpote quando aliquae res secundum suam naturam ad invicem ordinatae sunt, et invicem inclinationem habent; et huiusmodi relationes oportet esse reales; sicut in corpore gravi est inclination et ordo ad locum medium; unde respectus quidam est in ipso gravi respectus loci medii; et simile est de aliis huiusmodi. Aliquando vero respectus significatus per ea quae dicuntur ad aliquid,*

Species here is the relation. Men are thus related to animals. Note that for St. Thomas, as for Aristotle, relation is an accident *in* the subject. Hence he writes, “there is in the heavy body a relationship to the central place”; hence it nonetheless does not “inhere” in the subject as thus, it may be, naturally ordered to something *else*. Or only reason thus “orders” it. The Russellian account of relations, imported into much post-Fregean logic, is therefore quite different. There relation relates two disparates or similars as if it were an extra arithmetical sign, conceivably inhering in neither. Thus four is connected to two, whereas this *doubling*, on the older theory, inheres in four *as thus mentioned*. The Russellian theory thus focuses on the *representation* of a relation without explaining relation itself. One speaks simply of the relation R and its various kinds. The difference may seem subtle, even overly so. However, the later theory gives no account of a relation in nature, that things *are* thus connected. It may go on, however, to give a contextual theory of meaning, by which things are nothing in themselves or apart from context, i.e. relation, and this seems to concur in Hegel’s vision, in many respects at least, relation suffering there the same fate as do all the finite categories.

But when a thing proceeds from a principle of like nature, both – that which proceeds and its principle – belong necessarily to the same order; and therefore real relations exist between them. Since then in God the processions are realised in identity of nature ... necessarily the relations considered from the fact of these processions are real relations.⁸³

So divine relations are real as connecting two realities, neither of which *is* the other though their union must be *infinitely* close, natural to God. Thus they are *qualified identities*, identities in difference, and this is the source of Hegel’s concrete as against abstract identity, the only genuine identity since there must be two *relatanda* for any relation to be instanced at all. Ultimately Aquinas finds that the persons related *are* the relations, as is already implicit when we say “God is love”, as we do.

est tantum in ipsa apprehensione rationis conferentis unum alteri; et tunc est relatio rationis tantum; sicut cum comparat ratio hominem animali ut speciem ad genus. (ST Ia 28, 1)

⁸³ *Ibid: Cum autem aliquid procedat a principio eiusdem naturae, necesse est quod ambo, scilicet procedens et id a quo procedat, in eodem ordine convenient; et sic oportet quid habeant reales respectus ad invicem. Cum igitur processiones in divinis sint in identitate naturae, necesse est quod relationes quae secundum processiones divinas accipiuntur, sunt relationes reales.*

Hegel's treatment of the Trinity might be considered less formal and systematic than Aquinas's as being written out in discursive prose or, at least, less plainly divided up. This is an illusion, however. Yet we need to find out what he means when he characterises the distinctions of persons as distinctions of play, although without saying that they are not real or "opposed" but rather it is a case of "this simple beholding of itself in the Other", though these, again, are "not as such set up independently". Despite the grammar, that is, we are not as such speaking of two independent realities. Rather, "it is distinction in the way of distinction ... is immediately no distinction – a recognition of Love, where lover and beloved are by their very nature not opposed to each other at all" (Baillie, p. 769).

We need also to bear in mind that the Trinity is never abstracted for study on its own, as it is by St. Thomas's method. Hegel seeks rather to show how everything hangs together and this includes showing the necessity of Trinity, but precisely in cooperation with all other notions involved and in particular with incarnation as what actually reveals it. Implicit here is a theology more Scotist than Thomist on the point of the Incarnation's unconditional necessity. If it must be viewed, therefore, as a remedy for sin then this requirement must be seen as positing the "sinfulness", the proneness to error, to *hamartia*, of the finite as such. Behind this, furthermore, for Hegel whether or not for Scotus, lies the notion of the finite as something set to be cancelled, as, in Hegel's words, the error or falsity out of which alone the truth can arise in its necessity for thought. This thought, again, is inseparable from the system, the **method** of logic as the End held in focus from the first as ever realised but realised precisely as end. The movement of thought is circular, something Trendelenberg tried to use to invalidate Hegel's system. But how could it be otherwise, given that it is the mind of God, infinite mind, infinity, that is to be disclosed, something that cannot have beginning or end, the centre being everywhere, the first last.

*

St. Thomas continues (article 2 c) his account of relation as the weakest form of "accident":

To clarify this question let us first note that to each of the nine kinds of accident there are two aspects to consider. There is, first of all, the being (*esse*) appropriate to each of them as an accident, and for all, this consists in existing within the subject; indeed, accidental being is existing in another. The other aspect to be considered in each of these is the formal reason proper to each one of these kinds. But in the kinds other than relation (for example, in quantity and quality), the proper formal reason is found in the relation to the

subject: So we say that the quantity is a measure of the substance, and quality of its disposition. On the contrary, the proper formal reason of relation is not found in its relationship to the subject in which it exists; it is found in its relation to something external. If then we consider relations, even in created things, as relations, under this aspect they are found *assistantes* (adjacent) and not fixed from within, i.e., that they signify a relationship closely connected in some way to the thing referred to, since through relationship it tends to the other. While if we consider the relation as accident, it is thus inherent in the subject and has in it an accidental being.

Relation, again, is seen as “existing in another”, simply because it is an accident (to something), as is not catered for on the Russellian and related accounts. This happening to, *accidens, accidendum*, is just what gives the accident its specific formality, in the Aristotelian sense of form, as whether it is transitive, reflexive, reciprocal and so on does not. It is in relation alone that this formal quality “is found in its relation to something external”. Hence they are “adjacent”. A mutual tendency is set up. Nonetheless, if more “weakly”, relation too inheres “in the subject and has in it an accidental being”, whether it be *secundum esse* or *secundum dici* only, to mention a distinction explored by Descartes’ Scholastic contemporary Jean Poincot “of St. Thomas”, but which can be found in Hegel’s system though discussed in other terms, deeply affected as it is by the realisation that the **whole** is the **part**, the part the whole. Hegel in fact calls this “the immediate relation” (*Enc.* 135):

The content is the whole, and consists of the parts (the form), its counterpart. The parts are diverse from one another. It is they that possess independent being. But they are parts, only when they are identified by being related to one another; or, in so far as they make up the whole, when taken together. But this “Together” is the counterpart and negation of the part.

Whence he adds, as we find in the *Zusatz*:

Essential correlation is the specific and completely universal phase in which things appear ... The existent thing in this way has no being of its own, but only in something else; in this other however it is self-relation; and correlation is the unity of the self-relation and relation-to-others.

We find here, in a logic applicable to things in general, close relation to the positions tending in Aquinas to be reserved to the Trinity in itself, in which, however, Hegel reminds us, all things “live and move and have their being”, as St. Thomas himself well knew, of course. The method is different, as much from historical causes as from anything else (see our remarks on this above), but in view of the unity of substance easily discernible we need to

bring them together or into some relation. They have by now pursued their separate ways for long enough. This was the burden, after all, of the first part of our essay here.

St. Thomas, however, goes on to stress the difference:

But that which in creatures possesses an accidental being, when transferred to God possesses in him substantial being; for nothing in God exists as an accident in a subject; anything existing in God is his essence. Whence if one considers relation under that aspect which in created things gives it accidental being in the subject, in this way the relation that really exists in God gets its being from the divine essence and makes only one with him. But as a relation, it does not signify a relationship to the essence, but indeed to its opposite.

Thus it is clear that the real relation in God is really identified with the essence, and differs from it only by mental consideration; inasmuch as the relation evokes a relationship to its opposite, it does not evoke the term "essence". It is also apparent that in God there is no distinguishing of relative being and essential being; this is one and the same being.⁸⁴

His final sentence here may be taken as refuting the misrepresentation of him as merely adding on this treatise on the Trinity to a fully developed unitarian conception of the divine nature already in place in the treatise on the one God, his existence and nature, to which he returns, after the treatise on the Trinity, when taking up the theology of creation. "It is also apparent that in God there is no distinguishing of relative being and essential being, this is one and the same being." In other words, the Trinity and/or anyone of the persons *is* the divine unity and contrariwise. The tendency is aggravated by a failure to take into consideration that St. Thomas had the exhaustive and plainly magnificent treatise by St. Augustine before him, as his citations constantly confirm, when writing on the Trinity, which he would not have wanted himself to appear as going too much beyond, either simply or in the circumstances of his time and place.

⁸⁴ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theol.* Ia 28, 2 c.: *Quidquid autem in rebus creatas habet esse accidentale, secundum quod transfertur in Deum, habet esse substantiale; nihil enim est in Deo ut accidens in subjecto; sed quidquid est in Deo, est ejus essentia. Sic igitur ex ea parte qua relatio in rebus creatas habet esse accidentale in subjecto, relatio realiter existens in Deo habet esse essentiae divinae, idem omnino ei existens. In hoc vero quod ad aliquid dicitur, non significatur aliqua habitudo ad essentiam, sed magis ad suum oppositum. Et sic manifestum est quod relatio realiter existens in Deo est idem essentiae secundum rem, et non differt nisi secundum intelligentiae rationem, prout in relatione importatur respectus ad suum oppositum, qui non importatur in nomine essentiae. Patet ergo quod in Deo non est aliud esse relationis et essentiae, sed unum et idem.*

Referring now this text to Hegel's thought and way of presentation, I make just a couple of remarks and suggestions for further considering, i.e. not merely "suggestive", as I hope. The accident of relation possesses in God *substantial* being. But at the same time it remains relation; there must be relation there, else God is a dead abstraction, like a "thing-in-itself". Such relation first occurred, immediately as it were, to or in the minds of those thinking of God as being *their* creator "in the beginning", as at the opening of *Genesis*, inasmuch as creating "heaven and earth". God, that is, was bound to be in the image of man since man was in the image of God. As thought developed, however, it was seen, e.g. by Aquinas, that the thought, the conception, of God prohibits that he have any *real* relation to anything, any being at all, outside of himself⁸⁵, since, for infinity (of being), there can be no such so to say objective being. This is what, one might argue, makes of Aquinas too an absolute idealist, if somewhat cryptically in view of his commitment, as theologian and "medieval", to "religious" language, though it is this same language which elicits this to the pious at first startling conclusion. As object out and out, for us, God is universal subject, for Hegel as for Aquinas. It is only we, *as if* outside of God, who have "real" relation to him, i.e. it is real due to our general unreality, due, note, and not simply in relation (to), as the relation of one *character* to another in a novel might be real, the novel itself being real-ly fantastic, as we might go on to say. It is the achievement of Hegelian idealism, however, to have made more explicit, in systematisation, that such finite real relation is representation, *Vorstellung*. As being nothing we are simultaneously one with God in a concrete identity which is the cause of our nothingness when or as considered apart or abstractly.

Relation, however, or just therefore, first appeared as explicitly or specifically *within* God, at both ends as it were, to those coming to think of it, through their experience of one claiming God "the Father" (as we now say) as *his* father, essentially, as he was essentially his "Son", doing always what pleases him and never separated the one from the other. This later showed itself to be deliberate ambiguity, or identity, rather, just *in* difference (the speculative mode), inasmuch as while the Father is Father of the Son within the eternal Trinity yet the Trinity as a whole, which is the "one God", is "father" of Jesus Christ there speaking "on earth" as "truly ... Son of God" (though "not yet ascended ... to my father and your father") in the words spoken beneath the Cross (by a centurion) more "ambiguous",

⁸⁵ Cf. *Summa theol.* Ia 13, 7, confirmed at 28, 4 as cited below at footnote 61.

again, than the speaker could have realised, a situation Hegelian logic generalises in its critique of “Subject-Predicate Logic”.⁸⁶

This prime or internal relation very quickly became identified, although at the same time to some extent pictured, as that between thought and the Word of this thought, only it was necessary, dealing with the infinite, that this word should be one, fully personal as perfect expression of that divine indivisible essence. This identification, however, at once posits the divine life as mirroring (whether actively or passively, as cause or effect⁸⁷) human mental life, thus causing the latter to be seen as analogue of the former. Man, like his thought, thinks only himself. Hence his being in the image of God, or God being in his image, depends upon there being an actual factor, thought. To admit this reflexive possibility one has but to ponder the sublation of the religious term “God” by, in Hegel’s theological analysis, “the Idea”. I say term as assuming the *concept* is the same. There is, necessarily, no word for this concept except a Word itself divine or infinite.

How thought relates to human nature as a whole is also a question. The tendency is often to put thought or mind with “soul” as against the body, although the sounder notion of “soul” is as form of, precisely, “the body”. This, though, is an abstraction: a body only becomes a body at all through its form. Otherwise it is just pure matter or potentiality to this or that, which means to this or that notion, form or concept. So if we want to say that mind as form is where God’s image is found we must not abstract this from body, from “the human form divine”, in Blake’s phrase.

Of course then one could not forbid Duns Scotus to talk of an intervening *forma corporis* bundled up with the human “form” proper, in Aristotle’s thought, which just thereby lends itself to (absolute) idealism, as Hegel saw⁸⁸. Scotus as theologian was more concerned to maintain the continued divinity of Christ’s dead body in the tomb than to exactly reproduce a correct Aristotelianism, according to which every human feature of the corpse becomes thereby equivocal; a dead hand is not a hand, though once idealism becomes explicit, thus relativising *life* as “the idea immediate” only, this becomes less clear. One needs an ontology of bodies similar to

⁸⁶ This was my chosen title for what appeared, rather, as “Subject and Predicate Logic” in *The Modern Schoolman*, LXVI, January 1989, pp. 129-139, an intervention obscuring the identification I aimed to pinpoint. See further my “The Supposition of the Predicate”, *ibid.* LXXVII, November 1999, pp. 73-78, also my *Hegel’s Apotheosis of Logic*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle-upon-Tyne 2017, esp. pp. 236-256 (“Hegel on Judgment”),

⁸⁷ Recall Bd. John Duns Scotus: “God would have become man ... since he willed ... in Christ ... the *closest possible* bond” (stress added).

⁸⁸ Cf. *Enc.* 142, *Zus.* (final paragraph).

Hegel's of the three kingdoms (of Father, Son and Spirit), such as several thought-systems profess.

The Aristotelian concept, anyhow, can help reconcile us to the latest development in theology on this, initiated by Karl Barth⁸⁹ but abruptly taken up by both the last two Popes, John Paul II (Wojtyła) and Benedict XVI (Ratzinger), as reflected in the documents they shepherded into being. They are now saying, namely, that the image of God is best found reflected in the Scriptural statement, of an obvious truth, viz. "male and female created he them", later to be modified by the Pauline "In Christ there is neither male nor female, but a new creature". Hegel would not be daunted by this, however, rather seeing in the male and female relation a reflection of the Trinitarian Father-Son relation. Or it is again seen in the Son's, Christ's, love for the Church, the assembly which is his body, as bride. Male and female stand for and are, therefore, the most direct representation of that Love which God is. As they become "one flesh", so do the Trinitarian relations embody the divine unity in its concreteness, also a matter of flesh at the most concrete level as Hegel will bring out, saying, again, that it is "first" in becoming flesh that God really becomes himself, not, surely, by "conversion into flesh" but by "taking of the manhood into God" (Athanasian "creed"), since God is prime and firstly author of the visible, the ordered and natural. These are also His word, as being "made" by or through the Word, of whom is said *et homo factus est*, this being known in religion as "the second (or new) creation".

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In order to show that two *relatanda* both identical with the same thing, here the divine essence, can indeed be two, i.e. not identical, Aquinas writes as follows:

According to the philosopher, there are limits to this argument, and only if the identity is real and logical is it true that two things identical with the same thing are identical with each other (as, for example, a tunic and a garment); but not if they differ logically. So in the same spot he states that although action is the same as motion, and passion also; yet it does not follow that passion and action are the same; for action implies reference in the thing moved to motion *from which*; whereas passion implies that something is *from another*. So although fatherhood, like sonship, is really the same as the divine

⁸⁹ Karl Barth, 1948, *Church Dogmatics* III, 1, §41; 2, §44; 3, §54. Cf. Fergus Kerr, *Twentieth Century Catholic Theologians*, pp. 197-201, Blackwells, USA & Oxford, 2007.

essence, yet these two in their own proper idea and definitions imply opposite relationships. So they are distinguished from each other.⁹⁰

This follows on from the centre of the article concerned (28, 4), where he writes, referring back to the processions or proceedings (*processiones*) we discussed earlier here:

According to the Philosopher in *Metaphysics* 5 every relation is founded upon either quantity, as double and half, or upon action and passion, as doing and done, father and son, master and servant, and the like. But since quantity does not apply to God, who is “great without quantity”, as Augustine says, it remains that real relation in God can be based only upon action. Yet these relations are not based upon God’s action in reference to any extrinsic procession, inasmuch as *God’s relations to creatures are not real in him* (q. 13, art. 7)⁹¹. Consequently real relations in God are understood only in reference to those actions by which there are intrinsic, not extrinsic, processions in God.

⁹⁰ Aquinas, *Summa theol.* I, q. 28, 3, ad 1: *secundum Philosophum, in 3 Physic., text 21, argumentum illud tenet, quod quaecumque uni et eidem sunt eadem, sibi invicem sunt eadem, in his quae sunt idem re et ratione, sicut tunica et indumentum; non autem in his quae different ratione. Unde ibidem dicit quod licet actio sit idem motui, similiter et passio; non tamen sequitur quod actio et passio sunt idem: quia in actione importatur respectus, ut a quo est motus in mobile; in passione vero, ut qui est ab alio. Et similiter, licet paternitas sit idem secundum rem cum essentia divina, et similiter filiatio, tamen haec duo in suis propriis rationibus important oppositos respectus. Unde distinguuntur ab invicem.*

⁹¹ Italics added. Here we see that it is not only Hegel who inverts our immediate understanding of reality in reference to idea. God as the Idea, namely, is more real than anything we habitually call real. On this basis Hegel objects to the viewing of Aristotle as realist in comparison to the idealist Plato (also called realist, however, as stressing the reality of universals). “In that vulgar conception of actuality which mistakes for it what is palpable and directly obvious to the sense, we must seek the ground of a wide-spread prejudice about the relation of the philosophy of Aristotle to that of Plato. Popular opinion makes the difference to be as follows: While Plato recognises the idea and only the idea and only the idea as the truth, Aristotle, rejecting the idea, keeps to what is actual, and is on that account to be considered the founder and chief of empiricism. On this it may be remarked: that although actuality certainly is the principle of the Aristotelian philosophy, it is not the vulgar actuality of what is immediately at hand, but the idea as actuality. Where then lies the controversy of Aristotle against Plato? It lies in this. Aristotle calls the Platonic ideas a mere *dunamis*, and establishes in opposition to Plato that the idea, which both equally recognise to be the only truth, is essentially to be viewed as an *energeia*, in other words, as the inward which is quite to the fore, or as the unity of inner and outer, or as actuality, in the emphatic sense here given to the word.” (Hegel, *Enc. 147 Zus.*)

These are only two: ... one coming from the intellect's action, the procession of the Word, and the other from the will's action, the procession of love. Two opposite relations arise in reference to each of these processions: One of these is the relation of the person proceeding from the principle, the other is the relation of the principle himself. The procession of the Word is called begetting in the proper sense of the term, and thus it is applied to living things. Now, in perfect living beings, the relation of the principle of begetting is called fatherhood, and the relation of the one proceeding from the principle is called sonship. But the procession of love has not its own proper name, so neither have the relations derived from it. We give the name "spiration" to the relation of the principle of this procession, and that of *procession* to the relation of the proceeding term, although these two names are properly those of procession or of origin, and not of relation.⁹²

On these points, of real and logical relations, as concerning truth and ideas (*veritas est in mente*: Aquinas) we can begin to see the close relation between Aquinas and Aristotle. It is an illustration of the above point that two things identical with the same thing (here Aristotle) are not identical (*viz.* Aquinas and Hegel) if differing logically, in Aquinas's words above! As proceeding, anyhow, we see here that there are three relations corresponding to the three persons as being what they are the relations of. Or do we see that? It seems we do not yet do so. For the text seems to posit

⁹² *Ibid.* I, 28, 4c: *Respondeo dicendum quod secundum Philosophum, in 5 Metaph., ... relatio omnis fundatur vel supra quantitatem, ut duplum et dimidium; vel supra actionem et passionem, ut faciens et factum, pater et filius, dominus et servus, et huiusmodi. Cum autem quantitas non sit in Deo, est enim sine quantitate magnus, ut dicit Augustinus, lib. 1 de Trinit., cap. 1, circa fin., et lib. 1, cap. 7, circa princ., relinquitur quod realis relatio in Deo esse non possit, nisi super actionem est enim sine fundata. Non autem super actiones secundum quas procedit aliquid extrinsecum a Deo; quia relationes Dei ad creaturas non sunt realiter in ipso, ut supra dictum est, qu. 13, art. 7. Unde relinquitur quod relationes reales in Deo non possunt accipi nisi secundum actiones, secundum quas est processio in Deo non extra, sed intra. Huiusmodi autem processiones sunt duae tamen, ut supra dictum est, quaest. 27, art. 3 praecipue; quarum unum accipitur secundum actionem intellectus, quae est processio Verbi, alia secundum actionem voluntatis, quae est processio amoris. Secundum quamlibet autem processionem oportet duas accipere relationes oppositas, quarum una sit procedentis a principio, et alia ipsius principii. Processio autem Verbi dicitur generatio secundum propriam rationem, qua competit rebus viventibus. Relatio autem principii generationis in viventibus perfectis dicitur paternitas; relatio vero procedentis a principio dicitur filiatio. Processio vero amoris non habet nomen proprium, ut supra dictum est qu. 27, art 4; unde neque relationes quae secundum ipsam accipiuntur. Sed vocatur relatio principii huius processionis, spiratio; relatio autem procedentis, processio; quamvis haec duo nomina ad ipsas processiones vel origines pertineant, et non ad relationes.*

one relation of intellect or knowing, generating the Word, a second of will as love proceeding, i.e. just two processions. But then Thomas recasts this, saying that “the relation of the principle of begetting is called fatherhood” and that “the relation of the one proceeding from the principle is called sonship” while he adds a third: “but the procession of love has not its own proper name, so neither have the relations derived from it.” Here we may think we have the threesome we are after but no, or not yet. For the text continues, again: “We give the name ‘spiration’ to the relation of the principle of this procession”, i.e. that of love, “and that of *procession* to the relation of the proceeding term, although these two names are properly those of procession or of origin, and not of relation”. Spiration and procession are thus, anyhow, reciprocal. Of this relation the name, by no means a proper name, is “spirit”, a general term paralleling “fatherhood” and “sonship”, as the name “*the Holy Spirit*” does not seem to do. Might we say, then, that “the Holy Spirit” is a positive religious representation, in some measure, of spirit simply? Such a representation, if it is this, corresponds to that element in religion or religiosity even which prevents our seeing the identity of the divine spirit with thought or the Idea. But how else are we to catch hold of spirit’s necessarily personal character, not to be confused with some magically empowering fluid or similar?

CHAPTER SEVEN

TRANSCENDING REASON?

We now pass on to consideration of the persons. For Thomas, following Church teaching in his schematisation, this presents no problem. For Hegel as writing philosophically (highest form of Absolute Spirit), considering the Trinity indeed as belonging to the philosophical order, as van Riet as cited above makes plain, matters of procedure cannot be derivative. This must be the prime text, believe or not as he may. So he naturally pauses to consider further this Augustinian taking of the parallel of intellect and will, as we know them in ourselves, as a pattern for the divinely immanent relations, as if anyone but God himself could know of these. For this purpose Hegel finds it necessary to consider and refute the intuitionist philosophy of his near contemporary, Jacobi, with which his own system of reasoning might be carelessly confused. It is a matter of the relation of immediacy and mediation, their “intrinsic and self-affirming unity” of which the “whole of the second part of Logic, the Doctrine of Essential Being, is a discussion” (*Enc.* 65). This characterisation concludes his showing that Jacobi’s “philosophical” version of Christian faith is a “sapless” and abstract, indeed reactionary version of the same, since such faith “comprises in it an authority of the Church” and, “secondly, ... is a copious body of objective truth, a system of knowledge and doctrine” (63). Here Hegel wholly anticipates Cardinal Newman, as he became, in the next generation⁹³. My claim here, in this book as a whole, that is, is that one ought not to be surprised by this.

⁹³ Cf. J.H. Newman, *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, 1845. Implicit in Newman’s thesis, especially inasmuch as adopted by the Church (Pope Paul VI called the epochal Second Vatican Council of 1962-1964 “Newman’s Council”, while this Pope’s successor canonised him with the title “saint”) is that such development must bear also upon itself, just as Newman himself developed it and was accordingly held suspect in many “conservative” quarters for a half century or more, as a doctrine to be further developed, not to stand still. This, in retrospect, would legitimise, if anything would, Hegel’s “creative” interpretations for those requiring this, provided that it exemplifies development and not reduction or denial, say. Only, in his case, the Conciliar opening (1964) to ecumenism was still required.

But what is the precise difference from the intuitionism mentioned, the cult or claim of the all-sufficiency of immediate knowledge, this being, as Hegel wants to say, a contradiction in terms, perhaps on a level with Johnson's kicking of a stone and saying "Thus I refute Berkeley"?

A key passage in his long excursus here, for our purposes, might be this:

From the formal point of view, there is a peculiar interest in the maxim that the being of God is immediately and inseparably bound up with the thought of God, that objectivity is bound up with the subjectivity which the thought originally presents. Not content with that, the philosophy of immediate knowledge goes so far in its one-sided view, as to affirm that the attribute of existence, even in perception, is quite as inseparably connected with the conception we have of our own bodies and of external things, as it is with the thought of God. Now it is the endeavour of philosophy to *prove* such a unity, to show that it lies in the very nature of thought and subjectivity, to be inseparable from being and objectivity. (*Enc.* 64)

Immediacy, that is, gives us a picture of God and creation as together as two entities under one hat, so to speak. Philosophy, however, proves the unity, in Hegel's words, by refuting our imaginary immediate knowledge of created and finite things as they appear to us, refuting what McTaggart, interpreting Hegel, roundly rejects as systematic "misperception". As Newman would put it, his conviction, from childhood even, was that there were only two real beings in the whole universe, "myself and God"⁹⁴. Hegel's response to this, of course, *on strictly logical grounds*, would be to question Newman's stopping at even this duality or, we might say, at immediacy (in this text at least)⁹⁵, Hegel himself asserting rather absolute

⁹⁴ Cf. *The Heart of Newman*, a selection edited by Erich Przywara SJ. (Burns & Oates, printed in Belgium).

⁹⁵ Newman, as dedicated priest but also thinker, made a deliberate choice to write normally from the religious standpoint (Hegel's second of the three forms of Absolute Spirit), even though he frequently showed himself remarkably capable in philosophy, *The Grammar of Assent* of 1870 being the prime example of this. In general, unlike Hegel, who set about demonstrating the reasonableness of Christian faith (i.e. not at all "apologetically") as "the absolute religion" (of "the absolute idea", namely), Newman tended to equate philosophers with those worldly-wise persons castigated by St. Paul, the unity of theology with philosophy, or the absorption of one into the other, mutually even, scarcely occurring to him, distasteful as he well may have found it, as many continue to do, the term "mystery" playing an over-large role here. Cf. Hegel's comment about leaving the term "mysticism" "in its original utter mystery" (*Enc.* 82, *Zus.*). Faith, for Hegel, as for St. Justin Martyr, say, is a philosophical principle. Yet he would concede (yet it is assertive, that "impossible", as rebutting Jacobi) that "How belief and intuition, when transferred to these higher

idealism, exclusive of any “and”, as “the dogma of philosophy”. This whole question, concerned as it is with versions of the “ontological argument” as found in Anselm, Descartes and others, concerned also, in consequence, with the nature of proof, proof of God especially, as such, was the final preoccupation of Hegel’s philosophical activity as recorded for us in the unfinished, posthumously published *Lectures on the Proofs of the Existence of God*. Absolute Idealism, in fact, is the very reverse of Jacobi’s doctrine of immediate knowledge as finally determinative. So Hegel says of it:

Its distinctive doctrine is that immediate knowledge alone, to the total exclusion of mediation, can possess a content which is true. This exclusiveness is enough to show that the theory is a relapse into the metaphysical understanding (*Verstand*), with its passwords “Either -or”. And thus it is really a relapse into the habit of external mediation, the gist of which consists in clinging to those narrow and one-sided categories of the finite, which it falsely imagined itself to have left for ever behind. (*Enc.* 65)

A question here is this: how does Hegel’s critique of immediacy as a criterion of truth affect the validity of the Augustinian modelling of the divine Trinitarian nature upon the human? This wording may seem provocative insofar as in the traditional definitions of God person and nature are systematically opposed. Yet it is of the divine nature to be a trinity of persons, i.e. that is what it necessarily is in its concept even, Hegel would demonstrate, claiming⁹⁶ that this has to be so whether we believe or incline to believe or neither of these in a divine “existence”. Hence McTaggart tried to show, as noted above, from a formally atheist standpoint⁹⁷ that he

regions, differ from thought, it is impossible for anyone to say” (*Enc.* 63).

⁹⁶ He nonetheless discounts, disclaims even, the immediate numerical aspect (“it is useless to count”), as does Aquinas, however (*numeri non ponuntur in divinis*). The Trinity is, rather, the process of concrete self-individuality, in its concept again, which just therefore reflected itself immediately in the development of formal logic, upon which Hegel draws, therefore, in his attempts at elucidation of this in the first place rational posit. It is thus the passage from Idea, concept, to Being, as “the true being”, which occupies him in the closing pages of the greater Logic particularly, as also throughout the posthumous *Lectures on the Proofs of the Existence of God* as well as being fairly systematically worked over in *The Phenomenology of Mind*, Chapter VII C in particular.

⁹⁷ On this point, or standpoint, we might recall that the ancient Jews, as believing in God as unseen, were long declared atheists or godless by their contemporaries in general, while their descendants tended to regard Jesus, though styling himself Son and heir, as somehow godless or blasphemous, a tendency repeated in the ups and down of Islam, the history and fortunes of Al Hallaj, who also appeared to claim to be himself divine, being just one example here, however we interpret the fate of

claimed Hegel shared, that it was not specifically the *Christian* Trinity that was at issue. If it is not, then in what sense is mind, human mind in particular, ever finite? The badge of finitude is time, and it is therein that we find the mind growing in stature. Nevertheless Hegel insists that the mind⁹⁸ of the child also belongs to “the true reason-world” (cp. *Enc.* 82 and *Zusatz*). Mind as such, then, is never “in” time, which leaves us still wondering, however, as to the referent of “mind as such” here. But such wonder might itself be classed as “relapse”, to borrow Hegel’s favoured and twice-repeated word just cited, given that thoughts “think themselves” first, as is expounded by Hegel.

The question concerning man as phenomenon arises here. Teilhard de Chardin intentionally limited his study to just this phenomenon. The philosophical treatment of our own, inclusive of the philosopher’s own, experience requires, though, that we transcend this limitation, that we not concern ourselves only with what appears, even if thought has to begin with this, insofar, which is doubtful, as science itself can here be said to have a beginning. Compare Hegel’s enquiry at the beginning of the “greater”

Socrates, denying gods in favour of the “form of forms”, to cite later interpretation. Is atheism the ultimate theism, or is theism ultimately atheism? Or is the latter not at least a “moment” of it. It all belongs to the dialectic of cancellation and sublation. Or, if God is man (he is) is man God? In one obvious sense he is not. Or, to be himself he must become God, take that self-annihilating step, self-consciousness in Hegel.

⁹⁸ Or, for some even, such as Erwin Schrödinger the quantum physicist, consciousness, founded in sense and thus extending to “all sensitive beings”, belongs to “the true reason world”. “Knowledge, feeling and choice are essentially eternal and unchangeable and numerically one in all men” or gorillas, he implies. The reason-endowed child is at some early stage on a par with such an animal, though he develops away from it, as the animal does not. Yet there is evidence that animals living with humans, e.g. cats especially, start to develop human and/or rational characteristics thereby, import human patterns into the sounds they make even, for a start, according to some research (E. Schrödinger, cited in Daniel Kolak: *I am You*, Pomona, New York, p. xv). This is still a long way from the talking animals of mainly children’s fiction. “If a lion could talk we wouldn’t understand him” (Wittgenstein: whether the “*ihm*” is accurately translated as “him” rather than “it” is a relevant question here). I recall questioning to a Jesuit priest concerning a “pet” (they are called “mascots” in Spanish: merely?) dog and eternity. “He’ll be there if you want him” came the reply, heavy with counterfactual conditionality I scarcely doubt. It is a question, in Hegelian terms, of the *phenomenality* of animals, hence also of man as we *immediately* experience him/ourselves. Yet an animal’s eyes can seem and have seemed, as in Wordsworth’s poem, “Hartleap Well”, heavy with mediation, though this perception of ours seems itself at least to partake of immediacy!

Science of Logic, “With What Must Science Begin?”⁹⁹ It is anyhow quite clear, and it follows already from Hegel’s discussion of the categories of **Form** and **Matter** (or Content) in the *Logic* (“The Doctrine of Essence”), that man as phenomenon is not what is at issue in this philosophy of self-consciousness.¹⁰⁰ Yet in this its clarity our ability to see is not always immediate, even though we may specify when Hegel is referring explicitly “only” to the conceptual approach to, say, Trinity or the Absolute Idea, as putatively distinct from concrete treatment of either of these as actual, objective and/or “existent”. The question arises, even, as to how far there remains a difference between these two things or whether, alternatively, their order of importance or actuality becomes reversed, the ideal becoming the actual, the finite merely ideal (as Hegel says) or, finally, whether the finite order is not just annihilated or “cancelled”, to use Hegel’s word. This seems to be Hegel’s meaning when he says that

The notion ... is the idea which, as absolutely first (in the method), regards this terminus as merely the disappearance of the show or semblance, which made the beginning appear immediate, and made itself *seem* a result. It is the knowledge that the idea is the one systematic whole. (*Enc.* 242, stress added)

or when he says:

The Idea, as unity of the subjective and Objective Idea, is the notion of the Idea, - a notion whose object (*Gegenstand*) is the Idea as such, and for which the objective (*Objekt*) is Idea, - an Object which embraces all characteristics in its unity. This unity is consequently the absolute and all truth, the Idea which thinks itself, - and here at least as a thinking or Logical Idea.

In short, again, “The Idea ... is the notion of the Idea”. Nonetheless Hegel will devote the last of his last lectures to stressing the necessary reality of the contingent in the scheme of things. For everything, not least the unnecessary, is necessary. It follows though, taking all together, that my

⁹⁹ See also our *Hegel’s Theology or Revelation Thematized*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle-on-Tyne, 2018, Chapter Six, “Hegel: With What must Science Begin? A Commentary”, pp. 41-75.

¹⁰⁰ It may be worth noting that the same applies to the theologian Hans Küng’s acclaimed study, *On Being a Christian*, Collins, Glasgow, Fount Paperbacks, 1978: cf. especially pp. 343-360. Original German title, *Christ sein*, Piper Verlag 1974. Man as considered by “common sense” is as phenomenal as his history and neither fall within the purview of Absolute Idealism as “the dogma of philosophy”. Heidegger’s point against Sartre in the “Letter on Humanism” was no different from this.

mind, my will, are not true Mind or Will and it is “our” affair” to “cancel” these natural appearances, necessary though, in their place, they be.

*

With these matters in a measure or for the time being put to rest we may return to the Study of Persons, first as introduced by Aquinas, who introduces the topic with an introductory dissection of themes to be considered:

We have first of all set forth the notions that seemed prerequisite with regard to processions and relations; we must now begin the study of the persons. It will comprise two parts: the persons considered in themselves and the persons in relation to one another. About the first, we should primarily consider persons in general, then each person in particular. The study of persons in general comprises four questions: 1. The meaning of the term “person”; 2. The number of persons; 3. The attributes that this number implies or excludes, such as those that call for difference, solitude, etc.; 4. Our knowledge of the persons,¹⁰¹

So we come to Person and indeed God: firstly, as cited above, we consider the meaning of the term. This turns out to be best understood in relation to the following three terms:

Essence, hypostasis, subsistence (not to be confused with substance itself) ... what these three names signify in common with the entire genus of substances, the name *person* signifies in the genus of rational substance.¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ Aquinas, *Summa theol.* I, 29, Prologue: *Praemissis autem his quae de processionibus et relationibus praecognoscenda videbantur, necessarium est aggredi de personis.*

Et primo secundum considerationem absolutam. – et deinde secundum comparativam considerationem. Oportet autem absolute de personis primo quidem in communi considerare, deinde de singulis personis.

Ad communem autem considerationem personarum quatuor pertinere videntur. – Primo quidem, significatio huius nominis persona. – Secundo vero, numerus personarum. – Tertio, ea quae consequuntur numerum personarum, vel ei opponuntur, ut diversitas, et similitudo, et huiusmodi. – Quarto vero ea quae pertinent ad notitiam personarum.

Circa primum quaeruntur quatuor: 1o de definitione personae; 2o de comparatione personae ad essentiam, subsistentiam et hypostasim; 3o utrum nomen personae competit in divinis; 4o qui ibi significet.

¹⁰² *Ibid.* 29, 2c: *Essentia ... hypostasis... subsistentia Quod autem haec tria nomina significant communiter in toto genere substantiarum, hoc nomen persona*

Aquinas replies to the “objections”, queries or difficulties, as follows:

(*ad 1um*, i.e. answer to the first “objection”). As used by the Greeks, the strict meaning of “*hypostasis*” refers to any individual substance, but custom has associated with it a certain dignity, so that it refers to an individual being of rational nature. Lat.: *Hypostasis apud Graecos ex propria significatione nominis habet quod significet quodcumque individuum substantiae; sed ex usu loquendi habet quod sumatur pro individuo rationalis naturae, ratione suae excellentiae.*

(*ad 2um*). Just as we refer in the plural to three “persons” and three “subsistences” in God, so the Greeks refer to three hypostases. But the word “substance” which, strictly speaking, is equivalent in meaning to “hypostasis”, is equivocal in our usage, inasmuch as it refers at times to “essence” and at other times to “hypostasis” (compare the distinction between “primary” and “secondary” substance); in order to avoid misunderstanding they (i.e. the Latins) chose to translate “hypostasis” by “subsistence” rather than by “substance” (parentheses added). Lat.: *Sicut nos dicimus in divinis pluraliter tres personas, et tres substantias, ita Graeci dicunt tres hypostases. Sed quia nomen substantiae, quod secundum proprietatem significationis respondit hypostasi, equivocatur apud nos, cum quandoque significet essentiam, quandoque hypostasim; ne possit esse erroris occasio, maluerunt pro hypostasi transferre subsistentiam, quam substantiam.*

(*ad 3um*). Strictly speaking, the definition expresses the essence. A definition includes specific but not individual principles. It follows that essence in things composed of matter and form refers neither to the form alone nor to the matter alone but in what is composed of both matter and form in general, as principles of the species. But what is composed of this matter and this form is characterised as a hypostasis or a person; for whereas soul, flesh and bones belong to the meaning of “man”, *this* soul, *this* flesh and *these* bones belong to the meaning of *this* man. So “hypostasis” and “person” add individual principles to the notion of the essence, and in things composed of matter and form these are not identical with the essence, as we noted when speaking of the divine simplicity. Lat.: *Essentia proprie est id quod significatur per definitionem. Definitio autem complectitur speciei principia, non autem principia individualia. Unde in rebus compositis ex materia et forma, essentia significat non solum formam, nec solum materiam, sed compositum ex materia et forma communi, prout sunt principia speciei. Sed compositum ex hac materia et ex hac forma habet rationem hypostasis et personae. Anima enim, et caro, et os sunt de ratione hominis, sed haec anima, et haec caro, et hoc os, sunt de ratione huius hominis. Et ideo hypostasis et persona addunt supra rationem essentiae principia individualia; neque sunt idem cum*

significat in genere rationalium substantiarum.

essentia in compositis ex materia et forma, ut supra dictum est, quaest. 3, art. 3, cum de simplicitate divina ageretur.

(*ad 4um*). Boethius says that genera *subsist*, since if it belongs to certain individuals to subsist, they do this as subjects of genera and species comprised in the category of substance; the genera and species do not themselves subsist except in the theory of Plato, who made the essences of things subsist apart from singulars. On the contrary, the function of *substare* belongs to the same individuals with regard to accidents, which make no part of the definition of genera and species. Lat.: *Boethius dicit genera et species subsistere in quantum individuis aliquibus competit subsistere ex eo quod sunt sub generibus et speciebus in praedicamento substantiae comprehensis; non quod ipsae species vel genera subsistant, nisi secundum opinionem Platonis, qui posuit species rerum separatim subsistere a singularibus. Substare vero competit eisdem individuis in ordine ad accidentia, quae sunt praeter rationem generum et specierum.*

(*ad 5um*). The individual composed of matter and form has the function of subject for accidents properly from its matter. So Boethius says that the form cannot be a subject (*On the Trinity*, 2). It subsists by itself through its form. This is not an addition to something already subsisting, but gives actual being to matter so that the individual can subsist. This is why Boethius relates *hypostasis* to matter and act of being or *subsistentia* to form: This is because the matter is principle of *substare* and the form principle of *subsistere*. Lat.: *Individuum compositum ex materia et forma habet quod substet accidenti ex proprietatem materiae. Unde et Boethius dicit, in lib. De Trinit., ante med.: Forma simplex subjectum esse non potest. Sed quod per se subsistat, habet ex proprietate suae formae, quae non advenit rei subsistenti, sed dat esse actuale materiae, ut sic individuum subsistere possit. Propter hoc ergo hypostasim attribuit materiae, et ousiosin (Greek term here) sive subsistentiam, formae, quia materia est principium substandi, et forma est principium subsistendi.*

Regarding the meaning of the “word” person”, the third topic concerning the word’s meaning was to ask whether the term is appropriate to God. We will explore the argument as it continues further, therefore, before relating it to what can be gleaned, or found fully expounded, concerning Hegel’s view of these matters, bearing in mind the ground we have prepared for this earlier above.

“Person” refers to that which is most perfect in the whole of nature, namely to that which subsists in rational nature. Now, because God’s nature has all perfection, and thus every kind of perfection should be attributed to him, it is fitting to use the word “person” to speak of God; yet when used of God it is not used exactly as it is of creatures, but in a higher sense, just as is the case

with other words naming creatures, as was clarified when we treated of the names of God.¹⁰³

This consideration supports Hegel's usage when he states, as so to say "analytical", that "God is the absolute person". If that, whether taken from Spinoza or not, were to be taken as denial of the Trinity then so would be this passage from Saint Thomas, speaking, as we noted earlier, of the divine nature in abstraction from the persons, as he does by chosen method in the first twenty eight questions of the *Summa* before he introduces a or the trinity of persons as necessary to this "absolute person", who is thus "three in one and one in three". Thus spoke the ancient Jews or, more deliberately, the Moslems, thus speak any number of people quite naturally and correctly, since, anyhow, the point of the Trinity is that it is three-*in-one*, again, or what Hegel will call a "concrete unity" as opposed to one abstractly taken. Whether the two ways of referring here imply two different uses or senses (or both) of "person" or not or to what extent or in what regard they may do this, these are questions to be kept in mind throughout the analysis rather than to be pronounced upon here. We will find Hegel questioning in particular (in *The Phenomenology of Mind*) the necessity of triplicity; at any rate he will want us to think about whether there might be four or five or more divine "persons", this in relation to how this belief found its way into the minds of men, i.e. phenomenologically. The logical treatments of it that we find, in the *Encyclopaedia* for example, proceed differently.

Returning to St. Thomas's treatment here we may consider his reply to two of the "objections" in the *Summa*, where *objectio*, literally a throwing something in the way, is used as a general term to cover counter-arguments or just further considerations in its scope:

So the word "person" is not discovered in the text of the Old or New Testament as referring to God. Yet what this word means is often present in the Holy Scripture, namely, that his is the peak of self-existence and most perfect in wisdom. If we were restricted to speaking of God only in the words used in Holy Scripture, it would follow that no one could speak of God in any other language than the one used in the Old and New Testaments. Because we must dialogue with non-believers, it is necessary for us to discover new words

¹⁰³ *Summa theologiae* Ia q. 29, 3c: *Persona* significat id quod est perfectissimum in tota natura, scilicet subsistens in rationali natura. Unde cum omne illud quod est perfectionis Deo sit attribuendum, eo quod ejus essentia continet in se omnem perfectionem, conveniens est ut hoc nomen, "persona", de Deo dicatur; - non tamen eodem modo quo dicitur in creaturis, sed excellentiori modo, sicut et alia nomina, quae creaturis a nobis imposita, Deo attribuuntur, sicut supra ostensum est, quaest. 13, art. 3, cum de divinis nominibus ageretur.

about God expressing the ancient belief. Nor should we avoid such innovation as profane, i.e. as out of harmony with the Scriptural meaning. What St. Paul tells us to avoid are profane verbal innovations.¹⁰⁴

We will find in Hegel too the term “self-existence” or self-being, along with a certain critique of this idea of what seems, taken literally, the “peak” or end-term in a merely univocal series. Yet St. Thomas clearly and frequently asserts that God alone *is* absolutely.

(*ad 2um*). Although we may not use “person” in its original meaning of God, we may extend this acceptably for our present purpose. Since famous men were represented in comedies and tragedies, the word “person” (*persona*: mask) came to be used to refer to men of high rank. In the ecclesiastical world there grew up the custom of referring thus to personages of rank. For this reason some theologians define person as “a hypostasis distinguished by dignity”. To subsist in rational nature is characterised by dignity, and so, as we said, every individual with rational nature is spoken of as “person”. Certainly the dignity of divine nature surpasses every nature, and thus it is entirely suitable to speak of God as “person”.¹⁰⁵

We may note that Saint Thomas writes here “surpasses every nature” and not merely every “other” nature. He is uniformly alive to the analogical character of language used of God, despite the “peak” metaphor used in this

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid. ad 1um: Licet nomen personae in Scriptura veteris vel novi Testamenti non inveniatur dictum de Deo, tamen id quod nomen significat, multipliciter in sacra Scriptura invenitur assertum de Deo, scilicet quod est maxime per se ens, et perfectissime intelligens. Si autem oporteret de Deo dici solum illa secundum vocem quae sacra Scriptura de Deo tradit, sequeretur quod nunquam in alia lingua possit aliquis loqui de Deo, nisi in illa in qua prima tradita est Scriptura veteris vel novi Testamenti. Ad inveniendum autem nova nomina antiquam fidem de Deo significantia coegit necessitas disputandi cum haereticis. Nec haec novitas vitanda est, cum non sit profana, utpote a Scripturarum sensu non discordans. Docet autem Apostolus profanas vocum novitates vitare, 1 ad Timoth. ult.*

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid. ad 2um: Quamvis hoc nomen persona, non conveniat Deo quantum ad id a quo impositum est nomen, tamen quantum ad id ad quod significandum imponitur, maxime Deo convenit. Quia enim in comoediis et tragoedis representabantur aliqui homines famosi, impositum est hoc nomen, persona, ad significandum aliquos dignitatem habentes. Unde consueverunt dici personae in Ecclesiis, quae habent aliquam dignitatem. Propter quod quidam definiunt personam, dicentes quod persona est hypostasis proprietate distincta ad dignitatem pertinente. Et quia magnae dignitatis est in rationali natura subsistere, ideo omne individuum rationalis naturae dicitur persona, ut dictum est art. 1 huius qu. Sed dignitas divinae naturae excedit omnem dignitatem, et secundum hoc maxime competit Deo nomen personae.*

translation at least. It is certainly interesting to see our usage of “person” deriving from ecclesiastical custom, although the use we find of the term in legal documentation would be temporally antecedent to its universalisation in a similar way, one conjectures.

We enquire further as to what “person” signifies in God, for Saint Thomas in the first place here. But first I would throw more light from Hegel on what he says about “the absolute person”. In his critical discussion of Jacobi’s philosophy as “Immediate and Intuitive Knowledge” (*Enc.* 61-78, the “third attitude of thought to objectivity” after the first or “natural” attitude of pre-Kantian metaphysics and the second attitude equally of empiricism and “the critical philosophy”, of Kant principally) Hegel notes the indiscriminate and common way of, “only too frequently”, positing together the categories of “Knowledge, Faith, Thought, Intuition”:

These terms, as presumably familiar to everyone, are only too frequently subjected to an arbitrary use, under no better guidance than the conceptions and distinctions of psychology, without any investigation into their nature and notion, which is the main question after all ... The word faith or belief, in the dialect of this system (Jacobi’s), comes to be employed even with reference to common objects that are present to the senses. We believe, says Jacobi, that we have a body, - we believe in the existence of the things of sense. But if we are speaking of faith in the True and Eternal, and saying that God is given and revealed to us in immediate knowledge or intuition, we are concerned not with the things of sense, but with objects special to our thinking mind, with truths of inherently universal significance. And when the individual ‘I’, or in other words personality, is under discussion, - not the ‘I’ of experience or a single private person – above all, when the personality of God is before us, we are speaking of personality unalloyed, - of a personality in its own nature universal. Such personality is a thought, and falls within the province of thought only. More than this. Pure and simple intuition is completely the same as pure and simple thought. Intuition and belief, in the first instance, denote the definite conceptions we attach to these words in our ordinary employment of them: and to this extent they differ from thought in certain points which nearly everyone can understand. But here they are taken in a higher sense, and must be interpreted to mean a belief in God, or an intellectual intuition of God; in short, we must put aside all that especially distinguishes thought on the one hand from belief and intuition on the other. How belief and intuition, when transferred to these higher regions, differ from thought, it is impossible for anyone to say. And yet such are the barren distinctions of words, with which men fancy that they assert an important truth: even while the formulae they maintain are identical with those which they impugn. (Hegel, *Enc.* 63)

For Absolute Idealism, namely, which is philosophy, the common-sense objects of time and space, along with space-vehicles and temporal events

generally, thought annihilates or sees the non-being of “common objects that are present to the senses”, even though it is from there that mind rises to truth as “its own result” and it is there that even God rises to affirmation of his truly infinite being, in the body and person of Christ namely, as Hegel argues, not, emphatically, as a historical happening, events themselves being, either before- or after-hand, with time itself namely, eliminated, but as belonging to his concept, to the Idea which “is the notion of the Idea” (236), “the Idea which thinks itself” only, as having no Outside. Jacobi’s idea of common faith, in every “appearance”, just does not go through. Here alone, says Hegel, is personality absolutely realised.

Note that it is “the individual ‘I’” *as such* which is first equated with absolute personality here, as being itself universal, whatever we may wish to *mean* by the word, but which is itself only realised *in* God or as one with God in self-consciousness. But here is the context of Hegel’s naming God as “the absolute person”:

In the history of philosophy we meet with Substance as the principle of Spinoza’s system ... God as substance, and substance only. What we are to think of this charge (atheism, pantheism) follows, in the first instance, from the place which substance takes in the system of the logical idea (i.e. Hegel’s system). Though an essential stage in the evolution of the Idea, substance is not the same with absolute Idea, but the idea under the still limited form of necessity. It is true that God is necessity, or, as we may also put it, that He is the absolute Thing: He is however no less the absolute Person. That He is the absolute Person however is a point which the philosophy of Spinoza never reached: and on that side it falls short of the true notion of God which forms the content of religious consciousness in Christianity. Spinoza was by descent a Jew; and it is upon the whole the Oriental way of seeing things, according to which the nature of the finite world seems frail and transient, that has found its intellectual expression in his system. This Oriental view certainly gives the basis for all real further development. Still it is not the final idea. It is marked by the absence of the principle of individuality, which first appeared under a philosophic shape, contemporaneously with Spinoza, in the *Monadology* of Leibnitz. (Hegel, *Enc.* 151 *Zus.*)

On this we may remark, as germane to the theme of our study here, that for Christianity this principle of individuality becomes universalised to the whole body of the redeemed, called Christ’s mystical body, which is simply Christ, where the part, when in the whole, is the whole and the whole, when in the part, is the part. But here, though, individuality is sovereign, God, again, being the absolute person and anyone else being that as one with Him and hence no longer “else”. This also functions in our relation, that of love,

with one another.¹⁰⁶ With this I return to St. Thomas's account of what "person" signifies in God:

... This is usually understood of the divine persons: that each of them subsists distinct from the others in the divine nature. Thus the term "person" is common in our understanding of the three divine persons.¹⁰⁷

Perhaps the most striking difference from Aquinas's account as we are presenting it, according to the received ideas or (often second-hand) impressions, of Hegel's treatment is that he does not start, as it were dogmatically (well, but does Aquinas?), from the three persons, but allows the idea to unfold from a profoundly phenomenological speculation, as to how things would appear, namely, concerning the remotest beginnings of thought about ultimate things, inclusive of God, good and evil in one inchoate system, so to say. This aspect can of course be found piecemeal and not ignored in the corpus of the writings of Thomas Aquinas and that, indeed, can and will be compared with what Hegel has to say, if we now or shortly turn to that account that he gives in *The Phenomenology of Mind*.

First, however, I note some further remarks of Aquinas concerning a Trinity of persons:

In its etymological meaning, the word "Trinity" evidently signifies the one essence of the three persons, so that "trinity" means triune unity. But strictly speaking, it rather signifies the number of persons in one essence; and hence we cannot say that the Father is the Trinity, as he is not three persons. Yet it does not mean the relations themselves of the persons, but rather the number of persons related to one another, so that the word is not expressive of relativity.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ This ought to dispose of the objections of Fr. Daniel P. Jamros SJ to Hegel's system in his article "Hegel on the Incarnation: Unique or Universal", *Theology and Philosophy* 56 (1995). See my *Hegel on Thought and Incarnation*, the first chapter.

¹⁰⁷ Aquinas, *Summa theol.* I, 30, 1 ad 1: *Respondeo dicendum quod plures esse personas in divinis sequitur ex praemissis. Ostensum est supra quod hoc nomen persona significat in divinis rationem ut rem subsistentem in natura divina.* Mary T. Clark's version, which I give above, as for Thomas's Trinitarian texts generally, is more an admirable paraphrase than an exact translation of what in the original (above) sounds yet more Hegelian (*hoc nomen persona significat in divinis rationem ut rem subsistentem in natura divina*). For Hegel, in short, "person" stands for *ratio*, i.e. for reason, mind, I, consciousness, "free Spirit", thinking (*Enc.* 159, as closing the whole "Doctrine of Essence"). The big question about "artificial intelligence" theories must be, if this is sound, whether they could ever be thought to assimilate or correspond to it, as Mary Shelley's novel perhaps "immediately" attempted.

¹⁰⁸ Aquinas, *Summa theol.* I, 31, 1 ad 1: *nomen, trinitas, secundum etymologiam*

In the next, article 2, Aquinas follows and recommends a path of prudence and caution superficially opposed to Hegelian boldness, “to avoid heresy”. Really, though, this is the attitude which unlocks deep-lying marvels, as we may surely call them. Thus it is really the same honest confidence, of being led, that produces Hegel’s unforeseeable texts too. Aquinas writes:

Because as Jerome notes (*Ep. 57*), words badly used run the risk of heresy, in speaking of the Trinity we must do so carefully and modestly: “Nowhere”, says St. Augustine, “is error more dangerous, the search more arduous, the finding more fruitful.” But in speaking of the Trinity we should avoid two contrary errors and proceed with care between them – namely Arius’s error, a making of the trinity of persons a trinity of substances; and that of Sabellius, who made of the unity of essence a unity of person.

To avoid Arius’s error we should avoid speaking of “diversity” or of “difference” in God – this would ruin the unity of essence. We can, however, appeal to the term “distinction”, because of the relative opposition; it is in this sense that one should interpret the expressions “diversity” or “difference” of persons when encountered in a reliable text. Moreover, to preserve the simplicity of the divine essence, we should avoid the terms of “separation” and “division” that belong to the parts of a whole; lest equality be lost we avoid using the word “disparity”; and to preserve likeness we should avoid the terms “alien” and “divergent”. For Ambrose says (*On Faith I*) that “in the Father and in the Son” there is no divergence, but one Godhead, and according to St. Hilary there is nothing separable in God.

But to avoid Sabellius’s error, we should not use the word “singularity” (isolatedness), which would deny the communicability of the divine essence; according to St. Hilary, in fact, it is a sacrilege to call the Father and the Son “a singular God”. We should also avoid the term “unique”, which would deny the plurality of persons; St. Hilary says in the same place: “We exclude from God the idea of singularity or uniqueness.” Yet we do say the “only Son”, for there is no plurality of sons in God. But we do not say the “only God”, for Godhead is common to several. We avoid the word “confused” to respect the order of nature among the persons. So Ambrose says: “What is one is not confused and there is no multiplicity where there is no difference.” We should also avoid the word “solitary” lest we detract from the society of the three persons; for, as Hilary says (*On the Trinity IV*), “We confess neither a solitary nor a diverse God.

vocabuli videtur significare unam essentiam trium personarum, secundum quod dicitur trinitas, quasi trium unitas; sed secundum proprietatem vocabuli significat magis numerum personarum unius essentiae; et propter hoc non possumus dicere quod Pater sit trinitas, quia non est tres personae. Non autem significat ipsas relationes personarum, sed magis numerum personarum ad invicem relatarum; et inde est quod secundum nomen ad aliud non refertur.

But the masculine meaning of other (*alius*) denotes only a distinction of *suppositum*, and so we can properly say that the Son is other than the Father, because he is another *suppositum* of the divine nature, as he is another person and another hypostasis. (Aquinas: *Ibid.*, q. 31, 2)

After this we come to where Aquinas discusses the trinity as “transcending” (human) reason. So I will first just mention how Hegel introduces discussion of the Trinity, or of a Trinity, or both in one as it turns out, simply from the logical exigences of Hegel’s system (of logic primarily), as if this had itself been come upon from consideration of the Trinity in the first place, or might just as well have been. He introduces it in *The Phenomenology of Mind*, supposing we prescind for the moment from his earlier discussions of faith and religion, though I would just recall that he had earlier made the remarkable suggestion, noted by Christine Malabou in her equally remarkable book, *The Future of Hegel*, that the Spirit may be seen, in accordance with certain Scriptural texts¹⁰⁹ in fact, as proceeding from the Son alone or exclusively, thus undercutting the historic dispute, whether intentionally or not, between East and West on this issue, that of the *filioque*, i.e. the Western “from the Father and the Son”, added to the Eastern or up till then universal “from the Father” merely (which, as text, might or nor might not imply the *filioque*), when referring to the procession of the Spirit, all on the spurious authority of a Carolingian monarch but anyhow later taken up by the papal Church but steadfastly (St. Thomas says “obstinately”) refused by the Greeks, as was so stressed by Photius at the time of the schism (c. 1054). No one seems to have considered what Hegel here has suggested.

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So we come to the Trinity as “transcending reason” as St. Thomas puts it, an indication that when he speaks of *ratio* he means human reason, whether or not this corresponds to the restrictions of *Verstand* as understood by Hegel as against *Vernunft* or simply “thought”, corresponding to Aristotle’s *nous* as certainly no less than divine or absolute. For both parties Mind in God would be identical with God himself, the divine nature.

It is impossible to reach the knowledge of the Trinity by natural reason. For, as previously explained (q. 12, article 4 ad 12), man through natural reason cannot reach any knowledge of God except from creatures. But we go from

¹⁰⁹ E.g. *John* 16, 7: “... unless I go the Advocate will not come to you, but if I do go, I will send him to you ...”

creatures to knowing God as from effects to their cause. So by natural reason we can only know of God what necessarily belongs to him as the principle of all things ... Now, the creative power of God is common to the entire Trinity; and so it belongs to the unity of the essence and not to the distinction of the persons. So by natural reason we can know what belongs to the unity of the essence but not what belongs to the distinction of persons.¹¹⁰ (*Summa theol. Ia*, q. 32, art. 1 c)

Note, though, that St. Thomas immediately stresses, replying here to the third “objection”, a *need* to know God as Trinity, just as we find argued for in Hegel as the only reasonable conception of God:

The knowledge of the divine persons was necessary for two reasons. The first was to give us the right idea of creation¹¹¹. To assert that God made all things through his Word is to reject the error according to which God produced things by natural need; and to place in him the procession of love is to show that if God has produced creatures, this is not because he needed them for himself nor for any other cause extrinsic to him: it is through love of his goodness [the desire to share].

Also Moses, after having written: “In the beginning God created heaven and earth”, added, “God said, ‘Let there be light’”, to manifest the divine Word; and then said, “God saw the light that it was good”, to show the approval of the divine love. And in the same way he describes the production of the other works.

The second reason and the principal one was to give us a true notion of the salvation of the human race, salvation which is accomplished by the incarnation of the Son and by the gift of the Holy Spirit.¹¹²

¹¹⁰ ST I, 32, 1c: *Impossibile est per rationem naturalem ad cognitionem Trinitatis divinarum personarum pervenire. Ostensum est enim supra, qu. 12, art. 4, et 12, quod homo per rationem naturalem in cognitionem Dei pervenire non potest nisi ex creaturis. Creaturae autem dicunt in Dei cognitionem sicut effectus in causam. Hoc igitur solum ratione naturali de Deo cognosci potest quod competere ei necesse est, secundum quod est omnium entium principium; et hoc fundamento usi sumus supra, qu. 12, art. 12, in consideratione Dei. Virtus autem creativa Dei est communis toti Trinitati; unde pertinent ad unitatem essentiae, non ad distinctionem personarum. Per rationem igitur naturalem cognosci possunt de Deo ea quae pertinent ad unitatem essentiae, - non autem ea quae pertinent ad distinctionem personarum.:*

¹¹¹ On creation, cf. our “Divine Creation, Exemplarism and Divine Ideas”, *The Downside Review*, October 2004, pp. 259-273; also “Creation *stricto sensu*”, *New Blackfriars*, Vol. 89, No. 1020, March 2008, pp. 194-214.

¹¹² *Ibid. ad 3um: Cognitiono divinarum personarum fuit necessaria nobis dupliciter. - Uno modo ad recte sentiendum de creatione rerum. Per hoc enim quod dicimus Deum omnia fecisse Verbo suo, excluditur error ponentium Deum produxisse res ex necessitate naturae. Per hoc autem quod ponimus in eo processionem amoris,*

In this way the difference between Thomas and Georg, if any, reduces to a difference concerning the nature and meaning of “revelation”. In Hegel, as we will have seen, this concept, also found to be a *Vorstellung*, precisely as a *religious* term (“religion and nothing but religion”, however, being philosophy’s concern, he asserts), becomes absorbed into those of thought and knowledge, the Idea in fact. Thought, having been presented, from whatever quarter, with the notion or idea of revelation, or with a certain content given as receivable under this notion, naturally progresses from this situation of faith to one of knowledge, which the believer would not or might well not, as St. Thomas affirms, otherwise have come upon, whatever we say about those first receiving it. Nor is it thereby established, in my view at least, that faith is ever left behind, in “this” life at least, while what something is “called” elsewhere, if indeed anything, hardly signifies.

Hegel, in fact, presents a kind of phenomenology of revelation. This leaves us with a viewpoint from which the question, so important for many, of whether what stands revealed is “supernaturally” or “naturally” known seems to have no definite signification, seems indeed a blueprint for the acquisition of any knowledge or faith whatever. The question does indeed arise whether the principles of ecumenism, as endorsed by the Church in Council back in 1964, can tolerate any other outcome. Rather, if the Christians reject large sections of Mohammed’s message this rejection stands or falls at the bar of reason. Hegel, however, does not understand this as implying rejection of the necessity for a and the true Mediator, coming at the *appointed* time, just inasmuch as the Absolute Idea as infinite or absolutely without limitation, even as to *this* point, unless self-imposed, stands as crown and root of his system. Behind this it is easy to see place for the Hegelian adage, “The factual is normative”, which, however, he is careful to keep apart from the argument to God’s truth by general consent, mainly, however, by claiming that such consent is lacking. The phenomenology, all the same then, will yield the truth just as the truth entails a phenomenology. I will pass to *The Phenomenology of Mind*. But first we need to discuss something of St. Thomas’s account of what are traditionally called “notions” in God, a term certainly suggestive of Hegel.

ostenditur quod Deus non propter aliquam indigentiam creaturas produxit, neque propter aliquam aliam causam extrinsecum, sed propter amorem suae bonitatis. Unde et Moyses, postquam dixerat, Gen. 1, 1: In principio creavit Deus caelum et terram; subdit: Dixit Deus: Fiat lux, ad manifestationem divini Verbi; et postea dixit: Vidit Deus lucem quod esset bona, ad ostendendum probationem divini amoris. Et similiter in aliis operibus. – Alio modo, et principalius, ad recte sentiendum de salute generis humanae, quae perficitur per Filium incarnatum et per donum Spiritus Sancti.

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We start, then, at the next article, 3, of this Question 32 of this treatise on the Trinity or of Part One of the *Summa* as a whole, rather:

A notion is the proper idea whereby we know a divine person. But the divine persons are multiplied by reason of their origin, and origin includes the idea of *someone from whom another comes* and of *someone who comes from another*, and by these two ways a person can be known.¹¹³

“By these two ways” is the important division between the notions here. The concept of a “notion”, as such or, here, in God, was introduced in the previous, second article of this Question 32. I note here the difficulty Aquinas finds of how to avoid presenting notions as *determinative* of God. Clearly an absolute unity has to rule here; we must note the difficulty in presenting origin as an eternal reality. God has to be presented as himself these originating and originated acts, such as, for example, that the Father is the generative act wholly, the Son is the proceeding from or being uttered, wholly, the Spirit being the actively determinative self-knowing (in which all is included) between them as proceeding or, on Hegel’s mentioned suggestion, more like that in which all issues as “mind knowing itself”: i.e. this, the eternal reality, has to be Trinitarian.

So the person of the Father cannot be known by the fact that he is from another but by the fact that he is from no one; and so the notion that pertains to him is unbegottenness. As the source of another he is knowable in two ways, for insofar as the Son is from him, the Father is known by the notion of *fatherhood*; and as the Holy Spirit is from him, he is known by the notion of *common spiration*. The Son is knowable as begotten by another, and so he is known by *sonship* and also known through another person proceeding from him, the Holy Spirit, so that he is known in the same way the Father is known, by *common spiration*. The Holy Spirit is known from the fact that he is from another or from others; hence he is known by *procession*; but not by the fact that another is from him, as no divine person proceeds from him. (*Igitur persona Patris non potest innotescere per hoc quod sit ab alio, sed per hoc quod a nullo est; et sic ex hac parte ejus notio est innascibilitas. Sed in quantum aliquis est ab eo innotescit dupliciter, quia in quantum Filius est ab eo, innotescit notione paternitatis; in quantum autem Spiritus Sanctus est ab eo, innotescit notione communis spirationis. Filius autem potest innotescere*

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, article 3c: *Notio dicitur id quod est propria ratio cognoscendi divinam personam. Divinae autem personae multiplicantur secundum originem. Ad originem autem pertinent a qua alius, et qui ab alio: et secundum hos duos modos potest innotescere persona.*

per hoc quod est ab alio nascendo, et sic innotescit per filiationem; et per hoc quod est alius ab eo, scilicet Spiritus Sanctus; et per hoc innotescit eodem modo sicut et Pater, scilicet communi spiratione, Spiritus Sanctus autem innotescere potest per hoc quod est ab alio, vel ab aliis, et sic innotescit processione; non autem per hoc quod alius sit ab eo, quia nulla divina persona procedit ab eo).

Why not, one might ask, without wishing to be irreverent. There must be some kind of reflexive or circular force involved, whereby the scheme (not a “process”) stops at three persons. Certainly the divine praises are, in the traditional picture, born back to the Father by men and angels, a bearing back *in* which they receive the *outpouring* of grace, truth and love. The creation, that is, is truly in God and nowhere else, in that necessity of love which is the opposite of compulsion, viz. freedom. Nor is it some tacked on afterthought. This aspect becomes more prominent in Hegel’s account; it is perhaps characteristic of modern religious consciousness. God cannot be, it is felt, a second undisturbed reality. Rather, what seems second is absorbed in him, in eternal peace, and this it is that annihilates or gives the lie to our evil and suffering. As Hegel puts it, there cannot really be a “fall” from God, from God’s “hand”, adding that evil is “a sham, being”. Aquinas pursues a similar path, *mutatis mutandis*. Meanwhile:

So in God there are five notions: unbegottenness, fatherhood, sonship, common spiration and procession. Only four of these are relations, for unbegottenness is not a relation, unless by reduction, as is seen later (q. 33, art. 4 *ad* 3). Only four are properties. For common spiration is no property, inasmuch as it belongs to two persons. Three are personal notions, i.e. constituting persons: *fatherhood*, *sonship* and *procession*. Common spiration and unbegottenness are spoken of as notions of persons, but not personal notions, as we shall see (*Summa theol.* Ia 40, 1 *ad* 1um).¹¹⁴

Again, it is striking, surprising even, that he can say that these notions are *in* God. Does God himself “have” them? Does this prepare the way for acceptance of similar expressions in Hegel? Might it suggest for some, for

¹¹⁴ *Summa Theol.* I, 32, 3c: *Sunt igitur quinque notiones in divinis, scilicet innascibilitas, paternitas, filiatio, communis spiratio et processio. Harum autem tantum quatuor sunt relationes. Nam innascibilitas non est relatio, nisi per reductionem, ut infra dicitur, qu. 33, art. 4 ad 3. Quatuor autem tantum proprietates sunt. Nam communis spiratio non est proprietas, quia convenit duabus personis. Tres autem sunt notiones personales, id est, constituentes personas, scilicet paternitas, filiatio et processio. Nam communis spiratio et innascibilitas dicuntur notiones personarum, non autem personales, ut infra magis patebit, quaest. 40, art. 1, ad 1.*

example Mohammed's followers, that Greek metaphysics has here been allowed to overreach itself, even at the hands of the first Greek-speaking believing Jews as we meet them in the New Testament's now canonical writings? On the other hand, how could it be otherwise? Must there not be intellectual content to the inner life of God? Is not this just what validates intellectual life, or enables it to shine forth its own validation indifferently? Validation, of course, must always be "for us", which is as much as to say, however, that the concept is otiose. *Veritas est in mente*, i.e. in *our* minds, while, equivalently, wherever "our" is said, there truth is found. Conversely, however, *veritas*, truth, is not itself being *tout court*, not even for Hegelian idealism, which shows, rather, that what we *take* first to be truth is in fact, or rather, being *tout court* or, as he puts it at the end of the *Logic*, "true being". "I am the way, the truth and the life", yes for sure, but because, firstly or absolutely, "before Abraham was I am" period.

ad 2, i.e. in reply to an "objection": The divine essence is signified as a reality; the persons are also signified as realities. whereas the notions indicate ideas intimating the persons. So, although God is one by unity of essence, and triune by trinity of persons, he is not fivefold by the five notions.¹¹⁵

So the distinction here is between realities and ideas which merely "intimate" realities, while for Hegel the Absolute Idea, the Notion, is the highest reality and "the true being". Indeed, speculative talk of *quinum*, soberly negated by Aquinas here, might almost be the ancestor to Hegel's mention, not entirely jocose, of "a Quinity" as "what Spirit might be more exactly expressed numerically" as. This needs to be born in mind throughout the comparison we are making between the two thinkers. For Hegel indeed, as we shall see later here, this specifically "notional" development extends to "otherness", as at least including evil, the other of goodness (just as one can say, in a Christian Platonic context, that God is not-Being inasmuch as he is Being). The one notion is, abstractly or *qua* notion, *infinitely* multipliable. Hegel relates this to Christ's manifestation to us as "made sin" while remaining just therein absolutely good and self-abandoning, a self, however, which is all the same, this being the whole *sense* of the matter, eternally resumed in that self-centredness, of "the self-existence relinquished", which

¹¹⁵ *Ibid. ad 2um: Essentia in divinis significatur ut res quaedam, et similiter personae significantur ut res quaedam; sed notiones significantur ut rationes notificantes personas. Et ideo, licet dicatur Deus unus propter unitatem essentiae, et trinus propter trinitatem personarum; non tamen dicitur quinus propter quinque notiones.*

he finds otherwise to be “characteristic of evil”. Of all these notions indeed Aquinas says:

Because real plurality in God is based upon relative opposition, the several properties of one person, since they are not relatively opposed to each other, do not really differ. Nor can we predicate them of each other, since they are mentally distinct, just as we do not say that the attribute of power is an attribute of knowledge, although we do say that knowledge is power.¹¹⁶

This is an argument in support of the claim that there are not *more* than these five notions “in” God. It is of a *divine* person only that it is said here that the properties of one person do not or cannot, rather, “differ” (so as, or as if, to multiply further the persons). Hence they cannot be predicated of each other. Such properties must not be confused with the divine attributes which Aquinas has enumerated earlier at length and which apply to the divine nature rather than to some one person, while Hegel for his part says this:

Counting the moments ... can be regarded as altogether useless ... because the thought that grasps the many in one has to be dissolved out of its universality and must be distinguished into *more than* three or four distinct components. This universality appears, in contrast to the absolute determinateness of the abstract unit – the principle of number – as indeterminateness in relation to number as such; so that in this connexion we can speak only of numbers in general, i.e. not of a specific number of distinctions. Hence in general it is here quite superfluous to think of number and counting,” for this “falls outside conceptual thought”.¹¹⁷

In the following article St. Thomas says this about the notions specifically or, rather, about anyone speaking of them, surely not excluding himself:

... Anyone may hold contrary opinions about the notions, if he does not intend to uphold anything at variance with the faith. But if anyone should hold a false opinion about the notions, knowing or believing that what is contrary to the faith would follow, he would fall into heresy.

Bearing this in mind, we look now for what in Hegel corresponds to this discovery of the at the final count in a sense finite concepts. The notions are

¹¹⁶ *Ibid. ad 3um: Cum sola oppositio relativa faciat pluralitatem realem in divinis, plures proprietates unius personae, cum non opponuntur ad invicem relative, non different realiter. Nec tamen de se invicem praedicantur quia significantur ut diversae rationes personarum, sicut etiam non dicimus quod attributum potentiae sit attributum scientiae, licet dicimus quod scientia sit potentia.*

¹¹⁷ Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, Baillie version, p. 1967, 772.

not, that is, severally the Absolute Idea into which they are one and all assumed or sublated and hence “cancelled”, this alone corresponding to the absolute simplicity necessary to Infinite Being just conceptually, as affirmed by both Thomas and Hegel and also Aristotle, when he says that thought “thinks only itself”. So we may take the five notions one by one.

First, then, to unbegottenness, *innascibilitas*, or “unbegettability” rather, corresponds necessity in Hegel, which is both the true Being and the Absolute Idea which true Being finally is. To this, in the other direction, corresponds also *paternitas*, inasmuch as the Word and hence all is from him, *ab eo*, by *filiatio* or generation. To such generation, of the Word, corresponds that active self-consciousness in which all is constitutively known, mind thinking as this all, however, only itself. One might compare Gentile’s pair, in the Italian, *pensiero pensante*, thought thinking, and *pensiero pensato*, thought as thought, which he, however, posits as abstractly objectified conditions so mutually opposed that the latter, corresponding to Nature on any possible view, he rather assumes, should be logically impossible for Hegel to include as a systematic constituent and certainly impossible for Aquinas, for whom the poet’s “in whom we live and move and have our being” is referable as much to Nature as to “we”. Gentile need not have judged so, however, and thus erred in so doing since in the Idea thinking and being thought are the same. The “groaning and travailing” of Nature is *pro parte subjecti* or “in the eye of the beholder”, given that in and for the system the End is *as such* realised.¹¹⁸ This is what leads Hegel to speak of “distinctions of love” or “distinction in the way of distinction”.¹¹⁹

Of the five Thomistic *notiones* there remain *communis spiratio* and “procession”, *processio*. Of this Hegel says that the Divine Being is “known just in its being known as Spirit, as a Being which is essentially self-consciousness” (*Phenomenology of Mind*, pp. 758-9). Of such Absolute Knowledge he says “It is spirit knowing itself in the shape of spirit” (*Ibid.* p.798), i.e. as just characterised as “essentially self-consciousness”, hence that it is “knowledge which comprehends through notions”, truth here having, absolutely, “the character of certainty of self” and that alone. Content and certainty are the same “when the content has received the shape of self”. “Spirit, appearing before consciousness in this element of existence,

¹¹⁸ Hegel, *Enc.* 204, 212 *Zus.*

¹¹⁹ Cf. Hegel, on the same page as we have just cited from *Phenomenology of Mind* (772): “Counting the moments ... altogether useless ... since for one thing, what is distinguished is itself just as truly one and single – viz. the thought of distinction which is only *one* thought – as the thought is this element distinguished, the second over against the first” *et f.*

or, what is here the same thing, produced by it in this element, is systematic Science”, such as we find in the theology of Thomas Aquinas, namely.

In that sense Spirit proceeding, the actively “common spiration”, is indeed the final *facit* of the unity in Trinity, of Trinity in unity, without which, namely, there would be no unity, and this is the answer to the claim of McTaggart and others that Hegel makes of Trinity a process in which the first two “persons” are absorbed in the third and that this, therefore, is not the Christian Trinity. Rather, “Have we known Christ after the flesh we know him so no more”, i.e. we know *him* so, but now otherwise (than when we first read of the earthly life of Christ in the Gospels, perhaps) i.e. in the Spirit.

For Hegel indeed the five *notiones* coincide in the one, actively self-thinking notion (*Begriff*) in just this simplicity of “single-minded” self-thought, ever new as never begun. Conversely, however, this absolute notion or Idea coincides, as it were “for us”, in the five Thomistic notions or facets of one infinite reality, which thus *in its being* has no facets. They “cannot be predicated of each other” just because they are “only mentally distinct”, the “several properties” of a divine person “do not really differ” (Aquinas, anticipating Hegel). This applies especially to what is active and passive in the Father and Son, generating and being generated (*filiatio*), or, in the Holy Spirit, common spiration, by Father and Son, or its own consequent *processio*, active as much as passive¹²⁰, while as for this “consequent”, Hegel’s account is completed by his identification of cause and effect as such, thus cancelling both (in the wake of Hume perhaps), as set forth in the *Science of Logic*, either version.

Bearing all this in mind we can see that we should have realised, and have perhaps done so, that the immense complexity of St. Thomas’s work, made ever more complex precisely by the need for it all to be comprised in one system (but compare Van Riet above: “We think there are two systems in Saint Thomas” – was he finally right about this?), should have prepared us for the emergence of this complexity in and as one system, as it surely is, absolutely or *in Deo*, one with God himself, in fact, who, Hegel claims, necessarily *is* “revelation” and, indeed, system, this conception itself being thus at once “thematised”¹²¹ and personalised.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.* 154.

¹²¹ See our *Hegel’s Theology or Revelation Thematised*, CSP, Newcastle on Tyne, 2018, Chapter Seven in particular.

CHAPTER EIGHT

HEGEL ON TRINITY

It is now time, as promised, to look at Hegel's text(s) on the Trinity. After these questions on the notions and the Trinity as a whole St. Thomas goes on to consider each person separately and their various interactions. When studying Hegel, however, it is not possible to divide the material up so neatly¹²². So we will return to these later parts of Aquinas's presentation hereafter. One reason for this more synthetic approach is that Hegel pointedly does not in any way separate the Trinity from the Incarnation, at least if we take *The Phenomenology of Mind* as prime text for our purposes, just as he does not begin with the Trinity, or even with Religion, with which Art is put in most intimate contact (cf. the section "Religion in the Form of Art", itself requiring study of the preceding "Natural Religion" section, from which the whole procession of nature, from light to plants and animals and "the artificer" himself can hardly be separated). The whole supplies invaluable material for how to read and understand the later "Philosophy of Nature" (*Encyclopaedia* II) or his ultimate account of Mind and Thought, which he and we find coinciding with much that we, many of us, have heard repeated without understanding, and consequently come to dismiss as "clichés", from our earliest days.

Having singled out the Incarnation, however, I will begin at the point where he first refers to this, or uses this ultimately theological term, of course deliberately, even though it is not the true "first", whether or not anything is that. Hence he mentions, even singles out one, probably not unique, "prototype" of incarnation, viz. the statue:

¹²² This in fact was made an objection to Hegel's thought as unmethodical and "not safe for teaching" by those advising the Roman Holy Office prior to its "condemnation" of aspects of Hegelian "ontologism" specifically in 1860, following several critical notices having appeared in the Jesuit-edited journal at Rome, *Civiltà Cattolica*. Later, as noted above, during the 1880s, several propositions, seen as "ontologist", taken from the works of the later canonised Serbatio Rosmini, were similarly condemned from the same Office.

Through the Religion of Art spirit has passed from the form of substance into that of subject (something we noted him taking up again above in the transition from Spinoza's to Leibniz's *thought*); for art brings out its (Subject's) shape and form ... This incarnation in human form of the Divine Being begins with the statue (Baillie p. 751, parentheses added).

The quote is from the opening paragraph of Chapter VII, Section C, "Revealed Religion", in *The Phenomenology of Mind*. And there follows discussion of the mentioned Incarnation up to page 767, where a threesome is touched upon, although "These three moments" are mentioned at page 765, as a conclusion reached. To illustrate:

Spirit is content of its consciousness to begin with in the form of pure substance; in other words it is content of its pure consciousness ("Spirit ... is to itself in the form of objectivity ...", p.696). This element of thought is the process of descending into existence, or of individuality. The middle term between these two is their synthetic connexion, the consciousness of passing into otherness, the process of imaginative presentation as such. The third stage (i.e. after the "middle term") is the return from this presentation and from that otherness; in other words it is the element of self-consciousness itself. (p. 765, parentheses added)

This passage is in some respects a reflection upon his whole book here, what it stands for and would embody.

These three moments constitute the life of spirit ... this reflection into itself is at the same time the transition into another sphere of its being. Imaginative presentation constitutes the middle term (again) between pure thought and self-consciousness as such, and is merely *one* of the determinate forms (three? Or more?). The content itself, which we have to consider, has partly been met with already, as the idea of the "unhappy" and the "believing" consciousness ... is not yet its own content inherently and essentially, or in the sense of being its (consciousness's) substance. ... The consciousness of the religious communion, on the other hand, possesses the content as its substance, just as the content *is the certainty* the communion has of its own spirit. (pp. 765-766, parentheses and stress added)

Thought thinks itself alone, once again, as in Aristotle, or nearly. The following paragraph has to be quoted in full (a few lines from it have just been cited above, however) as being literally Hegel's first statement here of his comprehensive view of Trinity, on which all the following in this section (VII c) is commentary:

Spirit, represented at first as substance in the element of pure thought, is, thus, primarily the eternal essential Being, simple, self-identical, which does not, however, have this abstract meaning of essential Being, but the meaning of Absolute Spirit. Yet spirit consists, not in having a meaning, not in being the inner, but in being the actual, the real. "Simple eternal essential Being" would, therefore, be spirit merely in empty phrase, if we remained at the level of pictorial thought, and went no further than the expression of "simple eternal essential Being". "Simple essential Being", however, because it is abstraction, is in point of fact the inherently negative, is indeed the negativity of reflective thought, or negativity as found in Being *per se*; i.e. it is absolute distinction from itself, is pure process of becoming its other. *Qua* essential Being, it is merely implicit, or for us: but since this purity of form is just abstraction or negativity, it is *for itself*, it is the self, the notion. It is thus objective; and since pictorial thinking apprehends and expresses as an event what has just been expressed as the necessity of the notion, it will be said that the eternal Being begets for itself an other. But in this otherness it has likewise, *ipso facto*, returned into itself again; for the distinction is distinction in itself, i.e. the distinction is directly distinguished merely from itself, and is thus the unity returned into itself. (pp. 766-7)

This is the background to the "thus three moments" (p. 767) we started by mentioning.

There are thus three moment to be distinguished: Essential Being, explicit Self-existence, which is the express otherness of essential Being, and for which (i.e. for the second) that Being is object; and Self-existence or self-knowledge in that other. The essential Being beholds only itself in its Self-existence, in its objective otherness. In thus emptying itself, in this kenosis, it is merely within itself: the independent Self-existence which excludes itself from essential Being is the knowledge of itself on the part of essential Being. It is the "Word", the Logos, which when spoken empties the speaker of himself, outwardizes him, and leaves him behind emptied, but is as immediately perceived, and only this act of self-perceiving himself is the actual existence of the "Word". Hence, then, the distinctions which are set up are just as immediately resolved as they are made, and are just as directly made as they are resolved, and the truth and the reality consist precisely in this self-closed circular process. (p. 767)

So we are now into Hegel's account, his vision, rather, from which the account proceeds, of the Trinity. Like any believer, also if he is a philosopher, academically in service or free indifferently, just as much as or more, ideally, if he is not one such, he is bound to try to understand what he confesses, if he does, or, *a fortiori*, if he does not. In fact, as Aristotle brings out, no man or woman *is* a philosopher, any more than they are a postman or postwoman, i.e. is not to be identified as such without the backing Hegel

supplies for the subsumption (*Aufhebung*) of attribution as such into statement of concrete identity. For absolute idealism, however, the further truth arises that no man or woman is essentially man or woman, i.e. human, that the true subject, and hence object (under consideration) is rather consciousness and ultimately self-consciousness, in Hegel's sense here, this being also precisely the import of Heidegger's *Letter on Humanism* (addressed to Sartre) rejecting this limitation upon philosophy. We see here that it is precisely the point, the soil, at which and in which Hegel's thought becomes Trinitarian. It may be connected with Incarnation in this way, namely that in declaring himself the Son of Man the divinely incarnate mediator, whereby, in that he truly mediates, he is truly divine, overcame the representation which was man's notion of himself by raising man up or taking "the manhood into God". Man as separate is there abolished as never having been, "cancelled for thought" or, it is the same, as only *having* been, rather as we now think of "Neanderthal man". Hegel's philosophy "Neanderthalises" abstracted humanism. We enter a sphere or period where, in Hegel's words, "time is no longer real for spirit", where any notion of events is transcended just as, in fact, by this transferred application of them, are "the natural relations of Father and Son".

Also notable here is his application of *kenosis*, (self-) emptying, not only to the *second* Trinitarian person's action in becoming man, the "canonical" usage as taken from the *Letter to the Philippians*, as it is also earlier on here (p. 755f., referring immediately to the birth of the Christ-child) but even or, it must then be, primarily, to the dynamics of the Trinitarian being itself, the pictured generation of the Word, the first *conception* after all, i.e. the more real and fundamental *has to* be pictured *in language*, should language become a factor, due to the finitude precisely of the latter. There is an intimate relation here to Aristotle's doctrine of the *phantasmata* as necessary to human knowledge, which Hegel does not seem especially to have thematised, or not when giving his own account of this necessity in the *Logic*.¹²³ This active generation, self-conceiving namely, is simultaneously a total emptying, more radical than mere "objectification", in and out of which, as actually constituting it eternally, the "Word" proceeds as being himself that proceeding. This Word thus becomes the causal analogy of all our words and for that matter, actions, *kenosis* itself above all. A whole system in potential lies dormant here, unless or except insofar as it is indeed Hegel's system itself. To this corresponds the picture given by George Macdonald of the crucifixion or sacrificial death of Christ (as Word), as God

¹²³ John of the Cross has a similar relation to Aristotle (perhaps closer, inasmuch as he does not claim to give a new "philosophy" as such), whom he regularly refers to or cites, in his "mystical theology".

imagining the eternal Trinitarian action “in the wild weather of his outer provinces”. There is great unity of vision here, which I do not doubt lies retrievably in Aquinas but which speculative method as at hand here seems very well suited to bring out.

In this way the last-quoted paragraph already begins to confirm our remark that Hegel’s Trinitarian thought is set forth in closer integration with his view of incarnation than was, for example, the Scholastic custom. In the previous Patristic period, existing alongside and not without interaction with the final period of “Academic” Greek pagan philosophy, bearing fruit, for example, in the writings of St. Maximus the Confessor, the two, Trinity and Incarnation, were perhaps a shade more often held closer together also in formal writing. So Hegel in that respect returns to that earlier way, writing there less “formally”, though not as making anything especially easier to grasp, the prime motivation for Scholastic method after all, as it was for the return to it promoted at Rome as promoted, in particular, by a group of influential Jesuits (through their journal), we noted, there in the 1860s or so, complaining that Ontologism, Liberalism and other varieties of Hegelianism lacked “theological” or other method or were “not safe for teaching”¹²⁴. I now have no alternative but to quote (from) Hegel’s succeeding paragraph, which I find in its close-knit maintenance of several themes not unlike the finale to Mozart’s “Jupiter” symphony, *mutatis mutandis!* We need to keep our ears, eyes and mind open:

This movement within itself expresses the absolute Being *qua* Spirit. Absolute Being, when not grasped as Spirit, is merely the abstract void, just as spirit which is not grasped as this process is merely an empty word. Since its moments are grasped *purely as* moments, they are notions in restless activity, which *are* merely in being inherently their own opposite, and in finding their rest in the whole. But the pictorial thought of the religious communion is not this notional thinking; it has the content without its necessity; and instead of the form of the notion it brings into the realm of pure consciousness the natural relations of Father and Son. Since it thus, even when thinking, proceeds by way of figurative ideas, absolute Being is indeed revealed to it, but the moments of this Being, owing to this [externally] synthetic pictorial thinking, partly fall of themselves apart from one another, so that they are not related to each other through their own very notion, while, partly again, this figurative thinking retreats from the pure object it deals with, and takes up a merely external relation towards it. The object is externally revealed to it from an

¹²⁴ This was the phrase used by The Holy Office (*sic*) in 1860 in its condemnation of several ontologist and related propositions close to or one with Hegel’s thought and writings as taken up by Gioberti and, indeed, the now sainted Rosmini, similar propositions from whose writings were again condemned in the 1880s.

alien source, and in this thought of Spirit it does not recognize its own self, does not recognize the nature of pure self-consciousness. In so far as the form of figurative thinking and that way of thinking by means of relationships derived from nature *have to be transcended*, and especially the method of taking the moments of the process, which Spirit is, as isolated immovable substances or subjects, instead of transient moments – this transcendence is to be looked at as a compulsion on the part of the notion, in the way we formerly pointed out when dealing with another aspect. But since it is only an instinct, it mistakes its own real character, rejects the content along with the form, and, what comes to the same thing, degrades the content into a historical imaginative idea and an heirloom handed down by tradition. In this way there is retained and preserved only what is purely external in belief, and the retention of it as something dead and devoid of knowledge; while the inner element in belief has passed away, because this would be the notion knowing itself as notion. (pp. 767-8, stress added)

We need to look back here to Hegel's "other aspect" (pages 763-4):

Pictorial presentation constitutes the characteristic form in which spirit is conscious of itself in this its religious communion. This form is not yet the self-consciousness of spirit which has reached its notion as notion; the mediating process is still incomplete (i.e. the mediation by Christ the Mediator). In this connection of being and thought, then, there is a defect; spiritual life is still cumbered with an unreconciled diremption into a "here" and a "beyond". The content is the true content; but all its moments, when placed in the element of mere imaginative presentation, have the character, not of being conceptually comprehended, but of appearing as completely independent aspects, externally related to one another.

Nor can the previous two paragraphs be ignored:

This individual human being, then, which Absolute Being is revealed to be, goes through in its own case as an individual the process found in sense-existence He is the *immediately* present God; in consequence, his being passes over into his *having been*. ... And it is because it (viz. consciousness) only *has* seen and heard Him, that it first becomes itself spiritual consciousness; or, in other words, He has now arisen in Spirit, as He formerly rose before consciousness as an object existing in the sphere of sense. (pp. 762-3, parenthesis added)

What further confirmation is needed of Hegel's acceptance of the Christian doctrines? The general controlling principle controlling this analysis was expressed in the immediately preceding paragraph:

The preliminary and similarly immediate form of this universality is, however,

not at once the form of thought itself, of the notion as notion; it is the universality of actual reality, it is the “allness”, the collective totality, of the selves, and is the elevation of existence into the sphere of figurative thought (*Vorstellung*); just as in general, to take a concrete example, the “this” of sense, when transcended, is first of all the “thing” of “perception”, and is not yet the “universal” of “understanding”.

Noteworthy here is the mention of “the universality of actual reality” as the “allness”, the collective totality, of the selves”, recalling directly McTaggart’s interpretation of Hegel’s Idea as a perfect unity of “the selves”, transcending even the Pauline organic unity, the image he uses at least, as “one body”. Note though that this for Hegel is “preliminary” and “immediate” as the final universal, not of the understanding merely but of reason, of that which “used to be called mysticism”, is not. This preliminary and immediate form is still “figurative”, trailing with it still the paraphernalia of our misperceived temporal existence. It is not yet “the form of thought itself”. I don’t recall offhand if McTaggart meets or recognises this objection as applying to his system. This, though, “the form of thought itself”, is the Idea, the Notion, the “true Being”, ultimately God himself (cf. the closing pages of the Greater Logic, Science of). By this there is no “inter-subjectivity”, no object, whether absolute or finite, having “something” in it “concealed from consciousness” (p. 759), though this certainly is also recognised in McTaggart. “For here, in its relation to consciousness the object is in the form of self; i.e. consciousness immediately knows itself there, or is manifest, revealed, to itself in the object”, for no doubt God “is the object” all the same, but not as placed athwart, so to say, in opposition to the or a “subject”. Rather, Hegel finds himself in complete unity with Augustine’s classic verdict: “There is one closer to me than I am to myself”, *intimior me mihi*. This is in fact precisely the Trinitarian situation, the “three moments”, where the distinctions are simultaneously “set up” and “resolved”, in a kind of “play”. They “lose themselves in the unity of the notion” (159 *Zus.*), three in one and one in three, as the hymn goes.

So it is then with the selves themselves: as perceived by one another so to say abstractly they belong still to the immediacy, the paraphernalia, of present or temporal life. The parallel to this in Aquinas is his statement, after conceding that the unity with and enjoyment of the Idea, which he identifies as God, has to be total, perfect or totally satisfying, while yet having to admit the “society of friends” as an element in *beatitudo*, that although friends, or rather the enjoyment of their society (this is ultimately a finite notion, he at least implicitly grants), cannot be essential or of the *esse* of perfect or eternal beatitude they yet belong to its *bene esse*, i.e. this society “of friends” is appropriate only. Similarly it is not more than appropriate for the believer

on earth to join the assembly as or at church once a week or so – many of the Desert Fathers disregarded or transcended such appropriateness (in a way an aesthetic consideration), while the Carthusian hermits do meet thus once a week or so. Of course this reduction to appropriateness at first clashes with our normal and best perceptions but only because we do not yet truly perceive what we yet see must follow, viz. that God is truly all things, *omnia*, for us, that, as it were conversely, it is truly and wholly God, and even thus only God (“Without me you can do nothing”) who came or comes close to us in our mothers who brought us forth, our wives with whom we are “one flesh”, our friends in whom we see our own minds reflected, the beggar at the gate, coming closer to the heart of things. And what, for that matter, do the saints do when we ask them to pray for us, unless from their being “in God”, just as we pray to God to be “in my heart and understanding”? That too is piecemeal representation. Within God is the proper place for saints, ourselves and, in Christ, the body, humanity as a whole. Meanwhile we need all our normal thoughts as we need sacraments and conversely. Hence it is often remarked how the deepest and most withdrawn mystics have been able to give the most effective advice to those actively involved in ephemeral responsibilities. We either observe that this is so or, more fundamentally, understand that this has to be so.

Working backwards in this way through Hegel’s pages seemed the best way to come into this thought-world so as to compare it with the same terrain as covered by Aquinas as we described and cited above.

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Whereas Aquinas introduces “notions in God” as (proper) ideas whereby we “know a divine person” Hegel has from start to finish a notion of “thought” as ultimate *nous* knowing reality as entirely within itself. St. Thomas has this conception of things, equally. But he transposes the original Aristotelian distinction between things more knowable to us and things more knowable in themselves (but not always or immediately to us too), quite clearly to that between natural and “revealed” knowledge, as taken on faith only. A great deal of St. Thomas’s efforts, however, are directed to showing the reasonableness of faith, as are Hegel’s, but with this difference, so far as it may go, that for Hegel it is axiomatic that if the doctrines of faith are reasonable then they must be, once suggested at least, by whatever agency, accessible to reason, since these two expressions mean the same, necessarily. One could make a case for Thomas as agreeing with this (what is theology unless attempting to show the reasonableness of faith, even if, negatively, only as not *unreasonable?*), though hampered in

admitting it by some attitudes and interpretations common in his day. “There are two systems in St. Thomas”, the reader may recall my citing earlier from Van Riet, whereas for Hegel the doctrine of the Trinity “belongs to the philosophical order” and it is our duty to unravel it therefore with respect to that. St. Thomas would rather “unravel” with respect to consistency with the body of “revealed” doctrine as a whole. This leads to self-contradictory notions of philosophy as the mere “handmaid”, *ancilla*, i.e. ancillary to faith, a dangerous half-truth. The position is, rather, that by such submission, as pupil to teacher, reason itself becomes teacher of the teachers, as was the destiny of St. Thomas himself. All of these expressions, however, are, as Hegel would say, many-sided and therefore not to be taken at immediate face-value or to the letter, as we say.

St. Thomas’s position, certainly congenial to faith, is, as we noted, that, given (ST Ia 32 *ad* 1) that our knowledge of God is derived from creation as from effect to cause we can only know “the unity of the essence” and not “the distinction of the persons”. Yet Hegel goes a long way at least to showing that such abstract knowledge of the essence, as it must eventually be understood to be, is not reasonable if refusing any possibility of distinction, whether or not or to what extent this negative truth can strike the mind “before” or only “after” the enlightenment of faith, since, anyhow, these temporal and immediately “natural” categories can have no bearing upon the matter under consideration. It is a simple fact that “pictorial presentation” is the form “in which spirit is conscious of itself in this its religious communion”. Hence it is natural to it to find the true “content” pictured in earlier belief such that, even, “orthodoxy stands or falls with the mystical interpretation of Scripture” (Newman) - and it is even natural to it to use representations, e.g. those of Father and Son, in its most “advanced” theological presentations, while it is precisely the preoccupation of those actually called mystics to get behind this, so to say. Nor is this incompatible with the insight, Pauline, that God the Father is that from whom “all fatherhood in heaven or earth is named”. Hence, again, he also says that this Father has given the Son, as he comes to be recognised to be, “the name which is above all names” (*supra omne nomen*), i.e. above any and every name (itself a finite category) and not simply above every *other* name.

For Hegel, anyhow, our knowledge of God is not so much derived from “creatures” as from the nature of thought itself as ultimately infinite and divine, as mentioned above here, something found in Augustine’s position that truth cannot be eradicated from the mind without self-contradiction, before we should even begin to consider Anselm’s specific development of this, considerations which need not be classified as “proofs” in the narrower sense, as St. Thomas pointed out with respect to Anselm’s position, that it

is not an “argument” precisely. That question itself does not admit of self-evident resolution here and now, however. What emerges is that it is legitimate for Hegel, even “a compulsion on the part of the Notion”, to try to get behind these naturally limited images of Father and Son in presentations of Trinitarian belief, as even behind the “threeness”, as St. Thomas himself appears to concede: *numeri non ponuntur in divinis*. So this brings us to a “consideration of the persons” in the “need to know God as Trinity” which St. Thomas states to be “necessary” even for understanding creation, after all (ST I, 32, 1 *ad* 3). We will see how Hegel approaches or comes upon this before simply retailing St. Thomas’s account of the persons, as distinct from that already given of divine personhood as such. Hegel in fact begins before or while still leaving open the conditions for conceiving of a divine or infinite person. Or, we might say, he assumes personality as essential to divinity from the first, as found in the history of religions, and finds his way *therefrom* to a Trinity of persons, if only because “God is the absolute person”, something that clearly accords with Aquinas’s presentation of the divine essence and nature immediately prior to the treatise on the Trinity, whether or not the word “*persona*” is to be found there.

The most striking consequence of Hegel’s approach is that just as, we found, the Incarnation is involved there in his picture of the emergence of Trinitarianism (of course this characterises Aquinas’s presentation too, but differently), so, yet more originally, we find essential involvement of the question, the dilemma, of Good and Evil, and in a perhaps quite astonishing way, evil being in some way the determining element, which, again, and inevitably, deeply affects the view then taken of our immediate or “unthinking” duo of Good and Evil in abstraction from divine things.

CHAPTER NINE

AQUINAS A CRYPTO-IDEALIST?

We touch here, though perhaps throughout the investigation, upon the relation of what are called the “mysteries of faith” to belief in miracles and whether such mysteries are reducible to claims as to the miraculous. Interpretation of the latter term is necessarily included in any worthwhile discussion of this question. The expression “*miranda Dei*”, for example, is routinely, but prejudicially, translated as “the wonderful *works* of God”, though the phrase says nothing about works, having just the neuter plural as meaning things to wonder at about God or similar. *Mirari*, for that matter, just means to look, though that can always have implied a certain wonder. *Zum Erstaunen bin ich da*, I am here, I, *Dasein*, exist to be astonished (literally, as a means to astonishment), wrote Goethe as poet, confirming Hegel’s account of Absolute Spirit as beginning with poetry, *poesis* or art generally. What is absolute cancels, wipes out or just subsumes, as itself self-standing, the relative, certainly in Hegel. It is thus in close relation to the miraculous in a shared discontinuity (with the finite). Yet it is not miraculous as being something “done”, as in an *event*; it is rather something ever unchanged yet able to be caught sight of by intellect, even as that for which intellect *ist da*, to take up Goethe’s line again.

The “fall” of man, upon which so much *sin*-theology depends, comes to be taken by Hegel as an account, inspired as being canonical (Karl Rahner’s understanding of “inspired” as acceptance by the Church rather than as acceptance by the Church as inspired over again), of the passage from innocence to ethico-moral maturity. The marvellous life of Christ as told in the Gospels comes to be displaced by Hegel from the centre and replaced there by the believing community or “mystical body” of Christ, which is theologically quite correct anyhow and puts Hegel in the company of Patristic and in-depth dogmatic theology, inclusive of sacramental theology and, finally, of mystical or ascetical theology as understood, so to say, canonically. To Biblical literalists, miscalled fundamentalists (they have no fundament), this can seem indistinguishable from Gnosticism or similar heterodoxies (the boundaries between true and false sapiential literature, i.e.

the gnostical, are not precisely determinable, however). Where it all ends, though, as they maybe foresee, is in a universalisation of the miraculous or, as it then becomes, the mysterious. Thus one way of understanding and appreciating the discoveries of “science” as they are produced in succession is to see them not as resolving the mystery but as deepening it, leading us “further in”. Everything is a miracle, i.e. is the miraculous and nothing more so than God himself, say Absolute Necessity itself, understood finally (finally?), Christians believe, as the Holy Trinity. This, say the poets, as for example Francis Thompson or Thomas Traherne, is what they contemplate in contemplating anything at all, is what they summon to the surface, as do the *Tondichter* Bach, Beethoven or Bruckner, or surely the impressionist or expressionist painters, art here having become, according to Hegel, more absolutely religious in its transcending of the specifically religious, seeing the world in a grain of sand – this is not “romanticism” in the sense of pretence or affectation (as some find convenient themselves to pretend, making of anti-romanticism precisely a negative romanticism only) but metaphysics, or “spirituality” simply, come down to earth, as Hegel speaks of God as “first” coming to himself in assuming an immediately sensitive nature. Regarding “first”, I recall here a breviary hymn speaking of Adam, man’s prototype, as having the face of Christ. So Christ, “last”, can be said, is said, to have the face of God, the first and the last.

It is open for all to note how such lines of speculative comparison find place for puzzles surrounding theories of evolution, creation in general, nature in separation from thought and so on. It can be argued that absolute idealism, or a transition to it, is the necessary prerequisite to theological or indeed scientific truth as such. Thus the late Axel Randrup (cf. his articles on the Internet), as an anthropologist, in Denmark, argued forcefully, in a series of scientific papers, for the necessity of acceptance of philosophical idealism as necessary for any would-be rational account of man’s origin and intellectual nature, such as the evolutionary one, if we are to avoid unresolvable self-contradiction in performance. Similarly, I would argue that Thomas Aquinas was a crypto- (or not so crypto) idealist and similarly for Aristotle, as Hegel has himself claimed to establish (cf. *Enc.* 142, *Zus.*: for Randrup, cf. the relevant papers published under his name on the Internet).

Some may fear that acceptance of this may involve the eclipse of religion and one can indeed ask if Christianity is indeed truly a religion and not rather “religion itself” (Henri de Lubac’s phrase) as fulfilling and hence absorbing, taking away and even “cancelling” finitely “abstract” religion (*aufhebend*). Here, though, there is no eclipse, while subsidiary benefits include a better appreciation on the part of Latin Christianity of the aesthetic

element finding its fulfilment in the original Greek, inclusive of Greco-Judaic, Christianity. The *Book of Psalms*, for instance, is a pre-Christian aesthetic marvel and this *is* its spirituality. The Hegelian premises stand firm here too. One finds oneself indeed in a system from which there is no way out, this having been a key feature of “ideology” as understood and praised by the early Marxists from Lenin up to Stalin, even though they themselves as individuals refused to submit to it, exploiting a ruined or mutilated form of it for totalist domination of “the masses”, as they would make people out to be, by means of this quality, in its purity no more than the precisely “logical”. Yet wherever one speaks of “a mad logic” logic is seen as deserted, able to be vanquished, however, though but for a season, by itself alone.

CHAPTER TEN

SPIRITUALISATION OF FAITH: BLESSEDNESS IN HEGEL

So, to the greater *spiritualisation* of faith there can be seen to appear an apparent whittling down of the miraculous character of belief in one department after another. I have been pointing out here that this charge is based upon misunderstanding, while even if the miraculous keeps an assured place in Christian tradition, as for example when miracles in reply to identifiable requests for them to be worked by the potentially sainted departed one are demanded. Yet even back in the fourteenth century, when no miracle was forthcoming for the canonisation of Aquinas, the Pope simply declared that every article of the *Summa* was a miracle, thus moving some way, in Hegelian terms, from religious to philosophical mode. Such a move, of course, is in no way peculiar to popes or similar, being rather part and parcel of the Pentecostal sending (*missio*) of the Spirit, this itself not so to say confined to the occurrences of that time and place, but rather eternal and transcendent of before and after, of time and place, again, precisely as spirit, *Geist*, of which it is not an individualised instance but rather contains all of these, as we understand more easily when we speak of *Geist*, in English, say, as Mind.

Nowadays, again, we seem to learn that the plagues of Egypt called down by Moses find natural explanations, even the deaths of the first-born, whose privilege it was to first partake of food offered, here corn, now, however, infected, it is claimed to have been found (I posit this just as an example of interpretative possibility in general), with a deadly virus bred in the climatically changed conditions resulting from the massive eruption of and/or on the island of Thera¹²⁵. This, true or false, in no way prevents or

¹²⁵ A variant on this is Rudolph Steiner's claim, in his fascinating essay on Moses, that the latter represented the first manifestation of our culture of rationality which succeeds upon the culture of ancient *clairvoyance*, which the invention of language only gradually replaced and in which the Egyptians were still immersed, This rationality, firstly engulfing Moses in the dialectics of I AM, enabled him, from the

hinders the tale, the account, of liberation under Moses being joyfully exulted in at the annual Easter Vigil liturgy, the conceptual mood being “what counts”. As Hegel once said, anyone whose religion depends upon the truth of isolated (that’s the word) historical events has not understood his or any religion. From which it would follow that the resurrection is not, i.e. not merely, a historical event or that it is not history which “guarantees” it but rather, as Hegel expounds it anyhow, the accuracy of true faith as an unalloyed virtue “This is the victory that overcomes the world, even your faith” (i.e. in me, these being, as first being “put” as, words of Christ¹²⁶). Nor is it given that we see history as a matter of phenomena merely, though as with all phenomena, i.e. as in phenomenology, e.g. Hegel’s, history, and the contingent in general, becomes fused with the necessary, analogous as a process or principle to the necessary picture-element in all linguistic representations, even those offered by Rudolf Carnap, say¹²⁷.

The resurrection is hence in principle unobservable, many theologians claim, but as of greater and more enduring truth (than “events”), this being

same cause, to calculate when and where the Red Sea or some inlet or other might be crossed, while the Egyptians perished hopelessly in their ignorant limitation within a past and dying culture.

¹²⁶ One has to understand that the science involved here cannot remain under the umbrella of empiricism, which as absolute idealism it transcends, That empirical science, like sense-experience itself, is not thus finitely confined, is open to a critique of experience, inasmuch as it *is* thought, intelligence, is, so to say, it too, infinitely open, has been becoming variously more apparent, whether in quantum physics, in the contradiction posed by evolutionary theories of intelligence itself, and so on. Absolute Idealism, that is to say, is not exclusively the posture of “religion” (the place where, all the same, many believers so to say immediately incline to reject it). Two questions remain here, though: 1. Was Moses a magician? 2. What is a magician? Is he master, “exploiter” as we say today, or interpreter (or both) of nature? The third question, which philosophy undertakes to supply: What is nature? Cf. Aristotle, *Physics*, Hegel, *Enc.* 245 ff. and similar works, ancient, modern or contemporary. Rhetorical attempts to bypass or negate this undertaking, in the hope of justifying one’s philosophical ignorance, such as the populist *Our Mathematical Universe* (Tegmark), by a Swedish “physicist” resident in USA, or the confident emissions of the late J.J.C. Smart (“scientific realism”) from “down under”, in the tradition, so to say, of Anthony Flew, do not and cannot succeed. Hence the more thoughtful of those thus inclined, at least, such as Quine or Wilfrid Sellars, remained, after the example of Wittgenstein, open to reconciliation with the wider perspective as final victory for the authenticity sought (cf., again, as regards Idealism, which he did not, however, sufficiently distinguish as “absolute”, the trans-anthropological papers of the Danish thinker, epitome of modesty, the late Axel Randrup). The charge of ignorance, however, is always relative.

¹²⁷ E.g. in *Meaning and Necessity*, Chicago 1947.

the point also, or one of them, of Hegel's claim that the events of the *vita Christi* have to be past or precisely not present, those, accordingly, observing them being just thereby not able to understand them (as we may do). The claim here, though, is indeed deep. Whereas the appearances of the risen Christ are precisely appearances, yet so is his eating of food, his being touched, by those who, again, "saw" him, however much credibility we grant or refuse to the narratives. Not only Hegel's idealism but faith itself seems here to refute or repel the too easy claim that seeing, *unless* "in our language", is "a success verb". That is, it was and is naïve to omit this qualification (upon success specifically), as if, say, McTaggart had never written. Or, if "the limits of my language are the limits of my world" then change the language: though of course we can only do this by appealing to the language we have in the first place. "Even if we have known Christ after the flesh we know him so no more", i.e. we know him, and yet it, viz. the knowing, or the community ("I in them and they in me"), *is* him, in another way. This reflects back on ourselves too, who "know not of what spirit you (i.e. we) are" or, in consequence, "know not what we shall be". By this Hegel's reference to the pastness of history as indeed "past" is confirmation of his viewing both it and nature, study of which nonetheless forms the second part of the tripartite system, as it truly is and not as it is not, as "the being of the phenomenon", in Sartre's phrase, as phenomenal or contingent. Hence a great deal of the final *Lectures on the Proofs of the Existence of God* is devoted to showing the necessity, no less, of the contingent as such.

Miracle, meanwhile, is thus an essentially transient and phenomenal category of what still demands explanation, in terms, namely, of the complete, ultimately *self*-explanation of what is the ultimate and unique *mirandum* rather than miracle, the "notion" that is so much more than any finite "concept", even though concepts, *Begriffe*, in Hegel's system finally become notions and *the* notion which becomes known through itself (cf. *innotescit* in Augustine) and, exclusively, *by* itself, thus *entailing* our necessary participation therein (if we want to know or "see" anything). It is in this sense that Aquinas claims, again, we have just seen, to find just five "notions" (Lat. *notiones*) in the orthodox understanding of the Trinity, i.e. from our side, viz. unbegottenness (lit. unbegettability), generation, "sonship" (*filiatio*), common spiration and procession. These are ways specifically of reason's getting at reality. The only question is, what distinct quality can they retain in the system of Absolute Idealism, where these ways of thinking are themselves one with whatever is thought about, i.e. this itself is ever the Idea, now the one "notion", knowing only itself. Hence "My God and all things" is the correct translation of the Franciscan *Deus meus et omnia*, as "My God and my all" is not. Here it is striking, indicative even, that in

classical Greek the neuter plural generally (here, exemplarily so to say, all things as “my God”, doubly singular), in subject place, takes a singular verb, as if, for example, we might say “All things is God” or, more shortly simply, “All is God” (which transposed to “God is all” makes a denial of pantheism, say, explicit).

We may indeed call it the great or unique miracle of *the final explanation*, as does Etienne Gilson. Still, the form of the word *miraculum*, as deriving from *mirari* or *mirandum*, suggests an original diminutive, compare *homunculus*, and is in fact a diminution of explanation, as being a transient step on the way to total explanation as total *mirandum*, the *mirandum* of absolute necessity which we may call joy, as norm of norms, as far as finite notions can go¹²⁸. Either way, pure being, Hegel remarks, is a kind of antithesis to thought unless and until it is finally identified as and with the Absolute Idea, i.e. with thought.

If the world is only a sum of incidents, it follows that it is also deciduous and phenomenal, in *esse* and *posse* null. That upward spring of the mind signifies, that the being which the world has is only a semblance, no real being, no absolute truth; it signifies that beyond and above that appearance, truth abides in God, so that true being is another name for God (i.e., by Hegel’s logic, is not being). The process of exaltation might thus appear to be transition and involve a means (Kant’s objection), but it is not a whit less true, that every trace of transition and means is absorbed; since the world, which might have seemed to be the means of reaching God, is explained to be a nullity. Unless the being of the world is nullified (as in absolute idealism), the *point d’appui* for the exaltation is lost. In this way the apparent means vanishes, and the process of derivation is cancelled in the very act by which it proceeds. (*Enc.* 50, parentheses added)

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Hegel certainly has a sense, gives an account, of “blessedness”, *Seligkeit*, at *Enc.* 159, for example, though he is discreet about it and free of “enthusiasm”. This is one of the most deep-rooted themes of the philosophical stance, of *absolute* spirit. It lies at the heart of the Socratic praise of the lover in *Phaedrus*, as of his contempt for the non-lover. It is rejected consistently by the school of thought typified by Douglas Hofstadter or Daniel Dennett in their most recent, highly readable books. A kind of cult of sadness comes to

¹²⁸ *Wenn auch die Seligkeitshoffnung das sittliche Streben beflügelt, so ist dies doch kein utilitaristischer Eudämonismus. Denn die Seligkeit, wie sie Thomas als Endziel auffasst, ist zugleich höchste Entfaltung der Sittlichkeit.* (M. Grabmann, *Thomas von Aquin*, Munich 1959, p. 159).

the fore there, having an appearance of the rich man's self-indulgence, amid his enjoyment of great, the greatest, music and so on. The way that a persuasive scientism is used to inculcate this sadness seems almost incredibly blind or one-sided. It is a question of what kinds of arguments are to count. Hofstaedter pins his anti-faith on quantum mechanics, in his investigation into the "I" of self-consciousness, though nothing is said as to the out and out mystical ideas of Erwin Schrödinger on this subject. Whatever we uncover about the order in the world, its direction, is just that, order. But then you have to ask, whence this order, whence anything? The classical and only answer is intelligence. If for example there should be time, and space, along with a mechanism of development, of rational order working itself out, as the phrase, somewhat analytic or empty, "survival of the fittest", tries to capture, then there we have intelligence, called God as much as it can be called anything but itself. Thus in Hegel the purely contingent itself is brought under the divine concept, the "plan", so to say, though this is a picture only. The plan must be God himself, the being which, again, is the Idea, absolutely, thinking only itself, in utter blessedness of course or, rather, a source transcending even this, not descending into "sadness". There is really no special angle on "the brain" in this or possible replies to this. Can there be thought without "grey matter", some ask, when they should rather ask: can there be thought with it? Will it not get in the way, as *paremphenomenon*¹²⁹, of the emergence of any truth, even the truth of seductive denial? Seductive, insofar as this appears as a kind of rich man's diversion, again, from the real questions. "Rejoice, the Lord is King! Rejoice again, I say rejoice" (*Book of Psalms*). "Don't worry! Be happy!" (popular song).

Well, but not worrying may be bigger than some religious commitment or other, or even just that blessedness we mentioned. Or blessedness itself, rather, would transcend the worshipping, even the "euphoric" moment, if we are wanting to get away from the phenomenal. Blessedness is not the orthodox "believer's" property, nor is it orthodox to say so. The example of McTaggart comes to mind. Could this be the end-state of the movement of ecumenism which the Church in Council endorsed over half a century ago now? If, as is often said, we know nothing of blessedness, of heaven, may "no sooner know it than enjoy it" (Hobbes), then who is to say what form it takes, or for whom? Let the Dennetts and Hofstaedters and other deniers pursue their way as we wish them prosperity and *eudaimonia* and let us both, all, compare notes as we say. "And then shall we ever be with the Lord", whom, after all, no one in heaven will presume to name or otherwise

¹²⁹ Cf. Aristotle, *De anima*.

objectify. If you can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear then that may be no fault in the sow or its ear. Different vessels have different uses. The sense of being all in all, said of God, has to be an infinite one, not *con-* or *de-*finable. In this way modern atheism, as it is called, is one clear development from Christian belief precisely (i.e. no stance can be infinitely "radical"), though by no means an especially privileged one, to "put it mildly", regarded after all, this religion of spirit, even in its Israelite beginnings, as an atheism by the surrounding idolaters. Thus we are all of us idol-smashers but often persecutors into the bargain, regrettably, though here distinctions have to be made, as all "statesmen" know. Did Augustine become a persecutor in invoking state power against the Donatists, or the modern state in restricting the liberty of those judged probable bearers of the corona or any other virus? Different times have felt different necessities.

Here, then, we make a distinction between faith as a virtue and being right. Faith is a virtue, the first of the three traditionally called theological, of faith, hope and love. Of these also, if Aquinas be found consistent, his doctrine must hold that you can't have any one of them in perfection without all the others, love in particular, a doctrine Peter Geach declared "monstrous", giving the example of the habitual drunkard who possessed obvious charity¹³⁰. He either did not notice or would not concede that the material behaviour concerned can never be straight-off identical with the formality of virtue, defined always as reasonableness in this or that "matter", something that gets particularly ignored in regard to the virtue of chastity or temperance generally, again, in regard to that unity, whereby, furthermore, all virtue or the virtues are absorbed, taken up, cancelled, *aufgehoben* in an all-embracing love. Thus you can have a temperate drunkard, a loving warrior, etc. "Judge not!" Yet Geach recognises this distinction in his account of faith itself, which, precisely as a virtue, he defines or, better, describes (again, why doesn't he, or we, define?) as hanging on to an espoused view when faced with strong temptation or "cause" to abandon it, keeping faith as we say. In this precise sense of all-embracing love or *Aufgehobenheit* a modern saint and contemplative (aren't they all?) declared, "I have no virtues"¹³¹. This Hegelian view, in turn, reflects back upon the notion, or slogan as it becomes in Hegel, of "being right". "Judge not". In no lesser sense can "the world" be set by the Idea to be "proved wrong". "Judge not", then, is the behaviour, the virtue, entailed by this omnicomprehensive if negative juristic prospect, in, clearly again, a transformed use of the ever finite term. "One should be silent", enjoins the irritable

¹³⁰ P.T. Geach, *The Virtues*, Cambridge University Press, 1977.

¹³¹ St. Thérèse Martin "of Lisieux", 1873-1897.

genius of a once contemporary philosophy, thereby breaking his own maxim. We ourselves, then, in the writing of this book, are attempting to keep faith with this virtue of faith which is yet, after all, not a virtue, except in “concrete identity” with all the others and the Idea (of them or of anything, but supremely of itself) supremely. Thus, good and evil on their own, we will find, in Hegel fall away, though he seems to imply (it cannot be a mere loss of “nerve”, context shows) it is yet impossible to *say* this. Everywhere, then, the letter, taken abstractly, kills, the spirit “gives life”. Here, furthermore, one has precisely the absorption of the abstract intellectual virtue of *scientia* into the concrete unity of *sapientia*, the higher or prime intellectual virtue. Which again implies that the professional philosopher (thus shown to be a “contradiction in terms”) must oversee, but without overlooking, the finite requirements of his employment. Employers of the servants of Spirit, take note (this includes bishops), keep faith with such servants and honour them, also with their *honorarium*, while leaving them their freedom. You are not managing a mining or similar “material” enterprise but serving a community that ought to be busy with the “spiritualisation of faith”, as we began by saying. If “whatever is not of faith is sin” it follows that faith’s reach, if we speak of the virtue, is as wide as that of *Geist* itself, of spirit, “blowing where it will” and how it will.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

SPIRIT, SELF, GOD AND EVIL

How exactly do we get back, then, these things supposed, to Hegel on the Trinity and further back therefrom to Thomas Aquinas's classic account? Spirit, Hegel says, "is the form of simple unity, which, on that account, is just as essentially a process of becoming something else" (Baillie, p. 769). This is applied here especially to what might seem its opposite, "the form of essential Being", the element in which "the" Absolute Spirit, "*is pictured*", I stress, citing Hegel however, the picturing being on the side of "pure essential Being" only, as "merely a moment in the life of Spirit". Spirit itself has, Hegel would say, "sunk" it, viz. such Being, thereby "to the level of a mere element (in which Spirit lives)". The bias is "defective as regards form". Accordingly, to cite it again,

Spirit, in the element of essential Being, is the form of simple unity which, on that account, is just as essentially a process of becoming something else. Or, what is the same thing, the relation of the eternal Being to its self-existence (its subjective existence for Itself), is that of pure thought, an immediately simple relation.

Here the Trinity finds its first approach in a move of thought having some, but only some, relation to the Neoplatonic moment (as also to the Cartesian) of philosophy's history as a historical phenomenon. Being is itself "contained" within thinking, which, *ipso facto*, cannot, in the same respect, itself be contained within being. This is the renunciation of the world, seeing as Existence is a mere moment of thought, as become a finitely passing category, no more. It is thus a renunciation enjoined upon us all by him who "overcame" it, i.e. the world, in and by his own claim. It is tied, that is, to the Incarnation (of God, over again).

In this simple beholding of itself in the Other, otherness therefore is not as such set up independently; it is distinction in the way of distinction – a recognition of Love, where lover and beloved are by their very nature not opposed to each other at all. (*eodem loco*)

The “by their very nature” is a very strong initial warning against any kind of “tritheism”. Hegel links it here in the first instance to virtue, i.e. action, here of love, of itself or as it were *antecedently* requiring inward distinction of self and other. This is, so to say, ultra-orthodox, where the *ultra* is held within as superlatively perfecting its object (of reference). The “inner” distinction might be linked with “inner design”, as found in his thought as taking its rise, he tells us, from Kant. We might also be speaking of *self*-distinction, self-design, though without necessary or explicit recall of the *causa sui*.

Spirit, which is expressed in the element of pre thought (i.e. no longer “in” that, what he calls “the element”, of “pure essential Being”), is essentially just this: not to be merely *in* that element, but to be *concrete, actual*; for otherness Itself, i.e. cancelling and superseding its own pure thought-constituted notion, lies in the very notion of Spirit.

One can scarcely resist the sense of a momentous discovery being made, as if for the first time. “Behold, I make all things new”, even this. Otherness, to be for Otherness itself, “lies in the very notion of Spirit”. We might recall. “If God is for us, what can be against us?” Is Hegel discovering an unguessed logic beneath as underlying the sacred writings?

“The element of pure thought, because it is an abstract element, is itself rather the opposite of its own simplicity, and hence passes over into the proper element of imagination” – he might as well be describing the genesis of the fables of Narnia in the mind of their author, as equally or more immediately here of the sacred writings themselves. Yet the abstraction of pure thought does not simply *rebel* against its own abstractness. It is just this quality, of abstractness, Hegel seems to be saying, which drives it into self-opposition, as it were naturally. This self-opposition, though, “is the proper element of imagination”. Here “the moments of the pure notion at once acquire a substantial existence in opposition to each other and are subjects as well”. Thus or in similar manner he explains also the (logico-metaphysical) genesis of Nature.

Here we might expect him to, so to say, “come back” to add that we must therefore be able to restrain imagination by thought, to keep to the underlying and constitutive *unity*. He does not do this. Instead he has them, the moments, sees them, “break away from one another and stand confronting each other”, two moments, say, not existing “in indifference towards each other, merely for a third”. That is, so to say, a result of something anterior in or for thought. There is no intention here of supposing a cosmic or Titanic history in the mythological manner, though Hegel is taking and wants to

take note of whatever such stories represented. So, rather, what “was”, so to say, “merely eternal, or abstract Spirit”, note the “merely”, “becomes an other to itself: it “enters *immediate* existence” (stress original) or, to suppose an equivalence here, “it creates a World” (p. 769). As in Scripture, Hegel links God’s own being with this “relation”, a “relation” which confirms our earlier discussion of the miraculous as the worldly everyday, properly understood, the finding of the long-sought treasure in one’s own back-garden.

This “Creation” is the word which pictorial thought uses to convey the notion itself in its absolute movement; or to express the fact that the simple which has been expressed as absolute, or pure thought, just because it is abstract, is really the negative, and hence opposed to itself, *the other* of itself; or because, to state the same in yet another way, what is put forward as essential Being is simple immediacy, bare existence, but *qua* immediacy or existence, is without Self, and, lacking this inwardness, is passive, or exists *for* another. This existence for another is at the same time a world. Spirit, in the character of existing for another, is the undisturbed separate subsistence of those moments formerly enclosed within pure thought, is, therefore, the dissolution of their simple universality, and their dispersion into their own particularity. (pp. 769-770)

Pure thought, that is, is itself the other of itself, is not itself. i.e. as abstract. The real “pure thought” is not this essential Being, i.e. not, in the first place, “bare existence without Self”. It is thus as passive existence “for” an other, that it is World, Spirit in alienation, each moment existing separately as if *before* being thought of, it being then “our affair” to pound it into one. So it, the real pure thought, along with “nature”, is a kind of dissolution, always, in every particular, *determinata ad unum*, whereas reason in its exercise must be and is *ad opposita*, in and with every and any one of its considerations.

The world, however, is not merely Spirit thus thrown out and dispersed into the plenitude of existence and the external order imposed upon it; for since Spirit is essentially the simple Self, this self is likewise present therein. The world is objectively existent spirit, which is *individual* self, that has consciousness and distinguishes itself as other, as world, from itself. In the way this individual self is thus immediately established at first, it is not yet conscious of being Spirit; it thus does not exist as Spirit; it may be called innocent, but not strictly “good”. (p. 770)

Spirit distinguishes itself as world from itself and is thus consciousness of it as itself and this is Spirit. By this the picture of a world existing, being there, over a long but finite time-period before some consciousness or other

appears on it is just that, appearance. Consciousness as such, however, or in its first appearing, it too, is “not strictly ‘good’”, is innocent, though good as being, as we say of an agreeable dog or cat. Hegel does not much quarrel with the Kantian presentation of moral goodness as *sui generis* among good things. Or, at least as first appears, he does not consider the metaphysics of will specifically, which “determines the use to which everything is put” (Aquinas), as of much import here. For Aquinas this so-called honourable good is only called good at all as being the behaviour that *leads to* the one and only true good which is God. “Why do you call me good? There is none good but God.” Anything else one might well call “moralolatry”, priggishness even, this cult of virtue for virtue’s sake, unless one connects it with an aesthetic (of participation in what is absolute), with the beautiful action, *to kalon*, that *leads to* the Absolute, at least in one of its elements, say obedience or love, *as already possessing it* and thus winning forgiveness, acceptance, for the whole.

God or not, though, Hegel here introduces a third active factor, along with absolute and finite, or God and world, into the Trinitarian soil, we shall now find, while we wonder in what sense God, Spirit, should care about right or good conduct on our part or, it will seem, cosmically. Hegel continues:

In order that it may be self and Spirit, it (sc. this individual self) has first to become objectively an other to itself, in the same way that the Eternal Being establishes itself as the process of being self-identical in its otherness. Since this spirit is determined as yet only as immediately existing or dispersed into the diverse multiplicity of its conscious life, its becoming “other” means that knowledge concentrates itself upon itself. Immediate existence turns into thought, or merely sense-consciousness turns round into consciousness of thought; and moreover, because that thought has come from immediacy or is conditioned thought, it is not pure knowledge, but thought which contains otherness, and is, thus, the self-opposed thought of good and evil. (p. 770)

It is noteworthy here that Hegel’s thought-trajectory here is discovered by the Thomist thinker, Leo Elders, without any reference, and whether or not conscious at the time of these Hegelian passages, as being exactly the explanation of “the origin of negation” as found in St. Thomas Aquinas at just this development of thought when engaged purely, that is metaphysically, upon the successive unfolding, in and for itself, of the “transcendental predicates” and that in a strict order of succession, though its presentation can vary, of, for example, being, one, true, good, other, something, or, more shortly, being, true, good, something. Thus Being (*ens*) is, for Thomas, alone the true *esse* or simple actuality, since it is just Being over again, but as presented to intellect and will respectively, which is True and Good. These, therefore, are mere *entia rationis*, are reason making further explicit

precisely Being over again.¹³² Thus, or then, in this second, simpler list Thomas Aquinas presents as the *fourth* transcendental concept “something (or other)”, i.e. *aliquid*, which he derives, it seems rightly, from *aliud quid*, i.e. he derives something, viz. the finite being (and hence beings) from *otherness*. And this, Elders claims (it is his title), is “the origin of negation”, precisely as explained by Hegel here. “*Par consequent, l'idée de non-être, comme deuxième idée de l'intellect, est le concept de l'Autre*”¹³³. Under negation, of course, is included the idea of evil, and it is precisely this path that is followed by Hegel here, in an apparently independent thought-trajectory, as he passes naturally from consideration of God, of Trinity, to the creation of “the rational creature” (Kant’s phrase) specifically and its “fall”, which he explains as advance from mere innocence as, again he passes directly into the dialectic of Good and Evil.

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Interpretations vary here, however, some wanting to make out that Hegel is quite simply preparing the Feuerbachian path of seeing Absolute Spirit as a projection of finite self-consciousness, though such a thing as finite self-consciousness, as self-consciousness as defined or worked out by Hegel, is not strictly thinkable, mind knowing itself (only). But for this in turn to go through the Idea has to have been understood as the true being, *das wahre Seiende*, the final and total thrust of Hegel’s system of logic. Implied in turn by this is the overturning of the cause-effect paradigm, whereby, in this overturning, the effect effects the cause in very truth. By this Hegel may be thought to have his cake and eat it, though this homely proverb expresses precisely the meaning of reconciliation, which is Hegel’s project of knowing all things in one or absolutely. Included of necessity in the project is his account of “I” as universal of universals, enclosing all scientific or other objectivity within itself. This Cartesian moment comes down to the Aristotelian moment of thought thinking itself only. Included within this, however, is the consequence that both consciousness and self-consciousness,

¹³² It is noteworthy, though, that Hegel, working backwards as going forward, in circular fashion, from simple being through first “cognition proper” and then, as superior, volition or will, sc. love (as a superior cognition specifically), last category before the Absolute Idea, effectively reverses the Thomistic order, whether or not he knew of it, which places intellect first or closest to being (Aquinas, *Quaestiones Disputatae: De potentia*, VII).

¹³³ Cf., again, Leo Elders SVD, *Autour de Saint Thomas d’Aquin*, Tome 1, FAC éditions, Paris, 1987, “Le premier principe de la vie intellectuelle”, pp. 187-207 (*cit.* p. 195).

as concepts, are, in a measure, finite representations, which leaves us free to speculate on the poverty or richness of purely spiritual (*geistlich*) experience as such, i.e. how far or whether or not it is experience. Involved as prerequisite, and Hegel puts himself in line with Leibniz rather than Spinoza here, is identity of personal knowledge with God's. Here Hegel offers a philosophy of mediation, of the need for one personal mediator identifiable, while human, as a divine person and thus eliciting, finally, Trinitarianism as a philosophical truth, the only rational notion of God, however first proposed, as he puts it.

For further elucidation of this one cannot ignore the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, supplemented by what we have of the *Lectures on the Proofs of the Existence of God*. Meanwhile the account gets greater strength if we continue the project of elucidating the earlier *Phenomenology of Mind*, just because it is a phenomenology and as such is not so much earlier, an irrelevant consideration, as it is the first part of the system as it presents itself to us. After that we shall return to St. Thomas's account of the three persons for both comparison and a richer or more explicit elucidation as required for our time now, writing being an inescapably finite enterprise, hence "not pure knowledge, but thought which contains otherness and is, thus, the self-opposed thought of good and evil", as we have just quoted (from Baillie, p. 770).

Here, with evil, Hegel introduces in outline the tale, elaborated elsewhere as "the fall of man", of the entry, which he regards rather as inevitable presence (there cannot be a fall from God, he insists), of death and error (Greek *hamartia*, missing the mark or target, also the word used for "sin") into the otherwise spotless world, man being pictured, by traditional theology (following literally the Mosaic narration of the book *Genesis*) as originally endowed with "preternatural gifts" of immortality, knowledge, freedom from subjection to passion (*concupiscentia*) and so on. One can legitimately wonder if this latter doctrine is not destined to go the way of the recently downgraded, by the relevant authorities, "limbo" (into what has become thus a kind of limbo over again of dogmatic speculation). Alternatively this, these lost gifts, might come to be seen and treated much as Hegel treats other doctrines first put forward pictorially or as a history, for example, this being precisely how we may view the Incarnation of God itself, in the one who "has been" as compared with the eternal and "mystical" Body of Christ which we all *are*, not by a reduction of God to man but conversely and, after all, eternally as "taken into God" (the "Athanasian" account reflected in liturgy, e.g. the Offertory prayers of the Latin Mass over

the water and the wine, q.v.).¹³⁴ Eternity cannot, as such, be begun in time, any more than can thought in general as if not “containing otherness and hence evil”, i.e. neither, as noted and quoted above. This is the problem about speaking of the evil of or in the finite as such, inasmuch as it is “other than” or not God, but which Hegel finds, giving his reasons, necessary. The notion of evil, we need, incidentally, to be aware, as considered philosophically here, is in a certain sense neutral or, as Hegel himself exclaims, “just not evil”, rather as it was not for Milton’s Satan as exclaiming: “Evil be thou my good” (though what else could he have said, given, say, Aquinas’s view that “*malum est semper in subjecto*”, *sc. in subjecto bono?*). Hence, evil is “sham-being”, Hegel judges and says, in perfect accord with the *privatio boni* of Aquinas. Privation is something which is not, just as such, therefore, simply analogous to the merely or neutrally contingent necessary to all finitude but with which it is yet, as otherness, bound up and that, so to say, logically, however we explain its origin and “nature”.

Given these views I want to maintain that thought cannot do other than adopt the way of Absolute Idealism, which I therefore argue to have been endemic, though in some measure hidden, not only to Aristotle, as Hegel argues, but to the greatest minds of Christendom, of Christianity’s history. Both Christian Neoplatonism and Christian Aristotelianism reflect this. It is the lingering apocalyptic and hence limitedly Judaistic (as distinct from Judaic) outlook as to irruptions of eternity into time, rather than the absorption of time (and space) conceptually into eternity, *Aufhebung*, as entailed by the identity of part and whole in general and as regards the Concept, the Idea, in particular (cf. *Enc.* 160f.), that requires this persistent hostility to idealism in the religious representation of things. Nor is this hostility entailed when the risen Christ shall have said “I will see you again”, though this can be claimed contradicted by that other word, “Lo, I am with you always”, though there too there is added “until the end of time” or “of the age” or even “of the world”. For thought, anyhow, this end is as such *ever* realised, just as “in the midst of life we are in death” (*media vitae in morte sumus*, beautifully set to music, the chant, in the Latin office of Lenten Compline). So the “always”there, as meaning “at all times”, itself

¹³⁴ Recall the quote from Scotus cited previously here, concerning the divine desire for the *closest possible union* with man (our own desire for God being no other, hence the fear of loss), irrespective of any kind of “fall”. The concept itself of praeternatural gifts here seems elicited by the truth that “what can err sometimes does” (Aquinas), this applying precisely to the finite as such, that which the infinite, infinite love, “must” seek.

encloses a cancelling of time, faith once again confirming McTaggart's in form only atheistic intuitions.

So we come to evil and man's losing "the form of harmonious unity with himself" as part, specifically, of the Hegelian account precisely *of the Trinity*, I want to maintain here.

Since this self-concentration on the part of the existent consciousness has straightway the character of becoming discordant with itself, Evil appears as the first actual expression of the self-concentrated consciousness. (p. 771)

Surely there is an anticipation of Freud here, insofar, at least, as we discuss evil's *appearance* in relation to "growing up", individually or as "rational creature" generally. Thus the absolute dualism of good and evil is straightaway undermined or relativised within the larger alternative harmony and discord. "Evil appears as the first actual expression of the self-concentrated consciousness." One wonders how much this can explain. What or whence is such self-concentration or how does it differ, even in a child, from mere childishness? A popular fantasy represents it as a singing out of tune, on the part of Satan, or is that not rather the mere sign of it, or do sign and thing at all differ at this primeval level, of the prime evil, and if not then how or why not? Or why is this consciousness "essentially and merely evil" because the opposition "is not yet broken down"? Or how are good and evil utterly opposed, given that "evil is always in a (good) subject" (Aquinas), such as is even a fallen angel naturally or "physically" considered. Or is this just what Hegel is trying to get beyond? Elsewhere in his work sheer evil appears as identical with just finitude rather, as we have noted. The clue to this follows immediately, thus:

At the same time, however, owing to just this very opposition, there is present also the good consciousness opposing the one that is evil, and again their relation to each other. In so far as immediate existence turns round into thought, and self-concentration is partly itself thought, while partly again the transition to otherness on the part of the inner self (*Wesen*), is thereby more precisely determined, - the fact of becoming evil can be removed further backwards away out of the actually existing world and transferred to the very earliest realms of thought. (p. 771)

The clue is mention of "the transition to otherness", since this is precisely the originating necessity of Trinity, we have found, namely that what is infinite has to *include its other* as part of or, rather, as one with itself (while as other than infinite it will have to be finite). Evil then is here put as a candidate for this otherness in this other, whoever or whatever, as

necessarily personal (it will be seen), he or she has to be. “Male and female created he them.”

It may thus be said that it was the very first-born Son of Light [Lucifer] who, by becoming self-concentrated, fell, but that in his place another was at once created. Such a form of expression as “fallen”, belonging merely to figurative thought, and not to the notion, just like the term “Son”, either (we may say) transmutes and lowers the moments of the notion to the level of imaginative thought, or transfers pictures into the realm of thought,

Hegel appears to mean that this does not matter much (suddenly?), once we understand the intention. But “another was at once created” should not be misunderstood or taken out of context. What is being thought, “imagined”, is a kind of frozen moment or perpetual movement (of begetting) without change, the begetter being nothing other than this “for ever and ever”. We have ideal movement without instability or change, otherness thus coinciding with sameness. In this sense the Son is not just a or the son, but the entire Word or thought, rather, the purging of the evil also, it follows multifariously, being not separable from this conception itself, which Hegel thus puts as a so to say negative response to evil and that essentially.

Regarding the Son, “Jesus the God-man” (yet what *is* man but that? There is of course an answer, in terms of participative identity):

Thus he reveals “that the human, the finite, frailty, weakness, the negative, is itself a divine moment, is in God himself; that otherness or Other-being, the finite, the negative, is not outside of God, and that in its character as otherness it does not hinder unity with God.” (LPR III, pp. 93-94). No doubt he did not take evil upon himself which is attachment to finitude, but one understands that the negation of the eternal Idea can only manifest itself as natural death and cannot follow its course to the voluntary distancing of itself from the Father.¹³⁵

Does one thus understand though, in view of the passage from the *Phenomenology*, cited above? Or does the peculiar horror, or horribleness of the details of that death, of one “who was *made sin* (a curse even) for us” make up, so to say, for the lack of evil, the lack of lack, in the Son? A clue here, an important ingredient, is the anterior identification, in some measure at least, though it seems more radical than that, of evil with the finite as such, again. The Son actually or in that moment “became a curse”, St. Paul accordingly seems to say. But it was precisely a “moment”, of the otherness that is in God, necessarily. Hegel will indeed say, does say, that there is evil

¹³⁵ Van Riet, *op. cit.* p. 82.

in God, and there we have to recall what he says about evil and how it can be that in certain circumstances “evil is just not evil” and, further, that we have to maintain both positions at once and with equal obstinacy. In his logical system, therefore, the True and the Good finally give place to Being as the Idea, *called* the “true” there nonetheless. This corresponds to truth and goodness, in Aquinas, being rated¹³⁶, unlike Being (all three are “transcendental predicates”), as mere *entia rationis*, beings (over again) “of reason”¹³⁷ only, as discussed above here.

Precisely consequent upon this, in Hegel’s account of religion and of absolute religion in particular (actually a contradiction in terms, as he is aware), we enter into “The Kingdom of the Spirit”, without, however, as McTaggart interpreted Hegel, negating the first two “kingdoms”. This language may recall, be a reminiscence of, even, the Kantian Kingdom of Ends.

So we are presented here with a sort of divine thought-process, very much of the same ilk, with difference, though even the different sides are, again, the same side, as that presented in *The Science of Logic* too as the thought, the mind, of mind itself, of God himself, of Spirit. The Trinity, then, is discovered here in the life and self-chosen fate, a choice motivated by eternal love, of God incarnate, who yet is not best called the God-man, as if some centaur-like oddity, but rather man or “son of man” as man in perfect meaning and idea or, in Hegel’s words, as God himself come to perfection, of course not in temporal series merely, not merely as the representation that this as such constitutes, its *being as a phenomenon*, so to say, only¹³⁸, but

¹³⁶ Aquinas, *QD de potentia*, VII.

¹³⁷ Cp. our article “*Ens rationis* II: Medieval Theories”, in Smith & Burkhardt, *Dictionary of Metaphysics and Ontology*, Munich 1991, Vol. 1.

¹³⁸ Sartre, in *Being and Nothing*, seems to make too much of this as a seeming paradox, which is all that it is. Language, namely, as belonging to no language for man other than that of alienation (“each thing is itself and not another thing”), is, in its “bewitchment” of intelligence, a product of nature and nature’s “canonisation” of otherness. It can generate nothing more, can only, in Herbert McCabe’s phrase, speaking of analogy, “try to mean” (as he only tries in saying just that). One cannot just dismiss this, the nervous strictness of salaried professors, or our own as rated sane members of society, notwithstanding. Language finds itself, quite simply, involved, *by* Thought, in a progressive putting of itself “out of court”. “We know most about God when we know that we know nothing”. Aquinas does not proceed from this insight to set fire to the “straw” of his voluminous writings, while Wittgenstein too speaks of “what we cannot speak”, reserving “silence” for another day. So we all beat upon “the cloud of unknowing”, only some acknowledging this, however. Here Hegel offers a philosophy of faith as also of the necessity of the contingent, however, within the total infinite scheme, still more within our own finite

as self-revealed, as “revelation itself” in its full reality, the fulfilled destiny of every concept, as we might say, and, above all, of any and every possible individual, as being the “place”, there on the Cross in robes of glory, as it is represented, of individuality itself or “the body of Christ”. No individual, that is, comes to fulfilment as one with the Idea without or apart from this revelation, this destiny, this act of saving love, as it is put in picture, picture, as Hegel says, “transferred into the realm of thought”, called in religion heavenly glory. We might ask: is then the past as past itself picture, according to Hegel’s account thereof? There seems some good reason at least for thinking so.

This account ought now, or further, to be brought into relation with the traditional philosophical argument “from natural desire”, for the absolute and infinite namely, as contained within intellectual nature. This argument causes trouble not only on the side of scepticism but also on the side of theologians who feel bound to account for what they emphasise as a *grace*, participation in the divine nature namely, as transcending therefore, precisely if or as maintained as grace specifically, any possible natural desire. Recent approaches to this, common to sceptic and theologian, have begun to speak of man as that being who naturally desires and seeks, as he is hence born to do, self-transcendence or the *supra* natural, as we find this, for example, represented in Hegel’s pages, where he flatly states that it is “our affair” to transcend (our) nature, but “by nature over again”, this must mean. For implicit is that the conscious situation of the Christian is “already” there, implicitly, in spiritual nature as such. Nor does this contain any necessary denial of dependence upon divine help, however close in immanence (closer than close, however, necessarily again) or far removed in transcendence this divine or absolute must be, in a so to say “natural” transcendence, from human nature itself. For Hegel, therefore, man without God is an abstraction as is also God without man, of whom he speaks as “first” coming to his own perfection in the assumption of sensitive nature. This is anyhow implicit in the truth of necessary divine immutability, or of a movement, a perpetual *act* (and not merely action) including or implying just this, as Duns Scotus had effectively insisted against the *felix culpa*

scheme of the infinite. For this is the total subjectivity of self-consciousness itself becoming the “out and out” Object, as he says of God, simultaneously, i.e. inseparably, sublating this duo, as far, again, as language is concerned, there being in truth but one Word, the necessary “moment of the moments”, of momentariness, itself though, Himself, the very paradigm of any possible “creation”, necessary, however, i.e. rather, to any possible infinity as perpetually generating, *diffusivum sui* indeed and not exclusively as *bonum* but as Idea, which is “the true being”, the first *Science of Logic* concludes in affirming.

moment of previous theology, or as reinterpreting “it”, viz. the *culpa*, merely. Of course God does not “come to” anything except in our own developing conception, which history reveals or reflects indifferently, while the only sacrifice we can make for being what we are, finitely culpable, is literal self-denial, acme of self-consciousness, Hegel concludes. It is the nerve of his thought as “ruin of the individual”, the nerve of “science” itself even, or in a subsidiary way, this being the connection, he further implies, between Christian religion, as historical phenomenon initially, and the rise, in constant progress, of science itself, in transcendence of any possible “Greek” beginnings (the “thousands of years” he speaks of: cf. *Enc. !63 Zus.*). How, further, are we to think this or these necessary requirements? Hegel, for the moment, continues here, amazingly maybe, as in relation to his development of a Trinitarian concept, although consistently as succeeding upon his acknowledging that the thought-process, concerning what does not begin, *begins* logically from a consideration of evil, as self-concentration, namely, as an evil consciousness specifically:

In the same way, it is matter of indifference to co-ordinate a multiplicity of other shapes and forms¹³⁹ with the simple thought of otherness in the Being of the Eternal, and transfer to them that condition of self-concentration. This co-ordination must, all the same, win approval (i.e. despite its immediately shocking character, as it may be), for the reason that, through it, this moment of otherness does express diversity, as it should do: not indeed as plurality in general, but as *determinate* diversity, so that one part is the Son, that which is simple and knows itself to be essential Being, while the other part is the abandonment, the emptying, of self-existence, and merely lives to praise that Being. To this part may then *also* be assigned the resumption once again of the self-existence relinquished, and that “self-centredness” characteristic of evil. (*Phenomenology of Mind*, pp. 771-772, parenthesis and stress added)

It seems as if Hegel would present the emergence (for thought) of Trinity as in close or even necessary connection, as it will have to be (as even its own

¹³⁹ Baillie, in a footnote, refers this to “the angelic hosts”. This is not inappropriate if we recall, for instance, the angelology of Thomas Aquinas, more or less standard, whereby each angel is an entire species or, hence, we may well say, un-individualised form in any normal sense, so that, as not counting individuals, we attain to not more than an *analogical* plurality as what might identify “angelological” plurality *in re*. Thus in Scripture the expression “the angel of the Lord” (and sometimes, once at least, there are three at once, “three men” as the text has) is not clearly or consistently distinguished from God himself, while theologically the whole idea of mission (*angelos* is Greek for one or the one sent) is an idea culminating in the one sent fusing with the one sending or coming himself, such that “God has visited his people”.

“first moment” perhaps: thus removing any possible dichotomy between God and his creative act), with the earliest or “angelic” *creation*, again, as I suggested above, nothing else being compatible with the divine, or absolute, immutability, not, quite clearly, to be confounded with immobility in our everyday sense, since this is here *aufgehoben* as a way of thinking. It might, this presentation, as clearly be (represent) the apotheosis of mobility itself in this finite sense of “change”, of place or similar. “Movement itself does not move” (Aristotle). God, anyhow, is what he does, must be that Act which, over again, he is.

In so far as this condition of otherness falls into two parts, Spirit might, as regards its moments, be more exactly expressed numerically as a Quaternity, a four in one, or (because the multiplicity breaks up itself again into two parts, viz. one part which has remained good, the other which has become evil), might even be expressed as a Quinity.

Quaternity, that is, if one is to assimilate (add) creation to God Trinity, quinity, if one *add* otherness in evil as extraneous to the fourth. In other words, or at least incidentally, “it is useless to count” (i.e. to add in abstraction from assimilating), as he goes on now to say, or, as Aquinas had put it, *Numeri non ponuntur in divinis*.

Counting the moments, however, can be regarded as altogether useless, since, for one thing, what is distinguished is itself just as truly one and single – viz. the thought of distinction which is only one thought – as the thought is this element distinguished, the second over against the first. For another thing it is useless to count, because the thought which grasps the many in one has to be dissolved out of its universality and must be distinguished into more than three or four distinct components. This universality appears, in contrast to the absolute determinateness of the abstract unit – the principle of number – as indeterminateness in relation to number as such; so that in this connection we can speak only of numbers in general, i.e. not of a specific number of distinctions. Hence, in general, it is here quite superfluous to think of number and counting, just as, in other connexions, the bare difference of magnitude and multitude says nothing at all and falls outside conceptual thought.

On this, on counting and quantity, as on the whole question of Ideality *vis à vis* Reality, one should consult *Enc.* 98 (Being-for-self) and 99, along with their long *Zusätze*:

The readiest instance of Being-for-self is found in the ‘I’. We know ourselves as existents, distinguished in the first place from other existences, and with certain relations thereto. But we also come to know this expansion of existence (in these relations) reduced, as it were, to a point in the simple form

of being-for-self. When we say ‘I’ we express the reference-to-self which is infinite, and at the same time negative. Man, it may be said, is distinguished from the animal world, and in that way from nature altogether, by knowing himself as ‘I’: which amounts to saying that natural things never attain a free Being-for-self, but as limited to Being-there-and-then, are always and only Being for an other. – Again, Being-for-self may be described as ideality, just as Being-there-and-then was described as reality. It is said that besides reality there is *also* an ideality. Thus the two categories are made equal and parallel. Properly speaking, ideality is not something outside of and beside reality: the notion of ideality just lies in its being the truth of reality. That is to say, when reality is explicitly put as what it implicitly is, it is at once seen to be ideality. Hence ideality has not received its proper estimation, when you allow that reality is not all in all, but that an ideality must be recognised outside of it. Such an ideality, external to or it may be even beyond reality, would be no better than an empty name. Ideality only has a meaning when it is the ideality of something: but this something is not a mere indefinite this or that, but existence characterised as reality, which, if retained in isolation possesses no truth. The distinction between Nature and Mind is not improperly conceived, when the former is traced back to reality, and the latter to ideality as a fundamental category. Nature however is far from being so fixed and complete, as to subsist even without Mind: in Mind it first, as it were, attains its goal and its truth. And similarly, Mind on its part is not merely a world beyond Nature and nothing more: it is really and with full proof seen to be mind, only when it involves Nature as absorbed in itself. – *Apropos* of this, we should note the double meaning of the German word *aufheben* ... (*Enc.* 96, *Zus.*)

What Hegel has achieved here is an account of Trinity which accounts therein, thereby and simultaneously for creation and, hence, Nature, inclusive of necessary Incarnation of a second person, the beloved Other of the Father, as also, and again thereby, *qua* other, as pictured “in the earliest realms of thought”. Thus the whole drama of Good and Evil, of affirmation and negation, of the positive and the negative, is contained necessarily and without beginning or end in the Infinite Being, in the Absolute Idea, Spirit, this last being known alone by and in Spirit, i.e. of itself, dynamically in an *immutable motion*, Mind (*Geist*) proceeding from the opposition. *Natura est ad unum, ratio est ad opposita*. Nature, that is, is the unfree, held together, however, ever in Mind, here *ratio*, in productive opposition, which is thought’s *perpetuum mobile*, immovably *in actu* (as we must add to avoid our stagnating in mere paradox). In short:

The alienation of the Divine Nature is thus set up in its double-sided form: the self of Spirit, and its simple thought, are the two moments whose absolute unity is Spirit itself. Its alienation with itself consists in the two falling apart from each other, and in the one having an unequal value as against the other.

This disparateness is, therefore, twofold in character, and two connexions arise, which have in common the moments just given. In the one, the Divine Being stands for what is essential, while natural existence and the self are unessential and are to be cancelled. In the other, on the contrary, it is self-existence which passes for what is essential and the simply Divine for unessential. Their mediating, though still empty, ground is existence in general, the bare community of their two moments. (*Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 774)

One might recall here the words the fourth evangelist attributes to Christ in the midst of his account, however we take it, of the restoring to life of a personal friend at that time and place: “He that believes in me, though he be dead, yet shall he live”, interpreting the opposition, as here above, as simply a description of Spirit, which, again, “I (we) shall send” (Hegel, as I mentioned, envisions immediate procession of Spirit wholly from the Son, as legitimate *idioma*, obviously without exclusion of the Father thereby). One *might*, I say, so recall, again, as pointing to evident associations in Hegel’s mind which not all readers are likely to share. We must, whatever our initial commitments, avoid being touchy here, as the earlier Hegel interpreters were or have been often very touchy, to the detriment of our understanding of this philosopher. The advent of the “ecumenical” era facilitates open-mindedness without loss of commitment here, the *having* (in sameness) of the other as other which, after all, classically, is knowledge.

Hegel, meanwhile, leads up to the summary of his position, only Trinitarian as included in his total view of the revealed canvas, by reference to “Good and Evil”, again (p. 773):

Good and evil were the specific distinctions of thought which we found. Since their opposition is not yet broken down, and they are represented as essential realities of thought, each of them independent by itself, man is the self with no essential reality of his own and the mere ground which couples them together, and on which they exist and war with one another. But these universal powers of good and evil belong all the same to the self, or the self is their actuality. From this point of view it thus comes about that, as evil is nothing else than the self-concentration of the *natural* existence of spirit (the central claim: nature is “evil”), conversely, good enters into actual reality and *appears* as an (objectively) existing self-consciousness. (p. 773, stresses and the first parenthesis added)

The “appears” here is not Docetic, since man as within nature is as such a specific reality of which idealism is the truth, as we have just cited Hegel as saying and holding. The individual humanity assumed, as theology has it, is as ideal or as real or unreal as any of humanity’s instances.

That which, when Spirit is interpreted in terms of pure thought, is in general merely hinted at as the Divine Being's transition into otherness, here, for figurative thinking, comes nearer to its realisation: the realisation is taken to consist in the Divine Being "humbling" Itself, and renouncing its abstract nature and unreality (sc. ideality, as explained above). The other aspect, that of evil, is taken by imagination as an event extraneous and alien to the Divine Being: to grasp evil in the Divine Being itself as the wrath of God – this is the supreme effort, the severest strain, of which figurative thought, wrestling with its own limitations, is capable, an effort which, since it is devoid of the notion, remains a fruitless struggle.

One might, possibly, say that the wood (*lignum*, Gk. *hyle*: i.e. matter) of the (Roman) Cross, made holy and/or "wondrous", fulfils this role (of "wrath" or of evil "in" God, though one hail it, *Ave crux*, as *spes unica*). It is fruitless for figurative thought specifically, that is. Hegel takes it as read that the attribution of "wrath", seemingly a human and finite emotion, to God is but figurative. In fact he does not directly assert this, as he asserts that "there is evil in God". Rather, he asserts an unfulfillable capacity for "figurative thought". In a perhaps similar way he sees figurative thinking as nearer to realising pure thought's "hinting" at the divine "transition into otherness", which may seem here to have been more than a hinting¹⁴⁰ anyhow. Figurative thinking comes nearer, however, in a figure which Hegel here finds in some respects misconceived, if we read on (i.e. in the immediately above quotation and further). The upshot, for him, might seem to be that we *need* the figurative, the "necessary picture-Idea", e.g. in our worship, but should always take it for what it is, a figure. God does not change, does not humble *himself* (this is the figure), though he may well be taken as essentially "meek and lowly of heart". One cannot apply such a quality to just one of the divine persons in isolation, while our own humility reflects his own, his truth before his own truth, as God *is* his Idea. This is what ultimately makes humility uniquely "the virtue of truth", as Aquinas has it, when translated or, rather, when transitioning, as "assuming" human nature, from all eternity as it would have to be, in view of the immutability, eternity itself being non-durational, which makes the expression "*from* all eternity",

¹⁴⁰ See Hans Küng, *On Being a Christian*, Collins Fount Paperbacks, Glasgow 1978, p. 470: "The trinitarian confession of the early Church developed theologically through a long history into an increasingly expanded doctrine of the Trinity. The culminating points of the development came in the last century with Hegel's philosophy of religion and in the present century with Karl Barth's *Church Dogmatics*" (Vol. I, 1). Küng refers us to his own *Menschwerdung Gottes; Eine Einführung in Hegels theologisches Denken als Prolegomena zu einer künftigen Christologie*, Freiburg/Basel/Vienna, 1970, VII 4 (available in English translation).

as usually taken, essentially figurative. That is, God has it (human nature) and we have his, in a qualified or “concrete” identity, between two, namely, and not as abstractly “one”, which would exclude relation. Yet, as Aquinas showed, God *has no real relation* with anything outside himself, hence this identity is “inside”, though without being specifically Trinitarian. It is a “divine idea”, one of the ideas being that of Trinity, however fundamental. Yet the divine ideas, Aquinas again shows, as God’s own, are alone what God knows, each one of them, namely, being “identical with his essence”.¹⁴¹ This is what was *manifested* in historical “reality” (understanding this in Hegel’s sense, of *unreality* namely¹⁴²) and in incarnation, “his glory as of the only begotten Son” (Johannine Prologue), i.e. as being eternally begotten. “What is God? What is man?” (public exclamation of Pope John Paul II, Wojtyla, no mean philosopher in his private capacity).

¹⁴¹ Cf. Aquinas, *Summa theol.* Ia q. 15, all articles.

¹⁴² See Hegel, *Enc.* 96 to 99, as quoted above.

CHAPTER TWELVE

DOGMA, RELIGION

To sum up these sections on Hegel and the Trinity, before returning to Aquinas's account, now of the persons specifically as distinguished, note first that the Absolute Idea, as Hegel understands it, holds all determination (*alle Bestimmtheit*) within it and not merely all determinations (*Bestimmtheiten*). The Idea, as not abstractly individual but just in its individuality as the universal of universals, since it is Infinity as such, knows or actively thinks (or is) all possibility and every possibility, the exemplary first of which is possibility itself, albeit in *Aufhebung*.

Since it is itself Idea, however, such knowledge, as absolute, includes its own realisation (as necessary result or, in Hegel's terms, its "own result"). Any mere substance, as opposed to Idea, would just lie there, no one knows how, awaiting detonation, so to say. The Idea "is the true being", Hegel ends his *Science of Logic* (1812-1816) by declaring. Therefore there is self-determination, whether single or various remaining thus far conceptually indifferent. It or they are of infinite character as being within or as constituting the Idea itself, which they themselves, together or separately, identically are, even though they cannot be said to be identical absolutely, as destroying relation, with one another. These are what Trinitarianism, as rational reflection upon God, claims to identify, of course prompted thereto by a certain historical experience of which a record has been handed down in continuous community for these twenty centuries (if we prescind for the moment from previous mystic or literary indications of this, as regards the written word primarily). I say "prompted" as a more focussed term than "conditioned". Some such prompting was necessary, Aquinas can seem to claim more definitely than Hegel, rather than being simply helpful. Yet since Hegel affirms the *necessity* of a divine mediator, as within the philosophical order, as we have found also Duns Scotus implying, by way of divine "incarnation", the two accounts coalesce. Note that Hegel leaves free, within his philosophical system, any answer as to whether the or any incarnation posited as "in history" truly was such, at the same time, however, as his logical system in fact excludes such a dilemma as being "outside

conceptual thought”¹⁴³. Just this is the significance of his statement that “The definition, which declares the Absolute to be the Idea, is itself absolute” or that “The **Idea** is truth in itself and for itself – the absolute unity of the notion and objectivity” (*Enc.* 213).

Its ‘ideal’ content is nothing but the notion in its detailed terms: its ‘real’ content is only the exhibition which the notion gives itself in the form of external existence, while yet, by enclosing this shape in its ideality, it keeps it in its power and so keeps itself in it.¹⁴⁴

He also says that anyone having his religion depend upon historical contingencies has not understood it. Theologians in fact uniformly state that the incarnation or the resurrection, say, are mysteries of faith as such transcending the historical as *in principle* unobservable¹⁴⁵, so Hegel finds himself in “good” company here. His philosophy thus accommodates itself,

¹⁴³ Understanding this would affect how we read the centurion’s statement at the foot of the Cross, “Truly this was a son of God”, which faith, and hence some versions, especially musico-liturgical, already in fact transform, over-riding the letter, to “the Son of God” (something two evangelists confidently assume will be done *in the reading*), whatever the soldier was, if ever and by whomever, heard to say. Hegel’s point, one of them, is that “actually” in past sentences would be used in a non-actual context (hence my omitting it here), distinguishable all the same from the fictional, closer to his account of the contingent, as including temporality as such. Does McTaggart’s claim to “refute” time’s “reality” amount to more than this? The above is said here without prejudice to the seeking first “the letter” stressed in Biblical scholarship as distinct from exegesis.

¹⁴⁴ *Enc.* 213. Note also 236, the whole paragraph.

¹⁴⁵ Cp. Herman Hendrickx, *The Resurrection Narratives of the Synoptic Gospels*. Geoffrey Chapman 1978, 1984, pp. 111-115. Archbishop Michael Ramsey seems to have been a distinguished exception to this judgment, however: “For my part I find no reason to abandon the traditional view that the body was raised from the tomb, believing it to be congruous with the *historical* evidence...” (*Jesus and the Living Past*, OUP 1980, p. 31, stress added). Yet for Hegel or for absolute idealism the main question here concerns the status of the historical as such. We have stressed this throughout. Compare the Buddhist saying, “No birth, no death”, or even the recorded words of Christ over the presumed dead body, i.e. as men speak, of the daughter of Jairus, before indeed raising her from the dead (this is the Evangelist’s plain intention), “She is not dead but asleep”, whereupon “They laughed him to scorn”. Or, in *John* 11, “Lazarus, our friend, is asleep, but I go to wake him”. But then he said to them plainly, “Lazarus is dead”. By this, in Hegel found true of the historical in general, one might apply an inspired translation of St. Paul’s words, concerning a more ancient narrative: “Now these things happened in a figure” (*Galatians* 4, 24), with Hegel, to happenings in general. The point: he did not say “*as* in a figure”. How does that affect the force of “plain” here is the question?

or, rather, is found accommodating precisely this situation, while those must be quite mistaken who accuse him of having “logicised” Christian belief out of all recognition. It is just what can be recognised here, though put forward with all modesty and discretion.

The possibilities just as such, meanwhile, such as we have been discussing them, or possibility itself, above, are strictly necessary. This category transcends the distinction, valid enough, between those “contingencies” God “brings about” or those he does not. What he knows, that is, he knows, including the not to be brought about, the “possible worlds” in contemporary parlance. Hence it is, in part, that this necessity also holds of finite possibilities, all of them, the greatest or prime necessity holding, all the same, of the Idea, thus necessary and absolute, of which choice is but a figure. The Idea is absolutely free, with “no shadow of turning”, transcending hesitation. This is of the greatest importance for all and any actuality, nothing being lost or wasted but to be “gathered up”, like the jots and tittles of the Law, though it be “our affair” (Hegel) to see to this.

Freedom, that is, is the ultimate necessity. Hence we, as finite subjects, are never more free than when we reason to necessary conclusions, in *theoria*. But also our free *action*, as conclusion, *always*, to a “practical syllogism”¹⁴⁶, is absolutely necessary, determined in the free and executing knowledge, which is love, of or in the Absolute, or of the Absolute Idea. This, we shall see, is necessarily true also of action deemed evil.

So the Idea determines itself to differing formations, as Hegel puts it, to Nature and Spirit, namely. If one compares the final paragraph, in Hegel’s *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, of Part I, *Logik*, 244, with the conclusion to Part II, *Naturphilosophie*, 375-6, one sees that the determination is nonetheless one and continuous. There is a clear need to synthesise this determination, constitutive of the Idea itself, with Hegel’s Trinitarian thought, this not in the sense, again, of following a dogmatic declaration as extrinsic guide to thinking. Even if Hegel’s philosophy of logic and his system generally has arisen in part (in great part, as we have been maintaining here) from life-long reflection upon the Christian religion and its role in cultural development generally, this in no way entails circularity when Hegel turns the result of such reflection back upon this activating influence itself so as to develop further its intellectual and spiritual potentiality, as Trendelenburg¹⁴⁷ had objected. It is rather an individual

¹⁴⁶ I.e. the *action* is the conclusion and not a mere proposition of the form *hoc est faciendum*. Cf. our *The Recovery of Purpose*, Peter Lang, Frankfurt-am-Main 1993, Ch. VI. Reason *includes* life as its immediacy.

¹⁴⁷ Cf. Franco Volpi’s informative article on Trendelenburg in *Handbook of Metaphysics and Ontology*, Philosophia Verlag, Munich 1991, pp. 991-2.

version of what everyone does and is bound to do, though without such sharp conscious awareness and honest admission thereof as we find here in Hegel. It is rather that the process of thought reflects back upon the dogma and even clarifies and sometimes “purges” it. In this way the philosophy of religion cannot but itself become theology, *theologia* in Aristotle’s understanding, thus identified by him with metaphysics at its summit. Hegel, nonetheless, adds a qualification, distinguishing theology, where “the content and object is God as such”, from philosophy of religion, where the object is put as “God as he is present in his community”¹⁴⁸.

This in fact implies that theology is philosophy as *der höchste Gottesdienst*, metaphysics generally therefore rather than “of religion” specifically, as if God were some kind of special subject, i.e. object. Rather, Hegel adds here, “God can only be genuinely understood in the mode of his being as spirit”. This view, rather than excluding less than “scientific” believers, rather points to and implies the view of “what used to be called mysticism” (Hegel) as at one and the same time the highest development of normally lived faith, to which all who are faithful are thus directed. Mysticism itself, therefore, the term naming mind’s journey towards self-knowledge, in whatever religion as in none¹⁴⁹, is thus ultimately directed towards absorption, explicit or implicit, into speculative philosophy, not by conversion of the latter into something merely esoteric but by the esoteric assumption of chosen individuals, one by one, into this realm of spirit.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸ LPR III, 116.

¹⁴⁹ McTaggart, for example, one of Hegel’s most accurate commentators, followed the latter’s mystic way (as he took it to be) while holding aloof from any religion. This illustrates the uncertainty for Hegel, as for Christianity as a whole, as to whether the latter is indeed a religion. Cf. the statement by Henri de Lubac, cardinal as he became: “Catholicism is not a religion: it is religion itself”. Yet “religion itself” is just what is absorbed, by Hegel’s system, into philosophy or, better, into *sophia* itself (to which, as *sancta*, the cathedral at Constantinople was originally dedicated). For Aquinas, largely following Aristotle, wisdom is an “intellectual virtue”, the highest, while religion is, as a “moral virtue” only, a subordinated or adjoined habit adjoined to *justice* as giving what is *due* to “the gods”, thus paralleling piety, as a distinct virtue, towards parents, ancestors and the like (cf. the relevant sections in *Summa theol.*, IIa-IIae).

¹⁵⁰ Cf. David Knowles: *What is Mysticism?* Sheed & Ward Ltd., London 1967, 1971. The view, however, is not or has not been entirely unchallenged in ecclesiastical or even theological circles. One may also compare the section on “states of life” in Aquinas’s *Summa theologiae* at the end of Part IIa-IIae. Hegel himself always held out for esoteric professionalism in philosophy, which did not prevent him from recognising, with qualification, the merits for thought of untutored mystics such as Boehme or, equally, Eckhart, inasmuch as Hegel clearly felt little need to investigate

Specifically dogmatic theology, as it is now called, is, as we have it, a finite development within the Church which arose at a particular time, quite quickly though, after the beginning, if indeed it is appropriate to speak of a beginning here for what proclaims itself as a mystery hidden before all the ages. In this way it differs from Scripture, though the latter contain theological reasoning here and there. Paul's or John's thought, therefore, may be fairly classed as philosophy, as may the earlier Jewish writings, as Porphyry saw, calling the Jews "a nation of philosophers". One might rather say that these writings, in part at least, partake of the forms of Absolute Spirit as Hegel has identified them, artistic, religious, philosophical, bearing in mind the destiny of the first two of these forms to be absorbed, perfected and hence "cancelled" (Hegel's term) in and by the third, which is itself destined, as it was Hegel's aim to bring about, to surpass itself towards pure *sophia*, wisdom, itself transcending in final self-consciousness even the "absolute knowledge" of *The Phenomenology of Mind*, i.e. in so far, at least, as this is written *about*, there. Such wisdom, namely, is pure spiritual or "intellectual" *virtus*, knowing but more than knowing (as we know it) only itself, but this as all, *Deus meus et omnia*, the last word often mistranslated as "my all". It means, to repeat it, "all things", taken as one, however, as was habitual with the classical neuter plural, which in Greek when standing as subject normally, and significantly (as a kind of grammatical anomaly "of the letter"), took a singular form of the verb.

Hence the Pauline category of wisdom from on high is a philosophical category, finally to be classed by Hegel as *within* the subject as and because all is "within" the Idea since, again, "the definition that the Absolute is the Idea is itself absolute" (*Enc.* 213), as the concept (the Idea) proper absorbs the judgment, the judgment syllogism. Hence, conversely, "Everything is a syllogism". As the Concept it follows that the Absolute Idea, also as Word, as Spirit, is "the true being". This is the transcendence of knowledge or of the "tragedy of knowledge" (Berdyaeu) when it remains at the level of "objectification", a conclusion implicit also in Hegel¹⁵¹, objectification

the latter's academic qualifications, Thus the Husserlian phenomenologist and "canonised" Christian martyr, Edith Stein, on reading the *Life* of St. Teresa of Avila, simply written by the saint herself, put down the book exclaiming "This is the truth". Recall Hegel's *Das ist was wir haben wollen*, on hearing at home with Baader of Eckhart's *Lehrsätze*, so to call them.

¹⁵¹ for this phrase, "the tragedy of knowledge", cf. N. Berdyaeu, *Spirit and Reality*, where, however, it seems to refer back to the Kantianism Hegel repudiates. For him the "tragedy" refers to a finitude not identifiable with knowledge as such or in its infinite perfection, in which, in the Idea, rational being(s), all *creation* even, is seen as eternally participating, "I in them and they in me", this, however, not to be

entailing a stopping short of true knowledge of Being.

There is something in its object concealed from consciousness if the object is for consciousness an “other” ... if consciousness does not know the object as itself. This concealment, this secrecy, ceases when the Absolute Being *qua* spirit is object of consciousness. For here in its relation to consciousness the object is in the form of self ... the *immediately universal*. It is the pure notion, pure thought, or self-existence, (being-for-self), which is immediately *being*, and, therewith, being-for-another, and *qua* this being-for-another, is immediately turned back into itself and is at home with itself (*bei sich*). It is thus the truly and solely revealed. The Good, the Righteous, the Holy, Creator of Heaven and Earth, etc. – all these are predicates of a subject, universal moments, which have their support on this central point, and only are when consciousness goes back into thought. ... As long as it is *they* that are known, their ground and essential being, the Subject itself, is not yet revealed; ... To be in its notion that which reveals and is revealed – this is, then, the true shape of spirit ... The divine nature is the same as the human, and it is this unity which is intuitively apprehended (*angeschaut*).¹⁵²

Again, as context shows, this is to be read not as “conversion of the godhead into flesh” but as “taking of the manhood into God”. Hegel’s philosophy casts a most powerful searchlight upon this ancient Athanasian doctrine. In this absolute self-consciousness all otherness is absorbed or cancelled in and by “pure thought” as, again, the true being. This “within” (as in “within the subject” above) is thus a figure for an identity of being ultimately transcending language. With his “Whereof one cannot speak thereof one should be silent” (*Tractatus 7*) Wittgenstein broke his own rule in formulating it, since he spoke of, named, that he would forbid naming. He thus invited a sequel, whether from the past (Hegel) or as embodied in his own later “investigations”. Language, meanwhile, stops (but for us immersed in finitude it can never stop) at the paradox, “This also is thou, neither is this thou”, said of anything whatever, even a given Trinitarian person. Thus, for example, in Hegel’s thought, God the Father is only

identified with “the world” as an organised, finally illusory representation (cf. the Johannine and evangelical “I pray not for the world but for them thou hast given me”) from which spirit (*Geist*), in its ultimate form philosophy as perfected in *sophia* ultimately frees us. Hegel’s universalism here, I would maintain, is distinguished from a dogmatically quantitative “universalism”, so-called, which lies outside the concept. This is what is *represented* in the Gospel by Christ, i.e. the divine Son or Word, who knows everything, saying “I never knew you”. We might compare Hegel’s remarks on Rousseau and “the general will” (*Enc.* 163, *Zus.*). Here, anyhow, is (principal) matter for the necessary virtue of hope.

¹⁵² Hegel, *Phenomenology of Mind*, pp. 759-760.

“realised” in identity with his Son or Word, the latter thus realised again in the “difference” which is Nature, his other, known by us as “alienated” therefore. Theologically one speaks of the ideas of all things as “contained” in the Word.¹⁵³

Yet the same as we said above of John or Paul may be said of Augustine, the major proponent of Trinitarianism in many ways, even though he too adduces the notion of a or the *regula fidei*, as an existent phenomenon merely. This finite concept, therefore, is open to philosophical treatment like any other. It, this rule of faith, may be referred either to the existential situation of the thinking subject or to beliefs he would be here and now required to confess. Theology as philosophy, *theologia* in Aristotle’s sense or that which is discussed in mystical theology, as it is called, is to be distinguished from “dogmatic theology” (an honoured title nonetheless), which is, in the light of its first principles, a finite discipline, like in this to all reasoning starting from finite experience and which Hegel just therefore finds bound to fall short of the spiritual. Rather, this threeness, to return to that, is referred to a necessary logical triadicity as condition for passing to new knowledge, or for newness or process as such. Even here it is not strictly numerical, as in mathematics, but logical! Implied by this is a distinction of dogmatic theology from dogma itself as matter of and for faith, the substance of which becomes known in that philosophical speculation often called, reasonably enough, mystical theology, as Aristotle called “the philosophy of God” (Bernard Lonergan’s phrase) *theologia* viewed with respect to its final end and terminus in or as self-thinking thought, this of course as object of and hence not identifiable with any written text nor indeed with any thinking of finite agency within life as not absorbed into that same self-activating, i.e. self-conscious, as in Hegel’s account, Idea. To this, as applying to any creaturely participation, corresponds the *lumen gloriae* enabling the “beatific vision” of Patristic and later Scholastic

¹⁵³ Plants and animals (but not rocks or “the elements”!), are declared by Aquinas not participant in “the resurrection”, their absence being overcome, he says, by “the beauty of the bodies of the redeemed” (*Summa theol., Supplementum* Q 91, esp. art.5). By his own metaphysical principles, however, “body” is a logical abstraction when not absorbed into spirit’s self-consciousness, into the Idea in whom “we live and move and have our being”, so his account here, obedient to kerygmatic proclamation, is conceivably, i.e. according to concept, reconcilable with (and even enriching of) what in Hegel remains for the most part implicit. Nothing that is anything, that is, can be understood as finally absent. Or, as to a mourned pet dog etc., “He’ll be there if you want him”, i.e. we know neither the one nor the other, any more than we “know” that which, virtue commands as is taught and here argued, we must firmly hope to know, shall “no sooner know than enjoy” (Hobbes).

provenance.

The philosophy so redounds upon the theology here that the category of revelation¹⁵⁴ is freed from its taint of legalistic or extrinsic finitude. Trinity, again, is freed from suggestion of a positivistic and finite adhesion to a particular numeral, three. One thinks of Aristotelian triple identity (syllogism). Rather, this threeness is referred to a necessary logical triadicity as condition for passing to new knowledge, or for newness or process as such. The mathematical analogue of this is that two things equal to a third thing are equal to each other.

Not only, however, is the *trinitas* or threeness of Trinity thus saved. It is emphasised that the threeness is of a type able to pass on to any amount of numerical ideas whatever, this being used to show that the first threeness is not quantitative since, as we know whether by our belief or from previous speculation, there are not three gods but one, the Idea, necessarily or in logic. *Numeri non ponuntur in divinis* (Aquinas). Hegel concurs: "It is useless to count", He accordingly goes on to postulate Satan as a conceivable fourth "Trinitarian" person, as Jung had postulated the Virgin Mary, hence overcoming triadicity, which he, Jung, thought psychologically "bad". A fifth one proposed, by Hegel, turns out to be some angel or other. In fact Hegel assimilates the angelic "host" to the divine persons, in true Biblical fashion¹⁵⁵. So the second angel replacing Satan, in Hegel's speculation, may well be the divine Christ, the one sent being finally sender, as also in Aquinas's theology of "mission", the subject of the final *quaestio* of his treatise on the Trinity. God *qua* God need send no messengers not himself or Word. He has, finally, no other message either.

So Hegel points out that Satan is or was "Son of the Morning", Lucifer, light-bearer, before becoming, in story, *via* Iranian mythology or not (what matters here is what Hegel himself does with it), the principle of evil. This in itself means that Good is the principle of Evil, he implies, says in fact, as Evil could have no other origin. This is the height of consistency as of religious or pious insight, so Hegel has nothing but praise for Boehme's tortured attempts to represent this relation of Good, of God, that is, to Evil, rather than representing the infinite as infinitely beleaguered by evil or even in cahoots with it. The very notion, rather, of evil, is abstracted from good by way of pure negation. Yet there is no good without evil rather as there is no man without woman or woman without man. More importantly, there is,

¹⁵⁴ Cf. our *Hegel's Theology or Revelation Thematized*, CSP, Newcastle-upon-Tyne 2018.

¹⁵⁵ This has been compared to McTaggart's assimilation, in his Hegelian interpretation, generally reckoned atheistic, of human persons *in toto* to the Hegelian Idea as itself "heaven", matter and nature as we know it, however, being illusory.

necessarily, no evil without good, no *culpa* that is not *felix*. When Augustine thus exclaimed, *o felix culpa*, he seems to have *imagined*, at least, a contrast with a *culpa infelix*, yet the deeper truth is that *culpa* is as such *felix* in being part of the scheme of things or a constituent of the Idea, thus far, logic finds, or, ultimately, one with it. Scripture reflects this in Job's exclamation: "Have we received good at the Lord's hands and shall we not receive evil?" - from the same source, namely.

For Aquinas the general solution to these puzzles is at least sighted in the distance through mediation of his view of evil, more or less shared by Hegel however, as *privatio boni*, in truth or entirely. Only thus can Satan be actually thought to exist, while for neither thinker was he created evil, except inasmuch as for Hegel, but again in some not so different (if any) sense for Aquinas too, all finite being, when considered in itself and not as "in God", is evil. "What can err at some time does so" (Aquinas). The evil being spoken about here is anyhow, primarily, that found in the will. Of course, to say that anything, or here all things, is or are created as "in" God is to say that none of them are created in any usual sense of this term, i.e. as *not* "out of nothing".

Of evil Hegel in fact replaces the concept there with "self-centredness", as he could not do of course for purely natural or "physical" evils. So there he is in agreement with Kant, but not, it might seem, with Aquinas, in assigning a different *meaning* to moral evil than to physical. Aquinas does not do this, claiming rather that a man, or a free being generally, is good, i.e. naturally or generally, when he is good at all, by virtue of his will exclusively; and evil or bad by the same. Otherwise he assumes, simply, that a man, dog or glass of beer are good by virtue of what they are essentially. It is thus a property shared by just anything in so far as it is itself. But in being essentially will, or finally the Idea, man is raised above himself just by his own nature, such nature being *aufgehoben*. Thus the Devil, like any devils, as our main example maybe, is essentially an angel. He has or belongs to a good nature or genus. A difference, however, lies in Hegel's whole shifting of "good" from its status as a transcendental predicate, though, together with one or two or any other such predicates (such as "beautiful"). Hegel does indeed leave Being as the uniquely transcendent predicate, identifying it thus with the Absolute Idea, at the end of the original *Science of Logic* (1816) particularly. Yet this corresponds, in Aquinas, to the view of all these transcendentals other than being, *ens*, as entia rationis only or as themselves being(s) in some respect merely, e.g. being over again but as presented to intellect (truth) or will (god). "One" or "something" are in a different case again however.

So what is of special interest, for a Thomist particularly perhaps, in Hegel is his considering, if but for “a moment”, Satan as a possible divine and “Trinitarian” person, something which, one thinks, would hardly have occurred to Aquinas. It perhaps offers a possible line of reconciliation with the Cathars and similar groups once so persecuted, but that would not be the kind of motivation relevant to any philosophical (the word “conceptual” is rather spoiled for this purpose) analysis here. He surely did not just need to fit “the Devil” in somewhere.

What his analysis means, rather, is that the victory of good over evil, of God over “the powers of darkness” as we still say, of, nearer home, the Absolute Idea over abstract finitude in all its forms, is an eternal truth concretely played out in the incarnation, passion, death and resurrection, of Christ our only Lord, Mediator and “Advocate”, as Scripture has it. Taking at its face-value the term “Idea”, given this degree of prominence, means that the *existence* of this or any good or bad *angel* is not what is in question or of interest. There are many ways to think things and on Hegel’s premises there can be no such thing as *things*, apart from and just as their being thought. Thought, that is, the Absolute Idea, rises above, cancels, what we normally, or at least usually, term “reality”, as Hegel baldly affirms, we have seen¹⁵⁶. It would nonetheless be a mistake to affirm, with George Macdonald, that what the Son as Mediator accomplished at Jerusalem at some given time (is even that a true presentation of Truth’s own “coming to itself”?) was, i.e. it is the same, there accomplished “in the wild weather of his outer provinces” as mirroring, *only*, what he ever does “at home”. This is a sound intuition as far as it goes but it misses Hegel’s stronger presentation of these events of mediation as, in truth, God’s own coming to himself, of course in thought or even only in *our* thought of God, but yet as being God’s own such coming indeed and definitively, this being the only development, and it is *a logical* development, of (our) thought again, envisaged. The saving act would be included, absorbed in the divine act (of being) as such as eternally essential to what God is, only this, incidentally, making any kind of “prophecy” possible. This is why Hegel says God *is* his revelation. It is remarkable how it all hangs together in exceptionless confirmation, not as ideology, which as a phenomenon is a mere reflection of this, but as perfection of all perfections. This is what Leibniz had in mind when he insisted, as a matter of logic, upon the best of all possible worlds solely. No denial of freedom was involved or, I would say, there envisaged.

¹⁵⁶ Cf. footnotes 71 and 72, for example.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

AQUINAS ON THE PERSONS TAKEN SEPARATELY

It is now time, and place, after these pages in Hegel's company, to return to consideration of the divine persons separately as this is set forth by Thomas Aquinas. We last saw Aquinas discussing what were called "notions in God", of which he claimed to find precisely five, viz. *unbegottenness*, *fatherhood*, *sonship*, *common spiration* and *procession*. Aquinas stressed, we saw, that God "is not fivefold by the five notions" as he is "triune by trinity of persons". In fact "the several properties of one person, since they are not relatively opposed to each other, do not really differ. Nor can we predicate them of each other, since they are mentally distinct"¹⁵⁷. The "real plurality in God is based upon relative opposition" of the persons. In fact, then, as he will later affirm, *ipsae relationes sunt personae*. The relations themselves are the persons.

We get here a hint of underlying harmony between the Thomistic and Hegelian accounts in their perhaps startling difference. Both emphasise the final unity, in one divine "nature", even though, perhaps challengingly, Hegel will affirm that "God is the absolute person", an expression Aquinas might seem bound to have deprecated, though on the other hand his, and Augustine's, identifying the personal relativity, as it then must be, with the relations themselves, can be thought (it need not be: see below) to indicate a different or equivocal use of "person" when speaking of God. Otherwise they seem to be saying the persons are the relations of these persons, which would be, apart from apparent incoherence, to take back the identification just made, of person with relation. I say this need not be thought equivocal. The difference may rather indicate a final and univocal development in the concept of person which can hold right across the board as extending into the human case or into every being created or uncreated, finite or infinite, truly denominated personal. This harmonises well with what we have stressed here, as we find in Hegel, concerning the final nature of self-

¹⁵⁷ Aquinas, *op. cit.*, Ia 32, 3 ad 3.

consciousness, as reflected in the Pauline statement that “we” are “members of one another” or the Johannine relations, characterisable as relations of relative identity, as asserted, or foreseen, in the final or “priestly” prayer of Christ at *John 17*:

May they all be one.
 Father, may they be one in us,
 As you are in me and I am in you,
 So that the world may believe it was you who sent me.
 I have given them the glory you gave to me,
 That they may be one as we are one.
 With me in them and you in me,
 May they be so completely one
 That the world will realise that it was you who sent me
 And that I have loved them as much as you loved me.
 Father,
 I want those you have given me
 To be with me where I am,
 So that they may always see the glory
 You have given me
 Because you loved me
 Before the foundation of the world.¹⁵⁸

It is really time that these antecedents to Hegel’s thought be recognised and then acknowledged, just as they are, those same antecedents, recognised and acknowledged by all students of Aquinas, dedicated or merely neutral or, more positively, impartial, to which, however, being “partisan” is not the only alternative. One may be self-consciously and benevolently illuminated simply or, we might say, theoretically. But no personal *apologia* is being intruded here. It is just a matter of getting things straight. The same applies, again, to the charge of circularity in Hegel, once the Christian origin of his thought is admitted, as if he were not careful to show, in fact delighted in finding and showing, the true situation and character of logic as made clear to him within the ambit of Christian or “Western” thought, inclusive of that of the Enlightenment, as we found Van Riet pointing out earlier on here. That does not, to speak logically, relativise his logic to a dependency upon this ambit, any more than a man remains the creature of his father or progenitor, giving, in the opposite direction, the latter absolute right over him, a free being. Nothing is more free than logic.

The question here of opposition to the world, essential to this “priestly prayer of Christ”, might be treated separately. Is not philosophy of the world?

¹⁵⁸ *Gospel of John 17, 21-24.*

It certainly arises from or within it. Or does it? That is itself a philosophical question. In answer we find Hegel speaking in terms of an ascent to truth through falsity, Wittgenstein's kicking away of the essential ladder in "ungrateful spirit" (Hegel). The fact is that a "Christian world" has been brought about or come about, at least¹⁵⁹, in obvious tension with the outlook of this prayer "that the world may believe" (as it then did not, and in a strict sense never does) and yet as witnessing to its fulfilment. Everyone who is baptised acknowledges renouncement of the world and today the theology of baptism has been in a sense universalised so that the human person as such, given that his will be good, is thus taken out of the world. In what sense, though, can one "give" that good will apart from the metaphysical "platitude", as *has to be*, however, that *malum est semper in subjecto bono?* - an axiomatic thought, in fact, of Hegel's as of Aquinas's systematic vision, finitude itself demanding universal "pardon". Thus those not of good will, whoever they are or are not, withering away outside this general movement instigated at the time of this prayer cited here, have to be interpreted as those who truly have made evil their good (possible or impossible as this may be), this mercilessness, as one might say, as much against self as against any other, and whether or not it is ever exemplified, as the letter of certain texts indeed seems to insist. "Sin" against the Spirit, as it were more directly than anything else, though social indifference is mentioned here, if that is what it is (maybe the personalisation, as of refusing kindness to an individual, how it is put after all, is essentially intended rather), is open to hearing that "I never knew you", which is itself judgment and condemnation in one, and should maybe, why not, itself be taken literally, something like being "outside the Concept"! All the same, "God wills that all men be saved", a text (of St. Paul to Timothy) Hegel refuses to pass over as he leaves no room, in truth, for that distinction between God's original and God's "consequent" will, thoughtlessly pictured by some even of the best theologians historically. In Hegel's view, in fact, any condemnation is self-condemnation, a man thus himself appointing "the place prepared for him"

No doubt, too, there is a great deal of chance in what befalls us. But the chance has its root in the "natural" man. So long however as a man is otherwise

¹⁵⁹ One might consult here the disillusioned writings of Ignace Lepp of half a century ago now, i.e. prior to the epochal Second Vatican Council. The later disillusion of the Scripture scholar Geza Vermes, if his so-called "return" to Judaism be taken as implying that, might just as well, for all I have been able to ascertain, be interpretable as further enlightenment in the light of the development, on both sides, of an ecumenical theology.

conscious that he is free, his harmony of soul and peace of mind will not be destroyed by the disagreeables that befall him. (*Enc.* 147, *Zus.*)

This seems not to exclude such things as committing murder, at some time past, as proportional candidate indeed for absolute pardon.

If man saw, on the contrary, that whatever happens to him is only the outcome of himself, and that he only bears his own guilt, he would stand free, and in everything that came upon him would have the consciousness that he suffered no wrong. A man who lives in dispeace with himself and his lot, commits much that is perverse and amiss, for no other reason than because of the false opinion that he is wronged by others. (*Ibid.*)

It seems not to be our business to pursue this question any further, least of all by citing *texts* and counter-texts, necessarily finite both. Our metaphysics show that everyone has “the place appointed for him”, whether or not he can say, with Goethe’s Mephistopheles, “Why, this is Hell; nor am I out of it”, though we may at least recall that this figure was not, as represented, human. That is, the proposition remains mere representation unless or until we can clear up the sense of “everyone”, the metaphysics of “each”, the legitimacy of the “one at a time”, the “one by one”, of much religious discourse, inclusive of the prophet’s “Thou art the man”, delivered over King David in the narrative, doubtless correctly. “He that delivered me to you” had the greater sin, Christ shall have declared to Pilate, yet may it not be true of everyone taken separately that “they know not what they do”. Does anyone actually “sin against the spirit” in this further but, it seems at least, finally impossible sense of knowing a transient action. We are beyond the whole field of law and even of right here, upon which, nonetheless, Hegel has written with discernment.

Meanwhile the world remains as a necessary or conflicting principle inside each person, with which, though, he or she, as having also necessarily contrary principles, is not thereby identified abstractly, in any given case. “Each”, that is, is shown by Hegel’s logic to be a sublated and finite category, that of the “ruined” individual of immediacy. We are not able, and hence should not attempt, further to judge, since finally “all judgments are false”, a judgment in which both McTaggart and Hegel concur, since the separation involved is impossible “in heaven”. The unity of the notion “goes deeper”, as it were ante-dating the individual. “I live yet not I” applies here too, even undercutting Hegel’s words above in a measure. Or, “says” thought, if I will this or that, “what is that to thee”? Hegel’s system, too, remains finite, as of time and place, distinct, as written, from thought itself, to which, all the same, it is referred. The Idea itself, namely, is the only fulfilment of the systematic ideal, in its *Aufhebung* namely, smaller than

small (Nicholas of Cusa) in very truth, or huge beyond imagining, no sooner known than “enjoyed” (Thomas Hobbes).

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

FATHER AND SON OR *VERBUM*

So we now proceed to the persons as set forth in or by Aquinas, first that “of the Father” (*Summa theol.* Ia, 33, 1), whom he identifies as “principle” or possibly “a” principle merely, at this stage.

The word *principle* signifies only that from which something proceeds: for we call anything from which anything in any way proceeds a principle, and *vice versa*. Since the Father is the one from which another proceeds, it follows that the Father is a principle.¹⁶⁰

Thus Aquinas avoids saying the Father is necessarily a cause, of what or whom proceeds from him, for example. Similarly, Hegel does not see the Absolute Idea as “cause”, precisely, of all it contains within it as in identity with it.

The **Notion** ... is a systematic whole, in which each of its constitutive functions is the very total which the notion is, and is put as indissolubly one with it.¹⁶¹

Cause as such is for him a finite category in the Doctrine of Essence, thus destined for supersession. The Father is thus principle rather than cause of the Son or Word. “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God”. So here Aquinas concurs with the evangelical Scripture in avoiding ascription of causality, although in a certain if partial contrast to Hegel he applies it freely to God’s relation to finite things. Any cause, for Hegel, is thus *intramundana*, part of this passing show, whereas Aquinas speaks rather of a First Cause, cause of all causes exclusively, as of secondary causes, namely:

¹⁶⁰ Aquinas, *op. cit.* I, 33, 1: *hoc nomen, principium, nihil aliud significat quam id a quo aliquid procedit. Omne enim a quo aliquid procedit quocumque modo, dicimus esse principium et e converso. Cum ergo Pater sit a quo procedit alius, sequitur quod Pater est principium.*

¹⁶¹ Hegel, *Enc.* 160.

“Principle” is more general than “cause”, ... But the more general a term, the more it can be used of God, as was said above, *qu. 13, art. 11*, for the more specialised names are, the more appropriate they are to the creature. So the word “cause” implies diversity of substance and a dependence of effect upon cause, which the name “principle” does not imply; for whatever be the kind of causality, there is always between cause and effect a kind of distance in perfection and power. On the contrary, the word “principle” is used even when there is no such difference: it is enough that order is discernible: just as when we call the point principle of the line, or even when we call the first part of a line its principle¹⁶² (i.e. as the beginning from which the whole proceeds. Cp. note 111: *significat nihil aliud quam id a quo aliquid procedit*. Another example might be the source of a stream).

Aquinas adds a warning here not to “confuse the significance of the word with what was its origin or the occasion for its creation”. There is more than a “family likeness” here with Hegel’s warning not to “confuse the origin” (“first historical appearance” or *phaenomenon*) with “the simplicity of the notion” through one’s desire to “get at” the same.¹⁶³ In both cases the origin lies with the phenomenal, the historical. In both cases too one is speaking of the origin of a word, in Hegel’s case of the Word of God as second Trinitarian person, whose significance indeed depends upon its simplicity, as of the Hegelian notion itself:

For in the notion, the elements distinguished are without more ado at the same time declared to be identical with one another and with the whole, and the specific character of each is a free being of the whole notion.¹⁶⁴

Aquinas, having spoken of fatherhood as first notion, with which one might well say that the person of the Father, “from whom all fatherhood in heaven

¹⁶² Aquinas, *Ibid. ad 1: principium communius est quam causa ... Quanto autem aliquid nomen est communius, tanto conveniens assumitur in divinis, ut supra dictum est, qu. 13, art. 11, quia nomina quanto magis specialia sunt, tanto magis determinant modum convenientem creaturae. Unde hoc nomen causa videtur importare diversitatem substantiae, et dependentiam alicuius ab altero, quam non importat nomen principii. In omnibus enim causae generibus semper invenitur distantia inter causam et id cuius est causa, secundum aliquam perfectionem aut virtutem. Sed nomine principii utimur etiam in his quae nullam huiusmodi differentiam habent, sed solum secundum quemdam ordinem; sicut dicimus punctum esse principium lineae, vel etiam cum dicimus primam partem lineae esse principium lineae.*

¹⁶³ Cf. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, pp. 764-765.

¹⁶⁴ Hegel, *Enc.* 161.

and earth is named” (St. Paul), is identical, now passes to the notion of “unbegottenness”:

Since “begotten” implies relation in God, “unbegotten” belongs also to relation. Hence it does not follow that the unbegotten Father is substantially distinguished from the begotten Son, but only by relation (is he so distinguished), that is, as the relation of Son is denied of the Father.¹⁶⁵

There are not three divine substances. It would be hard to say which of our two thinkers here emphasised this the most. We have now come, anyhow, in Aquinas to the Word as second divine person.

... For the Father, by understanding himself and the Son and the Holy Spirit and everything else comprised in this knowledge, conceives the Word; in this way, then, the whole Trinity is *spoken* in the Word; and likewise are all creatures also, just as the intellect of a man by the word he conceives in the act of understanding a stone, speaks a stone ... So only the person who utters the Word is *speaker* in God, although each person understands and is understood, and so is spoken by the Word.¹⁶⁶

So the Father, the “person who utters”, is speaker, the Word is spoken, and yet each person “is understood and so is spoken by the Word”. One may recall here, without confusion, Aquinas’s defence of the divine simplicity, as being without composition, against the charge that this is un-Trinitarian. “For any composed thing must have potentiality and act. ... But there is no potentiality in God. And so in him there is no composition.”¹⁶⁷ In the *Summa theologiae* he further clarifies, against this same objection, by saying that the Father’s Word adds nothing to him inasmuch as the Word spoken, as perfectly uttering the speaker, utters the whole of him just as that utterance, in “begetting”, is the whole of him, is his generative act. Hegel

¹⁶⁵ Aquinas, *op. cit.* I, 33, 4 ad 3 (parenthesis added): *Unde cum genitum in divinis relationem importat, ingenitum etiam ad relationem pertinent. Et sic non sequitur quod Pater ingenitus distinguatur a Filio genito secundum substantiam, sed solum secundum relationem, in quantum scilicet relatio Filii negatur de Patre.*

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 34, 1 ad 3: *Pater enim intelligendo se, et Filium, et Spiritum Sanctum, et omnia alia, quae ejus scientia continentur concipit Verbum, ut sic tota Trinitas Verbo dicatur, et etiam omnis creatura. Sicut intellectus hominis verbo, quod concipit intelligendo lapidem, dicat. ... Et sic sola persona quae profert verbum, est dicens in divinis, cum tamen singula personarum sit intelligens, et intellecta, et per consequens verbo dicta.*

¹⁶⁷ Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentes*, I, 18: *Nam, in omni composito, oportet esse actum et potentiam. ... In Deo autem nulla est potentia; non est igitur in eo aliqua compositio.*

expresses or amplifies this point, or makes a similar and related point, in the following way:

... since pictorial thinking apprehends and expresses as an event what has just been expressed as the *necessity* of the notion, it will be said that the eternal Being begets for itself an other. But in this otherness it has likewise, *ipso facto*, returned into itself again; for the distinction is distinction in itself, i.e. the distinction is directly distinguished merely from itself, and is thus the unity returned into itself. There are thus three moments to be distinguished: essential Being; explicit Self-existence, which is the express otherness of essential Being, and for which that Being is object; and Self-existence or Self-knowledge in that other. *The essential Being beholds only itself in its Self-existence, in its objective otherness.* In thus emptying itself, in this *kenosis*, it is merely within itself: the independent Self-existence which excludes itself from essential Being *is the knowledge of itself* on the part of essential Being. It is the “Word”, the Logos, which, when spoken empties the speaker of Himself, outwardizes him, and leaves him behind emptied, but is as immediately perceived, and only *this act of self-perceiving himself* (i.e. the Father’s or eternal Being’s self-constitutive act) is the actual existence of the “Word”. Hence, then, the distinctions which are set up are just as immediately resolved as they are made, and are just as directly made as they are resolved and the truth and the reality consist precisely in this self-closed circular process. (*Phenomenology of Mind*, pp. 766-767, emphases and parenthesis added).

Aquinas now continues, concerning the Word, that it “is the proper name of the person of the Son”, as Hegel forcefully intimates here as just cited.

“Word” in its proper usage is taken personally in divine things and is properly the name of the person of the Son, for it signifies an emanation of intellect, and the person who in God proceeds through intellect’s emanation is called the Son, and this procession is called begetting, as was shown above, *q. 27, art. 2.*¹⁶⁸

He next, in reply to an objection here, makes a point closely related to our emphasis above on there being no pure potentiality in God, whereby, as just one consequence, he cannot be “in” time. Here, though, the stress is upon transcendence of composition:

¹⁶⁸ Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I, 34, *art. 2: Verbum proprie dictum in divinis personaliter accipitur, et est proprium nomen personae Filii; significat enim quamdam emanationem intellectus. Persona autem quae procedit in divinis secundum emanationem intellectus dicitur Filius; huiusmodi processio dicitur generatio, ut supra ostensum est, quaest. 27, art. 2. Under relinquitur quod solus Filius proprie dicatur “Verbum” in divinis.*

To be and to understand are in us not the same thing. So in us whatever has intellectual being does not belong to our nature. But in God “to be” and “to understand” are one and the same; thus the Word of God is not an accident in him or his effect but belongs to his very nature. Hence it has to be something subsistent, for anything in the nature of God subsists; and so Damascene says (*On Orthodox Faith* I, 18) that the “word of God is substantial and has a hypostatic being; but other words (like ours) are activities of the soul.”¹⁶⁹

Note that Aquinas speaks, in the Greek manner, of an emanation within God, though he avoids using the term of created realities. Contemporary theologians, however, many of them, find reason to reinstate this usage, common to Proclus and St. Maximus the Confessor.¹⁷⁰

Next, Aquinas speaks of the Word as conceived in relation to creation, though he stresses elsewhere that God can have no real relation to creatures viewed as external to him, he knowing “only” their ideas. Clearly, though, that is implicitly absolute idealism on the part of St. Thomas. Nothing actual in itself could be removed or “fallen from” the divine or absolute knowledge. Thus Aquinas and Hegel concur in devaluing what we normally call reality, i.e. “this passing show”¹⁷¹ in favour of “the Notion” as *for itself*. This is clear already in John of Damascus as Aquinas cited him above, where the Word of God is referenced as signifying just this, just as in Scripture it is what “was ... in the beginning” (*John* 1, 1). That is to say, it is “in reality”, as is not the case in our naturally “pictorial thinking” (this characterisation is relatable and should be related to Aristotle’s insistence on the necessity of *phantasmata* for any thought at all on *our* part) as covering even our immediately perceived natural being along with, again, “this passing show”. It is just this whole system of “thinking” that is called in question when the thought first presses itself upon us: “How is it possible that just I exist?”¹⁷²

¹⁶⁹ *Eodem loco, ad 1: in nobis non est idem esse et intelligere. Unde illud quod habet in nobis esse intelligibile, non pertinet ad naturam nostrum. Sed esse Dei est ipsum ejus intelligere. Unde Verbum Dei non est aliquod accidens in ipso, vel aliquis effectus ejus, sed pertinent ad ipsam naturam ejus; et ideo oportet quod sit aliquid subsistens, quia quidquid est in natura Dei, subsistit: et ideo Damascenus, lib. 1 orth. Fid., cap. 18, non procul a fine, dicit quod Verbum Dei est substantiale, et in hypostasi ens: reliqua vero verba, scilicet nostra, virtutes sunt naturae.*

¹⁷⁰ Cp. David Burrell, “Aquinas’s Appropriation of *Liber de Causis* to Articulate the Creator as Cause-of-Being”, in *Contemplating Aquinas*, ed. Fergus Kerr, O.P., SCM 2003, London.

¹⁷¹ W.V.O. Quine in his *Word and Object*.

¹⁷² Compare here the passage cited above from the quantum physicist Erwin Schrödinger as cited in Daniel Kolak, *I am You*, Pomona, New York, 2002, p. xv. For an early attempt to open this question, from my own perspective at least, I permit myself to cite once more my own earlier moment, viz. “Other Problems about the

Augustine says (*Eighty-three Questions*, 63) that “the name ‘Word’ signifies not only relation to the Father, but also relation to those beings which are made through the Word by his operative power”.¹⁷³

Recall here again, I would note again, in passing, that Aquinas himself affirms as beyond question that God has *no real relation* to anything or any being, for example the world, outside of his own, of himself, *in* whom, therefore, we all “live and move and have our being” (Greek poet apostolically cited with approval in Luke’s *Acts of the Apostles*). Aquinas continues:

So “Word” implies relation to creatures. In knowing himself, God knows every creature. But the word conceived in thought expresses all that the subject knows in act; so in us there are as many different words as there are different things that we understand. On the contrary, God knows in one sole act himself and all things; his one Word does not only express the Father, but even all creatures. While with God the divine thought is pure knowledge, with creatures it is knowledge and cause; so the Word of God is a pure expression of the mystery of the Father, but it is expression and cause of creatures. Whence the Psalmist said (Ps. 32: 9): “He spake, and they were made”, because in the Word is found the operative idea of what God makes.¹⁷⁴

Rightly understood this passage excludes, or renders improper, talk of *causa sui*, expressing rather conceptual transcendence of cause in the Idea and even of “force” or an active power (*Kraft*) distinct from its being, from it as “the true being”, exactly as in Hegel’s *Logic*. I conclude here, conscious also of other related texts in Aquinas, that if “himself and all things” is the object of “one sole act”, as is said above, then “all things” cannot be an

Self”, *Sophia* 24, 1, April 1985, pp. 11-21.

¹⁷³ Aquinas, *qu.* 34, *art.* 3, *sed contra*: *Sed contra est quod dicit Augustinus in lib. 83 Quaestionum, quaest. 63, quod in nomine Verbi significatur non solum respectus ad Patrem, sed etiam ad illa quae per Verbum facta sunt operative potentia.*

¹⁷⁴ Aquinas, *Summa theol.* I, 34 c: *in Verbo importatur respectus ad creaturam. Deus enim cognoscendi se, cognoscit omnem creaturam. – Verbum igitur in mente conceptum est repraesentativum omnis ejus quod actu intelligitur. Unde in nobis sunt diversa verba secundum diversa quae intelligimus. Sed quia Deus uno actu et se et omnia intelligit, unicum verbum ejus est expressivum non solum Patris, sed etiam creaturarum. – Et sicut Dei scientia, Dei quidem est cognoscitiva tantum, creaturarum autem cognoscitive et factiva; ita verbum Dei, ejus quod in Deo Patre est, est expressivum tantum; creaturarum vero est expressivum et operativum: et propter hoc dicitur in psal. 32, 9: Dixit, et facta sunt; quia importatur in verbo ratio factiva eorum quae Deus facit.*

addition to God, who would thus *ipso facto* be rendered, or would render himself, finite. The parallel, therefore, is the Franciscan *Deus meus et omnia*, my God and all things, intended to deny all things as anything on their own or abstractly, as Hegel would say, or “other than” God unless as an otherness “in” God. It is thus the same “and” as that in the call, the need, for belief “in God and in Jesus Christ whom He has sent”, an “and” which would otherwise be vicious, i.e. where not acknowledged as representation only. Thus, “I and my Father are one”. Or, conversely, God is only truly in the sense of finally known in Jesus Christ, otherwise the latter would be distraction. By this, or these, again, God *has* no relation to whatever is other than He, abstractly as Hegel puts it, whether it is anything or nothing equivalently or indifferently, which might there be put as outside of himself, or has “no relation whatever” to any such (transposing the “to” or the “whatever” indifferently).

The first qualification to make here, however, is that real relation is meant, as opposed to “relations of reason” not merely in the Scholastic “sense” but as it is well put in Scholastic tradition. So we would attribute relations of reason to God in the same sense as we say, St. Thomas says, there are “notions” (five!) in God. Note that he does not say God himself *has* these notions. As he might? Surely not, we want to reply, despite the “in”; or, with Hegel, that then they are well and truly *aufgehoben*, in the sense that he “hatheth nothing that he hath made”. But what is a notion that truly “is” (in God) but is not “had”, is not thought (think-ed) as being actively thought? Or is it that he thinks it all right, objectively, for us to have these notions, creates us so? Or is the sense that in which Hegel speaks of the community using expressions taken from earthly and family life such as “son” for the necessities of the notion (not “of” God now but which *is* God)?

For absolute idealism, in fact, it is the relations “of reason” that are the real relations with which they are otherwise contrasted, if we preserve the original sense of “real” prior to the Hegelian critique of this as, equally, of “existence”, now become a finite logical category (in the Doctrine of Essence), whereas the true Being (*Seiende* as act, *acting*) is that final end to categorisation, the Absolute Idea (as he there states at the end of his first logical treatise particularly). But this, of course, is to overturn the very terminology being used, nothing more, in turn, however, than Hegel’s procedure throughout, termed “speculative”.

Aquinas writes:

Since relations result from actions, some names carry a relation of God to the creature following from God’s transitive actions, i.e. terminating at an extrinsic effect such as to create, to govern (the world), names of this kind are attributed to God in time. But others carry a relation following from an action not passing into an extrinsic effect but remaining within the agent – as to know

and to will. These are not applied to God in time, and this kind of relation to creatures is implied in the name of the Word. Nor is it true that all names relative to the created are attributed to God in time, but only those that imply a relation following upon a transitive action.¹⁷⁵

It should be clear from previous citation, of both Hegel and Aquinas, that “transitive” divine action is “picture-language” (it need not be picture-thinking), a representation (*Vorstellung*), most likely one that Aquinas found himself obliged to use in his time and place in a teaching text or *summa*. Less likely is that he did not see the contradiction. For God, or in absolute reality, we have seen corroborated in Thomas’s own texts, there can be no “transitive” action, just as the finite category of causality is abrogated. Divine necessity as the absolute freedom remains. This is the sense, also, of Hegel’s critique of Herder’s use of “force” (*Kraft*) and its “expression”, a finite category (*Enc.* 136), to characterise God, who is the Absolute Idea rather. We live, have our being indeed, *in* God, to use still, indeed, a spatial metaphor for what Hegel will posit as a speculative identity in difference between two (as is needed for relation as such) that are yet one, in final self-consciousness.

Significant then is St. Thomas’s use, twice here, of “attributed”. One may indeed consult his *quaestiones*, early in the first part of the main *Summa*, that treat expressly of “the divine attributes”, the first of which, indicating the depth of the analysis, is “being”. We *attribute* being as we know it to God, a term, viz. being, that Hegel does not scruple to characterise as the negation of thought, Idea we might say. Being is thus that “with which science must begin”, even given that it ends there, equally, in circular (or spiral) advance.

Hence it is that events, along with time, are no part of Hegel’s (or Aquinas’s?) final ontology, if that is still the word, of Spirit (*Geist*), in the light of which, indeed, “the letter kills” (all along the line), as “bewitchment of our intelligence” (Wittgenstein), against which philosophy, perfect form of Absolute Spirit (Hegel), is defined as “the struggle”. It is only with

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.* 34, 3 ad 2: *cum relationes consequuntur actiones, quaedam nomina important relationem Dei ad creaturam, quae consequitur actionem Dei in exteriorem effectum transeuntem, sicut creare et gubernare et talia dicuntur de Deo ex tempore. Quaedam vero relatio est quae consequitur actionem non transeuntem in exteriorem effectum, sed manentem in agente, ut scire et velle; et talia non dicuntur de Deo ex tempore; et huiusmodi relatio ad creaturam importatur in nomine Verbi. Nec est verum quod nomina importantia relationem Dei ad creaturas omnia, dicantur ex tempore; sed sola illa nomina quae important relationem consequentem actionem Dei in exteriorem effectum transeuntem, ex tempore dicuntur.*

continuous effort, analogous to the “recollection” traditionally demanded for “prayer”, that philosophy, philosophers, can hold themselves to their defining task. Theologians, by contrast, are more often, more excusably for some, enmeshed in finite duties, those renouncing them being habitually side-lined as “mystics”. Hence ascetical theology itself is, for some, a finite discipline. Yet there is a more ancient use of *theologia*, even in a Christian culture dubbing it “angelic”.

The Word, anyhow, is called “image of God” and so we cannot avoid discussion of this term, this notion, in our present investigation, concerning the Word or second Trinitarian person especially, and firstly as we have it in Thomas Aquinas:

Likeness belongs to the notion of image. Yet not any kind of likeness is sufficient for the notion of image, but only likeness of species, or at least of some specific sign. And in corporeal things the sign characteristic of the species is chiefly the figure. For we notice that the species of various animals are of various figures; but not of various colours. So if the colour of a thing is placed upon the wall, we do not call this an image unless the figure is also pictured there. Moreover, more is needed for an image than likeness of species and figure, and this is the origin; for, as Augustine says (*Eighty-three Questions*, 74): “One egg is not the image of another, because it is not derived from it.” To be truly an image of another, it is necessary to proceed from it so as to resemble it in species or at least in a sign of the species. But the attributes that imply procession or origin in God are personal names. Hence the name “image” is the name of a person.¹⁷⁶

To proceed from the other the image “must resemble it in species”, at least as sign thereof. But what thus proceeds “in” God must be personal as, it is implied, its origin is personal. What is truly named God’s image, therefore, is “a person” (stress added). So the personal proceeds from the personal, the *principium*, given that this is “personal”, as “that which is most perfect in

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.* 35, 1: *de ratione imaginis est similitudo. Non tamen quaecumque similitudo sufficit ad rationem imaginis, sed similitudo quae est in specie rei, vel saltem in aliquo signo speciei. Signum autem speciei in rebus corporeis maxime videtur esse figura. Videmus enim quod diversorum animalium secundum speciem, sunt diversae figurae, non autem diversi colores. Unde si depingatur color alcius re in pariete, non dicitur esse imago, nisi depingatur figura. Sed neque ipsa similitudo speciei sufficit, vel figurae; sed requiritur ad rationem imaginis origo: quia, ut Augustinus dicit in lib. 83 Quaestio., quaest. 74 post init., unum ovum non est imago alterius, quia non est de illa expressum. Ad hoc ergo quod vere aliquid sit imago, requiritur quod ex alio procedat simile ei in specie, vel saltem in signo speciei. Ea vero quae processionem sive originem important in divinis, sunt personalia. Unde hoc nomen “imago”, est nomen personale.*

nature” must hold also of nature’s *principium* or source, of that order and development we call nature, namely.

Or it resembles its principle as “a sign of the species at least”. This will recall to Scholastic philosophers the “formal sign” of John of St. Thomas, or Jean Poinsoot, to give him his secular name.¹⁷⁷ For Poinsoot a concept is a “formal sign” of the reality and nothing else. Hence it cannot be known on its own but only *via* a second *signum formale* or meta-concept, as in “the theory of types”. Or it recalls the later theory of Butchvarov of “immediate knowledge”. The application to the divine Word is clear, though this would then be a “sign of itself”, perhaps recalling what Hegel calls the necessity of “picture language” in theology which in this semiotic or quasi-sacramental way can achieve closer representation (well, of course) or understanding than a more spiritual (*geistlich*) or, one might loosely say, “abstract” effort, though in general Hegel’s efforts are directed at removing abstraction in favour of the concrete, as he calls it, precisely as typical labour at the highest or philosophic level.¹⁷⁸ Behind this “concession” lies precisely his endorsement of Trinitarian belief and thought as explaining what he simply puts as an experienced “fact”, consistent with his entire account of the three forms of Absolute Spirit whereby religion, itself succeeding upon (the religion of) art, necessarily precedes philosophy, ultimately *sophia*, as “highest divine service” or worship. Philosophy, that is, preserves the pictures without using them in circular fashion while interpreting them. Here too we see the continuity of Hegel’s thought within the hermeneutical frame up till today. In similar fashion the latter requires for its continued validity preservation of a developing understanding of Hegel, to which the present work would contribute. *It was once similarly necessary for Thomas Aquinas to recall Aristotle for thought to continue to progress.* Thus, too, Hegel himself recalls Hume (*via* Kant), though this is not so often noticed. He refers to “the Scotch philosophers”, though this was

¹⁷⁷ For exposition of Poinsoot’s semiotic and its application to contemporary discussion see especially the work of John Deely, for example his *Introducing Semiotic*, Bloomington 1982 or “How Language Refers”, in *Studi Internazionali di Filosofia*, 1972. See also my article, “John of St. Thomas”, in *Dictionary of Metaphysics and Ontology*, ed. Barry Smith & Hans Burkhardt, Philosophia Verlag, Munich 1991.

¹⁷⁸ In eucharistic theology the consecrated bread (and wine) is sometimes concluded to as being a “sign of itself”; cf. Abbot Ansgar Vonier, *A Key to the Doctrine of the Eucharist* (in *Collected Works*, published in the 1920s); cp. Matthew Levering, “Metaphysics and Contemporary Sacramental Theology: Retrieving Ansgar Vonier, O.S.B.’s *A Key to the Doctrine of the Eucharist*”, in *Indubitanter ad veritatem: Studies offered to Leo J. Elders SVD*, ed. Jürgen Vijgen, Uitgeverij DAMON Budel (Netherlands) 2003, pp. 281-301.

not an epithet in which Hume particularly rejoiced. After Hegel came Newman's *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* of 1845, important for theology in particular and yet in itself, consciously or otherwise, an instance of the Hegelian logic of the retention as necessary fundament for present conclusions of what is otherwise "cancelled". The true requires the false, as he puts it, rebutting Frege's "logical Manicheism" (Peter Geach's phrase), though otherwise anticipating the Fregean "level" of thought and, in particular, questioning, in advance.

Aquinas continues, with explicit adherence to Augustine (how far his own concise account represents further development of Augustinian prolixity on the Trinity is not to my knowledge a question that has often been explicitly addressed):

Augustine says (*On the Trinity*, VII, 11): "The Son alone is the image of the Father". ... The Greek doctors usually say that the Holy Spirit is the image both of the Father and of the Son, but the Latin doctors attribute to the Son alone the name "image".¹⁷⁹

There we have again that use of "attribute" to indicate a certain distance of reserve which we noted above. Yet theology cannot, after all, aim at much more than the right way to speak. In that way the Christian religion has contributed directly to the distinctive sophistications of modern and still more contemporary philosophy, the derivative ground having been laid within Scholasticism itself, following upon Patristics. Yet more direct and more original were the self-improvements of philosophy itself practised by Plato with Aristotle following on. We should note, though, that the citations of Augustine in Aquinas's theological works far outnumber those of Aristotle. Aquinas continues:

For in the canonical Scripture it is only found as applied to the Son, as to the words: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of creatures" (*Colossians* 1, 15); and also: "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the figure of his substance" (*Hebrews* 1: 3).¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁹ Aquinas, *Summa theol.* I, 35, 2, *sed contra* and c: *Sed contra est quod Augustinus dicit 7 de Trin., cap. 11, quod solus Filius est imago Patris.* ...

Doctores Graecorum communiter dicunt Spiritum Sanctum esse imaginem Patris et Filii, sed doctores Latini soli Filio attribuunt nomen "imaginis".

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 35, 2 c: *Non enim invenitur in canonical Scriptura, nisi de Filio; dicitur enim Coloss. 1, 15: Qui est imago Dei invisibilis, primogenitus omnis creaturae: et ad Hebr. 1, 3: Qui, cum sit splendor gloriae, et figura substantiae ejus.*

Aquinas clarifies further when replying to an objection (*ad 3*) to the above:

A thing may be an image in two ways. In one way as of the same specific nature, as the image of the king is found in his son. In another way as when it is something of a different nature, as the king's image on the coin. In the first way the Son is the image of the Father; in the second way man is called the image of God; and to express the imperfect character of the divine image in man, man is not merely called the image, but "to the image", whereby there is expressed a certain motion of tendency to perfection. But we cannot say that the Son of God is "to the image" because he is the perfect image of the Father.¹⁸¹

The first way is the "perfect image", then, and we will find that as regards the second way, of "imperfect image", the imperfection lies rather, or at bottom, in *our* perception, in, that is to say, the quality of our self-consciousness. If, then, we keep our gaze fixed upon God, upon the Idea, we see the necessity of the image as entailed by absolute knowledge as, in procession of Spirit, of mind (*Geist*), conceptually engulfing self-consciousness in preserving and fulfilling it. For this is what the pronoun "I", as it is found in the various languages, attempts to express, as it naturally expands to the I AM or the name of God which is not a name, is particular as being "the universal of universals".

As St. Thomas himself explains in his treatise (on the Trinity), the self-knowing image must know self as must its begetter or, rather, principle (*principium*), its utterance as being uttered by another. I do everything", literally, "that pleases him", from which it accordingly proceeds, by the very nature or requirement of infinity, as being the same as the other, or the object which is subject. "I and my father are one. He that has seen me has seen the father". Otherness, that is, must be in the Concept, must be found in God, as the same. Aquinas and Hegel are at one here. The Word loses nothing, absolutely nothing, in its procession, its generation from, its signification of, whence it comes. It is and has to be, can only be, a personal proceeding, in the stock theological terminology. It is in this sense that the Trinity "belongs to the philosophical order", as we found Van Riet expressing it. Hence we

¹⁸¹ Aquinas, *Ibid.* I, q. 35, 2, *ad 3um*: *imago alicuius dupliciter in aliquo invenitur: - uno modo in re ejusdem naturae secundum speciem, ut imago regis invenitur in filio suo: - alio modo in re alterius naturae, sicut imago regis invenitur in denario. - Primo autem modo Filius est imago Patris: - secundo autem modo dicitur homo imago Dei: et ideo ad designandam in homine imperfectionem imaginis, homo non designatur. Sed de Filio in perfectionem solum dicitur imago, sed ad imaginem, per quod motus quidam Dei non potest dici quod sit ad imaginem, quia est perfecta Patris imago.*

find inklings of it, as we would expect, in the pre-Christian monotheistic writings and similarly in poetry and art generally. So what is first proposed in religion is discovered, *thereupon*, to belong to the philosophical order, whether or not we find ourselves bound to it by faith. It is indeed a little puzzling to find Van Riet writing that what we know or understand we can no longer merely believe. I take this as applying to our eternal condition, to speak thus, which is the condition of faith as such as swallowed up in love or “charity”. Hence it is more usually said, as applying to religious or Christian praxis in this here and now finite life, as by Augustine for instance, that faith is perfected progressively in growth of understanding, its fruit. So Augustine says that even or especially if he understood perfectly the essence of the proclamation (gospel) he would still accept it in faith on the authority of the community or church, *ecclesia*, the assembly of those “called out” (Hebrew *qahal*) from “the world”, or “chosen”, again, as Hegel brings out for his part too, as a necessity of election, in some sense at least, even as the incarnation, to be manifested at all, must be of one person and as one person, even if “standing for” all. Surprising, I note in passing, is that where Aquinas considers whether the finite nature assumed might have been nature taken more abstractly or generally, or even that of an animal, he does not, as I recall, enquire whether it might, as individual as it indeed is and/or was, be or have been a female or, as human, feminine nature.

This recalls us to St. Thomas’s distinction here, between the mediator and us, which some commentators would accuse Hegel of merely neglecting, making the incarnation too all-embracing. To which one might simply reply by asking what is the head without the body. As the priestly prayer quoted shows, those who “believe”, and baptism is the communally given expression of this, the entry by death into Spirit, as Hegel puts it, are “in” as “putting on” Christ (the baptismal robe used in many rites of baptism). This awareness of “the whole Christ” (Mersch) or “mystical body” is the body, is He, “where the eagles are gathered together”, a somewhat wry image on the speaker’s part perhaps. Recall here Hegel’s warning not to confuse the beginnings of Christianity with its notion, with the Notion itself, as it would then be, not to stay behind at “what the actual human being [incarnating the divine Spirit] has spoken”.

This reversion to the primitive is based on the instinct to get at the notion, the ultimate principle; but it confuses the origin, in the sense of the immediate existence of the first historical appearance, with the simplicity of the notion. By thus impoverishing the life of spirit, by clearing away the idea of the communion and its action with regard to its idea, there arises, therefore, not the notion, but bare externality and particularity, merely the historical manner in which spirit once upon a time appeared, the soulless recollection of a

presumably (*gemeinten*) individual historical figure and its past. (*Phenomenology of Mind*, Baillie version 1967, p. 765).

It indeed follows from Hegel's general philosophical position, its logic, that anyone whose religious certainty, so to say, depends upon certainty as to the empirical factuality of, say, the life of Christ on earth dateable from around 8 BC to 29 AD or however it is estimated, has "not understood his religion", understanding of this being what Hegel, knowingly or unknowingly following in the footsteps of Augustine and Aquinas (his "seven-league boots"¹⁸², may seem at times, to himself or others, to fit awkwardly into such footsteps) is giving. For this is dependence upon empiricism as such as a mind-set or immediate position, no doubt catered to frequently in Scripture but not universally or as "matter of principle", being rather simply the immediate, which Hegel teaches is the first attitude philosophy has to overcome, to invert indeed.

¹⁸² Cf. his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, when referring to medieval philosophy in general (cited a shade disapprovingly in Joseph Pieper's *Scholasticism*, originally *Scholastik*, Munich, Kösel-Verlag, 1960).

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

SPIRIT

We come then to the third divine person, the Holy Spirit, in Aquinas, whence we will be led back to some further consideration of the notions involved, always with one eye upon the development of these themes in Hegel. The third person “proceeds by way of love”, whereas the Word proceeds by way of knowledge. Aquinas’s flat identifications here underline again how close is Augustinian thought, or possibly Pauline or Johannine, to Hegel’s own yet more explicit (but is not this “more” itself an error of perspective?) unfolding of the mystery in terms of logical system, i.e. logic’s own system, as it presents itself, whereby the supremacy of love or *Volition* (*Enc.* 233-235, *beta*) over “*Cognition proper*” (226-232, *alpha*) is clearly posited as placed next or nearer in the Advance to the Absolute Idea, although *within* the subdivision of Cognition in General (*b*), which stands in the middle between Life (*a*, 216-222) as the *immediate* Idea and, finally, the Absolute Idea (*c*), 236-244, where the whole of “The Science of Logic”, as first part of the *Encyclopaedia*, ends, as does this third part, C, THE IDEA (213 to end), succeeding upon A, THE SUBJECTIVE NOTION (160-193) and B, THE OBJECT (194-212) within this third section of the Logic or III, *THE DOCTRINE OF THE NOTION*, succeeding upon II, *THE DOCTRINE OF ESSENCE* (112-159), which follows upon as deriving, in what is Advance, from I, *THE DOCTRINE OF BEING* (84-111). Paragraphs 1 to 18 are thus an Introduction to the whole *Encyclopaedia* in its 577 paragraphs. Paragraphs 19 to 84, consequently, stand separately as including a “Preliminary Notion” of this science (19-25), the following (26-78) more or less lifted from an earlier work of Hegel’s and called by Hegel a “survey” of “three attitudes to objectivity”, by no means purely historical, however, though he calls it “historical and inferential in its method” (25). Paragraphs 79 to 83 comprise the section “Logic further Defined and Divided”. As thus set forth the plan of the work is given here as in the latest editions of the German original.¹⁸³

¹⁸³ E.g. *G.W.F. Hegel, Hauptwerke 6: Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften*

It can seem strange to find Love, i.e. Volition (but compare *Enc.* 159), included within a presentation of the Science of Logic. It follows immediately, however, upon Hegel's noetic, within which, the accepted noetic, anyone's account of logic, to be complete, has to be placed. Here volition belongs to cognition, namely, as "conative", to use a term lately in vogue. Otherwise the notion of formality, as instanced in the directing phrase "formal logic", gets hopelessly misunderstood, misrepresented rather, thus distorting the whole substance of this science. Cognition "proper" gives way, yields, simply to cognition's own perfect form, volition, as Hegel, following a long philosophical development not merely his own, claims. The connecting notion, between cognition and will, is union, unity even, as expressed finally in "the Absolute Idea", whether in itself or as forming the final section of the work at hand.

Knowledge and love thus together make up spirit (*Geist*). Nor is love, volition, simply to be identified with affectivity, as *Enc.* 159, otherwise a fine guide to the whole here, can suggest. Love is more than "feeling" or *Empfindung*, while it is only our "imperfect knowledge" which must fail or disappear according to St. Paul's famous text (I *Cor.* 13). For then, rather, he goes on, "I shall know as I am known", while Hegel aims at nothing less than this. Hence he places love, volition, under Cognition (cf. *Enc.* 225). The parallel of knowledge and love with the Theoretical and Practical "action" or "activity" "of the idea", which Hegel cites, is not all that illuminating, unless we note his reference to the "instinct of the Good" to fulfil "the instinct of science after truth", unless, that is, we read the whole paragraph 225 concerning Cognition in general as superseding the contrast of subjectivity and objectivity, "infected with the finitude of this sphere", presenting, it is implied, knowledge and instinct or feeling (*Empfindung* rather) as a "split", just as theory, identified by Aristotle as itself "highest practice", and practice are often mindlessly split. The cognitive process *supersedes* subjectivity "by receiving the existing world into itself", into subjective connection and thought as itself an "objectivity" filling up "the abstract certitude of itself" as cognitive process, as the idea realising in one "both itself and its other" as being "the certitude of the virtual identity between itself and the objective world".

Reason comes to the world with an absolute faith in its ability to make the identity actual, and to raise its certitude to truth; and with the instinct of realising explicitly the nullity of that contrast which it sees to be explicitly null (*Enc.* 224, cp. 50).

im Grundrisse (1830, 3rd edn., Heidelberg), Felix Meiner Verlag, Hamburg 1992 (2015).

Thus it is that Aquinas begins his sections on the Holy Spirit as third Trinitarian person:

... To signify the divine person who proceeds by way of love, this name “Holy Spirit” is suitable to him through Scriptural usage. The appropriateness of the name is seen in two ways. first, because the person called “Holy Spirit” has something in common with the other persons. For, as Augustine says (*On the Trinity* XV, 17; V, 11): “Because the Holy Spirit is common to both, he himself is called that properly which both are called in common. For the Father also is a spirit and the Son is a spirit; and the Father is holy and the Son is holy.”¹⁸⁴

Because Father and Son are equally spirit the Holy Spirit, who is the same as Spirit itself (*Geist*), is their “common spiration”. In the Gospel the Mediator or Christ speaks indifferently of himself, his father or both together *sending* the Spirit to the believer or community of believers, just as, equally, he says “we will come unto him and make our abode with him”, meaning himself and the Father but, equally, the Spirit (*Geist*) who “will teach you all things”. That is, it is clear that in some sense the coming or sending of the Spirit, called Pentecostal after the feast-day on which, according to record, it was mainly experienced by the Apostles, is that in which the whole divine act terminates or is completed. “If I go not away the Spirit will not come unto you”, a passage Hegel also treats as central. With this in mind it can look like lack of familiarity with the community’s worship and structure when McTaggart makes of this pre-eminence of Spirit, to which the first moments were in some way a means, an argument *against* any identity of Hegel’s system with Christian orthodoxy, since this its distinctive feature, the primacy of Spirit, is just the keystone of orthodoxy and of the dogmatic system in general. Only, in the “advance” to this final point the moments along the way are not lost but recapitulated as absorbed and explained (*aufgehoben*), so that here “the Cross shines forth in mystic glow” (from the Carolingian hymn, *Vexilla regis*, of Bishop Venantius Fortunatus, Tractarian translation).

¹⁸⁴ Aquinas, *Ibid.* I, 36, 1 c: *ad significandum divinam personam quae procedit per modum amoris, accommodatum est ex usu Scripturae hoc nomen “Spiritus Sanctus”. Et huius quidem convenientiae ratio sumi potest ex duobus – Primo quidem ex ipsa communitate ejus quod dicitur Spiritus Sanctus. Ut enim Augustinus dicit, 15 de Trinit., cap. 17, circa fin., et lib. 5, cap. 11, a med., quia Spiritus Sanctus communis est ambobus, id vocatur ipse proprie quod ambo communiter. Nam et Pater est spiritus, et Filius est spiritus, et Pater est sanctus, et Filius est sanctus.*

Here the unity in simplicity of God amid the diversity of relations is urged upon us, so I would cite now from three *quaestiones* further on in this treatise:

... It was shown previously (*q. 3, art. 3*) that the divine simplicity requires in God that essence be identical with *suppositum*, which is nothing else than person in intellectual beings. What is apparently difficult here is that with several persons, the essence keeps its unity. And as, according to Boethius (*On the Trinity*, 1), “relation multiplies the Trinity of persons”, some considered that in God essence and person differ, since they thought of the relations as “adjacent” (*assistentes*), seeing in relation only the notion of “reference to another” while forgetting that relations are also realities. But as previously shown, although in creatures relations inhere as accidents, in God they are the very essence. It follows that in God essence is not really distinct from person; and yet the persons are really distinguished from one another. For “person”, as, at *q. 29, art. 4*, was said above, signifies relation as subsisting in the divine nature. But “relation”, in reference to the essence, does not really differ from it, but only through our thinking about it; whereas in reference to an opposite relation, it is really distinct from it by virtue of the opposition. So there is one essence and there are three persons.¹⁸⁵

This is completely in accordance, or conversely, with Hegel’s affirmation that “God is the absolute person” and nonetheless three persons, *without equivocation*. One would only add that Aquinas considers the point more separately, the notion of a *Summa* as *doctrina* for “beginners” in fact entailing such separate treatment of a number of specific themes, of which “doctrine”, e.g. the logical, in Hegel’s *Encyclopaedia*, by contrast, is just one, being there considered rather than performed. Hence the magisterial or

¹⁸⁵ Aquinas, *Ibid.* I, 39, *art. 1, c: Ostensum est enim supra, quaest. 3, art. 3, quod divina simplicitas hoc requirit quod in Deo sit idem essentia et suppositum, quod in substantiis intellectualibus nihil est aliud quam persona. Sed difficultatem videtur ingerere quod multiplicatis personis divinis essentia retinet unitatem.*

Et quia, ut Boethius dicit, lib. 1 de Trin., non procul a fine, relatio multiplicat personarum trinitatem, posuerunt aliqui hoc modo in divinis differre essentiam et personam, quo et relationes dicebant esse assistentes, considerantes in relationibus solum quod ad alterum sunt, et non quod res sunt.

Sed sicut supra ostensum est, quaest. 28 art. 2, sunt relationes in rebus creatis, accidentaliter insunt, ita in Deo sunt ipsa essentia divina. Ex quo sequitur quod in Deo non sit aliud essentia quam persona secundum rem, - et tamen quod personae realiter ad invicem distinguantur. Persona enim, ut dictum est supra, qu. 29, art. 4, significat relationem prout est subsistens in natura divina. Relatio autem ad essentiam comparata non differt re, sed ratione tantum. Comparata autem ad oppositam relationem habet virtute oppositionis realem distinctionem. Et sic remanet una essentia, et tres personae.

teaching aspect is more pronounced in this work by Aquinas (it is but one of many quite different works, commentaries, treatises etc., explicit rather than implicit) than one could expect of the *paideia* indubitably still contained, but at a further “cyclic” step, in Hegel’s work, the express intention being more explicitly to demonstrate precisely this cyclic integrity of the ultimately trans-composite whole.

So Hegel is undoubtedly somewhat more “radical” here when he writes of “the pictorial thought of the religious communion” not being “this notional thinking” (*Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 767).¹⁸⁶ The latter is such thinking *because* it has logical necessity and it has this necessity *because* it has “the form of the notion”. There is a simple tie-up between essence and being, form and existence, this principle rules throughout. Meanwhile the Ontological Argument receives ever greater precision and accuracy, i.e. different *a priori* or “logical” arguments are formulated under this label. This, anyhow, explains why or how Augustine, Aquinas and others, following Johannine and Pauline and general evangelical precedent however, along with a wealth of earlier Biblical allusions, from the “wisdom” literature principally, naturally explain or, rather, in the first place arrive at Trinitarian formulations by way of concept-formation itself and this concept’s consideration of itself. This is the Son, as the religious communion, beginning with the Mediator himself, that “actual human being”, figuratively pictures him, by means of just this natural Father and Son relation but not only or exclusively that all the same; e.g.: “I and my father are one” (an affirmation regarded, in the records we have, themselves now defined as “sacred”, by some contemporaries opposing this Mediator as atheistic). This would declare the identity of self and other in the concept, though the element of logical necessity, the essential relation of all concept-formation as such, of every “word” (*verbum interius*) to judgment and syllogism as establishing it, the Concept, and carrying it further, is not as

¹⁸⁶ Nonetheless it is precisely “notional thinking” that Aquinas *presents* throughout, just as Hegel strives to exercise a teaching function, otherwise he would have kept his thoughts to himself, free of the “necessary picture-idea” that just *is* language. One can hardly say more on this point of their relation, whereby I imply that it is what this our book as a whole “says”, as it were encyclopaedically, it too, in a measure, this being specifically philosophical or logical “method” as Hegel expounds it. There is a sense, then, it has been truly said, in which Aquinas tends to write of philosophers as being as such “a defunct class”, though it was principally he who became identifiable as the “moment” of setting in motion the identification of Christian theology, though still called “dogmatic” by its official proclaimers, with “first” philosophy worked through to its ultimate or “last” moment or, more truly, to the Idea absorbing and “cancelling” (Hegel) all such moments..

such emphasised in the believing and worshipping community as a whole, nor could it be, though they never abstract from it, from the alpha and omega annually affirmed at the Easter Vigil, say, or identified by the daily “this is my body”, *mysterium fidei*, an expression, set precisely to demystify “mystery”, of faith as the virtue in its substance “overcoming the world”, not least in the revitalising of philosophy as begun by Ss. Paul and John, though more in the literary or personal manner of Plato than that of the Academy he founded. “Go and *teach* all nations”. This affirmation, faith, as infinitely perfectible *sophia*, dominates the New Testament writings, destined to be included in Scripture, called “holy” as “the new law” *fulfilling* the old, of love of God above all things, also expressed, by Christ, as “Love one another *as I have loved you*”, a qualification finally identifying, but without reduction, active and passive love. “We love God because God loved us” (Epistle of John), i.e. love is what love bestows, cause and effect identified, as we find systematised in Hegel’s logic, hence, as the closing pages of its first or “greater” version make clear, “the true Being”, in fulfilment of the Anselmian innovation, itself though recalling the Scriptural theme: “Which of you, by taking thought, can add one cubit to his stature?”. There is an implicit contrast there, but with what unless with that which *is* just *as* thought, the Idea, as Hegel identifies it. This is the Concept with which each of its “parts” is identical (*Enc.* 160), actually the approved method of Scripture-reading in “mystical” interpretation, with which “orthodoxy stands or falls” (J.H. Newman), whereby God or the Spirit is to be sought and found in every turn of Scriptural phrase, in every relating of one such to another, obliterating the distinction between Old and New in its very positing. It *is* “the unity returned into itself” (see the citation below). Thus, in speaking of parts, though, we descend from the Trinitarian, our first instance, to any relation whatever. Hence it is that any object (of a possible relation) is actually only known absolutely as an idea which is one with thought as such and not merely thought “as a whole”, as if composite.¹⁸⁷

“Simple essential Being” is an “abstract meaning”, such as Spirit in itself, “in the element of pure thought”, is not. It has rather “the meaning of Absolute Spirit”:

Yet Spirit consists, not in being a meaning, not in being the inner, but in being the actual, the real. “Simple eternal essential Being” would, therefore, be Spirit merely in empty phrase, if we remained at the level of pictorial thought, and went no further than the expression of “simple eternal essential Being”. “Simple essential Being”, however, because it is abstraction, is in point of fact the inherently negative, is indeed the negativity of reflective thought, or

¹⁸⁷ Cf. Aquinas, *Ibid.* I, 15, on “divine ideas”, all three articles.

negativity as found in Being *per se*; i.e. it is absolute distinction from itself, is pure process of becoming its other. *Qua* essential Being, it is merely implicit, or for us: but since this purity of form is just abstraction or negativity, it is *for itself*, it is the self, the notion. It is thus objective; and since pictorial thinking apprehends and expresses as an event what has just been expressed as the *necessity* of the notion, it will be said that the eternal Being begets for itself an other. (pp. 766-7)

This, of course, is immediately corrected in theology when it is said that the Father is nothing other than this actual begetting, *is* the relation as the relation *is* he, which rather proves Hegel's point:

But in this otherness, it has likewise, *ipso facto*, returned into itself again; for the distinction is distinction in itself, i.e. the distinction is directly distinguished merely from itself, and is thus the unity returned into itself.

The thought here is difficult, but necessary. There are and can be no real or particular distinctions, as they would necessarily be particular, if real, in the divine or infinite, but only the relations of opposition, as Aquinas puts it, e.g. that the Father is not the Son, nor the Son the Father, yet, or just therefore, "I and my father are one". Without such opposite relationality *in the divine or absolute*, i.e. absolutely, simple Being remains an inertly negative and even particular concept:

There are thus three moments to be distinguished: Essential Being; explicit Self-existence, which is the express otherness of essential Being, and for which that being is object; and Self-existence or Self-knowledge *in* that other.

Note that these three moments do not yet mention the procession of Spirit (see the next paragraph, in *The Phenomenology of Mind*, as cited below, after the following):

The essential Being (Hegel continues: p. 767) beholds only itself in its Self-existence, in its objective otherness. In thus emptying itself, in this kenosis, it is merely within itself: the independent Self-existence which excludes itself from essential Being is the knowledge of itself on the part of essential Being. It is the "Word", the Logos, which when spoken empties the speaker of himself, outwardizes him, and leaves him behind emptied, but is as immediately perceived, and only this act of self-perceiving himself is the actual existence of the "Word". Hence, then, the distinctions which are set up are just as immediately resolved as they are made, and are just as directly made as they are resolved, and the truth and the reality consist precisely in this self-closed circular process.

Hegel makes a couple of substantive if implicit theological points here, most strikingly in adopting the Greek word *kenosis*, emptying, always referred otherwise, and that exclusively, to the celebrated Pauline text, that the Son, though he was equal to the Father, “emptied himself” and, being found as or taking the form of man, “became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, wherefore God has exalted him and given the name which is above all names”, i.e. his own as *kyrios*, Lord, so that all should worship him. The implication here in Hegel, however, is that such incarnation is necessary reflex of the *eternal emptying of the Father* as speaker, first of all, i.e. before that of the other persons (note that the “proper” but missing name that Aquinas suggests as suiting the third person, too, is “gift”, *donum*) in what becomes mutual towards one another. Once more Hegel’s Scotist ancestry is apparent¹⁸⁸. Scotus saw the incarnation as necessary, whether or not there was a “fall” or *felix culpa*. What we are getting here, anyhow, is Hegel’s Trinitarian profession, arising naturally out of his whole philosophy at this developmental point. I cite, then:

This movement within itself expresses the absolute Being *qua* Spirit. Absolute Being, when not grasped as Spirit, is merely the abstract void, just as spirit which is not grasped as this process is merely an empty word. Since its moments are grasped *purely as* moments, they are notions in restless activity, which *are* merely in being inherently their own opposite, and in finding their rest in the whole. But the pictorial thought of the religious communion is not this notional thinking; it has the content without its necessity; and instead of the form of the notion it brings into the realm of pure consciousness the natural relations of Father and Son. Since it thus, even when thinking, proceeds by way of figurative ideas, absolute Being is indeed revealed to it, but the moments of this Being, owing to this [externally] synthetic pictorial thinking, partly fall of themselves apart from one another, so that they are not related to each other through their own very notion, while, partly again, this figurative thinking retreats from the pure object it deals with, and takes up a merely external relation towards it. The object is externally revealed to it from an

¹⁸⁸ Cf. E. Gilson, *On Being and Some Philosophers*, PIMS, Toronto 1952, for insightful identification of this general Scotist tendency, which Gilson presents negatively, as if in preferential loyalty to Aquinas rather than as finding the thought of the earlier thinker fulfilled or continued in this process. Or, in singling out what might seem negative, where Thomist *analogia entis* is concerned (hence Gilson’s title), for example, the distinctive Scotist theological gains, which Hegel perhaps unknowingly inherits, are downplayed or ignored. Scotus claims not to know (*nescio*) any act of being (*actus essendi*) while Hegel identifies the act which *is* the Concept, is Thought, Absolute Knowing, as itself “the true Being” (GL, final page), surely Aquinas’s position.

alien source, and in this thought of Spirit it does not recognize its own self, does not recognize the nature of pure self-consciousness.¹⁸⁹

The remedy in the community for this deficiency of the necessary theological “picture” is taken generally in this community as being prayer, meditation, contemplation ultimately, of which latter philosophy is itself a species, the common genus being *sophia*, of itself offered to all in an at least potentially universal esotericism, or so it may be at first seen, though the negative is ever needed, as is the “all” of which, of whom, it is prayed that it, that all, “may be one”, even alienated nature as a whole, however, being here included although entirely as found within “the beauty of the bodies of the redeemed”, according to Aquinas (*Summa theol., Suppl.*). “It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body” (St. Paul).

But the text in which Hegel’s fusion of the doctrine of Incarnation with that of the Trinity, and assuredly it must fuse, just as it is fused in the Gospel accounts, most notably in the Fourth Gospel’s Prologue, though even here the union of the two strands becomes visible precisely as composite by the use of the neutral conjunction “and”, generally avoided by Hegel (“and the Word was made flesh”), this text, I say, is the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, Part III, “The Absolute Religion”, where these deal with these two Church dogmas, although by no means exclusively as such. What Hegel highlights is the impossibility of God’s becoming man as any kind of afterthought, which might indeed seem to endorse Scotus over Augustine and Aquinas. This impression, however, is little more than that and to make it more than that could well be an error in perspective both historical and philosophical, no one affirming more forthrightly than Aquinas that God as infinite, as infinity, does not have afterthoughts. This becomes clearer if we consider Hegel’s own account of the *felix culpa*, posited, represented as we might say, by Aquinas as the immediate “cause” or motive for divine incarnation as man but with the divine remaining as “cause of all causes”, including this one, as he elsewhere makes clear.

For Hegel, then, in the wake of Hume and Kant, the category itself of causality is by no means absolute. It does not, that is to say, belong finally to logic as the Idea, since it is just within such logic that it is transcended towards the Doctrine of the Notion¹⁹⁰. Secondly, within Hegel’s system of thought the fault itself, human error or “sin” (Greek *hamartia* in the sense, “rather”, of missing the target¹⁹¹), is a necessary property of finitude as such,

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.* pp. 767-8.

¹⁹⁰ *Enc.* 153f.

¹⁹¹ This term is used throughout the Greek writings of the “New Testament” (also in the Greek Septuagint version of the Old?), rather than the original Hebrew word, for

simultaneously as, from the Thomistic viewpoint, there is no clash, but identity rather, between divine or absolute necessity and (absolute) freedom. Viewed thus the incarnation then becomes seen, “redemption” itself does so, namely, as liberation from abstract finitude. The upshot of this view, as it has passed into modern philosophy though not always with full consciousness of how this came about, is the doctrine, almost slogan, that man is that being naturally born to transcend himself, transcend his nature by this very nature namely. Behind, as implied in this, lies the whole denial of absolute fixity of substance within the empirical realm of “appearance”, to which just mind itself as a phenomenon (i.e. “subjective” appearance) is referred. In the one absolute Substance both motion and rest, as opposites, are sublated, *aufgehoben*, and the true Being is found at the end of the process from which the Absolute Idea results, as “its own” result, however, having first occurred or posited itself abstractly as precisely the negation of thought or the Idea, Hegel claims.

In this crucible of philosophic or “sapiential” thought Nature herself disappears as, in her immediate state, nothing other than *the* negatively differentiated moment of the necessary advance from thought in a measure abstract or logical to Mind in its own self-determinative nature or to Spirit (*Geist*). It is in this sense that God must, so to say, “begin” as man. That is to say, he is successively revealed, not primarily to man, as we have this in religion, but, as religion’s deeper meaning, he is revealed to himself as being himself “revelation itself” and nothing else, just as, mirroring this, there is, e.g. for the Thomists, nothing other than Being, nothing in any abstract and hence exclusive sense of “other”. Otherness, rather, is or has to be, conceptually, in God himself, in Being, therefore, as infinite. This otherness, in the first place, is what is spoken of in religion, confessedly “pictorially”, as God’s, ultimately “the Father’s” (as “principle”), Son. It is thus the Evil, evil itself, which the Son overcomes precisely as “made sin for us”. This is the faith-background to the dialectic of Good and Evil in the chapter we have been considering. >It is in fact here, therefore, that the idea of “beyond good and evil” first becomes thematised in philosophy, whether Nietzsche

“sin”, having its roots in purely ritual error, of which, however, disobedience (for which the prophet condemned, indeed deposed, King Saul: he failed to kill enemy civilians or destroy their property) might well be seen as the chief, as being a kind of interface between ritual error and discriminatory or ethical “morality”, such as the term “sin” itself indeed reflects. Either way, though, one sins “against” God, thus erring to one’s own disadvantage, the material “objectivity” of this sin, rooted in ritual demand though it be, as prior, in historical consciousness, to questions of knowledge *vis à vis* ignorance (as in the crassly finite legal adage, “ignorance of the law is no excuse”).

himself grasped this fact or not. In *The Phenomenology of Mind* Hegel further relates this to the necessary differentiation of Evil from Good in that order specifically rather than in the more usual contrary form (differentiation of Good from Evil). Evil thus becomes identical with all that is not God, hence *is not* at all ultimately, or it becomes identical with finitude, such that, in a sense, it would then follow, evil is then “just not evil”, nor goodness good specifically, he says, but not as merely making a comment on the use of terms, note well. At stake, rather, is whether good and evil, this pair, constitute an objection to the unity of opposites (transcending “the soulless term *is*”) governing his whole metaphysics. *Ratio est ad opposita, natura est determinata ad unum* (Aquinas).

This whole category, or categorial pair, is assumed into the Idea, just as, as constituted there even, in the (science of) Logic. So Hegel concludes that, necessarily, “there is evil in God”, in Spirit, where, as is the case with death itself, it is “overcome” in its essentially “absolute sham-existence of negativity in itself”¹⁹². So, as Hegel baldly states, “death is the entry into Spirit”. This all-transcending view becomes most apparent in the closing pages of these *Lectures*. This, he claims, is what is meant by the separation of the soul from the body in Christian religion, rather than an intrusion of finite dualism ultimately suffocating religion. “Body”, Aquinas declared in one of his Aristotelian commentaries, is not a metaphysical term, adding that it is only of interest to logicians. A modern “saint”, not learned in such matters, confirmed this, by implication, on her deathbed:

It’s not ‘death’ that will come in search of me, it’s God. Death isn’t some phantom, some horrible spectre, as it is represented in pictures. It is said in the catechism that ‘death is the separation of the soul from the body’ and that is all it is.¹⁹³

¹⁹² *Enc. 35, Zus.*

¹⁹³ *St. Thérèse of Lisieux: her Last Conversations*, ICS Publications, Institute of Carmelite Studies, Washington DC, 1977, p. 41. Catechism are not works of philosophy. Thérèse takes as read the nothingness of the body. Compare Christ’s “Fear not those who kill the body but have no power to hurt the soul”, i.e. even in that very same act, or St. Paul’s “It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body”, hence one with the spirit. By this the soul, as mind ultimately, is not a “part” of the man, nor, impossibly is man exclusively an animating soul. As in Aristotle the final form excludes, as absorbing, all others, even the Scotistic *forma corporeitatis*. The other ways of speaking we encounter in religion hence fall under representation (*Vorstellung*) as categories of expression (not of thought precisely). This is why the risen body of Christ, as St. Thomas has to declare, is not carried about when the sacrament, which yet *is* his body, is He, rather, is carried about in procession. Nothing else, in fact, can lie behind Christ’s discourses (*John 6*) on his

Behind this lies the nothingness of natural and finite things, “the body”, in their abstract separation from the Absolute Idea as this is proclaimed in Absolute Idealism, of which the doctrine of “creation” is, accordingly, regarded by Hegel as a “picture”, just as the Word of God is a picture as immediately occurring, word being naturally separated from its speaker, as in God it is not, the opposition of principle (Father) and Word being due only to a relation of *self*-procession, as we have been noting here as taught by Aquinas and, we claim, Hegel, while only “in God” do we or anything have our being or live. This is why Hegel sees creation, as normally taken, as a picture, contradicted, however, by the theological and sapiential statement that creation adds nothing to, marks or makes no change in, God.¹⁹⁴ “Movement can neither come into being, nor cease to be; nor can time come into being, or cease to be.”¹⁹⁵ They are thus as concepts entirely self-cancelling.

So, again, Hegel asserts, with striking assurance: “Death is the entry into Spirit”, though the further meaning of this entry is left unclear.¹⁹⁶ The “ruin of the individual” is anyhow seen as effected by the Concept itself. This is made abundantly clear, while Hegel states, as concluding the section on Life (*Enc.* 222): “The death of merely immediate and individual vitality is the ‘procession’ of spirit”, use of this term (*Hervorgehen*, in itself a shade more

flesh and blood as meat and drink indeed, the living water after which one will never thirst again (*John* 4). Understand spiritual things spiritually, St. Paul teaches, and not as babies. This I submit to the judgment of and correction by the Church, concerning whose teaching I deny and would deny nothing, as being myself in conscience not merely an but the (“it is useless to count”) “aboriginal vicar of Christ” (Newman), just like, though with difference, Pope Pius IX (*l’église c’est moi*). Here I would but reflect Hegel’s teaching of the Concept, whereby all is each and each is all, as *Athanasius contra mundum*, first premise of true ecumenism as final selflessness, *of course* “open to correction”.

¹⁹⁴ When agonising, in 1963, over how the soul “separated” for a season from the body could manage to know or think anything our teacher, Fr. Edmund Hill OP, an accredited theologian, remarked, in a written aside, “Well God has to, so it can’t be all that difficult”. Implicit here, I now see, in this Thomist thinker (even if he maybe didn’t), as in St. Thérèse (cited above), was the absolute idealism natural to the religious mind. Here one can, to some extent at least, let Aristotle’s metaphysics (as in Books VII to IX) “absorb”, or “cancel” in the sense of transcend (*aufheben*) the account given in his *physics* of the soul (*De anima*).

¹⁹⁵ Aristotle, *Metaph.* 1071b.

¹⁹⁶ According to Hobbes, again, “we shall no sooner know it than enjoy it”. Certainty as to this is, it seems plausible, the root of Hegelian sobriety.

positive than the English term) recalling, deliberately or not, the Trinitarian processions.

So simple abstract being is quite simply not “being *qua* being”. If we stop there we do not get a true *picture* even. Hence it is not serviceable for religion but not for spiritual life as a whole either. Hence it is discounted by apophatic mysticism, the point about which becomes just therefore that it is apophatic through and through, a “cloud of unknowing”, a “ray of darkness”, yet, ultimately, the Absolute Idea, in whom or which all else is known precisely as being nothing else. In God is light and in him there is no darkness at all”, as there would be if I or you stood over against him, for example. We are all one *in* the Idea, whether apart from or “in” that knowledge. No other position holds up, this is the claim, especially for the practitioners of religion (mediating form of Absolute Spirit) in its as near as can be absolute form.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

AQUINAS AS CONFESSIOAL THEOLOGIAN

Let us return now to Aquinas's thirteenth century confessedly theological account, in the sense of an avowedly confessional theology, of the Holy Spirit:

... To signify the divine person who proceeds by way of love, this name "Holy Spirit" is suitable to him through scriptural usage. The appropriateness of the name is seen in two ways. First, because the person called "Holy Spirit" has something in common with the other persons. For, as Augustine says (*On the Trinity* XV, 17; V, 11): "Because the Holy Spirit is common to both, he himself is called that property which both are called in common. For the Father also is spirit and the Son is spirit; and the Father is holy and the Son is holy." Second, from the proper signification of the name. For in bodily things the name "spirit" apparently signifies impulse and motion; for we give the name "spirit" to breath and wind. Now, love moves and urges the lover's will toward the beloved. Moreover, holiness is attributed to whatever is directed to God. So because the divine person proceeds by way of the love by which God is loved, that person is most properly named the "holy Spirit". (*Summa theol.* I, 36, 1)¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁷ Aquinas: *Summa theol.* I, 36, 1: *ad significandum divinam personam quae procedit per modum amoris, accommodatum est ex usu Scripturae hoc nomen, "Spiritus Sanctus". Et huius quidem convenientiae ratio sumi potest ex duobus. – Primo quidem ex ipsa communitate ejus quod dicitur Spiritus Sanctus. Ut enim Augustinus dicit, 15 de Trin., cap. 17, circa fin., et lib. 5, cap. 11, a med., quia Spiritus Sanctus communis est ambobus, id vocatur ipse proprie quod ambo communiter. Nam et Pater est spiritus, et Filius est spiritus, et Pater est sanctus, et Filius est sanctus. – Secundo vero ex propria significatione. Nam nomen spiritus in rebus corporeis impulsionem quamdam et motionem significare videtur; nam flatum et ventum, Spiritum nominamus. Est autem proprium amoris quod moveat et impellat voluntatem amantis in amatum. Sanctitas vero illis rebus attribuitur quae in Deum ordinantur. Quia igitur persona divina procedit per modum amoris, quo Deus amatur, convenienter Spiritus Sanctus nominatur.* There seems no warrant in Augustine's original (or Aquinas's citation of him) for inserting the indefinite article in English translation before "spirit" a s twice used here: *Nam et Pater est spiritus, et Filius est spiritus*, as is found in some translations.

He has more to say on the choice of term:

Although this name “Holy Spirit” does not indicate a relation, yet it substitutes for a relative term one suitable to signify a person distinct from the others by relation only. Yet one can see a relation in this term by considering the Holy Spirit as being breathed (*spiratus*).¹⁹⁸

Aquinas, then, distinguishes, as so to say the Holy Spirit’s self-distinction as a “procession of love” as thus distinct from and indeed other than that “emanation of intellect” or “procession through intellect’s emanation” which is “called the Son” and “called begetting” (34, *ad 2* as cited above). What is it that is “missing” as distinct from what Hegel adds and why is the latter not merely “important” but valid? For Aquinas, to attempt now to answer this, the three persons appear (are revealed) successively *in time* as what are pictured as separate divine “missions”, i.e. sendings, even though the whole burden of his account of the divine nature as absolute and infinite either excludes such a possibility or, rather, indicates that in treating of this mystery, viz. the Trinity, as of much else, one’s thinking itself has to proceed by way of “picturing”.

But the pictorial thought of the religious communion is not this notional thinking; it has the content without its necessity; and instead of the form of the notion it brings into the realm of pure consciousness the natural relations of Father and Son. Since it thus, even when thinking, proceeds by way of figurative ideas, absolute Being is indeed revealed to it, but the moments of this Being, owing to this [externally] synthetic pictorial thinking, partly fall of themselves apart from one another, so that they are not related to each other through their very own notion, while, partly again, this figurative thinking retreats from the pure object it deals with, and takes up a merely external relation towards it.¹⁹⁹

It is in this sense that it remains a “mystery” where it should rather take over the mind as *an enlightenment*, the true one, this sense of enlightenment being surely what is breathed throughout the “new testament”, the new witnessing. One might say that Hegel is begging St. Thomas to bring together the two treatises, viz. *De Deo uno* and *De Deo trino*, whether or not or however much he was familiar with these same texts specifically. A

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, *ad 2um*: *licet hoc quod dico Spiritus Sanctus relative non dicatur, tamen pro relativo ponitur, in quantum est accommodatum ad significandum personam sola ratione ab aliis distinctam. Potest tamen intelligi in nomine aliqua relatio, si Spiritus Sanctus intelligatur quasi spiratus.*

¹⁹⁹ Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind* (tr. Baillie), pp. 767-768.

certain return to Augustine, after the Thomistic differentiation, might be seen to be making also of this integration a *reintegration*, a being ever led back to the pure and primary evangelical or Pauline “end in the beginning”, this circling motion, however, needing to be ever distinguished from that “reversion to the primitive” which also Hegel identifies as erroneous:

This reversion to the primitive is based on the instinct to get at the notion, the ultimate principle; but it confuses the origin, in the sense of the immediate existence of the first historical appearance, with the simplicity of the notion. By thus impoverishing the life of spirit, by clearing away the idea of the communion and its action with regard to its idea, there arises, therefore, not the notion, but bare externality and particularity, merely the historical manner in which spirit once upon a time appeared, the soulless recollection of a presumably (*gemeinten*) individual historical figure and its past. (Hegel, *op. cit.*, pp. 764-5).

One might question the translation of *gemeinten* here as “presumably”, inasmuch as Hegel’s presumption is precisely towards the unreality of the historical *as such* as compared to the notional or philosophical, the latter being the correct way, as he elsewhere makes explicit, to approach “the life of spirit”. He is not here concerned or in line with the future finite speculations concerning “the historical Jesus”, a discussion he totally transcends, remarking in one place that anyone who makes the truth of, say, the resurrection dependent (i.e. merely or exclusively) upon historical “fact” does not understand his religion. The “third day” is conceived, and even divinely spoken of, in religion, as within our picture or representation (*Vorstellung*) of days and their successiveness. “With the Lord a thousand years is as a day”, while the Christ is thus spoken of, or sung of in the Roman-rite Christmas liturgy, as having come down from the heaven he never left.

Keeping then to the “notional”, Hegel says this:

Spirit, represented at first as substance in the element of pure thought, is, thus, primarily the eternal essential Being, simple, self-identical, which does not, however, have this abstract meaning of essential being, but the meaning of Absolute Spirit. Yet spirit consists, not in being a meaning, not in being the inner, but in being the actual, the real. “Simple eternal essential Being” would, therefore, be spirit merely in empty phrase, if we remained at the level of pictorial thought, and went no further than the expression of “simple eternal essential Being”. “Simple essential Being”, however, because it is abstraction, is in point of fact the inherently negative, is indeed the negativity of reflective thought, or negativity as found in Being *per se*; i.e. it is absolute distinction from itself, is pure process of becoming its other. *Qua* essential Being it is merely implicit, or for us: but since this purity of form is just abstraction or

negativity it is *for itself*, it is the self, the notion. It is thus objective; and since pictorial thinking apprehends and expresses as an event what has just been expressed as the *necessity* of the notion, it will be said that the eternal Being begets for itself an other. But in this otherness it has likewise, *ipso facto*, returned into itself again; for the distinction is distinction in itself, i.e. the distinction is directly distinguished merely from itself, and is thus the unity returned into itself.²⁰⁰

This in fact is, though in a certain respect only, the analogy of being, without which, says Aquinas, all things would coalesce. In Hegel, however, they do coalesce while remaining at the same time other each to its or the other. Hence the “Body of Christ”, say, whether as Church or as sacramental “host”, to be consumed wholly by each, *is* Christ and not merely analogously Christ. The proof of this is that the identity, unlike an analogy, holds equally in the opposite direction. Christ is his body (the Church) or the sacramental host as much as these are He, i.e. that is what is believed, whether by Hegel (with those adjustments required by his logical system) or by the Catholic body, insofar as these are thought to differ, indifferently. Hence, too, the neighbour is both self, one’s “own” self (what you do to him you do to me: cp. “Paul, why are you persecuting me?”), and Christ. Analogies, that is, belong with language and its logic, the thesis defended by the late Ralph McInerney. They do not belong with religion or metaphysics, with Absolute Spirit, where “simple essential Being” finds its true referent, the Idea. To put it shortly, what words symbolise is the other reality, whatever it is, and not merely the *analogy* of these words over again, a gap people, even in “science”, try to lessen, without ever succeeding, by recourse to “empiricism” as an epistemological principle. For this, whether we are “realists” or “idealists”, is *the meaning of reference*, the *Sinn of Bedeutung*. “Theoretical physics” may thus be seen as a kind of protest against this tyranny of the finite word. Words, after all, one class of things among many in the universe, cannot be seen as analogies of themselves, which is what the “theory of types” and similar theories, e.g. of “second order” predication, try to make out. “God has spoken only one word” (John of the Cross), a word, Thomas Aquinas and the whole Christian world claim, that totally exhausts the speaker-fatherer, himself infinite as “principle”.²⁰¹

In general, one can say that Aquinas’s account of Trinity is inseparable from that account of “the divine missions” with which he concludes his

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 766-7.

²⁰¹ Cf. Jacques Derrida, “Speech and Writing according to Hegel: - The Pit and the Pyramid: Introduction to Hegel’s semiology”, in *G.W.F. Hegel, Critical assessments*, ed. Robert Stern, Routledge 1993, taken from *Margins of Philosophy*, 1972 (tr. Bass, U. of Chicago 1982).

treatise (*Summa theol.* I, *qu.* 43). All such missions or sendings, however, are included by Hegel in his account of the Absolute Idea or divine essence, a process rightly identified by Thomists as beginning with Duns Scotus, though the limitations of the opposition, to Aquinas, have not for the most part been properly grasped, that we had here in fact a *development* of Aquinas's own thought or, at least, presentation, as I have been trying to show here. This can perhaps be seen better as we proceed now with reference to Thomas's further account of the Holy Spirit, of spirit as third Trinitarian person, lacking its own or a proper name.

*

We begin with a controversial point as between Western and Greek Christendom:

It must be said that the Holy Spirit is from the Son. For if he were not he could in no way be distinguished from the Son. ... the divine persons are distinguished from one another only by the relations. Now, relations cannot distinguish the persons unless they are opposite relations. Now, there cannot be in God any relations opposed to each other except relations of origin. And opposite relations of origin are to be understood as of a *principle*, and of what is *from a principle*. So we must conclude that it is necessary to say either that the Son is from the Holy Spirit, which no one says, or that the Holy Spirit is from the Son, as we confess ...²⁰²

²⁰² *Aquinas, ST I, 36, 3 c: necesse est dicere Spiritum Sanctum a Filio esse. – Si enim non esset ab eo, nullo modo posset ab eo personaliter distingui; quod ex supra dictis patet, qu. 27, art. 3. Non enim est possibile dicere quod secundum aliquid absolutam divinae personae ab invicem distinguantur, quia sequeretur quod non esset trium una essentia. Quidquid enim in divinis absolute dicitur, ad unitatem essentiae pertinet. Relinquitur ergo quod solum relationibus divinae personae ab invicem distinguantur. Relationes autem personas distinguere non possunt, nisi secundum quod sunt oppositae. Quod ex hoc patet, quia Pater habet duas relationes, quarum una refertur ad Filium, et alia ad Spiritum Sanctum; quae tamen, quoniam non sunt oppositae, non constituent duas personas, sed an unam personam Patris tantum pertinent. Si autem in Filio et Spiritu Sancto non esset inveniri nisi duas relationes, quibus uterque refertur ad Patrem, illae relationes non essent ad invicem oppositae, sicut neque duae relationes quibus Pater refertur ad illos. Unde sicut persona Patris est una, ita sequeretur quod persona Filii et Spiritus Sancti esset una, habens duas relationes oppositas duabus relationibus Patris. Hoc autem est haeticum cum tollat fidem Trinitatis. Oportet ergo quod Filius et Spiritus Sanctus ad invicem referantur oppositis relationibus. Non autem possunt esse in divinis aliae relationes oppositae, nisi relationes originis, ut supra probatum est, qu. 28, art. 4. Oppositae autem relationes originis accipiuntur secundum principium, et secundum quod est a*

It is worth pointing out here, as drawn to my attention by Christine Malabou's in her study, *The Future of Hegel*, that in an early text Hegel suggests that the Spirit could be *said* to proceed from the Son alone or most immediately. He does not appear to be intending practical ecumenism there merely. Here anyhow he continues, in reply to the seventh "objection" to the above article:

The Holy Spirit is distinguished personally, from the Son insofar as the origin of one is distinguished from the origin of the other; but the difference itself of origin is found in the fact that the Son is only from the Father, but the Holy Spirit is from the Father and the Son; for otherwise the processions would not be distinguished from each other, as was shown above in the body of the article and at question 27.²⁰³

Against this and all that follows there we have Hegel's thesis that the distinctions are "make-believe" distinctions, in a sense that must be held separate from the ancient heresy of Sabellius. Hegel is giving the sense in which it is precisely the one God that is truly three, i.e. tri-une, such that "in this otherness it has likewise, *ipso facto*, returned into itself again; for the distinction is distinction in itself, i.e. the distinction is directly distinguished merely from itself, and is thus the unity returned into itself" (p. 767: I repeat from the longer passage cited above). Only in this way, the true way, can the treatises on the one divine nature (*De Deo*) and on the Trinity of persons be reconciled. It is in this sense that there are, as Van Riet, we saw, maintained, two systems existing side by side in St. Thomas, as instanced in his claim that the Trinity of persons cannot be open to reason, called by him "natural" reason, since the persons are only known in their "internal" relational opposition to one another, first revealed by one of them as incarnate as what Hegel calls a "human consciousness", side-stepping the anciently stark alternative of person or nature. Hegel rejects this possibility of two systems within philosophical thought as the proper or ultimate form of Absolute Spirit. However the Trinity may have become known, through the incarnation of God as a human consciousness in this case, it belongs necessarily, once known, *to the philosophical order*, as does, this is the

principio. Relinquitur ergo quod necesse est dicere, vel Filium esse a Spiritu Sancto, quod nullus dicit: vel Spiritum Sanctum esse a Filio, quod nos confitemur; et huic quidem consonant ratio processionis utriusque.

²⁰³ *Eodem loco, ad 7: dicendum quod Spiritus Sanctus distinguitur personaliter a Filio in hoc quod origo unius distinguatur ab origine alterius; sed ipsa differentia originis est per hoc quod Filius est solum a Patre; Spiritus Sanctus vero a Patre et Filio; non enim aliter processionem distinguerentur, sicut supra ostensum est, in corp. art., et qu. 27.*

implication, theology as a whole, which is as much as to say, with Aristotle, that philosophy itself is firstly theology, concerned with “religion and nothing but religion” in Hegel’s words.

This individual human being, then, which Absolute Being is revealed to be, goes through in its own case as an individual the process found in sense existence. He is the *immediately* present God; in consequence, His being passes over into His *having been*. Consciousness, for which God is thus sensuously present, ceases to see Him, to hear Him; it *has* seen him, it *has* heard Him. And it is because it only *has* seen and heard Him, that it first becomes itself spiritual consciousness; ...²⁰⁴

This was expressed originally thus: “He that has seen me has seen the Father” (*John XIV*). Read in terms of Hegel’s system of thought it means, includes in its meaning, that this individual, along with all objects of sight, is never what is seen in the sense of successful knowledge. What one has seen, and it always becomes instantly past, is not itself the reality, is time-conditioned. To be truly the reality it has to be trans-figured, thus ceasing to be figurative and un-mediated. The same point is made as follows: “If I go not away the Comforter (i.e. strengthener, root from *fortis*, also called “paraclete” or advocate) will not come to you”; yet what he gives you, the speaker continues, will be “mine”.

Hegel continues:

... or, in other words, He has now arisen in Spirit, as He formerly rose before consciousness as an object existing in the sphere of sense. For, a consciousness which sees and hears Him by sense, is one which is itself merely an immediate consciousness, which has not cancelled and transcended the disparateness of objectivity, has not withdrawn it into pure thought, but knows this objectively present individual, *and not itself*, as spirit. ... (stress added)

Not only that, but the “formerly” refers to our time-conditioned *misapprehension*, taking figured representation for what it is not. So this cannot be kept separate from the general Hegelian principle of the emergence of the true from the false, of the absolute and infinite from the finite. He continues, further,

... In the disappearance of the immediate existence of what is known to be Absolute Being, immediacy acquires its negative moment. Spirit remains the

²⁰⁴ Hegel, *Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 762.

immediate self of actual reality, but in the form of the universal self-consciousness of a religious communion, a self-consciousness which rests in its own proper substance, just as in it this substance is universal subject: it is not the individual subject by himself, but the individual along with the consciousness of the communion, and what he is for this communion is the complete whole of the individual spirit.

It should be clear that in the last sentence here the “he” can be referred indifferently either to the mediator, who is Christ the Lord and God, or to the individual subject who is otherwise, outside of this so to say ontological relation in and with the faith-community, purely an abstraction. “Ontological” here is distinguishable from “ontic” as giving a possibly new interpretation of being and what it is, such as we find at the close of Hegel’s first *Science of Logic*, viz. that “this”, the Idea namely, “is the true being”. This is the Absolute Idealism of Hegel’s thought from which all the outstanding “Twentieth century Catholic theologians” in Fergus Kerr’s book of that title, in particular De Lubac, Rahner, Lonergan, Von Balthasar and Küng, show themselves keen, or perhaps obliged, to take distance. They thus fail as philosophers and hence, it must be, in this regard at least, as theologians. What Hegel says, in a kind of play on words taken from this sphere, is that absolute idealism is *the* “dogma” of philosophy. It is God alone who *is*, i.e. who is not finite.²⁰⁵

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Aquinas continues, in his following article (36, 3), by conceding, without denial of the *Filioque* (inserted in the West in Carolingian times), that the Greek formulation of spiration by the Father of the Spirit *through* the Son is also acceptable:

... Because it is from what the Son receives from the Father that the Holy Spirit proceeds from him, it can be said that the Father spirates the Holy Spirit through the Son or that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father through the Son, which means the same thing.²⁰⁶

²⁰⁵ See the Epilogue to my *Hegel’s System of Logic*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle-on-Tyne, 2019. for further comment on this purely sub-philosophical fixation.

²⁰⁶ Aquinas, *Summa theol.* I, 36, 3: *Quia igitur Filius habet a Patre quod ab eo procedit Spiritus Sanctus, potest dici quod Pater per Filium spiret Spiritum Sanctum, vel quod Spiritus Sanctus procedat a Patre per Filium, quod idem est.*

The *sed contra* of the following article 4, “Whether the Father and the Son are one principle of the Holy Spirit”, adds this: *Augustinus dicit in 5 de Trin., cap. 14, in fine, quod Pater et Filius non sunt duo principia, sed unum principium Spiritus Sancti* (Augustine says, concluding chapter 14 of *De Trinitate* 5, that the Father and the Son are not two principles but one principle of the Holy Spirit). I note again that this brings us closer to the Hegelian account. It is Aquinas all the same who here, in the body of Article Four of this *quaestio*, further clarifies this insight, as follows:

The Father and the Son are one in everything when there is no distinction between them of opposite relation. Thus since there is no relative opposition between them as the principle of the Holy Spirit, it follows that the Father and the Son are one principle of the Holy Spirit (*Pater et Filius in omnibus unum sint, in quibus non distinguit inter eos relationis oppositio. Unde cum in hoc quod est esse principium Spiritus Sancti, non opponantur relative, sequitur quod Pater et Filius sunt unum principium Spiritus Sancti*).

What is quite clear, however, is that if they are “one principle” then they are surely not Father and Son in any normal or literal sense, in which sense the Moslems are quite right in insisting that “God cannot have a son”. This corresponds exactly to what Hegel will say about this. I quote again:

“Simple essential Being”, however, because it is abstraction, is in point of fact the inherently negative, is indeed the negativity of reflective thought, or negativity as found in Being *per se*; i.e. it is absolute distinction from itself, is pure process of becoming its other. *Qua* essential Being it is merely implicit, or for us: but since this purity of form is just abstraction or negativity, it is *for itself*, it is the self, the notion (cf. *Enc.* 160f.). It is thus objective, and since pictorial thinking apprehends and expresses as an event what has just been expressed as the *necessity* of the notion, it will be said that the eternal Being begets for itself an other. But in this otherness it has likewise, *ipso facto*, returned into itself again; for the distinction is distinction in itself, i.e. the distinction is directly distinguished merely from itself, and is thus the unity returned into itself.²⁰⁷

From this it follows that by “pure process of becoming its other” Hegel does not mean any kind of particular event, like the birth of Christ in Bethlehem or of anyone anywhere else, though it is certainly *act*. Awareness of this surely lies behind Herbert McCabe’s reproaching Raymond Brown for speaking of the “pre-existent” Christ²⁰⁸. A giving of actual primacy to the picture is implied. Christ was truly born in one sense, though this sense is

²⁰⁷ Hegel, *Phenomenology of Mind*, pp. 766-7.

²⁰⁸ Herbert McCabe OP, *The New Creation*.

altered once we realise that our notion of birth is a misperception. How can I be born, not being there beforehand to undergo this? So the Buddhist saying, a true one, also confirmatory of Absolute Idealism: “No birth no death”. Death is “the entry into Spirit”, says Hegel, is not to be identified with the nightmarish picture we would make of it, adds the dying Thérèse Martin of Lisieux, again, in 1897. “I go to the Father”, says the Johannine Christ, simply, of his own foreseen death. Thérèse adds that it “says in the Catechism that death is the separation of the soul from the body and that is all it is”, confirming not a dualism of soul and body but the monism, again, of absolute idealism, as one not a philosopher but belonging to “the true reason-world”²⁰⁹. The abstract term “Body”, says Aquinas, to repeat, is a term having no function in metaphysics, being of occasional use solely in logic.

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Aquinas goes on from here to make detailed remarks about love as a “notional” term, in a sense having nothing immediately referable to the notion or notions in Hegel’s system²¹⁰, before returning to more detailed study of relation, central to Trinitarianism, as such, leading into the divine missions, temporal procession(s) and other hallowed conceptions, not necessarily notions though in either his or Hegel’s sense. For the moment we will just note that the Augustinian view he makes his own, that the Father and the Son are “one in everything” that can be noted from outside, so to say, that consequently those internal relations *are* the persons, is precisely that of Hegel that the distinctions, by opposition of relation, are “distinctions in the way of distinction” or in other words notional²¹¹ indeed or *of necessity*,

²⁰⁹ Cf, Hegel, *Enc.* 82 *Zus.*, for threefold mention, whole or in part, of this phrase.

²¹⁰ Mediatly, however, I would cite *Enc.* 159 with *Zusatz*, the paragraph leading immediately into “The Doctrine of the Notion”, which it anticipates: “For thinking means that, in the other, one meets with one’s self ... a liberation ... As existing in an individual form, this liberation is called I: as developed to its totality, it is free Spirit; as feeling, it is Love; and as enjoyment it is blessedness. – The great vision of substance in Spinoza is only a potential liberation from finite exclusiveness and egoism: but the notion itself realises for its own both the power of necessity and actual freedom.”

²¹¹ Some support for the older English translators making explicit a distinction, only potential in the Hegelian *Begriff*, between notion and concept, or for the intrusion of a second term, can be sought in their “classical” background, if not in Augustine, who first applies *notio*, *notiones*, to the specifically Trinitarian context, then in Cicero and others. “Notion” is used in Aquinas, we saw, for “the proper idea whereby we know a divine person” and there five of such ideas “in God” (*Summa*

as *what it means* for God to be. This, in fact, is “of faith”, that God is necessarily a Trinity and not in any other sense. It is the same God, in absolute simplicity or entirety indifferently, who acts as Father, as Word (hence the simplicity) and finally as Spirit, whereby all return to God as *principally* “all in all”, an all in fact inclusive of otherness, a *logical* truth pictured in religion as the divine love for God’s other or the finite he has, just therefore, himself posited. That is, love is the principle of “creativity”, goodness as “self-diffusion”, as nothing else is, the principle *defined* as that God “hates nothing that he has made”, not even Esau as other of Jacob (cp. *Genesis*, “Jacob have I loved, Esau have I hated”), yet who also gets, *via* Isaac, his paternal blessing.

So God’s revelation of himself and even *to* himself (as Hegel puts it) is the same as his appearing, i.e. to “us”, first as “principle”, then as Word, then, finally, as *after all* or just thereby Spirit in a temporal and hence past order by way, precisely, of appearance. Hence he²¹², Spirit, “shall take of mine”, as I have received “all” and “give” it to you in the only way possible, for “If I go not away the Spirit cannot come unto you”, i.e. except I die. This is the lot of man as such, for whom God has to be otherwise object, which is finally false. That is, God is the object indeed, but only in the sense of destroying all abstract objectivity, in becoming, it is the same, “the truth of self-consciousness”, a truth whereby, in fact, “the individual is ruined”, this being that same vision in or from which Aquinas says, in a poem, speaking of what is called the “holy communion”, a conception not in fact to be confined to the sacramental eucharist (which Hegel accordingly ignores

theol. Ia 32, 3) as, so to say, determining the “relations of origin” as the sole intra-divine relations constituting the divine self-knowledge, inseparable, Thomas seems to mean, from any knowledge of God beyond a certain stage, not reachable by our unaided reason. Hegel can agree in this with the further explicitation that once revealed or “handed down”, *tradita*, reason can indeed defend knowledge of God through these “notions” as both genuine, i.e. no longer blindly believed only (for what would we be believing if we did not understand it?), and sole embodiments thereof. St. Thomas, however, insists that there is no way that these internal divine relations could have been known apart from God’s initiative in revealing them as it were bodily through his incarnate Word. Yet once known they are seen to be rational, incontrovertedly. There seems to lie an inherent demand for further resolution here.²¹² Or why not she, as many are asking today? The answer would seem to depend upon whether the masculine is normative, the feminine a certain falling back therefrom as “the weaker sex”, or whether, without such gradation, “male and female created he them”, which today, since Karl Barth propounded this text as stating wherein the image of God in man consists (rather than “soul” as opposed to “body”), many theologians and finally the Roman authority, are taking as the *locus* of “the divine image in man”.

except when getting denominationally partisan), “where one receives a thousand receive” (*sumit unus sumunt mille*). In the same way the view of the persons as relations, *ipsae relationes sunt personae*, is precisely the transcendence of individuality by personhood as such. In a related way the Scholastics spoke of matter, *materia*, Aristotelian potentiality, as the principle of creation precisely in and as it is the “principle of individuality” or, for them, individuation, seen as a finally “real” process. This, I take it, is what lies behind Karol Wojtyła’s synthesised question, when Pope (John Paul II): “What is God? What is man?” God too is not individual, is precisely a relation to man, his “image and likeness”, in a common intellectual consciousness which thus thereby transcends consciousness in any empirically psychological sense. This relation, as a relation necessarily within God as its subject (a view, it seems, not reconcilable with the Russellian mathematization of relations) is, all the same, compatible, and more than so, with Aquinas’s flat statement that God has, can have, no “real” relation with his creatures, these being rather, definitionally, hence necessarily, related to him. In this fact we find our truth and, precisely, salvation or happiness, our and the true self, while it is “only” in relation to this that Hegel speaks of “the unhappy consciousness”.

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Essential to this account, then (as it is essential to Hegel’s Logic, as being ultimately a syllogistic logic in the latter’s ultimate implication, transcending rather than based upon mathematics as paradigm of rationality²¹³), is an adherence to the account of relation, pre-dating Russell or Frege as interpreted by the rank and file of their followers on this point, whereby relation is an accident inhering in a substance, i.e. completely or entirely in just one or more substances, e.g. two or more sons or daughters severally. It is put, indeed, as the “weakest” of accidents as needing an other, to which one is related, in its concept. So it is in no way a third joining element between two individuals, between individual and concept or even between subject and predicate where the latter is conceived as a “function”, which the subject completes as filling an “empty place”, as no doubt it does, the analogy here being the arithmetical one of two (equal but distinct) values on either side of an “equals” sign. It is not always seen though, or incidentally, that this holds even where they are identical in form, i.e. there is no special “‘is’ of identity subdividing a general “‘is’ of predication”. Hence Aquinas says that the grammatical subject signifies only *quasi* materially, the

²¹³ Cf. Hegel, *Enc.* 99 *Zus.*, final paragraph.

predicate only *quasi* formally, i.e. one can reverse them for emphasis or similar. But even the mathematical statement, however symbolised, follows, when treated propositionally, this Aristotelian analysis. Thus “ $2 \times 2 = 4$ ”, equivalently “twice two is four”, states that the former has entirely the relation of equality to the latter (whether or not this might be reversed by a given language’s stipulation). The relation remains, namely, within the subject alone, as “accident” (just as when we might say “twice two is twice two” or “is four units”), where it may be “real” or else a relation “of reason” only). It is in this sense that Aquinas states that God has no real relation to finite creatures or creation. All his relations, pre-eminently the Trinitarian, are “notional”.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

FIVE “NOTIONS”: LOGIC, SPIRIT AND QUANTITY

Thus Aquinas continues his presentation of the Spirit, succeeding to that of Word, as the love of which Father and Son are (one) principle, of love, firstly, “as a notional term”, as this is understood within Aquinas’s presentation of Trinity as described above:

... Insofar as love signifies only the relation of the lover to the beloved, “love” and “to love” are said of the essence (*essentialiter*), as “understanding” and “to understand”; but insofar as these words are used to express the relation to its principle, of what proceeds by way of love, and vice versa, so that by “love” is understood the “love proceeding” and by “to love” is understood the “spiration of the love proceeding”, in that sense “love” is the name of the person and “to love” is a notional term, like “to speak” or “to beget”.²¹⁴ (ST I, 37, 1c)

“Notional” here, again, seems to refer to what distinguishes the persons from one another and, differently, from the essence of the divinity, of God, of, in Hegel, the Absolute Idea, necessarily personal all the same even “before” Trinitarian issues are raised, hence “essentially” so, explicitly in the Jewish writings yet “personified” further there in the “wisdom” literature as what is almost put as God’s most intimate, indeed feminine partner, the Wisdom “playing before his throne”, implicit in much of Aristotle’s metaphysics, though they too conclude with the opposite identification, which is thus the same, of wisdom with *ho theos*, this being also the passage Hegel cites in the original as concluding his *Encyclopaedia*

²¹⁴ Aquinas, *Summa theol.* 37,1: *Sic igitur in quantum in amore, vel dilectione, non importatur nisi habitudo amantis ad rem amatam, amor et diligere essentialiter dicuntur, sicut intelligentia et intelligere; in quantum vero his vocabulis utimur ad exprimendam habitudinem ejus rei quae procedit per modum amoris, ad suum principium, et e converso, ita quod per amorem intelligatur amor procedens, et per diligere intelligatur spirare amorem procedentem; sic amor est nomen personae, et diligere vel amare est verbum notionale, sicut dicere vel generare.*

of the *Philosophical Sciences* (though it is cheerfully omitted in the English translation on the Internet stemming from the University of Idaho).

Our difficulty, however, is that Thomas presents the notions, and hence the notional account of Trinity and of the persons, as distinguished from the essence with which each is nonetheless identical *in its difference*, as exclusively theological in the sense of what is called dogmatic theology, i.e. as unavailable to unaided rational consideration not basing its thinking upon acknowledged dependence upon the covenanted Scriptural writings as these have been taken *historically* by the faith community or Church. Hegel, on the other hand, claims that Trinitarian thought belongs and has to belong to “the philosophical order” if it is to hold up at all. That is, faith must not only be *consonant* with reason, or reason with faith, in the sense of two supposed independent orders yet stemming from the same God in the sense of Saint Thomas, but faith has rather to understand itself as giving way to the rational or even “notional” grasp of faith’s object(s), the closest parallel to this being St. Paul vision of faith and hope as swallowed up, why not say *aufgehoben*, in love, when or where I “shall know even as I am known”. Nor can one doubt but that this is Hegel’s own intention, however we interpret the “when or where” just mentioned. Hegel needs to show, that is to say, that Christian faith itself, whatever we say of unqualified faith in general (in this or that), is thoroughly rational, on the analogy, for example, of a child’s unquestioning obedience to and/or acceptance of the teaching of its parents.

If we consider only what it contains, and not how it contains it, the true reason-world, so far from being the exclusive property of philosophy, is the right of every human being, on whatever grade of culture or mental growth he may stand; which would justify man’s ancient title of rational being. The general mode by which experience first makes us aware of the reasonable order of things is by accepted and unreasoned belief; and the character of the rational, as already noted (§45), is to be unconditioned, and thus to be self-contained, self-determining. In this sense man above all things becomes aware of the reasonable order, when he knows of God, and knows Him to be the completely self-determined.²¹⁵

This, though, is only “the first harmony”. It merely reminds us “of what the spirit must win for itself”:

The harmoniousness of childhood is a gift from the hand of nature; the second harmony must spring from the labour and culture of the spirit. And so the

²¹⁵ *Enc.* 82, *Zus.*

words of Christ, ‘Except ye *become* as little children,’ &c., are very far from telling us that we must always remain children.²¹⁶

We are first as children, then, also in the second birth, St. Paul’s “babes in Christ”. From there we progress to critical theology and philosophy, “bringing forth from our treasure things both new and old”. Such is the office of adult faith, developed to the point where St. Paul can say, apparently to his readers in general, “But we have the mind of Christ”. Hegel, anyhow, approaches this problematic in terms of a dialectic between mediate and immediate knowledge, as he expounds these terms.²¹⁷

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There is quite some parallel with McTaggart’s claim that we are in Heaven now but fail to realise it, which indeed seems a good way to understand even the account referred to as given by St. Paul, both implying that even as ostensibly imprisoned in time there are privileged moments where we, so to say, see through it to eternity. Otherwise St. Paul too could not have written as he did. What else, *mutatis mutandis*, is the full-blown aesthetic experience, perhaps miscalled or even, further miscalled, the mystical which, as Hegel says, however, is but the rational?

Hegel states explicitly that it is thought *and not history* that brings us to a more intimate and true understanding of the phenomenon of the life and work of Jesus Christ, as incarnate “on earth” without ever having left heaven, he too (thinking of McTaggart’s idea of things as just mentioned, one shared thus far by Scripture and the liturgy), or exemplarily rather. Thought brings us to what this means for religion and hence, on his view, for anything at all. This very view, however, this identification, of religion with everything that counts, amounts to an absorption of religion itself, unable to become perfect, “the perfect religion” as Hegel calls Christianity, precisely because religion is not the perfect or definitive form of Absolute Spirit, or not until it becomes *sophia* as *höchste Gottesdienst*, not forgetting though, as has just been shown, that for the true reason world this spiritualisation can occur at any level of culture, perhaps most easily too at the lowest! Even this corresponds to the notion of the first Christians of their new faith as “the way”, not seeing themselves as representing a new religion or even “a” religion at all, but something more universal than that could ever be. One does not so much “become” the path, the “way”, as absorb it.

²¹⁶ *Enc. 24, Zus. (3).*

²¹⁷ See further *Enc. 63-78.*

Never leaving heaven, then, though without prejudice to the needful virtue of hope as against the vice of presumption, this corresponds very much, if not more than so, to McTaggart’s claim that we are all “in heaven”, he might rather have said in eternity, now, a “now” which thus transcends the immediate notion of “already”, but that we are yet misperceiving things as being otherwise, a compulsion of nature against which thought is ever to be aware. This, I conceive, is the background against which to further consider St. Thomas’s “notions” and their place in his and the Patristic system from which they are taken. The background, however, also includes such tales as that of Psyche’s (soul’s) beautiful palace that she shared, as a heaven indeed, with her nocturnal lover but which appeared as but dust and ashes on “the bare hillside”²¹⁸ when she was persuaded to show it to those doubting her. We systematically “misperceive”, McTaggart claims.

Whether or in what sense the Fathers of the Church, as they are called (would any of them have accepted such a grandiose categorisation of himself?), were innocent of (some would say, rather, untainted by) absolute idealism, *the* philosophical form as Hegel claims, is a question not admitting any “obvious” answer. Thus in one sense they obviously *were* absolute idealists, inasmuch as recognising God as the absolutely all or “all in all”, the utterly objective *omnia* of St. Francis of Assisi or of the Davidic psalmist for that matter. In this sense, though, there is no other place to be than the McTaggartian heaven, even if, like him, one might proclaim oneself “atheist”, this not being more, by Hegel’s logic anyhow, than a version, whether final or intermediate, of a common theism such as that which unseated, at the hands of Plato and Aristotle, the miscellany of Greek gods and goddesses from their thrones and is since called philosophy. Hence, from within this tradition, Porphyry denominated the Jews especially as “a nation of philosophers”, the phrase being itself a perfect product of speculative thought (on the part of Porphyry), in the spirit of which it can be thought simultaneously with Hegel’s characterisation of philosophers as a select priestly caste having nothing to do with “the changes and chances of this fleeting world” except as engaged in breaking down its thus helpless though hellish gates, as Hegel reminds us, though seemingly in somewhat diffident mood, at the end of his *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*.

²¹⁸ From John Keats’ almost nightmarish poem, “*La belle dame sans merci*”, which thus may receive a similarly positive interpretation (beyond the poet’s own awareness maybe), the poet’s “joy”, like Wordsworth’s, awaiting him still after the time of trials, in that “undiscovered country from whose bourn no traveller returns”. Cp. C.S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*, 1940, final chapter, also his novel, *Till We Have Faces* (1956), framed around the Psyche- or soul-myth.

Given, then, that these notions are taken up directly as having been used at a prior moment, implicitly or explicitly, in the bare detail of a stated faith as held in common by the community, then, if one stays at that point, there can be no Trinitarian *philosophy* properly speaking. We, faithful or unfaithful, just have to understand that God is proclaimed here as *necessarily* a Trinity. Do we even know if this necessity is “logical” or of some other type? The next question must then be: does Hegel, thinking the Trinity, and even his conviction that it is a Trinity he thinks as a philosophical conclusion, arrive at the thought of just those “notions”, five in number, which Aquinas judges to be required by faith and hence set forth in dogmatic theology? Do philosophers, Hegelian or some others, find themselves admitting precisely the notions of **unbegottenness**, **fatherhood**, **sonship**, **common spiration** and **procession** or some sort of equivalent of these five on the same intellectual level as or perhaps a higher level than that to which the picture-thinking of the faith-community perfectly corresponds in the elevation of just these pictures?

Already we maybe can see that this might not be as far-fetched as a majority of us perhaps are immediately inclined to judge. Fatherhood and sonship are the first to go, in favour of, say, idea and expression, or thought and word. For “unbegottenness”, partaking of the same finite picture, we substitute “principle”, taken absolutely. Here arises already a query, as to whether, say, absolute principle is the same as principle of the Word? Why is there a divine word specifically at all? Or in what sense is the so-called unbegottenness, say, expressed within, the within without event, as in fact we find it worked out in Hegel’s logic, under the categories of just **Inward** and **Outward** (*Enc.* 139: “But Inward and Outward are identified ... identity brought to fulness in the content ... Both are the same one totality, and this unity makes them the content”). For, as the Scholastics say, of creation, *plura entia, sed non plus entis*? That is, nothing new, unless in the sense of *ever new* (*ecce omnia nova facio*), is begotten. The answer to this complex question, this complex of questions, lies in a grasp of Aquinas’s explicit affirmation that *principium*, principle, here, does not name a cause, this being a concept which the more general term *principium* sublates, more true of the Father but also, for the same reason, more true of God himself in his essence. The Father is not the cause of the Word, they are eternal, divine and absolute together as one principle, in Augustine’s words (*On the Trinity* XIV) cited here by St. Thomas.²¹⁹ Thus the Father has “in principle”, we

²¹⁹ Aquinas, *op. cit.* I, 36, 4. “Thus, since there is no relative opposition between them as the principle of the Holy Spirit, it follows that the Father and the Son are one principle of the Holy Spirit” as the Father, as “unbegotten” (notional term) is principle, but not Cause, of his Word or “Son” (“Word” ... “is the proper name of

can now say, no separate or principally prior being from that of his begotten Word, though he himself is unbegotten. Rightly understood this might be seen as paradigm for the equality of male and female, thus in this their equality, or identity in their difference rather (equality bears a mathematical taint, absent from identity in the concept) uniquely and precisely imaging the divine Trinity, a view, perhaps due to a primary impulse from Karl Barth, steadily replacing for theologians and even for Popes²²⁰, under the name, frequently, of “nuptiality”, the older notion that God’s image is found primarily in man’s soul rather than his body.

But this means, further, that also the categories of Inward and Outward were, as a composite, pictorial. We no longer have, anyhow, five notions at the true or philosophical level of spirit, but at most four. Going on from there, common spiration, say mutual love, seems none other than absolute self-consciousness, whereby the unbegotten loves himself and all “else” as not else but himself over again? And how, anyhow, does this differ from the Pauline “God shall be all in all”, not generally taken as anti-Trinitarian? Procession, of self as proceeding from self, seems, finally, to present no especial difficulty. But now, to this our effort at a first translation seems to correspond precisely Hegel’s account of Trinity, building upon but standing independently of the earlier speculative effort, while, one may argue, equally motivated by a need to defend people’s faith, such benevolence not after all invalidative of philosophy.

Having said all this we must recognise, nonetheless, that the use of language as such *has to* involve a finite or picture element, various analogies of our sense- or other perception coming into play. “If it were not so I would have told you ... There *are* many mansions in my father’s house”, unashamed usage of a picture here dismantling the whole problem. If we want really to grasp it as it is, this final unity in its most unmediated recess, then we must indeed “keep silent”, at least when that moment of grasping shall come, human philosophy giving way to divine *sophia*, though, as Hegel claims, we must still be aiming clearly at just the latter “all the time”, “using the world as though we used it not”, therefore. What we aim at, in fact, is “pure thought”.

the person of the Son”, writes Aquinas at I, 34, 2 in the *Summa theol.*).

²²⁰ Principally John Paul II and his successor, Benedict XVI (as Cardinal Ratzinger, in cooperation with the former Pope, and later). The evidence for this replacement is collected in Fergus Kerr’s study, *Contemporary Catholic Theologians*, cited above, pp. 193-197 and following. Cp. our *Hegel on Thought and Incarnation*, CSP Newcastle 2020, p. 18 f.

This is what lies behind Hegel's reserve as to the quantitative threeness propounded in Trinitarian doctrine, whether in *The Phenomenology of Mind*, discussed above here, or in the Logic:

Quantity, of course, is a stage of the Idea: and as such it should have its due, first as a logical category, and then in the world of objects, natural as well as spiritual. Still even so, there soon emerges the different importance attaching to the category of quantity according as its objects belong to the natural or to the spiritual world. For in Nature, where the form of the Idea is to be other than, and at the same time outside, itself, greater importance is for that very reason attached to quantity than in the spiritual world, the world of free inwardness. No doubt we regard even spiritual facts under a quantitative point of view; but it is at once apparent that in speaking of God as a Trinity, the number three has by no means the same prominence, as when we consider the three dimensions of space or the three sides of a triangle; - the fundamental feature of which last is just to be a surface bounded by three lines. Even inside the realm of Nature we find the same distinction of greater or less importance of quantitative features. In the inorganic world, Quantity plays, so to say, a more prominent part than in the organic. Even in organic nature when we distinguish mechanical functions from what are called chemical, and in the narrower sense, physical, there is the same difference. Mechanics is of all branches of science, confessedly, that in which the aid of mathematics can be least dispensed with, - where indeed we cannot take one step without them. On that account mechanics is regarded next to mathematics as the science *par excellence*; which leads us to repeat the remark about the coincidence of the materialist with the exclusively mathematical point of view. After all that has been said, we cannot but hold it, in the interest of exact and thorough knowledge, one of the most hurtful prejudices, to seek all distinction and determinateness of objects merely in quantitative considerations. Mind to be sure is more than nature and the animal is more than the plant: but we know very little of these objects and the distinction between them, if a more and less is enough for us, and if we do not proceed to comprehend them in their peculiar, that is their qualitative character.²²¹

No doubt this invites discussion of comparative "method in theology", or of what is *its* scientific method, as against that of mathematics though not that of logic. This "mere mathematical view, which identifies with the Idea one of its special stages, viz. quantity, is no other than the principle of Materialism", dialectical or other, as Hegel adds. Here, in thinking of one thing one forgets the other, as we distinguish subject and predicate, but "one thing only is needful", those contemplating the Idea in its final realisation choosing "the better part". What then, again, of the five notions, used

²²¹ *Enc.* 99, *Zus.*

exclusively to distinguish the three divine persons simply and absolutely in their inner and constitutive relatedness? Are they themselves not human and finite, or but "a stage of the Idea"? How does Aquinas view, situate, them? He has said, after all, that *numeri non ponuntur in divinis*, just as Hegel declares that it is useless to count. Surely the Word *does* proceed from its principle, surely there *are* processions in God? Or is it that these notions are just products of *finite* intellect? A first question, I would think, and we have been provoked thereto by Kant, is whether there can be such a thing at all as *finite* intellect, whether called "creaturely" or not. We have already found in Hegel, as in Scripture no less, that "creature", the created, is nothing unless as a divine idea and that hence God has nothing to do with or has no relation with it "in itself", as we naturally, but no more than so, persist in putting it, with "us" even. The individual is "ruined" in its own attempted self-conception. This seems the only way, Pyrrhic perhaps, to maintain consistency, at a price anyhow. "It is evident that it is this man who thinks", Aquinas maintained, stoutly as we say. What does this amount to, though, if it is but how things appear, as the phrase "it is evident" itself suggests? Recall Hegel's disqualification of the immediate as such, always and everywhere, as precisely what we nowadays might call a bad kind of "foundationalism". Instead, it is only thought that thinks itself, whether "in us" or not. In fact the "us" has nothing to do with absolute subjectivity, the true object; there is only the *first* person but that singular, unlike in grammar. Thus thought is free of the relative and grammatical character of language, grammar itself yielding way to logic and logic to its consummation in the Absolute Idea. This is what Hegel calls absolute self-consciousness, as annihilating any other kind. Even McTaggart follows here, explaining it very well in his account of the perfect unity, transcending even the organic and qualitative. He thus expounds God willy-nilly, as no longer needing or wishing to name him, which is how God himself revealed himself, his "name", according to the Mosaic account, faithfully adhered to in Judaism, under the figure, as far as it may go, of the *tetragrammaton*. So, "he that has seen me has seen the Father". Was not this intelligence interpretable as an atheistic communication, we saw, it too? So the orthodox of the time, such as the pharisees, understood it, whether or not their jobs and importance were at stake as well.

However this may be yet we *need* the notions, all five of them (and perhaps more?). Need them for what, though? Interpreters tend to say that the notions are epistemological, not ontological. Why, then, does Aquinas say that there *are* notions in God, even five of these? Well, this would indeed be ridiculous if he did not himself mean that they relate specifically to *our* knowledge of God, of the Trinity. As for the number three, we have

seen how Hegel treats it so to say quantitative value (can one distinguish “quantitative” from “numerical”? Pythagoras clearly thought so), in his somewhat startling but by no means purely jocose, which would have been in bad taste to say the least, mention of “quaternity” or “quinity” (*Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 772), and so on, it seems implied, as development of the relations, agreeing certainly in this with the account in Aquinas or Patristic thought as it developed: *ipsae relationes sunt personae*.

Indeed we find in Hegel’s system as a whole that this self-transcendent (quantity-transcendent?) principle, of many in one, one in many, is let us not say extended but rather applied to reality as a whole, as indeed it is in being included as specifying Trinity anyhow, given that nature or creation adds nothing to God, *plura entia sed non plus entis*. This Scholastic adage, a typical religious paradox, like the first being last and other such sayings, if sincerely meant in fact annihilates the world, which means that the Trinitarian principle *extends itself to all* from its first adoption as specifying precisely the divine or absolute nature, just as does the original revelation of the divine essence as He who is, it being added *sotto voce* “and there is none other”, always. The nations, said Isaiah, attempting to state this in picture, are (less than) the drop of water on the edge of the bucket, i.e. as left after one has indeed emptied it. I would only add that what I have just called the original revelation, to Moses, is interpretable also as Hegel’s “ruin of the individual”, inasmuch as if the divine name is I AM, then nothing else *is*, except analogously, Aquinas’s interpretation of the affirmation, using the metaphor of “in”, that “in God we live and move and have our being”. I is precisely by or through this truth of things, *Wahrheit der Dinge*, that Hegel posits and affirms the Absolute Idea, consequent upon Anselmian development of the necessary or self-conceiving concept of Infinity.²²²

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To pursue this “link”, so to say, further we need to recall and consider the statements of Meister Eckhart, a Dominican like Thomas Aquinas a century before him, in the form of assertions, which Hegel undoubtedly took to himself. Rather, we need anyhow to consider them. One is “The eye with which I see God is the eye with which God sees me”. Another is, “If God were not then I would not be, while if I were not then God would not be” (or possibly in reverse order). Eckhart also prayed, “Deliver me from speaking too much of God”. I argue that these sayings, the first two

²²² Rudolph Steiner’s essay on Moses, we noted, follows no other path.

especially, are being commented on throughout Hegel’s *opus*, are even what makes it Trinitarian, while we find them, i.e. *just* them, more systematically worked out as such, of course with certain differences, in the Hegelian philosophy of McTaggart.

Firstly, Hegel’s Trinitarian account is centred, as is the whole of his philosophy as embodying that absolute idealism which he took for or claimed to be what he calls, using a theological concept but *as a figure*, “*the dogma of philosophy*”, as replacing or absorbing utterly the individual self as immediate self-consciousness. It is significant, as being surely deliberate, that in his relatively final account, of “revealed religion” specifically, Hegel does not name the Trinity as such. Rather, in his discourse, he discloses it, as it can seem, so to say backwards, beginning with Spirit *which is yet spirit in general* and as such, i.e. as principle (Aquinas’s *principium*), “begets itself as his *son*”. He does not say “Word” here, perhaps as dealing with “revealed religion” specifically as “middle term” between Art and Philosophy, with which, as eternal essence, this Son is differentiated in identity and identified in difference (*Enc.* 565-567).

Yet in his speaking of the Son this, the “second Adam”, becomes identified with the first Adam against which or whom he is typically contrasted. This should not be called a dialectic exclusively, since it is meant as the truth, of man as of God. To be noted here is that it is (an) “individual self-consciousness” that is “the divine man who is the idea of the Spirit”. This is “*the implicit presupposition*” (570), I would stress, implicit, for example, in those not having known or heard of “the divine man”, “for the *finite* immediacy of the single subject”, which he or she, the single subject, is “the movement to throw off”, for “that example”, of the second Adam, “is his implicit life” “in the pain of negativity”. Thus, thirdly, the “Being of Beings”, *principium*, unbegotten, “brings about its own indwelling in self-consciousness”, i.e. in us, whether individually or universally indifferently. Rather, the latter is eternal truth, the immediate individual being mere representation, having himself to consent to or himself to achieve, they are the same, his own creation, this being what it comes down to, as the truth behind the popular proverb, “God helps those who help themselves”, this being so to say the compound interest principle of growth in grace, everything dependent upon the Absolute Idea as pure act (Aristotle), having indeed set *everything* in order (Anaxagoras).

This “in”, namely, can *only* signify identity. Thus it is that Hegel begins and ends with Self and that is Absolute Idealism, for him as, later, for McTaggart. It is the watchword of the New Testament or of its theologians, Paul, the earliest, and John. For “the essential and self-subsisting spirit ... is all in all” (Hegel). “These three syllogisms, constituting the one syllogism

(the terms of all three are the same) of the absolute self-mediation of spirit, are the revelation of that spirit ... the unfolding of the mediation contracts itself in the result”, in Hegel’s philosophy namely, “where the spirit closes in unity with itself – not merely in the simplicity of faith and devotional feeling, but even to thought”. Note that he does not say, for example, “supremely”, but “even” only. Yet this form of truth, he says, still within the middle section, of *The Phenomenology of Mind*, on “revealed religion” and not under the third and final form (of absolute spirit), “philosophy”, “is the object of philosophy”. The invitation is to recognise how we became philosophers, if we are such, recalling in this context the Socratic contempt, in *Phaedrus*, for the non-lover. Amid all this Hegel counsels earnestly against “falling back” “into the vanity of wilfulness” under cover, perhaps, of “irony”. Is there here perhaps a kind of pre-Sartrean anguish in regard to the impossibility of the longed-for sincerity? Yes and no, one can only reply.

Hegel also says, and it is clarificatory:

It often happens in philosophy that the half-truth takes its place beside the whole truth and assumes on its own account the position of something permanent. But the fact is that the half-truth, instead of being a fixed or self-subsistent principle, is a mere element absolved and included in the whole. The metaphysic of understanding is dogmatic, because it maintains half-truths in their isolation: whereas the idealism of speculative philosophy carries out the principle of totality and shows that it can reach beyond the inadequate formularies of abstract thought. Thus idealism would say: - The soul is neither finite only, nor infinite only; it is really the one just as much as the other, and in that way neither the one nor the other. In other words, such formularies in their isolation are inadmissible, and only come in to account as formative elements in a larger notion. Such idealism we see even in the ordinary phases of consciousness. Thus we say of sensible things, that they are changeable: that is, they *are*, but it is equally true that they *are not*. We show more obstinacy in dealing with the categories of the understanding. These are terms which we believe to be somewhat firmer – or even absolutely firm and fast. We look upon them as separated from each other by an infinite chasm, so that opposite categories can never get at each other. The battle of reason is the struggle to break up the rigidity to which the understanding has reduced everything.²²³

²²³ Hegel, *Enc.* 32. The last sentence is curiously anticipatory of Wittgenstein’s characterisation of philosophy as “the battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by language” (*Philosophical Investigations*). It might equally be seen as fostering, or confirming in advance, the ecumenical spirit officially endorsed by the Second Vatican Council’s “Decree on Ecumenism” (1962-1964).

"The soul is neither finite only, nor infinite only". This is the answer, in its beginnings, to those objecting to Hegel's fusing of *the* individual self, say Christ, with any or every individual self. "I live yet not I, but Christ lives in me." Hegel would claim that this statement belongs to the philosophical order, just as does "I in them and they in me". The spatial preposition "in" clearly stands for an identity and nothing else, an identity of course in difference, which is the only identity that is not merely formal or abstract, the only identity which is a relation, something not to be confused, though, reductively, with (as distinct from relating it to!) "relative identity" in the contemporary debate merely consequential upon it as to the *use* of "the same" or similar *expressions*. The Father and the Son are the same God without being conceptually interchangeable. Distinct debates about "relative identity" are themselves "the same" without being conceptually interchangeable while "the soul is neither finite only, nor infinite only". As for the unity of the absolute self with all selves in the sense of any or every individual self, this may legitimately be regarded as the exact or "theologically" correct version of the representation, of or by or in piety, that Christ on the Cross saw or "knew", in his divine nature, or "in the heaven of his soul" (Maritain) each and every person as from every age as aim and object of his action or, actually, passion, "for all" as it is put, the *figure* of predestination notwithstanding. That is, the seeing or knowing each soul represents, is figure for, his *being* each, wholly and in all. *From* this, ultimately, as, if anything at all, exemplary instance, it follows that all knowing or perceiving is actually figure for being that other, any other, which or who is ultimately the same as self, rendering, this truth, self, universal, divine even: "I will be in you". This is the true Being, the Idea which in knowing only itself knows all, all things, all persons. *Agnosce, o Christiane, dignitatem tuam!* But then you must acknowledge the dignity of each and every other too, all that we really should mean or try to mean in our easy talk of "human dignity". What else would be the "closest possible union" with man, with the rational creature specifically, that is to say, which we found Blessed Duns Scotus, as the Church now titles him, affirming as God's will, which, indeed, even "sin" cannot destroy. If unforgiven it could only ensure that the individual thus involved would remain merely as represented, *vorgestellt*, by us or himself, outside the Concept. "I went by and behold, he was gone" (Psalm of David). Hegel, in fact, sees forgiveness, "pardon", as *the* concept, missed by "the beautiful soul", eliciting religion and hence *sophia*. We remain outside so long as the resistance of the finite to the infinite is not "broken down", just as time is "real for spirit for as long as spirit needs it" (Hegel). That resistance is not so much forgiven as left behind, kicked away and forgotten, first or absolutely by God indeed. "Spite

of fears pride ruled my will: Remember not past years” (Newman). “I will not remember their sins any more” (Isaiah).

It has been well remarked by a Canadian philosopher that McTaggart’s is a philosophy of Trinity but of a Trinity with an infinite or at least very great number of persons, even in all their various combinations and separations, if there cannot be an infinite multitude. How many “particles” are there? But this was an error, to see things so. The Trinity, in fact, is fully and perfectly realised in every incarnation, if we take incarnation, the inward exteriorisation of the Idea, as the middle point or term of this conception, judgment and syllogism in one. That is what Hegel means by “the ruin of the individual”. Each is all and all is each: the Biblical “in” is logically superfluous. This is McTaggart’s perfect unity, as later interpreting it, as expressed in his “Immortality” chapter in his *Studies in the Hegelian Cosmology*, Cambridge 1901. It is a matter of each in all and all in each.

In Hegel, however, as McTaggart denies, the condition for this, it is made clear, is *the actual mediation by one “divine man”*, though I should not have to stress this. For equally, by Hegel’s Logic, that of “I think, therefore I am”, there is no decisive difference, either with respect to the truth or, hence, to the mediation, between the thought of and the actual incarnation of this person, given that flesh, or “matter”, is of itself a representation, even if, maintaining the same view, *appearance* in and as this representation is precisely what completes the divine reality. That is, Hegel says, as existing *for man* any defectiveness in “incarnation” is *pro parte objecti* only, or on the part of its concept specifically. The philosophy of spirit, that is, is not in itself a humanism or is not *limited* to being that. Heidegger, in his “Letter on Humanism”, was nearer the truth here, then, than was Sartre. Nor is this latter qualification, for the same reason, a specifying *limitation*, upon infinity or anything else. We may though, *accordingly* with this, ask for whom or what else (than itself) could it, the divine reality, exist, i.e. expecting the answer “Surely no one”. “In this is my Father glorified”. This, it is worth noting, is the presumption, as it seems, of Scripture, not as contradicting but as situating the *bonum diffusivum sui*. God does not “envy” anything or anyone, simply because, the larger reason, he has no real relation to anything as outside of himself. “In the beginning God created heaven and earth”, hence man, “in our image”, “male and female created he them”, this differentiation *thus* extending downward into all life as thus imaging, while conceptually enabling, the evolutionary process as temporally represented. He, God, was never, it would appear, doing anything else, not even “resting”; that he did only “after” this work and as setting the seal just on *it*. It, namely, *is* his rest, in the calm of thought, that is no less, for us, a “Bacchanalian whirl of concepts”. This raises again the

papal question mentioned: what is man? At a weekend seminar I once attended a Catholic academic participant said to me: “The Church says God is man; Marx says man is God”. He saw no difference between the two, just as statements. Yet there is clear difference between Hegel and Feuerbach, but not, I claim, between Hegel and McTaggart on this point, even though the latter chose a formally atheist discourse²²⁴, the former a theistic one, so that both get accused of not meaning what they say.

In Hegel, we have just noted, “the soul is neither finite only nor infinite only”. This is actually the same as the Scholastic characterisation of it as *capax Dei*, if we recall Hegel’s claim that the possible is the actual. In the *cogito* meanwhile it is not merely that the I is thought but that thought is always and everywhere I, self-consciousness. Or, or hence, this self-consciousness is fully realised as and when swallowed up in thought, as the Idea, transcending all that we usually or “immediately *call* consciousness, as immortality transcends “life”. Only, since *vivere viventibus esse* we see as life what is “no life at all”, St. Teresa and St. Paul concurring explicitly in this. Thus “I am come that they may have life”. There is nothing subjective about it and it is in this that it, self-consciousness, knowing and being known in one, is the final subject and only object for itself. Hence, finally, “if I were not, then God would not be”, for in the same movement of thought the finite “I”, its supposition, is given up, left behind, “put away”, as a dream at morning. We have “become men”.

If we would but consider (this was a favourite phrase of Aquinas’s) we could see that the notion of a finite intellect (never mind “soul”) is somehow “fishy”. It does not square with the principle that thought, intellect, is *ad opposita* as contrasted with nature, which is *determinata ad unum*. Indeed, could Aquinas not have said, of mind, intellect, that it too is *determinata*, but *ad opposita*, i.e. adding a factor of determination here too to the mere *ad* to show that the opposites too, as such, make one, *unum*, the *unum necessarium* indeed? The question is relevant, but as inviting reflection upon precisely creation, as a whole, as being both representation generally and a representation in its concept or notion, a finite notion in fact, which precisely intellect here aspires to surmount, thus illustrating that it can never be abstractly finite. If it were then the whole nexus of truth as such would be lost, a favourite theme of Augustine, as, but negatively, it was for Kant, whose thought Hegel professes to fulfil and hence correct, in critique of the *Kritik*. In calling creation a representation we in no sense deny the dogma, any more than we do when conceding Hegel’s point that in speaking of

²²⁴ McTaggart, tended, in fact, to see theism as a specifically Anglican misrepresentation!

God's "son" we introduce a picture into notional thought itself. For we know that we have to "understand spiritual things spiritually" (Paul the Apostle). The creation, it is a principle of orthodoxy to affirm, usually under the figure, again, of dust and ashes, is nothing apart from God, "in whom we live and move and *have our being*". From one point of view this is precisely the overcoming of the world spoken of ("I have overcome the world") which, again, free submission to death, up to the point of choice, perfectly represents. Life, says Hegel (and hence death, its "internal" opposite), is "but the Idea immediate", to be understood "spiritually", or in mediation, again. Thus, as a category (of the Notion!), it, life, appears first actually *in* the Logic, a "formal" category indeed, given that it should appear there at all (as many would and do contest), immediately after (*Enc.* 216) introduction of the category of the Idea generally (*Enc.* 213). Hence, precisely hence, "The death of merely immediate and individual vitality is the 'procession' of spirit" (222). The allusion to Trinitarian procession cannot be missed, thus closely uniting death as such, and hence life, with the death on the Cross and this, in turn, with the Trinitarian "processions". It is something of a *tour de force*. This is why, although Hegel distinguishes his discourse from that of mere "prophets", he calls for a reading in line with how the Bible is read anagogically²²⁵ or in the most "spiritual" manner, gathering all into one repeatedly, this whole "culture" being nothing other than a or the reflection upon the "I", upon self, as "universal of universals". "I, if I be lifted up, shall draw all men unto me" or again, in exemplification of the principle here, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness (so that all who gazed upon it were healed), so shall the Son of Man be lifted up" and so on. Jesus here identifies himself (it is a moment) with the serpent, principle at once of evil and of wisdom, as lifted up "on a banner". here of the Cross (in "the wilderness" of alienated life or nature), nor, in Hegelian perspective, can we fail to note the redemptive identification in difference, on behalf of the good, with the principle of evil or serpent, wisest of the beasts yet condemned for its mischief to go on its belly. "Before Abraham was, I am", an assertion, *mutatis mutandis*, later echoed by the similarly (in the sense of participatory, not as independent principle) martyred Al Hallaj, who claimed to be God, in the Islamic world. More modestly (if not the converse of modesty), we have Daniel Kolak's "I am you".²²⁶ So, conversely, "What you do to the least of these you do to me" or indeed, in

²²⁵ This term derives originally from the Greek *anago, anagein*, to "lead up".

²²⁶ They had to kill him, asserts the late Eugene Gendlin of Hallaj, in his superb commentary, "line by line", upon Aristotle's *De anima*, University of Chicago. Cp., once more, Daniel Kolak, *I am You*, Springer, New York, 2004, the Introduction especially.

“creative” form, “Love your neighbour as yourself”, viz. since he *is* that. Compare also Aquinas’s *Sumit unus sumunt mille*, where one receives a thousand receive, referring precisely to the (eucharistic) communion so central in and for Hegel that he devotes almost the concluding paths of the *Encyclopaedia* to it. This would have been the most inappropriate place for an explosion of mere anti-Catholic prejudice. But we should see it as this only incidentally, as critique of a sacramental theology (what could be more important?) in vital need of development, though Hegel could not or did not see how, even less that this had been developed, in the relevant pages of Aquinas’s main work²²⁷, as the reader may confirm for himself.

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Where are we going here? Our last two or three sections may be viewed as preparatory to the theme of the Trinitarian image in the soul of man or woman as such, each being thereby not the abstract or “ruined” individual, not even universal man specifically (whatever we may mean by “man”), or woman (they rather reflect first each the other, as well described by C.G. Jung’s account in terms of *animus* and *anima*), but, rather, spirit, something which Hegel describes in one place as a battleground, i.e. not the property of either contestant. Here each battles as the whole army, as in Eckhart’s “If I were not, God would not be”. God alone is the Trinity, the Idea, and he is found as one or the whole in each or, it is the same here, the part, in woman as in man, then, *because of* their imaging Trinity in their mutual opposition²²⁸. This was equally the case in the soul of Christ. Hence he is posited, by incarnational logic, as having a specific human soul, whatever be our final judgment upon that piece of Aristotelian natural philosophy or of the psychology called, with some presumption, “rational”. Hegel seems to indicate that he takes “soul”, along with “world” and “God”, as does Kant, as belonging to the early modern “dogmatic metaphysics”, as they were later denominated²²⁹, though not always or immediately, at least, with due

²²⁷ Aquinas, *Summa theol.*, part III.

²²⁸ This Barthian insight, mentioned earlier here, as one must surely see, and as taken up by two modern Popes in collusion (Ratzinger and Wojtyła, which leading which would be hard to say), as “pinpointing” the divine image in man, places the metaphysics of sexuality, as precisely “*agapic*” *eros*, or hence, equivalently, “*erotic*” *agape*, can no longer, with regard precisely to this image, be ignored or set aside. It is reflected from the Biblical beginning (“Male and female created he them”) and accordingly in the whole mystical theology, ecclesiology, of Church as “bride of Christ” or, simply, *his* body, “flesh of my flesh” (the “first” Adam in *Genesis*).

²²⁹ Cf. *Enc.* 47 to 49, but also 50 as supplying Hegel’s reconciling corrective.

acknowledgement of their being a somewhat degenerate version of a *philosophia perennis*.

Certainly, if Christ were not then God would not be, i.e. that is *the sense* of Christ specifically. Hegel universalises this but only as universalising Christ, “the man” or the term “Christ” itself, Christ adopting, from the prophet Daniel in some sense, the title “son of man”. That is, he does not universalise to men in general, as my Marxist-Catholic acquaintance seemed to do or as Fr. Daniel Jamros SJ²³⁰ objects to in Hegel. Christ, so runs the theory, is the truth of *each* man, whatever be the destiny of any particular man. By “Christ”, however, in his philosophy, Hegel understands “the Mediator” and not some particular historical individual, this being seen as “lying outside the concept”, as something not yet made whole, “lifted up” indeed, “glorified”²³¹ or accomplished simply. In that respect, in respect, that is, of any man’s truth, his “idea” in the divine mind which alone God knows, if he or it, the idea, were not, then God would not be (cf. Eckhart), since God has loved him “from before the foundation of the world”.

Of course that can leave us wondering about which we are, about our idea or ourselves, and the answer of absolute idealism is that we are or are “in” the idea, the rest being representation which, like all that belongs purely or abstractly to finitude, is false. “I live yet not I, but Christ lives in me”: here this is found to be not just a particular impression of a chosen individual, Paul, but the human condition in the context of a redeemed humanity, a situation of course requiring free acceptance. Being “born again”, then, is a question of finding our true being, as image of God. For this “again”, we should not forget, is itself a figure only, i.e. it is not essential to the concept of baptism that it should follow temporally upon “natural” conception or birth, as the one true “birth” specifically. One only does “again”, as distinct from blissful repetition, what *failed* the first time, as truth born out of error, by Hegel’s account of it. Hence we find Scriptural notions of sanctification in the womb and so on. Hence Hegel concludes *The Science of Logic* by identifying true Being, or truth simply, by his premises, with the Idea, i.e.

²³⁰ Daniel P. Jamros: “Hegel on the Incarnation: Unique or Universal?” *Theology and Philosophy* 56, 1995.

²³¹ “Now is the Son of Man glorified”, exclaims Christ in the Gospel, not as speaking from heaven directly but in just the moment when Judas leaves the common table to betray him or, as would be shown, give him up to the saving death. “For this I was born, for this I came into the world”. The second assertion, one might remark, corrects the first, in a measure, for us too. One cannot simply be born without being assumed present “beforehand” (actually eternally or “from before the foundation of the world”, where the picturing nature of “before” shows up clearly) so as to undergo this.

not “replacing” it with that simply, as one typical objection to philosophical or absolute idealism mistakenly assumes or would make out. It rather, as “spirit”, always mediated (art, religion, philosophy), *explains* “the sheen of being”. “I am the way, the truth and the life”. True being remained to be identified with that rather than being presupposed to it as a separate, more fundamental category. Such seems to be Hegel’s notion of things. Yet the Johannine Christ also utters just the first two words, “I am”, as a complete self-statement, itself being the “name” offered to Moses, by God (Yahweh), in place of any particular name. Implicitly there the particular, like the individual, is absorbed and indeed “cancelled”, the universal remaining thus being the “universal of universals” as itself **Universality** (“universal of universals” as I, the “subjective Notion”) containing the “moments” of **Particularity** and **Individuality** as expounded thus:

The Notion as Notion contains the three following ‘moments’ or functional parts. (1) The first is **Universality** – meaning that it is in free equality with itself in its specific character. (2) The second is **Particularity** – that is, the specific character, in which the universal continues serenely equal to itself. (3) The third is **Individuality** – meaning the reflection-into-self of the specific characters of universality and particularity; - which negative self-unity has complete and original determinateness, without any loss to its self-identity or universality.²³²

Note here that all three, including the first, are spoken of as “moments”. We thus have a statement of the truth of the Trinity freed of the pictured representations of fatherhood, sonship and associated through which the religious communion as such pictures the Notion, generally called “God” there and, so to say, “elsewhere” (in truth there is no “elsewhere”, anyone elsewhere being rather nowhere, in finite abstraction). To this corresponds the Pauline reference to God as “father” (“one God and father of all”) “from whom all fatherhood in heaven and on earth *is named*” (I add the stress), meaning or at least implying that “naming” in this one place functions differently, negatively even, as itself moment just as much, and not at some “second level”, as the notional concept (as of moments) first named. Note, though, that in the *Logic*, as Part One of the threefold *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences* there is no functional mention of “religion” such as is stressed in *The Phenomenology of Mind*, for it is not a category. It is given its due, rather, in Part Three, *Philosophy of Mind* (stress added), in the later work, as the intermediating form of the three forms of Absolute Mind, Art, Religion, Philosophy, while with an account of such Absolute Mind the

²³² *Enc.* 163.

work, Hegel's *magnum opus*, ends. He there posits Philosophy as Absolute Mind as such, but only insofar as it becomes *sophia* itself and not only love of it, this transformation being itself love's perfection and fulfilment, in only apparent contrast with St. Paul's account at *I Cor. XIII* here, that love "never falls away" (as do faith and hope), since he characterises just this as *knowing* "as I am known". So both Art and then Religion, in which Art itself is mediately fulfilled, are finally absorbed as finding their place in *sophia*, whereby alone philosophy, i.e. *sophia*, becomes more than just the third of three "forms", becoming rather form itself.

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Section 163 continues in a second paragraph, concerning "the individuality of the notion":

Individual and actual are the same thing: only the former has issued from the notion, and is thus, as a universal, stated expressly as a negative identity with itself. The actual, because it is at first no more than a potential or immediate unity of essence and existence, *may* possibly have effect: but the individuality of the notion is the very source of effectiveness, effective moreover no longer as the cause is, with a show of effecting something else, but effective of itself, - Individuality, however, is not to be understood to mean the immediate or natural individual, as when we speak of individual things or individual men: for that special phase of individuality does not appear till we come to the judgment (i.e. in this account). Every function and "moment" of the notion is itself the whole notion (§160); but the individual or subject is the notion expressly put as a totality.²³³

Actuality, mentioned, here, is yet itself a category, as put first previously or as now superseded at paragraph 142, but covering the rest of the Doctrine of Essence up to 159, as religion is not (superseded). But so is the **Notion**, whereby in the final and eternal Trinity the universality of the Father, expressed in (the particularity of) the Word, are both specifically reflected in the individual, in that individuality we presently call human, actually mind, "body" being phenomenal (not a term for metaphysics, says Aquinas) except as fulfilled as one and "mystical" or notional. Each is thus all, as in McTaggart's vision, and conversely. Only thus can one "have" God, as is mind's "natural" yet transcendent desire. The flesh as flesh avails nothing, is "as grass" and so on, which is as much as to say, in this context, that it is "there", where the Idea is the real and actual, fulfilled. The flesh in which I, or Job, rather, shall see God, according to some translations of *The Book of Job* at least, is thus become

²³³ *Ibid.* 163 continued (first parenthesis added).

different, “resurrected” in Christian “iconography”, itself necessarily “transfigured” as is ever Christ himself. “Rising again” is thus figure for just “rising”, itself a more basic figure over again. Theoretically one might as well say descending, the coming down being the going up. Simply moving aside or to the side, however, would not do. There is a logic even in representation. Hence it was, so to say, itself a figuration only and precisely of his genuine *transfiguration*, beyond all figure, that appeared to some chosen disciples on a mountain, as we are told. Here, though, begin the discussions attempting, *within* Trinitarianism, to distinguish true image from figure. “And, although there is much more to say on the problems raised in this work, I am going to stop here.”²³⁴

²³⁴ Cp. Peter Geach, *Mental Acts*, RKP London 1957 (1964, 3rd. imp.), p. 129, concluding page, concluding sentence.

EPILOGUE

Our aim here has been to show fundamental agreement between Thomas Aquinas's theology of the Trinity, presented in dogmatic theological mode, and Hegel's philosophical development of the same. As with our earlier study, *Hegel's System of Logic* (CSP 2019), we end by considering an objection to our procedure and conclusions emanating from the Gustav Siewerth Academy, this time in the form of an article by Professor Tadeusz Guz, "*Gustav Siewerth's Denkweg von Thomas von Aquin to Hegel*", also forming part of the collection *INDUBITANTER AD VERITATEM, Studies offered to Leo J. Elders SVD*, ed. Jürgen Vijgen, DAMON Budel 2003, pp. 202-218 (the previous essay we mentioned was that by Prof. Alma von Stockhausen, "*Das Sein als Gleichnis Gottes: Die vermittelnde Mittel zwischen Thomas von Aquin und Martin Heidegger*", *Ibid.* pp. 400-422). My aim, once again, in accordance with the plan of this book, is solely to consider the case brought against Hegel as philosopher of the Trinity and of Christianity generally.

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Professor Guz's essay begins with an impertinent correlation from Augustine as brought here, plainly, against Hegel as person, precisely in abstraction from his philosophical competence: "*Unselig der Mensch, der alles kennt, nur Dich nicht!*" However, I shall myself be presenting Hegel as what is called a mystical writer, or in this case a writer from within mystical or "ascetic" theology, so a little largesse either way must be allowed. Guz in fact recognises this himself and it is part of his critique. Thus he cites Siewerth (d. 1963):

Nicht er (sc. Hegel) hat den Widerspruch in die Philosophie gebracht. Hegel ist nur der Vollstrecker eines abendländischen Geschicks, das nach Thomas über das Denken gekommen ist ... Eckhart, Scotus, der Cusaner, Böhme und Suarez kam der dialektische Widerspruch mit immer grössere Macht ins Walten. (pp. 210-211)

If all those five thinkers, including at least one now *beatus* (is he not even *doctor ecclesiae?*), are to be classed, pejoratively, as bringing contradiction,

or *the* contradiction into philosophy then, it might be thought, Hegel is not faced here with an adversary worthy of immediate attention, with regard, at least, to his theological credentials specifically. A continuous line of development, though doubtless zig-zag, to use McTaggart's term for the progressive advance of the dialectic as he saw it²³⁵, from Eckhart on is rather suggested, from Aquinas through Scotus up to Hegel, just what Guz, more uncompromisingly than Siewerth, wishes to deny, asserting degeneration rather. To fill in the line, meanwhile, after, or contemporary with, Suarez and before Hegel, I would suggest Descartes, John of St. Thomas (Poincot), Spinoza and Leibniz, omitting Kant as, in Hegel's words, more of a phenomenologist than a philosopher, though, in that case, the closing somewhat subdued pages of Hegel's *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion III* rather suggest, a phenomenological force to be reckoned with all the same. This, as highlighting Hegel's religious *faith* specifically, Guz or Siewerth should not, if they would be consistent, hold against him. On the contrary, it brings him yet closer to St. Thomas, after all, who was never ashamed to rely on faith as his last defence, even where possibly entailing consequent restrictions upon thought, for example when outlining the necessity for the sacraments as we have them as essential to the Church, though seeming to constrict (*arctare*) freedom of the spirit, for whom or which, Thomas himself there concedes, all nature appears as a sacrament, or when as his final defence of the contemporary military religious orders he says that they are what the contemporary or then actual Church has welcomed as fulfilling a need, object how one will. One might discern a certain analogy, parallel even, with his treatment of the state's admitting capital punishment as an example of that virtue adjoined to justice, and moreover as its most perfect instance, *epieicheia* namely, or virtue of knowing when the right (*jus*) enjoins a discarding (*Aufhebung?*) of the (written) law (*lex*). *Lex est aliqua ratio juris*, he concludes, and not *jus* itself, a difference I once had occasion to bring home to John Finnis, who felt hindered by it in his efforts to popularise or defend natural *law* specifically.

In a word, our analogy seems to suggest, we have here once again an instance of that "certainty against faith" which we previously identified in the case of Alma von Stockhausen, thinking of Hegel's later Preface to his *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences* specifically, as highlighted in the arguments of the recent on-line paper, "Must Catholics Hate Hegel?" (Coyle and Woods, Boston College), which I there cited.²³⁶ It seems

²³⁵ See J.M.E. McTaggart, *Studies in the Hegelian Dialectic*, Cambridge University Press, 1896. For the significance of this term in relation to Hegel's logic.

²³⁶ Cf. my *Hegel on Thought and Incarnation*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 2020.

regrettable that Professor Guz could not find motive to develop or even go along with Siewerth's not very robust efforts, perhaps, to see continuity between Thomas and Hegel, siding rather with von Stockhausen's panicky intemperance here. She would pair Hegel rather with Heidegger, who thoroughly rejected his main conclusions, to say no more. Well, I guess I am not above a certain intemperance myself, bad temper in short.

We want to find out just where Guz finds Hegel incompatible with St. Thomas. The opening of his essay suggests that he, when writing this essay at least, and yet more likely Siewerth, was not familiar with Hegel's *Lectures on the Proofs of the Existence of God*, work on which was only interrupted by his death.²³⁷ His reference to *dem Hintergrund und Heideggers*, echoing his senior colleague and mentor, is not encouraging. Heidegger, one with the contemporary Nazi ideologues in this at least, had not much good to say about Hegel. But, again, I am not well qualified to go into the motivation of this general smearing of Hegel by these two writers, so prominent in this volume offered to Leo Elders, whose own critique of Hegel, when and where it occurs, is much more measured, let us say.

Guz tells us that Siewerth sought in Hegel inspiration or help for his goal of revivifying St. Thomas's philosophy of being, as *actus essendi* one supposes (Absolute self-thinking Idea in Hegel). He sought an inward meeting, *innere Begegnung* presumably mutual, just as we ourselves have attempted in these pages as in our *Hegel on Thought and Incarnation*. Guz cites Siewerth as seeking in vain for "*eine bisher noch nirgends geleistete Auseinandersetzung mit Hegels Denken in systematischer Entfaltung aus der Sicht des Seinsmetaphysik*". Siewerth cites his own main work as filling this gap, a task which Guz aspires to show is in fact unfulfillable. So it appears that Siewerth in some sense "came unto his own and his own received him not", a case, surely, on the part of the latter, of "certainty against the Spirit" (Hegel, as cited above). One might continue this evangelical mode, concerning those sticking to "the letter" against "the Spirit", asking whom or what this "letter" kills: - answer, in the first instance: the good repute of Thomism among those otherwise nearest to it or, why not, deep in it.

How concretely, then, did Siewerth realise his idea, Professor Guz will ask here, from the citadel of Siewerth's own Academy. The answer he gives, sadly, seems to be "not at all". Let us see what we can learn from this. Our own aim here, to make it clear from the start, is rather to show that Hegel's work continues the insights of Aristotle and of St. Thomas even without, it

²³⁷ A chapter of my *Hegel on Thought and Incarnation* (CSP 2020) is devoted to commentary on these lectures. Siewerth's own main work, *Der Thomismus als Identitätssystem*, dates back to 1939, when much less of Hegel's *Nachlass* was available.

seems, close acquaintance with the latter's work as a whole or clear grasp of the historical consequences it entailed, due to the limitations of his time and of his personal situation therein. This, however, makes the deep-lying coincidences all the more remarkable and, indeed, hope-inspiring, whether for the ecumenical project initiated by the Second General Council of the Vatican (1962-4) or for the further development of philosophy as a whole or as such, rather.

Guz, or Siewerth as cited, begin by citing Hegel saying that Logic, as kingdom of pure thought, is "truth itself for itself". It sets forth God as he "is" before the creation of nature and finite spirit. Note that the text has *ist* and not *war*. This automatically gives the *vor* the sense of "in abstraction from". Or what else? There is a wilful ignoring of this, so that this text can be cited again and again against Hegel's plain *Aufhebung* of the world, e.g. at *Enc.* 50. The whole of Nature, similarly, inclusive of any positing of a "finite spirit", is the region of Becoming, not of Being, is halfway between Being and Nothing as the necessarily contingent or, rather, *the necessary contingent*. Anything finite is but a moment. The truth rather is that Mind eternally and necessarily beholds God, the position of the Hegelian "ontologists". Mind, Augustine saw clearly, cannot be finite, is necessarily possessed by indwelling truth, is thus self-assured, as Hegel puts it. But what does this make mind? Not the abstract "common intellect" of medieval controversy merely, but neither limited to the individual ever incarnating mind, as St. Thomas recognises, saying that "It is evident that it is this man (human being) that thinks". Here already we have the incarnational pattern of Hegel's "Notion", wherein "each of its constituent functions is the very total which the notion is, and is put as indissolubly one with it" (*Enc.* 160). This, it will be seen to follow from the system as a whole, applied firstly to "constituent functions", has to include as one with this inclusion also the supposed individual thinkers, each one united in one with the whole, in identity in fact since the unity of the notion is necessarily more perfect than those organic unities often taken as model in Scripture but negated in the taking, as when St. Paul states, seemingly nonsensically, "You are all members of one another". In fact he is cancelling the organic image by which he ascended to where both he and we stand. So Logic is indeed the whole truth in itself, is heaven, the beatific vision and "resurrection" generally.

Professor Guz, however, puts at the head of his discussion Thomas's principle that the full truth has to exceed the capacities of unaided, implicitly finite intellect. This does not rule out modification of this contradictory concept of finite intellect as he develops his system, speaking, for instance, of an "obediential potency". For, as Hegel will show, this concept, once

introduced, has to be applied to any and every exercise of intellect taken in abstraction from the infinite and hence active intellect, such that it is intellect as act and as sole act or act itself, that such intellection lives and acts “in God” or not at all. This is the basis for Hegel’s saying that God thinks in us. At which no offence need have been taken, as if that he “only” thinks in “us” had been meant, a distinction of little sense anyhow until we have unravelled the meaning and scope of the “us”, as the equivalent instance of Hegelian or other “angels” confirms. What, for instance, can be meant by those guardian angels of children in the Scripture who behold “the face of my Father in heaven”, i.e. one for each child, unless that is in some way the reality of the child itself, not perceiving its own perception as McTaggart might say? “It is useless to count”, again.

The whole nature of “revelation” is at stake here, and one may begin by noting Hegel’s saying that God *is* revelation, but not of this or that, is revelation itself. His thought has already leaped ahead of us, but reflection shows this must be so, for what outside of himself would God have to reveal, while if he reveals himself essentially then, implicit to what he reveals, he is one with, is, revelation, indeed this real *act* of revealing. Revelation, as is true of all the divine virtualities, or virtue simply, cannot be other or less than act in its fullness. Thus God ever reveals himself, this being the root of eternity, as of “realised end”, properly conceived.

Well, we seem to be getting on like a house on fire. Mention of a kingdom (*Reich*) here, of the Father or of “pure thought”, seems to argue acquaintance with Hegel’s *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*. If so, then it should simultaneously be kept in mind that the three kingdoms, of pure thought, of phenomenal representation (incarnation, death and resurrection in our world) and (that “of the Spirit”) of subjectivity as such, “carried out in the community which is the Church, now and forever, on the earth and in heaven”²³⁸, “are not really separable nor even distinct”:

They refer to a single and self-same reality, grasped by us as different “elements”, in a more and more concrete way. The third recapitulates the two first ones, and in this sense, establishes the “truth” of them, but in addition it grounds itself in them and “presupposes” them. At the risk of being without guarantee, of being illusory, of reducing itself to a pure aspiration (*Sehnsucht*) or a Kantian *Sollen*, the subjective reconciliation lived for itself by human subjects must rest on an objective reconciliation, real in itself.²³⁹

²³⁸ G. Van Riet, *op. cit.* p. 61, cf. Hegel, *LPR* III, pp. 3-6.

²³⁹ Van Riet, p. 80.

As truth in itself this first kingdom anyhow could not but remain standing, as Christ comes down to earth from the heaven he never left. Hegel can hardly be meaning anything less. What he shows in addition, however, is the necessity of it quite anterior to a necessity of decree expressed in a to all appearances contingently finite revelation, determined as being at an elected time and place, rather than containing all times within himself. Now of course St. Thomas is quite able to dispel this appearance of *Vorstellung*, or of Appearance over again, and frequently does so in his theological writing. Yet he did not, for example, work it into his commentaries on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and other texts, even as possible correction of them (though he does on occasion correct them), as Hegel does, in a more explicit continuity, we have been claiming here, with the theology, implicitly the metaphysics, of Scotus. We have to combine what in Aquinas's texts he has tended to leave separate, possibly through lack of time in an area, a historical situation, where he would have wanted to tread very carefully and, as he might have asked himself, to what end? For Hegel, however, the public was waiting, thirsting. And Hegel gave them what lay sleeping in the pages left us by St. Thomas while scarcely realising, most likely, that this was what he was doing. That in itself is further testimony to the truth of these two harmonising accounts of God, man and the Christian Gospel. Much the same can be said of absolute idealism itself, bearing in mind that ancient tradition of Australian aborigines, some of them, that *their ancestors created the world*.²⁴⁰ Their ancestors, after all, are ultimately ours as well, if we are to stay with this representation. For, *sed contra*, "No birth, no death", from which it would follow that there are no "first" men, since, just for one thing, time is itself a representation "of ours". We are, just as much or as little, our own "ancestors", each one of us in union, identity rather, with the whole (cf. *Enc.* 160).

According to Thomas a full knowledge of absolute truth as man's "goal" exceeds reason's capacity (*Summa theol.* Ia, qu. 1, 1). Since possible research into this truth would be thus limited it "must be revealed to man". Therefore "a holy doctrine is necessary, based upon divine revelation", through the following of which many people can reach certainty of salvation. Hegel reduces supernatural to natural revelation, understood essentially differently, though, from that *theologia naturalis* which is able to acknowledge God as cause of the world from premises concerning finite substantial or accidental

²⁴⁰ Cf. work on this and related topics, arguing for philosophical idealism, by the late Axel Randrup of Copenhagen, in the field of anthropology, to be found on the Internet.

being. For Hegel this natural revelation is understood as “Nature’s positing of its world” or Absolute Spirit’s positing of itself as self-opposed.²⁴¹

The key fault here lies in the word “reduces”, *reduziert*. Guz has no warrant for seeing, or representing rather, Hegel’s move as a “reduction”, whether from anything more to less complex or from the more noble to the everyday or from the faithfully followed to facile simplification, etc. etc. It can rather be seen as a development, in Newman’s sense, of what was transmitted by St. Thomas, surely though not without development of Thomas’s own upon or from, as we say, his Patristic or Scriptural models.

Not much developed, though, is the notion of revelation St. Thomas as it were automatically (“unthinkingly” would be unjustifiably harsh) employs. In an earlier work²⁴² I have claimed that Hegel virtually pioneered a thematization and/or “in depth” penetration of this notion, showing the contradictions that arise if we fail to take note of the inbuilt picture-thinking underlying this concept of “un-veiling”. What is veiled, just for one thing, is to be understood as present all the time, otherwise no need for the veiling. So it is Hegel who unveils a veiled concept, showing the sense in which we can and cannot speak of truths “above” reason or as if *in themselves* beyond reason’s grasp. Bear in mind here that on Hegel’s own analysis the notion of a finite mind or reason is nothing other than an ultimately self-contradictory and/or momentary conception, to be, like all others similar, the logic teaches and exemplifies, taken up or, it is the same, cancelled by absorption in the Idea which is Mind or Thought itself and “the true Being”. Did Professor Guz never come across this in Hegel, or has he other motivation for not mentioning it? That would be sad indeed, but I cannot be blamed for noting this possibility, just as much or as little as the first one my question here mentions. Loyalty is a noble emotion but, as Pasternak

²⁴¹ *Indubitanter*, p. 204, - here is the original text: *Nach Thomas übersteigt eine vollkommene Erkenntnis der absoluten Wahrheit als “Ziel” des Menschen “die Fassungskraft der Vernunft”. Weil “die Erforschung dieser Wahrheiten nur wenigen möglich wäre”, “mussten” sie “dem Menschen geoffenbart werden”. Es ist daher “eine heilige Lehre notwendig die auf göttliche Offenbarung gründet”, durch deren Befolgung viele Menschen ihre Heilsgewissheit erreichen können. Hegel reduziert die übernatürliche Offenbarung auf eine natürliche, die auch wesentlich anders verstanden wird als im Sinne der theologia naturalis, die Gott als den Urheber der Welt mittels des endlichen substantiell-akzidentellen Seins zu erkennen vermochte. Für Hegel wird diese natürliche Offenbarung als “Setzen der Natur als seiner Welt” bzw, als Sichselbstentgegensetzen des absoluten Geist verstanden.*

²⁴² Stephen Theron, *Hegel’s Theology or Revelation Thematized*, CSP, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 2018.

once noted, there are very few things indeed which truly claim our loyalty unconditionally. Perhaps, I add, there is just one, against which our certainties must crumble rather than be dubiously or, in general, unspiritually reinforced.

Edith Stein, saint, exclaimed on reading the Life of St. Teresa by herself, “This is the truth”. I can only say that this verdict is exactly my own response, no saint, but as having a long background of consenting Thomistic studies, upon, some fifteen to twenty years ago now, taking up again for study Hegel’s *Science of Logic* in the later *Encyclopaedia* version, having let it lie unopened for thirty-five years after purchasing a copy for participation in a short post-graduate course some thirty-five years previously.²⁴³ Nor have I thereby withdrawn my assent to various Thomistic theses, maybe all of them. Thus I have raised the question here of whether Thomas was or might well be reckoned a crypto-idealist, bearing in mind Hegel’s considered view that (absolute) idealism is *the* philosophical science whereby philosophy is *der höchste Gottesdienst*, having as its concern “religion and nothing but religion” (Hegel). In general, our suggestion here, helped by the information Guz gives us, is that perhaps it is time that the integration that Siewerth so hopefully attempted, but found impossible to carry out as it seems Professor Guz is showing us, be re-attempted or more confidently executed, rather, encouraged, after all, in that professedly Catholic world especially, by Conciliar endorsement, since Siewerth’s day, of ecumenism at all levels, as also by papal canonisation of Cardinal John Henry Newman, in some sense proto-advocate, since 1845, of modern “development of doctrine”. We should bear in mind that if this itself is a doctrine, viz. that doctrine (of development) itself develops, as it seems it has to be, then this doctrine itself, of development, cannot be prevented, under impulse of the Spirit, from taking turns, under divine impulse, not foreseen by us or those placed as guardians of our shared deposit.²⁴⁴ The prime example of this situation, exemplar rather, is the birth, life and death of Jesus the Christ, who “came unto his own and his own received him not”.

So much for *reduziert!* The other fault, of course, lies in Professor Guz’s presentation of Thomas’s doctrine, as suits his clear purpose of disqualifying Hegel, without any attempt to draw out the eternal and spiritual truth underlying its thirteenth century letter, at which he would have us stick. As if that too were not destined for death and transformation in resurrection, as was St. Thomas himself. Or where is he now? His poor

²⁴³ The course was taught by the late Joseph Kockelmans, to whom I remain indebted.

²⁴⁴ Cp., for example, the development, tentative, in my *Thought and Incarnation in Hegel* (CSP, Newcastle, 2020, p. 18f.), of a basic teaching, based on certain features of the appearances at Lourdes in 1858.

head is in one place, his bones in another, yet he has sent us his spirit, leading into all truth as does spirit everywhere. Spirit, namely, is “holy”, another reason for not sticking with the idea of a finite intellect or *Geist*, this, like all Hegelian identifications, working in both directions, the condition for identifying necessity with freedom (and conversely!). But here my notes above on the notion of revelation and Hegel’s thematization of it must suffice for the present, or at least until my next paragraph or so. One has to see all together.

But one should just note that the very idea of truths to be held by faith while not graspable by intellect is incoherent in the extreme. How does one “hold” such a truth, or even *meaningfully* “confess” it? There must be a minimum of understanding and Hegel’s solution of this puzzle is that through the initial faith, of the “real presence” in the eucharistic elements, for example (not, in his case, the most appropriate example, however), one comes more and more to grasp the *necessity* of the truth concerned. Once grasped it can be defended, before all, and, what is more, one can go back to the conceptual origins of the revealed truth concerned and establish its proper intellectual foundations in reality, thus incidentally experiencing a progressive divinisation of one’s own intellect and/or “soul”, in form of an *Aufhebung*, than which nothing else can properly be meant by “growth in grace” and indeed favour, with God if not with men. So indeed there is nothing *jenseits des Denkens*, which is the same as to say that thought is spirit, is God: *Geist is Geist*. Whether or not we consider “being” a worthy predicate of Spirit is a subsidiary question, then, and one in its own right. Cataphatic and apophatic spiritualities vary in their answer to this question, which is equivalent to saying that not much hangs upon it. St. Thomas himself, after all, drew extensively upon Pseudo-Dionysius, while as for the “positivity” of being, which Professor Guz would stress in his presentation of Thomas, Hegel has surely demonstrated, to say nothing of the many and varied statements of Thomas himself, how a finite attribute of this sort can of itself turn round into its opposite. So, to quote Chesterton at his least or perhaps, in context, most poetic, “Chuck it, Smith!”

Our inappropriately appropriate example takes on an especial significance. For Hegel ends, almost, his *Encyclopaedia*, with an apparent digression due simply to his commitment to the Lutheran account of this (or *the*) *mysterium fidei*, as “defined” at Trent, of the real transubstantiating or more nearly consubstantiating presence, replacement rather, in and of the eucharistic bread and wine by Christ where the Mass is celebrated by a validly ordained priest, this validity being what we are finally worshipping here, it might be

argued.²⁴⁵ The Catholic, eventually Tridentine account appears, at least, to presume a philosophy of moderate realism, which, all the same it does not and would not define as of faith²⁴⁶. If one held instead to the idealist philosophy as, for one thing, more consonant with one's Christian profession, might one's belief not willy nilly coincide with the Hegelian account, irrespective of what religious practices one went along with, reservation of the sacrament, for the sick or simply for separate worship, for example? Hegel's objections are well known, to making of the sacrament an independent divine object, for example, and follow from his philosophy of spirit, of mind and hence of all else, which is nought considered apart from such mind. But might one not still, as just urged, hold to the Tridentine and Conciliar definition? After all, *ex opera operato* or not, all concede the divinity of the consecrated substance to depend upon a certain physical integrity, destroyed by decay or haphazard spilling of the wine on some absorbent material. On Hegel's view it depends upon the consciousness of the believer, or perhaps rather upon the presently actual consuming by believer or non-believer indifferently. It is just that different points of terminus are set up in the two accounts, which are thus one in the necessary respect, one of some finite temporality or other. No doubt there is some difference in regard to finite consciousness, but it seems conceptually empty. I am open to correction here and am not questioning the faith or teaching of the Church. Philosophically, after all, I have no need to do such. Could I ever, i.e. could philosophy, have such a need? A clear negative may be given without hindrance to freedom of enquiry. Thus Peter Geach did not really

²⁴⁵ It is indeed to posit the essentially unobservable as a "miracle" as is often done, while I have commented on the parallel situation of the defined (1854) "immaculate conception" of Mary as pre-destined *theotokos*, as also an unobservable difference from the usual, pointing there to the ambiguity of the term "conception", instanced particularly in the celebrated "appearance" at Lourdes (1858) where, as reported, the words "*I am the immaculate conception*" (emphasis added), which might seem closer to the Hegelian "doctrine of the concept" than what the earlier definition immediately refers to. Might this not be a case of "understanding spiritual things spiritually", by what is first put as miracle takes on, rather, the quality of the virtue of faith, *mysterium fidei* indeed. Or, is not this feminine apotheosis required by full understanding that "male and female created he(?) them"? Her relation to the historical or phenomenal proto-figure would be the same as is ours to our "ruined" (Hegel) because "abstract" individuality in Hegel's system, a concrete identity in difference, namely. Cf. our *Hegel on Thought and Incarnation*, p. 18f., especially reference at footnote 18 to the Dominican Fergus Kerr's discussion of a development involving Karl Barth and the two most recent Popes.

²⁴⁶ Paul VI's pamphlet, "The Credo of the People of God" might be seen as having momentarily leaned in that direction, as Hans Küng once pointed out.

need to refuse to suppose, as suggested to him, a woman giving birth to kittens. The supposition, any such, would have committed him to nothing against his will. Upon the further question of whether faith in a more prolonged real presence, such as creates the very atmosphere of just Catholic places of worship since somewhere in the second millennium at least, presumes a commitment to moderate realism, I need not comment, except maybe to add that a distinction, a difference, between moderate realism and absolute idealism, has not been formally established. In saying that the universal exists differently, i.e. alone, in the mind to how it is found in things one does not assert that it is found in things at all. Things, that is, might be a mere miasma or “logical” moment, due for eventual cancellation or similar in *Aufhebung*. One cannot say what “things”, severed from Mind, are; this difference from mind is thus negative. God, that is to say, “has spoken only one word” (John of the Cross), in whom, in which alone are all the rest. Taken together with our remarks on immaculate conception one can relate the ideal of progressive spiritualisation to the superior position accorded by Hegel *in logic* to the will or to love (the two accounts vary concerning this choice), as a form, like faith, of cognition, over the category of “cognition proper”.

That is perhaps enough on this point (of revelation *jenseits des Denkens*), along with the first concerning Guz’s “*reduziert*”. When he goes on to consider the accounts given by the two thinkers of faith and reason he introduces the third variable of *Gnade*, grace, as if this term were of self-evident significance for philosophy. Yet this isn’t always thus acknowledged, although one cannot say it does not figure in Hegel’s account, figuring indeed with a similar necessity (yet it is always the same) as what he sees belonging to the contingent or, rather, with a necessity greater than that, as Aristotle had already taught that pure chance is unthinkable, yet we have chance. God does what he wills with his own and Hegel equates this truth with that of personal responsibility for our destiny, under the rubric of a self-consciousness developing, but infinitely, towards infinity or, cognitively rather, towards its being thus realisable in the sense of finally intelligible, “I in them and they in me”, one might add. Each has “his appointed place”, self-chosen though finally with a freedom, the divine, which transcends the notion of choice, as his logic as it develops itself explains. For Hegel, in fact, as Karl Rahner also acknowledges, while God, St. Thomas teaches, cannot be thought not to exercise his mercy even upon whatever damned there might be taken to be, i.e. those he considers otherwise as “outside the bond of charity”. Pardon, forgiveness, extends over all as the moment in which religion is absorbed in a philosophy having as its own business, however, “religion and nothing but religion”. This is

the gift, the intellectual virtue, of *sophia*, ever *sancta*. Everything, that is, is grace, literally, reality being everywhere, always and as such “friendly” (Leo Elders), from which of course it follows, equally, that nothing is grace, i.e. not absolutely, meaning that the *gratis* is not, can never be, gratuitous, but rather most fitting, as mercy is the superior form of *justitia* (Aquinas) and this is its true religious and therefore most reasonable sense. From it, this distinction, comes validity for the inevitable question, “Why did God make me?” i.e. just me, and not some other in my place. Who, or what, am I? Self-consciousness, Hegel’s final answer, is as such divine, our “second birth” being the only true one, an entering into our inheritance, as it is put, or becoming what we are, not just under “natural law” but divinely. Each of us is in that way figured in the Mediator, rather than that he figures us. He is thus *the man*. *Ecce!*

So when we pray for divine help in an already existing scheme of things we are, if we wish to be without fault, really directing our plea beyond itself, entering the region, the true region, where God is all since anything other only is, or ex-ists, in Him as one with him, i.e. not as placed in a corner of a box of quantitatively determined capacity. This all, that is, includes our then present plea. Nor therefore must this merely mean that “he likes to be asked” (C.S. Lewis). This is the kind of thing you will find not just in Hegel or my admiring self but in, as just one example, John of the Cross, Doctor of the Church, to cite him yet again. He counsels that “In order to have the all you must deny yourself in all”, it being understood that such self-denial is first of all literal, adoption of a fully philosophic attitude, death-practicing (Aristotle), unbound and free from life. Just this is what Hegel is at pains to communicate, continually. The plea beyond itself, then, as just mentioned, is already, or just as such, a surrender of nothing to all or, it is the same, of this all to itself as originating such surrender in sacrifice, i.e. there is no such thing as divine *help*, merely. Help as such is a faint echo, in our finite conceptual scheme, our finite “world” as we say, of benevolence or love as such. Love, recall, is thinking as feeling (*Enc.* 159), whereby Hegel says much for feeling rather than little for thinking. In religion, however, as in our language generally, or religious doctrine even of an elementary sort (St. Paul’s “milk for babes”, and who is not such a “babe”?), we may continue to pray for or speak of divine help, continue to speak, in a word.

Regarding the “natural revelation” to which, according to Guz, quite original here, Hegel reduces the supernatural, Hegel, Guz points out, does not understand this “revelation” (as in the covenant with Noah, with the rainbow as sign, perhaps) which is nature, he says, as in its creator’s intention a revelation enabling us to acknowledge God, this being the

Thomistic understanding, he implies (though certainly not that found in the book *Job*), a “*Sichselbstentgegensetzen des absoluten Geist*”. I cite Hegel:

In this way (positing of necessary antinomy in cosmology) the suggestion was broached that the contradiction is occasioned by the subject-matter itself, or by the intrinsic quality of the categories. And to offer the idea that the contradiction introduced into the world of Reason by the categories of Understanding is inevitable and essential, was to make one of the most important steps in the progress of Modern Philosophy. But the more important the issue thus raised the more trivial was the solution. Its only motive was an excess of tenderness for the things of the world. The blemish of contradiction, it seems, could not be allowed to mar the essence of the world: but there could be no objection to attaching it to the thinking Reason, to the essence of mind. Probably nobody will feel disposed to deny that the phenomenal world presents contradictions to the observing mind; meaning by “phenomenal” the world as it presents itself to the senses and understanding, to the subjective mind. But if a comparison is instituted between the essence of the world and the essence of mind, it does seem strange to hear how calmly and confidently the modest dogma has been advanced by one, and repeated by others, that thought or Reason, and not the World, is the seat of contradiction. It is no escape to turn round and explain that Reason falls into contradiction only by applying the categories. For this application of the categories is maintained to be necessary, and Reason is not supposed to be equipped with any other forms but the categories for the purposes of cognition. But cognition is determining and determinate thinking: so that if Reason be mere empty indeterminate thinking, it thinks nothing. And if in the end Reason be reduced to mere identity without diversity (see next §), it will in the end also win a happy release from contradiction at the slight sacrifice of all its facts and contents. (*Enc.* 48, first parenthesis added).

He continues:

It may also be noted that his failure to make a more thorough study of Antinomy was one of the reasons why Kant enumerated only *four* antinomies. These four attracted his notice, because as may be seen in his discussion of the so-called Paralogisms of Reason, he assumed the list of the categories as a basis of his argument. Employing what has subsequently become a favourite fashion, he simply put the object under a rubric otherwise ready to hand, instead of deducing its characteristics from its notion. Further deficiencies in the treatment of the Antinomies I have pointed out, as occasion offered, in my “Science of Logic”. Here it will be sufficient to say that the Antinomies are not confined to the four special objects taken from Cosmology: they appear in all objects of every kind, in all conceptions, notions and Ideas. To be aware of this and to know objects in this property of theirs, makes a vital part in a

philosophical theory. For the property thus indicated is what we shall afterwards describe as the Dialectical influence in logic.²⁴⁷

That the Spirit is said here to set itself against itself, as we noted, shows that Hegel thinks of the collective human process of thinking as reflecting, in identity, the divine and eternal Idea. Taught by Christ, Christianised humanity comprehends the truth of this identity as it presses all the more confidently forward in what is, however, perpetual revolution, revolt even, against the previous moment now as equally “cancelled”, Hegel claims, as it is “absorbed”. This is to understand spiritual things spiritually and not, therefore, in the deadness of the lethal “letter”. This continues, belongs to the instantaneousness of, the Athanasian “taking of the manhood into God” in its fulness, the fulness of what the Incarnate Word in fact achieves, in “realised end”.

A good deal of the trouble, the opposition, as already noted, stems from the model of Reason and Faith in a certain opposition, put as paralleling that of Nature and Grace, as emphasised in Professor Guz’s essay. This opposition exists in Hegel too but as overcome, or, more tellingly, as *set* to be overcome, by faith overcoming, absorbing and thus transforming reason as yet, in the final sense, its “natural” end, under God, so to say. “For this I was made, for this I came into the world”. Here, and *in the same way*, I here harmonise in an identity in their difference, two affirmations of one End, the first finite, the second infinite, thus absorbing and hence “destroying” or cancelling the other. “Forget also thy father’s house”. Again, or secondly, “grace transforms nature” by building upon it (a well-known Thomist watch-word). Just so are we posited as becoming “in Christ a new Creature”, since it is question of Hegel’s theological credentials. When Rahner, for example, says that “everything is grace”, again, this is no more “subversive” than Gilson’s saying that everything, the whole of nature, is miraculous. In

²⁴⁷ *Enc.* 48, the part discussing the second of the three “unconditioned” entities, viz. Soul, World and God, as seen or selected by Kant and how he views the application of Reason’s “subjective” Categories to these “unconditioned entities”:

“(Beta) The second unconditioned object is the World (§35). In the attempt which reason makes to comprehend the unconditioned nature of the world, it falls into what are called Antinomies. In other words it maintains two opposite propositions about the same object, and in such a way that each of them has to be maintained with equal necessity. From this it follows that the body of cosmical fact, the specific statements descriptive of which run into contradiction, cannot be a self-subsistent reality, but only an appearance. The explanation offered by Kant alleges that the contradiction does not affect the object in its own proper essence, but attaches only to the Reason which seeks to comprehend it” (Hegel, *Enc.* 48).

both cases there is no reductive intention but rather an awareness of the general subsumption of all that is lowest into the highest, a view or aspect essential to the Gospel, after all, according to which the relation goes to the extent of total reversal, where the last becomes first, the first last. Nowhere is this more powerfully brought out by Hegel than in the closing pages of the section, at *The Phenomenology of Mind* VII C, leading into the final chapter, without break in the thought, viz. “Absolute Knowledge”.

As for Hegel’s destroying or relativising the, as we supposed, absolute distinction between good and evil, have we not noted that this is at least suggested in some sayings or teaching of the Mediator, in the parable of the unjust steward for example, or indeed the general preaching of forgiveness, of all except sin or “blasphemy” against the Spirit as such? Or have we dared to admit the thought that this preaching of forgiveness - it is surely why it scandalised the Pharisees - is in germ a species of condonement? Who can forgive sins (save God alone), they asked, and there is indeed a seed of divinity there already. “To err is human, to forgive divine.” Routinely we see nothing in Christ’s words about how desire of a woman is already “adultery” but the enjoining of a strict and legalistic morality, whereas its fundamental spiritual import is to deny distinction between adulterer and the rest of us, i.e. quite the opposite which is yet the same, apart from the serious intention of telling us to forgive and not judge or condemn. Yet, “Which of you can convict me of sin?” That holds, nonetheless, that difference, but said by one who places, as I have just been claiming, no barrier between himself and sinners, between the infinite and the finite, otherwise the infinite would itself be finite. And that is where, at the metaphysical or “logical” level namely, the subversion of the good-evil divorce comes in.²⁴⁸

As touching this question of good and evil, meanwhile, we find Hegel both distinguishing being evil from having a knowledge of it and yet asserting that the two things are the same, in which case, of course, evil is overthrown as a nothing, i.e. if it is nothing apart from the knowledge of it.

²⁴⁸ I name divorce deliberately to remind of C.S. Lewis’s beautiful dream-vision, *The Great Divorce*. Lewis affected to despise and reject Hegel, “the Hegelian wood”. Yet in the dream the damned, the conscripts of “unrepentant” evil, leave the fields of heaven by vanishing down wormholes, a clear figure for non-being, just as Hegel dismisses evil, in the *Encyclopaedia*, as mere “sham-being”. Can one distinguish finally repentance from growth? Or does not all growth include repentance, disgust with the previous way of going on, whether it be murder or childish vanity, and then again, to forestall the objection, is not all or any injustice vanity, all vanity a failure of justice. This is no more, “if one would but consider” (a favourite phrase of St. Thomas’s), than the Thomistic teaching of the necessary unity of virtue.

Here comes up the dialectic of nothing and being, along with the question of there being evil in God, as Hegel asserts must be the case, in which case, however, as he says in a related context, “Evil is just not evil”, which is really the burden of the whole problematical discussion, that this discussion, this opposition, of good and evil, it too, belongs to *Vorstellung* only. Not only so, however, but most startling of all, distinction itself is no distinction, the same, namely, is the different and conversely, *all along the line*. If so, we then incline to ask, why write anything at all, only to find that Hegel has the resources even for answering that one.

Of course in God a knowledge of evil and a being evil in God would not be distinguishable. That is, God would not lack the knowledge needed to distinguish them and yet, as beings, as *entia*, these two, and they are really two conceptually as we say, could not *be* two, on pain of invalidating the absolute simplicity of precisely the absolute as necessarily free of the frailty, the self-contradictoriness ultimately, of composition or many in one. Things *are* simply because God knows them and for no other reason. So, God knows evil and so it *is*, this negation, in himself firstly, so that, as Heidegger appears to have realised, nothing itself, *das Nichts*, has some kind of being (or does it? *Nichtet!*), and this indeed is the condition for God’s humbling himself, as religion, for example has it, or for being that still small voice that alone Elijah heard evidencing God’s presence. There is a certain preference for it, that is, as apophatic theology witnesses. There is evil in God but God is not evil. Is he wholly good then? Of course, but what has happened here is that Hegel shows that good and evil are finite categories, not part of ultimate metaphysics. This is but one (the only?) conclusion to be drawn from the distinction made by St. Thomas long before between being and all the other “transcendental” predicates.²⁴⁹ The only real such transcendental is being; the others are comprehensible only as finite variations upon the same, which thus makes them *entia rationis*, *ens* itself being the only *esse reale*. Thus the good itself is being and nothing but being, i.e. nothing but “everything”, as presented to the finite faculty (finite as separated) of will, just as the true is nothing other than being as presented to intellect, here taken, it seems, as a finite faculty, i.e. just in so far as it is a faculty. In Hegel mind is in no sense a faculty, but, as thought, it is everything, is, as the Absolute Idea, true being, uniquely. But for the moment we will avoid the comparison of truth and being we seem led to here, though I note that “I am” and “I am the truth” do make the same claim (but then so does the identification of “way” and “life”) and there is no point in discussing this when we have already opened our thoughts here to the

²⁴⁹ Cf. Aquinas, *QD de potentia* VII.

Hegelian identity of the same and the different as generated, or dependent upon, the truth, as he claims, that the Absolute is, among other things, absolutely in motion.

So Hegel removes good and evil beyond metaphysics; rather, he *finds* them to be “outside the concept”. Did Nietzsche somehow pick this up or was it, had it come to be, anyhow, “in the air”? What we have said so far ought, it seems to follow, to be enough to remove the scandal from the assertion of evil, along with the knowledge of good and evil, put in *Genesis* as just what characterises divinity *and*, notice, what Adam and Eve, in this first moment of man’s existence, have come upon and what demands their expulsion into the whole taxing realm of thought and philosophy down the ages. The serpent, meanwhile, has to go upon his belly before being lifted up so as to give life to all, near enough identified, as Holy Wisdom (there is no other), with the Son of Man and his Cross.

All of this is somehow reminiscent of the pages of Scripture, pre-eminently, after the Gospels and St. Paul, of *Job*, perhaps. There seems to be a sort of unkindness verging upon the malicious not to wish to acknowledge this, speaking of Hegel’s “perversion” and so on rather. That, anyhow, is surely where he got it from.

Meanwhile, having mentioned the Cross, there is close parallel between his writing and the mystical theology, which is also an aesthetics of the saint’s own poetry, of, yet again, St. John of the Cross, Doctor of the Church as he is officially dubbed, another highly Biblical thinker, though with a strong “practical” slant, at least to begin with, in *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*, which contains his severe advice for those whom he calls “beginners” in the search for God and spiritual union, say rather unity, namely. Finite personality, namely, is not something to be preferentially clung to. Otherwise his work is mainly a description of, as with Hegel, the activity of the Concept, of just that which men, inclusive of Plato, normally think of as quite devoid of action, the Idea. His work thus gets disdained as “mystification”, the label under which Hegel’s materialist commentators tried to dismiss what remained opposed to their “interpretations”.

At the other end of the stick, but not thereby extreme, I think, we have the genuine interpretation offered by McTaggart, genuine, since he had no other or extrinsic end in view, no programme. It is just here in these pages of the *Phenomenology* that his studies in Hegel’s dialectic or in what he calls, almost mischievously, “the Hegelian cosmology”, find confirmation. On his finding, correct enough, there is, ultimately, no cosmos in or for Hegel. McTaggart professes atheism, denying God as forcibly as he denies the reality of the sensibly perceived “world”. As with Hegel, though, what is left is Thought, the Idea, a name in Hegel, however, all the same, *the* name

precisely, for God as *Geist* or, one should perhaps rather say, for *Geist* as God. Even thought, however, in McTaggart, has not much left in it of what we normally take as included there, as in Hegel the Idea is the very “method” of the Logic. McTaggart sees *love* as lying on the other side of thought. What disappears, namely, is discourse, discursiveness, syllogism, and he argues syllogistically for this thesis, thus provoking the amazed but dissenting (perhaps this is not quite clear) regard of Professor Peter Geach.²⁵⁰ McTaggart argues that the true conclusion to Hegel’s philosophy is that reality consists of a perfect unity of spirits who love one another in changeless regard, though with different degrees of intensity (there is a certain incoherence here, as it seems). All the rest, including belief in a creator God, is demonstrable misperception. McTaggart confirms the Hegelian view on good and evil, in the main, while arguing that this is not destructive of “morality” as understood in pre-1914 England. For it belongs, after all, to the world he judges illusory. In eternity, in heaven, morality is of little or no importance since there is no change and the main or single act is love as an emotion or similar having little to do with an ethic of effort or any strenuousness whatever. It is rather a calm and mutual beholding, the one of the other beholding him or, indeed, of the other beholding him beholding her (or him) and so on, this benign regress contributing to an argument that this is the only possible state of affairs, is in fact fulfilled love just in its infinite mutuality (Determining Correspondence, which recalls Leibniz’s infinite mirroring of the monads: Leibniz, however, regarded his system as compatible with Christian belief, as, I claim, did Hegel).

So the link with mysticism is strong, as Hegel himself confirms (82, *Zus.*). The mystics, however, have not by and large been deemed unorthodox, it being rather they, according to the dominant view, who exhibit fulfilled possession of the gifts, traditionally seven, of the Holy Spirit.²⁵¹

To return to nature and grace, however, and Professor Guz’s objections, we find that, as is most fitting and indeed illuminating, he refers us firstly to the first article of the *Summa theologiae*, viz. Part One, Question One,

²⁵⁰ P.T. Geach, *Truth, Love and Immortality*, Hutchinson of London 1979, subtitled “An Introduction to McTaggart’s Philosophy”.

²⁵¹ The Dominican John of St. Thomas (Jean Poinsot), a philosopher contemporary with Descartes, is the recognised authority on these gifts. He is also author of a mammoth treatise on Logic, *Ars logica*, most noticed today for his view of concepts as “formal signs”, i.e. not materially knowable in separation from what they are signs of. Cf. work, chiefly in the field of semiotics, by John Deely on John of St. Thomas, along with work by André de Muralt of Geneva (*L’enjeu de la philosophie médiévale*). See also our own entry, “John of St. Thomas”, in *Handbook of Metaphysics and Ontology*, ed. Smith & Burkhardt, Munich 1991, pp. 413-414.

“On sacred doctrine”, Article One, which asks “Whether it is necessary for another doctrine to be held beyond the philosophical disciplines”. We have found Hegel assuming this other doctrine, viz. “sacred” theology, into philosophy as leading it *beyond itself while remaining itself*, although this self-transcendence is, as it seems, “naturalised” into the difference between understanding and reason, between *Verstand* and *Vernunft*. So there is indeed a shift of emphasis, as of one reintegrating what had first been differentiated, not by a change of mind but by bringing out the opposition contained within the first position but not yet brought into the light. Faith, namely, is eminently reasonable, is even reason itself, Hegel finds, which means that reason is never simply human, being rather the foundation of man’s self-transcendence, a transcendence ultimately to be identified as divine grace, though this concept still retains an element of picturing, as of an extrinsic condescension merely.

Such grace is actually a necessity for Infinite Being, which and whom we call God (Aquinas). As conceptually intrinsic and hence “logically” necessary it cancels any kind of extrinsic necessity, however (extrinsic to philosophy, for example), being one with absolute freedom, as Hegel’s *Science of Logic* establishes as a necessary moment of it. This is the kind of move, as between two levels of necessity, suspiciously condemned by the fideist John Gerson in the fifteenth century and which he blamed chiefly upon Scotism, Scotus, however, being now, i.e. today, confirmed as *doctor ecclesiae* with the title of *beatus* in addition. The point here though is to find the tendency which he reinforced rather than initiated confirmed in later thought such as Hegel’s, in whom, since he was a somewhat critical Lutheran, it can hardly be condemned as fideist “theologism”, a reproach once levelled against me by my friend and indeed patron, the late Henry Veatch, much of whose “intentional logic” finds confirmation in Hegel’s system as between two Aristotelians. So Hegel’s, like Aristotle’s, is theologism with a difference, *theologia* rather. We surely cannot forbid Christians philosophising to other than forswear this crown of Aristotelianism, unless under the empty pomp and sceptre of mere “natural theology”, however we evaluate this latter. Rather, faith is perfected in knowledge, whether the death intervening, also for Aristotle, must be merely physical or an *athanatizein* of the mind and spirit.

Of a piece with this is Hegel’s assertion, for the reasons he gives, of the necessity of mediation by “a divine man”, all the *philosophical* ramifications of this, which are theo-logical and/or metaphysical, being best set out in the climactic final pages of chapter VII C of *The Phenomenology of Mind*, which links us up here with the consideration of the treatment earlier on in that book, and in this, of “the unhappy consciousness”.

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The death of the divine man, Hegel thus finds, in genuine Pauline spirit, is a swallowing up of it, and hence of him, in life eternal and the coming of Spirit which is *one with* him, in the sense of the one entailing the other in a concrete identity. What only appears to or “enters consciousness as something remote” is known in the Spirit spiritually, i.e. absolutely or, again, by *faith* as perfected self-consciousness, identified as the self-guaranteed “absolute knowledge”, such as ordinary reason itself anticipates in its essential self-assuredness. There is no counter to a validly presented argument, still less to the self-assured Concept. This is what faith looks toward as being indeed born from it, according to Hegel. It is typically expressed by and in the sacramental death which is baptism, which Hegel properly, or not improperly, leaves as being “sacramental” or a representative sign, such as Aquinas too recognises as characterising nature as a whole, from which, however, divine *paideia* has set forth a system of sacraments for “covenanted”, hence “efficacious” divine action. This does not hinder that Christian freedom lauded by the poets in all of nature’s manifestations, he claims. This is the faith perfected in final self-consciousness, Hegel claims, for him too, as of “realised end”, attainable only beyond “the realm of the finite”, one, therefore, with the *visio beatifica* of mainstream theology, the connecting factor being the identity of every idea with the Concept, with the Absolute Idea.

Faith in its perfection, then, passes from the “actual divine man” upon earth, as we say, and what this man may have spoken, to the “spirit of (the) communion” not as less actual than this historically “actual divine man” but as this man’s true actuality. This would indeed have been the approach of the earliest and properly tone-setting generations of believers prior to the existence of written canonical gospels and must remain so, therefore. “What is man? What is God?” (Pope St. John Paul II, the philosopher Wojtila). This, such faith as “overcoming the world”, setting and seeing it as nothing (cp. *Enc.* 50), is Absolute Spirit in its perfect form, philosophy, also therefore “highest divine service”. It thus cancels the non-actuality of what consciousness first takes as actual, this being Hegel’s account of history eternally or philosophically viewed, into which all his reflections upon “actual” history have to be assimilated and *thus* relativised. Just this, Hegel asserts and claims to have shown, is to pass from immediate to religious consciousness, of course not attained, or not so to say explicitly attained, by every member individually here on earth of “the spiritual communion”, whose “conversation”, none the less, “is in heaven”.

This communion is actually for Hegel, as for our contemporary theology in the main, the true humanity, at once visible and invisible in final transcendence of its usual if varied representation (*Vorstellung*), each being one with the other with a certain presumption in favour of “universalism”, not as such a quantitative matter, however, just as Hegel argues that “the general will” posited by Rousseau is not identical with the individual will of every man or even necessarily of a majority of individual men, such individuality, as abstract, being anyhow for Hegel logically or ever “ruined”. As *I John 3*, the initial verse(s), has it, in some translations at least, “We know what we are but we know not what we shall be”, addressed specifically, in representational or temporal terms, to the specific believing community, a text much admired by McTaggart, and yet abstracting from those deeper mystical perspectives (whereby in that sense we do *not* know what we are, that is in fact the implied or spiritual point there, as the continuation, q.v., shows) which philosophy, as in aspiration *sophia*, must still explore, as it has done, from the days of the Apostle(s), Pseudo-Dionysius, Maximus the Confessor, Scotus Eriugena, Eckhart, Nicholas of Cusa, Hegel and until now and here. It must ever do so, an “inner ring” (C.S. Lewis) indeed, but existing solely, however, for the sake of the outer as itself there included (the first as last, the last first, inner and outer being a logically cancelled pair) in its individual or “actual” components, actually non-actual. This should not be posited apart from or as abstracted from that “grace” we are finding it philosophically necessary, *just as* it is for faith, to posit, our “just as” here finally signifying identity in “the wisdom from above” with all wisdom anywhere. There is in fact no separate wisdom “of this world” or “from below” and that was St. Paul’s meaning in discounting the philosophers of his time by comparison with the knowledge of those proclaiming the new, actually ever new, Gospel.

Such is “religious consciousness”, as distinct from “immediate” consciousness (final page of that Chapter VII we have cited) and as found in *der höchste Gottesdienst*, ever obedient to as reverencing the *regula fidei* (St. Augustine), here or wherever this be identified or defined and whether or not this has or has still to occur as itself, i.e. as philosophy, expounding it. That is, it is a conceptual reality which is *thus* the true one, as of *the* Concept, note, or Absolute Idea.

It is easy to see the finite element in St. Thomas’s bare claim, assumption almost, that something had to be simply declared to man by God, so as to help him along, so to say. This defect can only be remedied by further opening up of the concept of infinity, of the divine, the nature, *deitas*, which God, *Deus*, is, as Thomas demonstrates elsewhere. The fact is that nothing can be said to have been declared to man by God unless and until man is

himself able to understand it. For until he has understood nothing has been said to him, in the sense of said to one by another. So, as regards Christ's saying, for example, in *John 6*, concerning the eating of his flesh and drinking of his blood as condition for having life in oneself, this was recalled only after the speaker's death and the coming of his Spirit as now having meaning.

Certainly faith is taught, to children particularly, in this way, they first having to learn by heart what they do not understand (in fact they *do* understand something, as much as children need and can absorb, as is very likely true of all of us "here below"), but this establishes nothing to the purpose, overthrows it rather if anything. Once this doctrine is taught, revealed in germ at least, then it is seen within philosophic wisdom to be true, even if it should be that philosophy itself is elevated as a result, more or less Hegel's position. Yet for him, too, indeed supremely, the final philosophy is Concept, Idea, and not propositional syllogistic, unless in the sense that "everything is a syllogism" (Hegel). This is the sense in which God is present to Mind (cp. the writings of Rosmini, now, he too, declared a saint), as well understood by the somewhat suppressed "ontologist" Hegelians (thus those well-meaning nineteenth century Jesuits active at Rome cleared the way for emergent Marxism's abuse of Hegel's texts in Italy and elsewhere, there being no contrary interpretation to speak of within orthodoxy's ranks). Here, however, one should note that the orthodox teaching, as stressed by St. Augustine for example, is that even after being able to see these truths by one's own intuition or thought, simply (an essential condition for a viable apologetic), one should still immovably hold to them by and in the consciousness of faith. Whatever difficulties there may be in this notion it is at least negatively viable, meaning that one will not deny the Church's teaching, simply because of one's sworn love for its actual founder, Jesus the Christ. No philosopher can be disqualified through his or her being possessed by such a love, as by any other indifferently, love being essential to the Idea from Socrates (*Phaedrus*) to the Idea of Hegel (*Enc.* 159). Socrates, rather, taught there that any non-lover attempting to philosophise should be held in contempt.

It is in view of these considerations that Hegel identifies philosophy, and not religion, as *der höchste Gottesdienst*, thinking of it quite plainly as gift of the spirit, as wisdom, *Geist*. Wisdom, *sapientia*, is what St. Thomas stresses in this beautiful article²⁵², referring it later (article 6 of this first "question", *ad 3*) to a knowledge that is *per modum inclinationis* rather than *per modum cognitionis* merely, which latter would rather characterise the

²⁵² *Summa theol.* I, *qu.* 1, *art.* i.

less noble or more lowly intellectual virtue of *scientia*, the sole and abstract guiding light of the approach called rationalist, as opposed to rational simply. This rationalism Hegel explicitly transcends, though one might miss it, when he says that thought, i.e. thought itself, or the liberation which thought “means”, insofar (i.e. the whole way) as existing as feeling (as, it is implied, it can and should well do, recalling the Socratic qualification for being a philosopher again), is then Love, to repeat, and not even merely “called” love, as in another context it is “called I” (*Enc.* 159). Here, at the final reach, St. Thomas and Hegel are in full agreement, nor do I find them to be in anything more than surface contradiction on the way there. The two moments naturally yield to one another, as, Hegel teaches, is proper to Spirit and, finally, to what God is, something Thomas, read with understanding, at the very least does not deny and at most more than confirms, e.g. when he says that God is the *plenitude* of being, “if one would but consider”. For McTaggart, basing himself on Hegel, heaven, eternity, the final state of ever “realised end”, realised as such all the same, is one of non-propositional love and not knowledge, which love transcends or absorbs, a possibility at least indicated at *Enc.* 159 just cited. Or love itself is “knowing as I am known”, in St. Paul’s inspired phrase.

Hegel enlarges quite a bit on this superiority of philosophy to religion in *Phenomenology of Mind* VII C. Note that he finds it superior to religion, as a form of spiritual engagement with its object (which is again spiritual, hence it, as all three of these forms, is self-engagement supremely) but not to theology, with which, like Aristotle, he rather identifies it, despite his less than complimentary remarks concerning the theology practiced in his time and place. Supreme exemplification of this *theologia* is found perhaps at the place just mentioned, where, in particular, Hegel attempts to relate Trinitarian thought directly to the phenomenon, as he finds it to be, of good versus evil and contrariwise, just as the latest theology of the divine image in man relates it to the phenomenon of male as opposed to female and contrariwise. So just as Hegel concludes “there is evil in God”, a variant, incidentally upon what, in *Genesis*, the gods are said to “know”, so now theology would point to signs of the sexual difference in polarity in God and that in a relatively new way, seeing likeness, for example, to the sexual difference or to the relation of Christ to his Church or community specifically, a likeness there is no call to restrict by talk of *analogy* exclusively, in the relation of Father to Son or Word and contrariwise, the Word nonetheless remaining the image of the Father and so in that respect not contrariwise, one feels bound to add – though by what right, or what would the Father be if He did not speak His, which is *the*, Word? What would man be without woman (just this is what has attracted the theologians)? So which is

analogans, which analogate, or is there not analogy over again between even these two? Philosophers have not been wanting who attempt to relate analogy to the contemporary set theory worked out on mathematical models.²⁵³ This tends to degenerate, however, into theories of “vagueness”, not always consciously recalling the link with the *individuum vagum* of late medieval logical thought, however, just as theories of reference ignore, do not build upon, the incomparably richer body of the medieval doctrines of *suppositio* (bluntly, as opposed to sharply, mocked at the start of Wittgenstein’s *Philosophical Investigations* as we have them). Peter Geach’s *Reference and Generality* can be faulted here, despite the author’s undoubted knowledge of such medieval theory. Talk about “bad old logic” was never very edifying and the genuine enthusiasm for the mathematical Frege, mixed up with ignorant assumptions as to the virginal non-idealist character of his thought (M. Dummett), lead to such phenomena as the astute Quine throwing out remarks to the effect that syllogistic is a small and insignificant part of logical theory, a position providing good excuse for the ignoring of Hegel in some quarters.

But we had been commenting on Hegel’s originality, in relating questions of good and evil, as destined to bear a family resemblance to Nietzsche’s treatment of the theme later on, to *the* question, for him and for us here in this present work, about the Trinity. This seems to begin, to take its rise, from a proposed relation between not only an evil consciousness and its consciousness of evil, although very much this, but also from an observable priority, with respect to the development in the fullest application of this term, Hegel claims, of being or becoming evil specifically in one’s life, understood as being opposed to the good or the desiredly normal, so to say. This observation requires to be grounded in something aboriginal, as in religion it might be classed with an “angelic host”, whether one or many angels being matter of indifference. Amongst this supposed class of spirits (but here again the one/many dilemma is to be ignored as “outside of the concept”) the very first one, or “Son of the Morning” as he comes to be called, stands out in self-awareness and hence self-centredness (evil’s essence, Hegel affirms here), *simultaneously* with the constitutively Trinitarian utterance of the one and only Divine Word. Hegel’s studiously open manner of utterance leaves undecided the question of divinity. We are simply in the realm of Spirit. He does not scruple to use, simply or carelessly uses, the word “create” here, for this coincident (rather than merely simultaneous) divine *reply*, itself in turn a self-constituting reply, however, as it appears

²⁵³ Yves Simon, as I recall, wrote of “analogous sets”, somewhat *sui generis* of course.

(this though has the virtue of identifying the divine and the “essence” of the Good as, hence, ultimate being, which the discordant angel opposes), though this cannot be divorced from his emphasising that creation itself is plain metaphor, i.e. not even analogy, for the divine thought as *itself* constituting (i.e. without the additional thought of such constituting as such) absolute reality or truth, truth, we might say, as “the true being”. Any divine thought, we should be clear, is eternal and immutable. Change does not change, as Aristotle would say, did say.

In fact this Word is one with the being of the Father, as is its utterance, its eternal, trans-continuous genesis in *self*-utterance, and thereby of the Trinity, in which the Father so to say loses himself as, conversely, the Trinity, this set, notionally at least, of internal relations, is enclosed in him. “I and my father are one” says the Christ of the Gospels, or, again, “Before Abraham was I am”, using the very name of God as uniquely self-applicable, i.e. applicable to whoever uses it (therefore one may not use it, it was and is thought, here and there). Here, anyhow, begins Hegel’s account of the Trinity as hidden, along with or as all unity in difference and differentiation in unity, in the myth of Adam and Eve. It belongs here to say, however, with Hegel, that in this perspective evil “is just not evil”, nor good the good, we have to add, nor, therefore(!), being being. Being, rather, is the method of the Logic as a whole, become, by *Aufhebung*, rather, the Absolute Idea, freed from abstraction, in which all is rolled up, Being or being (the German initial capital to this verbal substantive, *das wahre Sein*, at the end of the Greater Logic, in itself indicates nothing either way).

It would be a mistake to urge that this may apply to so-called physical evil(s) but not to “moral” evil. It rather applies just there, to the latter instance, as is to be seen chiefly from Hegel’s treatment of pardon as the all-determining good leading first /from Art, of comedy) into religion, but most particularly into Christianity, for example. This sublation of morality within metaphysics does no harm to the practical requirements of morality or of virtue within this passing life, as McTaggart for one, on the basis of Hegel’s general position, forcefully pointed out²⁵⁴. The relation, after all, parallels that of Christ to the existing law: “I am not come to destroy but to fulfil”, adding famously that “not one jot or one tittle” is to be removed from the Law, an assertion, often thoughtlessly assumed to be useless for us, plainly implying a primacy for “the mystical interpretation of Scripture” with or without which, Newman, again, asserted, “orthodoxy stands or falls”. I would like to add that Hegel’s whole philosophy, in my reading, can be taken as a mystical interpretation of Scripture, the mysticism including the

²⁵⁴ Cf. J.M.E. McTaggart, *Studies in the Hegelian Cosmology*, Cambridge 1901.

ability to stand upon its own feet, thanks to the *paideia* supplied by this background. The infinite debt owed thereto, that is to say, is not of a kind to invalidate freedom of thought, i.e. philosophy, or for that matter faith, it being of the essence of philosophy to arise out of religion, as also out of art, from which also, according to Hegel, religion too first arises. Whence, then, comes art? Answering that would take us too far afield for the moment, but one has only to consult the texts, where this process at least appears to be perspicuously set forth.²⁵⁵ Put briefly, if “the goodness of God leads to repentance” then such repentance essentially involves the coming to see such goodness in a different, fuller or more profound way from previously, when one had in consequence turned against or ignored it. “Why do you call me good?” asked the Christ, “There is none good but God”. Prior, then, to the universal is the *exemplar*, as behind universal humanity lies “the” man, something the Vulgate phrase, *ecce homo*, is unable quite to catch, an inability, however, which all the more compels thought to acknowledge what is not, in the natural way of Latin, at least, unlike the Greek, i.e. we are not yet here dealing with that of which “one cannot speak” (cp. Wittgenstein, concluding, seventhly, his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*), fully apparent or evident. Conversely, the bare universal term *homo* suggests what might otherwise be missed as to what was or might have been in the evangelist’s mind, what is anyhow left for our minds to “pick up”.

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Concluding his thought-provoking review notice of an earlier book of mine, Hegel’s *Theology or Revelation Thematised*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle on Tyne, 2018 (*Review of Metaphysics*, 2018), Professor Martin J. De Nys of the George Mason University, Virginia, suggests two questions as developed in his final paragraph:

One may raise at least two questions about the argument of this book and similar arguments. Hegel is well-known for saying that a philosophical conceptualization of the religious representation alters the form but not the content of the latter. If so, then are there aspects belonging to the content of religious representational thinking, as this develops in Christianity, that resist a conceptualization of the sort that Theron suggest? Is there a positivity that belongs to the religious representation that requires one to say that this

²⁵⁵ On this question one might well consult G. Rinaldi’s forthcoming *The Philosophy of Art* (forthcoming, Oxford Whitelocke Publications, 2020), chiefly on Hegel’s and Hegelian aesthetics, but considering the partially dissident Hegelian view of F. T. Vischer or R.G. Collingwood concerning the position of Art in Hegel’s philosophy of Absolute Spirit as regards his aesthetics specifically.

conceptualization alters not only form but content as well? If this is so, does the problem lie with philosophy in its form as absolute idealism, or can one remedy the problem within this context? These questions seem important for the sake of addressing many issues about the relation of religious and philosophical truth.

The first question refers to “the content of representational thinking” and to “conceptualisation” of this content as such. It is asked whether the religious form, in Hegel’s sense, although one of representation, has a “positivity” precisely as such, resistant to or forbidding “conceptualization”. The second question, as developing further the first simply, asks, in effect, whether this would not or does not imply a defect in what is put forward by Hegel as the form of philosophy as such, but which Professor De Nys identifies as a particular school of philosophical thought, namely “absolute idealism”.

I answer: the notion of conceptualization introduced is not appropriate, inasmuch as any theology whatever is conceptualization. There are Christian groups, therefore, who reject theology because they or their movement is “confessional”, the confession, of faith, being seen as identical with some verbal formula lifted bodily out of Scripture. Now it was a principle of St. Thomas that this literal reading of Scripture, i.e. this abstaining from “conceptualization”, is to be preferred wherever possible. Now I would want to say that this is unintelligible unless it is implied that Scripture as such is already conceptualized, i.e. it has the or a form of Absolute Spirit whether it be as art, as religion or as philosophy, or even some kind of mixture of all three as, in a sense, must always be the case. Thus where the philosophical content is put into language we have already art, and this art, like all art, tends to become “religious”. Hegel sees religion as first arising as “the religion of art”, therefore, in some sense at least, one would have to add, if this view is to be universalised over and above the Greek example he works with, that art is necessary for life (of or in the spirit), as first unlocking many doors that would otherwise remain closed.

This already implies, I note, that the immediate conceptualization, so to say, preferred by Biblical (or, say, Koranic) fundamentalists *must* always have in it, typically as *aufgehoben*, or as a means to an end, an element of art, inasmuch as it is linguistic and is thus on the way to, as participant in, “conceptualization” or, as Hegel correctly puts it, “the Concept”. The Bible, namely, is a product of Absolute Spirit, of the ever-active and never passive Absolute Idea, which we wrongly suppose to lie in our own finitely particular power of thought. Hence Hegel insists that it is the Idea itself that acts when we or whole cultures develop our ideas, not that the Absolute itself temporally develops from less perfect stages but that our thought, at least to that extent representational or imperfectly conceptually, represents

the Realised End which is the Absolute under the form, the figure, artistic, religious, of time and, with some difference perhaps, even space, as, in some respects outlined by Kant but concerning which Aristotle and his disciple Thomas also give a definite and, in some respects at least, in Hegel's view too, more nuanced account.

On the question, second here, of calling in question Absolute Idealism as such in virtue of a more general conception of philosophy I can only say that this calls for an overhaul and ultimate rejection of Hegel's whole philosophy, as a whole school from Marx to Zizek fail to realise. I have argued for the thesis of Absolute Idealism at length in several publications and would rest content for now to refer critical enquirers to those texts. It is philosophy itself, as identified with the *sophia* that it loves, which according to St. Thomas is the most noble of the Aristotelian "intellectual virtues" and which is "the perfect form of Absolute Spirit". So there is no further distinguishable "form" there of "absolute idealism". That is to say, philosophy confesses the Idea as universal, sometimes called God, sometimes not. Infinite or necessary being, as in Anselm, is nonetheless meant, all-embracing and yet, or just therefore, simple or simplicity itself while, further, the true nature of this simplicity as "concrete" is what is disclosed in Trinitarian thought.

In this work I have not said much about the relation of nature and grace, or, rather, the whole book has been about that without use of this duo from traditional and hence finite positive theology. The Scholastic tag, concerning creation or "nature", *plura entia sed non plus entis*, simply names what we *immediately* experience as paradox, while Hegel teaches that the immediate is always false, insufficient, relating this claim to his defence of the necessity for one concrete mediator between "the rational creature" (Kant) and the Absolute Idea, known as "God" in religion, a name which is thus both "proper" and "natural" (*nomen naturae*). Hegel recommends avoiding this or any proper name in philosophy, giving sound reasons for this, but breaks his rule as often as he keeps it. For discussion of questions arising in relation to Being, absolute or relative, the whole recently introduced notion of "ontological discontinuity", which appears not to get us further, to say the least, or of the more fundamental questions of the relation of *ens* to *esse* as *actus essendi* or *actus purus*, of which there is only one as infinite and exemplar, including those concerning Hegel's (but is it not also Thomas's) positing of the (ultimate) End as realised as such or in its conception, or for the Thomistic distinction between necessity of compulsion and necessity of end, first arising in ethical discussion or moral theology but of more general metaphysical weight, for views, in short, as to all these questions I can only recommend those interested to consult further my other writings, before or

after a supposed Hegelian “turn” on my part, within what is just as much a straight line, the straighter the better. So my comment on grace and nature, more or less a version of Rahner’s “Everything is grace” (but a version only!), as separated out from this book I am here completing, will have to be left for the moment.

In general, though, I would defend the view that there is no essential difference between “conceptualization of the religious representation” taken as a general concept as applied to all theology, Aristotelian, Christian or other, and the instancing of “conceptualization” in St. Paul, as can be gathered from his letters, in Augustine and other Patristic and post-Patristic sources through Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus, Eckhart, Cusanus, Leibniz and beyond up to Hegel and beyond him to Newman and the decrees of Vatican II, to McTaggart, Geach, Wittgenstein, Berdyaev, Buber, Merton, Rahner, Barth even, Ratzinger, Küng, De Lubac, De Chardin or to what I have written here, warts and all, or to what many are writing today (as Professor De Nys notes), in particular in theology taken generally. This statement implies the possibility of a rational formal account of the *regula fidei*, or of what makes theology to be a “sacred” science separated from philosophy by “a great gulf”, i.e. as to what it or this *regula* is, as having been respected by those termed mystics generally, whether we reason from that to their credibility or contrariwise, while it would certainly be strange to say that it, such an account, could not be given. It can look as if the term “sacred” is coming to be used, by some today at least, just so as to exclude Lutherans, Anglicans, atheists or others from the ostensible or immediate “fold”, a conception that theology itself has learned (or it always knew it), rather, to take more “mediately” over the centuries, from the application, attribution rather, of the original “baptism of desire” to those diagnosed as “invincibly ignorant” to the Johannine (I refer to Pope St. John XXIII) opening to “all men of good will”, the last three words being of uncertain application and hence, perhaps, non-essential, though highly valued both evangelically (*Luke 2*) and liturgically (the Ambrosian *Gloria* of the Mass: *pax hominibus bonae voluntatis*). One can only hope and believe one has it, such grace and good will, both attitudes, however, belonging only to representation, i.e. we don’t know if we have them, or indeed charity, either. God alone is judge, theology and religion both teach. Yet we are supposed to know if and when we have “sinned”, a condition, such full knowledge, for “mortal” sin, but here too many, also in authority, tend to think we are more often mistaken than correct here. This, of course, recalls what I said above about forgiveness and its relation to condonation, especially where the one forgiving such mortal sin seems to be a mere mortal himself.

On the “ecumenical” point in general, one finds in the Gospels both “He that’s is not with me is against me” and “He that is not against me is with me”. All thought, to conclude or repeat, as belonging to, as a moment of, the Concept, is “conceptualized”, while of the Concept itself Hegel states that *thinking* “means a liberation ... called I: as developed in its totality it is free Spirit; as feeling it is Love; and as enjoyment, it is Blessedness”. All this “the notion *itself* realises for its own”²⁵⁶. That is, as he says elsewhere, “it is not we” who generate it. So the Temple veil is ripped, the sacredness poured out everywhere, nor is the absorption two-way as between infinite and finite (cf. *Enc.* 95: “the infinite is the affirmative, and it is only the finite which is absorbed”), whatever be the case with first and last, say.

Finally though, Hegel acknowledges that theology, and not only theology, tolerates introduction of representational notions into the very heart of its reasonings, and this applies, for example, as much to Word as to Son, and as much to Spirit, derived initially from movements in the air, to which spirit as perpetual motion bears a certain likeness. Speech, that is, requires analogy all along the line, as probably does thinking as such in its human and finite condition at least (I say this without meaning at all to reduce thinking to *sotto voce* speech, which would be nonsensical²⁵⁷), that condition which, Hegel says, made the introduction of evil inevitable, due to the notions employed not being wholly derived from the Idea but from natural impressions. In other words, the point here seems little different from Aristotle’s categorical insistence that there is no thought, human thought at least, that is free of accompanying *phantasmata* of some kind, one or several. Number, duration etc. may be free of them but just therefore they do not belong to the concept, are not conceptual, says Hegel, so that “it is useless to count”. For it plays no part in his concept of *nous*, even if that

²⁵⁶ *Enc.* 159, stress added.

²⁵⁷ This is of course the first hurdle to be faced by anyone wishing to uphold metaphysical as against merely logical analogy in the face of determined onslaughts upon this idea by, for example, the late Ralph McInerny and those many he has convinced. Cf. my “Metaphysical Analogy” in *Proceedings of the Society for Medieval Logic and Metaphysics*, Fordham University, Volume 2, 2002, pp. 26-33 (“prepublication”, at least at that date, but available). Cf. also “The Resistance of Thomism to Analytical and Other Patronage”, *The Monist*, October 1997, issue devoted to “Analytical Thomism”, with John Haldane as “advisory editor”. My arguments there I am applying equally to the attempted patronage of Hegel by Marx, Findlay and others. I have found great support in the Hegelian writings of and my correspondence with Professor Giacomo Rinaldi of the University of Urbino, Italy, for my position here. The reader may consult, however, his very critical if lengthy review of my *The Orthodox Hegel*, viz. “Hegel e misticismo. A proposito degli scritti filosofici di Stephen Theron” in *Magazzino di Filosofia*, No. 30, 2017. pp. 144-178.

word too is connected with some cognition of sense. For it is just against this notion of the divine that human thought is distinguished, since with the latter the *paremphenomenon*, or “that which appears beside” (Aristotle: *De anima*), would prevent that full identification of subject and object which alone we can call knowledge in all its nobility (*nobilis, gnobile, gnosis, agnostic* etc.).

“Behold and see if there is any sorrow like unto my sorrow”, declared the prophet Jeremiah, on the occasion of the fall of ancient Israel, fallen though, in his clear view, from within, simply because, as, taught by Hegel, I would now add, of its finitude. Doubtless the total depravity of man, as in some interpretations of John Calvin’s doctrine, was and is a heresy, which is to say no more than that it is lop-sided. The truth, rather, as Hegel clearly perceived and gave expression to, is that the whole of nature and of the finite as such is evil, which is the same as to say, in his phrase, that it, as evil, is “a sham-being”. That is the sorrow, for the natural consciousness, reflected in the calm eyes of the higher animals, of field or hearth, of *not being God*, of not being at all, therefore since being, rather, fair “creatures of an hour”, a sorrow which nonetheless, in the spiritual or “rational” creature, inevitably becomes Satanic and which must hence die to itself, there being no other conceivable remedy. But that is just what it cannot do, without, again, divine or absolute *mediation*, giving us, inasmuch as we receive it, “the power to become sons of God” or giving us happiness, in a word, *Glückseligkeit*, as *höchste Entfaltung der Sittlichkeit* or “morality” in its highest development.²⁵⁸ So the rational thing is to search for that mediation, where it might be found and, even, *while* it may be found. This is in fact what we do, some getting it right or some getting it wrong, most of us somewhere in between. But of course opinion is finite and hence, again, evil, opinionated as we say. We have to find a way of abandoning opinion which is more rather than less positive. One name for this, in the Christian tradition, is faith. “Whatever is not of faith is sin.” That means we have, each one, to legislate for the universe and that will be law indeed. Its opposite, hence its mirror-image, is, again, opinion. St. Paul says he “determined to know nothing except Jesus Christ and him crucified”. Are these the words of an opinion? Of a lover, rather, and that is surely the clue. So I will add the words of another: “Music is a greater revelation than the whole of religion and philosophy”. The author here was a musician himself, though, and so this illustrates our remark concerning faith, ultimately in self, as what Hegel identifies as self-consciousness, in its fullest development the obliteration, in total *Aufhebung*, of that abstractly individual self we began this paragraph by identifying as

²⁵⁸ The words are Martin Grabmann’s, in *Thomas von Aquin*, Munich 1959.

evil *per se*, though we failed to grasp the cause of this, which is in fact that it is entirely abstract, love, liberty, ultimately thought, being names for how it becomes concrete and, just as such, universal. Salvation by knowledge? Yes, but not the abstract knowledge of finite Gnosticism as it appeared in history's own appearance. "This is eternal life, to know God ..." Yet God is not known except through mediation, which is and has to be himself over again, recalling us to Trinity, the subject of this book. That is, God, infinity, must, to remain infinite in his or its concept, conceive of and realise (create) the finite which is infinitely opposed to him, send an Other to "save" it who is one with himself, *is* himself, rather, i.e. he sends himself by, in and along with never leaving himself, who is, can only be, what we have called "heaven", a term retained by McTaggart even after seeming, at least, to cast out this place's, this situation's, final identity, which, contrariwise, Hegel identifies, but without the casting out of anything so genuine, with self in its self-consciousness, the state in which, to cite Aquinas's eucharistic poetry, *sumit unus sumunt mille*, where one receives (the comm-union) a thousand receive (again, "it is useless to count, *numeri non ponuntur in divinis* – it is only that so he had to represent it, like the one hundred and forty four thousand of the Apocalypse, hardly suited for "the religion of absolute consolation", to cite Hegel's verdict upon Christianity).

Well, all this of mine here might well be that *audacia*, to which Thomas Aquinas gives two opposed faces (three if one includes, with virtue and vice, the *passion* thus named) in his "moral theology" of the virtues²⁵⁹, as if concurring, in some anticipatory measure at least, in Hegel's dictum that "good and evil are the same", to which Hegel adds, though, that "in that case evil is just not evil" or is, rather, the "sham-being" of privation, i.e. not merely *privatio boni* even (or, in one word, finitude or what God forgives, as we must, differently, "forgive" him), *privatio*, without which, Aristotle finds, no change, no movement, no event, is, in ultimate terms, possible (nor is it, inasmuch as the *privatio* is of *esse* as a whole, inclusive of these finite phenomena). Hence, in so far as evil shall be overcome, shall disappear, so shall these phenomena, in our or anyone's realisation of what Hegel identifies (*Enc.* 209-212) as "realised end".

Stephen Theron,
Stockholm,
August 6, 2020.

²⁵⁹ Compare our *Thomas Aquinas on Virtue and Human Flourishing*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle-on-Tyne 2018, Chapter Twenty-One, "Fortitude: the Example of Audacity", pp. 95-98.

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