

*HEGEL'S DOCTRINES: (1) "The individual" is epiphenomenal to world-historical Spirit ("History"), and must not be sentimentalized to the point of interfering with the emergence of (2) "the state," which culminates the world-developmental process of creation's emerging self-consciousness parallel with the divine self-consciousness. (World-Spirit realizes itself in the State, and the individual's duty is to participate in, and not be an impediment to, this process.--PH 33f, 35f, 37.)

Dear Willis--

Through this your 63rd Advent-Christmas, a string of lights festoons your soul and your days, antiphonal to the strings of lights throughout your home. Variegated lights, as your feelings are many. Helter-skelter in arrangement, as your emotions are interrelated only by the continuum of trust-love-joy-peace that attaches you to the messianic Manger then-past and the messianic Feast then-to-come.

This letter to you is about another string of lights. It has three bulbs: red, white, and blue. No, not for the good ol' USA (or Britain or France or any of the other countries using those three colors in its flag). The red is for Jesus, whose blood reminds you of the cost, to God and to our species, of the struggle to become human (relative sense). The white is for monotheism, for all colors are in and derive from the One God, "Maker of heaven and earth." And the blue is for the individual (relative sense), who emerges within humanity just often enough to save you from cynicism and despair.

Three onenesses--a trinity or at least triunity!--on one string: the One, the *Monogenes* (the "only" Son), *der Einzelne* (the "single" human individual). All, in some sense(s), in a continuum, one string of lights for you and for the world.

If one bulb "goes" on a Christmas string, you quickly replace it. But you have no replacements for any of the lights on your trinity/unity string. With what holophrastic idol would you replace the biblical God? What avatar or hero could, for you, take the place of Jesus, who says "I am the door," the open gate on both humanity and deity? And, while you do not believe in the Renaissance-Enlightenment doctrine of "the infinite worth of the individual," what happens to your claims for God and Jesus and yourself and your neighbor if you are willing to convert (in Jesus' phrase) "one of these little ones" from end to means?

Merry Christmas in the midst of, and through, your--and the Church's, and the world's--painful perplexities, anguished fears, joyful hopes.

--Willis

PS to the public (the letter shared):

The (Stoic) "worth" question works three ways: what's humanity, collectively and individually (severally and singly), WORTH to Deity? What's society WORTH to the person (i.e., what are the effects of particular social organs on the individual)? What's the individual WORTH to society?....I'm increasingly revulsed by pseudo-idealistic, ideological efforts to raise any one of these three to superior, not to say absolute, status. I can enjoy the naive purity of any one of these idolatries, but I must not be seduced by them, and I must warn others against them.Let's call the first one DEITISM, willingness to sacrifice both the individual and society to the god--under the illusion that the god is knowable and known in utter independence of the proposed sacrificial victims....The second is INDIVIDUALISM, the dangerous nonsense promoted by ACLU and romantic-sentimental-"humanistic" atheists (e.g., THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS' A. Eustace Hayden, feeding a squirrel on the U. of Chicago campus, said to me "This squirrel is of more worth than all these buildings!"). Reaganism is an ecopolitical monstrous form of this idol, and it's the guts in the anti-capital-punishment movement and the secondary sanction in the anti-abortion movement....And ETATISM (or "statism," the doctrine that society itself is of supreme worth [and, in Durkheim, e.g., is the source and locus of the god and the individual]) --through the early Socialists, then Marx, then Lenin-Stalin, then Hitler--has twisted Hegel's doctrines* almost beyond recognition.