Today, my honourable friend, begins the sixth week⁵ that I wait, impatiently but vainly, for a day of serenity in my inner self to write to you. And this day, since I am even less capable of the wait than on any before, I take up my pen with the fixed resolve of not putting it down until I am finished writing. What I propose to do by this resolve, which I make out of despair, I myself do not know. But for this reason it is all the more suited to my “non-philosophy,” that has its essence in “non-knowledge” just as your “philosophy” has its solely in knowledge and, according to my innermost conviction, is for this reason the one that alone deserves the name of philosophy in the stricter sense.

I say it at every opportunity, and I am ready [2] to confess it publicly: I consider you the true Messiah of speculative reason, the genuine son of the promise of a philosophy pure through and through, existing in and through itself.

Nobody can deny that the spirit of speculative philosophy, and what must have been the object of its incessant striving from the beginning, is to make unequal the equal certainty that these two propositions have for the natural man: “I am” and “There are things outside me.” Speculative philosophy had to try to subordinate one of these propositions to the other; to derive the former from the latter or the latter from the former—exhaustively, in the end—so that there would be but one being and one truth before its eye, the all-seeing one! Should speculation succeed in producing this unity, by pushing the production of inequality to the point that, out of the destruction of the natural equality, another, an artificial likeness of it, were to spring up inside the certain knowledge of an “I” and “not-I” whose existence is finally manifest—an entirely new creature completely belonging to speculation!—should it succeed in this,
then speculation might indeed also succeed, acting on its own, in producing a complete *science* of the true from itself.

[3] Thus the two main avenues, materialism and idealism, or the attempt to explain everything from a self-determining matter alone or from a self-determining intelligence, have the same aim. Their opposing courses do not take them apart at all, but rather bring them gradually nearer to each other until they finally touch. Speculative materialism, or the materialism that develops a metaphysics, must ultimately transfigure itself into idealism of its own accord; since apart from dualism there is only egoism, as beginning or end, for a *power of thought* that will think to the end.

Little was lacking for this transfiguration of materialism into idealism to have already been realized through Spinoza. His substance, which underlies extended and thinking being, equally and inseparably binds them together; it is nothing but the invisible identity of object and subject (demonstrable only through inferences) upon which the system of the new philosophy is grounded, i.e. the system of the *autonomous philosophy of intelligence*. Strange, that the thought never occurred to Spinoza of inverting his philosophical cube; of making the upper side, the side of thought [4] which he called the *objective*, into the lower, which he called the subjective or *formal*; and then of investigating whether his cube still remained the same thing; still for him the one and only true philosophical shape of reality. Everything would have transformed itself without fail under his hands at the experiment. The cube that had hitherto been "substance" for him—the *one* matter of two entirely different beings—would have disappeared before his eyes, and in exchange a pure flame would have flared up, burning all by itself, with no need of *place* or *material* to nourish it: *Transcendental Idealism*!

I chose this image because I first found entry into the *Doctrine of Science* through the representation of an *inverted* Spinozism. And I still portray it to myself as a materialism without matter, or a *mathesis pura* in which a pure and empty consciousness counts for mathematical space. I do not need first to explain how pure mathematics—by presupposing the drawing of a straight line (movement, that is, and all that this concept presupposes and implies) and the construction of a circle (*measure*, surface, figure: quality, [5] quantity, etc.)—is capable of creating mathematical *bodies* in thought out of nothingness, and then an entire world.—So only one ignorant and tasteless enough to despise Geometry and Arithmetic (the former, because it does not produce substances; the latter, because it does not produce numerical meaning, the value
“existence”)—only such a one could also despise Transcendental Philosophy.

I request and expect of Fichte that he understand me from hints; that he understand non-fleeting thoughts from fleeting words, outlines, and sketches. If this were not to be allowed to me, what book would I have to write! and never in my life shall I write such a book!

And so I proceed. And first, among the Jews of speculative reason I proclaim you once again, ever more zealously and loudly, as their King. I threaten the obdurates, that they recognize you as such and accept the Baptist from Königsberg only as your prophet instead.7 The sign that you have given is the union of materialism and idealism into one [6] indivisible being—a sign not altogether unlike that of the prophet Jonah.8

Just as, eighteen thousand years ago, the Jews in Palestine rejected the Messiah whom they had long yearned when he actually appeared, because he did not bring with him the sign by which they wanted to recognize him—because he taught, neither circumcision nor foreskin counts, but a new creature9—so you too had to become a stumbling-block and a stone of scandal10 to those whom I call the Jews of speculative reason. There was only one who professed himself for you openly and honestly, an Israëlite in whom there is no guile, Nathanael Reinhold.11 Had I not been his friend already, I would have become one then.12 But an entirely different friendship than had hitherto existed has since then arisen between us.

I am a Nathanael only among the heathens.13 Since I did not belong to the old covenant but remained still uncircumcised, I must abstain from the new one too, out of the same incapacity or stubbornness. *One among the more exuberant of the apostles of your doctrine,14 a minister to my soul, has actually hit the nail on the head, as they say, when he has accused me of lack of that purely [7] logical enthusiasm which is the “quintessential spirit” of the “quintessential philosophy,”† just as in Socrates it once was the genuinely Socratic.15 *3 He is perfectly right [8] when he says

*3. † This judgment is confirmed by Mr. Nicolai in his latest work where, driven by necessity, he must, this once and no more, speak about himself and well-nigh commend himself. The author of the Letters Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza

* In the 1816 edition the text from here until p. 9, “my non-philosophy,” is reduced to a few lines.
† Alleingeist, “Alleinphilosophie”
‡ Note omitted in the 1816 edition