

*THE MOMENT  
AND LATE  
WRITINGS*



**Søren Kierkegaard**

*Edited and Translated by*

**Howard V. Hong and  
Edna H. Hong**

*with Introduction and Notes*

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***THE MOMENT AND LATE WRITINGS***

KIERKEGAARD'S WRITINGS, XXII





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## HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

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Kierkegaard regarded *Either/Or* (1843) as the beginning of his authorship.<sup>1</sup> Previously he had written and published articles during his student days, *From the Papers of One Not Called a Poet* (1838), and his dissertation *The Concept of Irony with Constant Reference to Socrates* (1841). Because the articles were occasional pieces without a specific relation to the integrating aims of the authorship, they were excluded. *From the Papers* is a review of Hans Christian Andersen's *Only a Child*. The dissertation was written in fulfillment of the requirements for the university degree. Therefore he looked upon *Either/Or* as the initial work in the self-initiated dual series of pseudonymous and signed works. The primary position and intrinsic continuity of *Either/Or* in the organic authorship are epitomized in the title of a piece written in draft form in the last year of his life: "My Program: Either/Or."<sup>2</sup>

The earlier writings did, however, touch on some themes that appeared in the authorship proper.<sup>3</sup> They also had a polemical tone that emerged later in three episodes of direct polemics: the *Casparaffäre* in 1845–46 with editor Meib Gelassemidt<sup>4</sup> on the issue of destructive anonymous journalism; in 1851 with Andreas Carllob Rindfleisch on the issue of politicizing reformation of the Church;<sup>5</sup> and in 1854–55 with the established ecclesiastical order on the issue that is the focus of the present volume, the acculturized, accommodated Christianity of Christendom.

In each instance the primary concern for Kierkegaard was the issue, not a person. Insofar as persons were involved, the point

<sup>1</sup> See *On My Work as an Author*, in *The Point of View*, SHF XXII (54) 8, 1–190; *The Point of View as My Work as an Author*, K.S. XXII (MF XI) 1–17.

<sup>2</sup> See supplement, pp. 176–81 (SHF XI B 54–58).

<sup>3</sup> See Historical Introduction, *Early Polemical Writings*, pp. 322, 323–324, 326, 327; Historical Introduction, *The Concept of Irony*, XII B, pp. xvi–xxiii.

<sup>4</sup> See Historical Introduction, *The Caspar Affair and Related Related to the Church*, pp. vii–xxvii, SHF XII.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. xxvii–xxviii.

was what the individual represented, not some personal antagonism. For Goldschmidt, Kierkegaard had a certain respect and high expectations. Rudolph and Kierkegaard were acquainted through visits and conversations in the home of Michael Peder sen Kierkegaard. It was through his father that he came to know Bishop Jakob Peter Mynster's writings and later the bishop himself, for whom he had a deep appreciation that with certain changes continued throughout his life. Although Kierkegaard's eventual polemics against the empirical established ecclesiastical order centered on what Mynster symbolized in some respects, it was not until a year after the bishop's death that the direct attack began. Out of veneration for his father's pastor and appreciation of Mynster's sermons, Kierkegaard waited, and then the occasion came in the form of the Mynster memorial sermon by Hans Lassen Martensen, one of Kierkegaard's university professors and Mynster's eventual successor.

Perhaps the most adequate, yet brief, expression of the nature of Kierkegaard's authorship, and also of the context of the polemics in 1854–55, is the preface to *Two Discourses at the Commemoration on Friday* (August 3, 1851),<sup>6</sup> the last of his published writings (along with *On My Work as an Author*, August 7, 1851, and *For Self-Examination*, September 10, 1851) before he became silent for over three years:

An authorship that began with *Either/Or* and advanced step by step seeks here its decisive place of rest, at the foot of the altar, where the author, personally most aware of his own imperfection and guilt, certainly does not call himself a truth-witness but only a singular kind of poet and thinker who, without authority, has had nothing new to bring but "has wanted once again to read through, if possible in a more inward way, the original text of individual human existence-relationships, the old familiar text handed down from the fathers" —(See my postscript to *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*.)

<sup>6</sup> *Two Discourses at the Commemoration on Friday, in *Writings of Sørensen**, pp. 163–66, KJØ XVII (37–XII 267).

<sup>7</sup> *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments*, pp. 325–30; KJØ XII (31–XII [348–49]).

Turned this way, I have nothing further to add. Allow me, however, to express only this, which in a way is my life, the content of my life, its fullness, its bliss, its peace and satisfaction—his, or his view of life, which is the thought of humanity [*Menschenheit*] and of human equality [*Menschen-Gleichheit*]. Christianly, every human being (the single individual), unconditionally every human being, once again, unconditionally every human being, is equally close to God—how close and equally close?—is loved by Him.

Thus there is equality, infinite equality, between human beings. If there is any difference—ah, this difference, if it does exist, is like peaceableness itself. Undisturbed, the difference does not in the remotest way disturb the equality. The difference is that one person bears in mind that he is loved—keeps it in mind perhaps day in and day out, perhaps day in and day out for twenty years, perhaps with only one longing, for eternity, so that he can really grasp this thought and go forth, employed in this blessed occupation of keeping in mind that he—alas, not because of his virtue!—is loved.

Another person perhaps does not think about his being loved, perhaps goes on year after year, day after day, without thinking about his being loved; or perhaps he is happy and grateful to be loved by his wife, his children, by his friends and contemporaries, but he does not think about his being loved by God; or he may be humanly not being loved by anyone, and he does not think about his being loved by God.

"Yet," the first person might say, "I am innocent; after all, I cannot help it if someone else ignores or disdains the love that is lavished just as richly upon him as upon me." Infinite, divine love, which makes no distinctions! Alas, human ingratitude!—What if the equality between us human beings, in which we completely resemble one another, were that none of us really thinks about his being loved!

As I turn to the other side, I would wish and would permit myself (in gratitude for the sympathy and good will that may have been shown to me) to present, as it were, and to commend these writings to the people whose language I with filial devotion and with almost feminine infatuation am proud to

have the honor to write, yet also with the conclusion that it will not be to their discredit that I have written it.

One of the elements in the summary above is what Kierkegaard elsewhere calls the “Archimedean point,”<sup>22</sup> the fulcrum outside time and *fiat de wæreløbe tids* and *fiat de* can be moved. For him that Archimedean point was the changeless love of God for every human being, the theme of *The Changelessness of God*, published before the last three numbers of *The Moment*. Fifteen years earlier, just after he fulfilled his father’s wish by completing his university studies, he made a journey of filial piety to his father’s birthplace, Søding in Jylland. There he writes:

His last wish for me is fulfilled—is that, actually to be the sum and substance of my life? In God’s name! Yet in relation to what I owed to him the task was not so insignificant. I learned from him what fatherly love is, and through this I gained a conception of divine fatherly love, the one single unshakable thing in life, the true Archimedean point.<sup>23</sup>

This Archimedean point, that God is changeless love, is the basis of the royal Law: “You shall love”: “You shall love the neighbor”; “You shall love the neighbor.”<sup>24</sup> Christ, the prototype of essentially human perfection, calls for imitation<sup>25</sup> and constitutes the occasion for offense, or faith.<sup>26</sup> Self-knowledge comes through erring, and spiritual progress becomes retrogression in light of the ideal requirement: “In relation to God we are always in the wrong.”<sup>27</sup> “We are exceptions in need of a tele-

<sup>22</sup> See *Stephanos*, p. 383 (17y); *III & IV: Sacramental Sacraments*, pp. 111, 113-114, 115, 126 (16y); *III & IV: IS & IV*.

<sup>23</sup> See *Sacraments*, p. 383 (17y); *III & IV*.

<sup>24</sup> *Book of Love*, pp. 12, 44-51; *KH XVIII (SI IX)* 21-47, 63.

<sup>25</sup> See, for example, *Eighteen Discourses in Various Genres*, pp. 297, 317-18; *KH XX (SI VIII)* 92-125, 161; *Book of Love*, p. 84; *KH XXVI (SI IX)* 275; *Imaginal Christianity*, pp. 231-49; *KH XX (SI IX)* 214-35; *The Self-Emptying*, pp. 67-73; *KH XXI (SI XXI)* 351-54; *Love for Yourself*, pp. 187-213; *KH XX (SI IX)* 473-80; pp. 183-189.

<sup>26</sup> See, for example, *Discourse of Love*, pp. 197-201; *KH XXVI (SI IX)* 168-81; *The Seriousness of Death*, pp. 83-87, 125-31; *KH XIX (SI XI)* 194-20, 274-75.

<sup>27</sup> *Philosophical Fragments*, II, p. 229; *KH IV (SI II)* 308.

ological suspension of the ethical,"<sup>4</sup> in need of the paradoxical justification of forgiveness in faith,<sup>5</sup> and in need of grace.<sup>6</sup>

As a kind of poet–thinker Kierkegaard saw his special task as that of preserving the ideal, and as an ordinary individual he was to live under the claim of the ideal:

Once again I have reached the point where I was last summer, the most intensive, the richest time I have experienced, where I understood myself to be what I must call a poet of the religious, not however that my personal life should express the opposite – so I strive continually, but that I am a "poet" expresses that I do not venturse myself with the ideality.

My task was to cast Christianity into reflection, not inevitably to idealize (for the essentially Christian, after all, is itself the ideal) but with poetic fervor to present the total idealism of its most ideal—always ending with: I am not that, but I strive. If the latter does not prove correct and is not true about me, then everything is cast in intellectual form and falls short.<sup>7</sup>

In Kierkegaard's view, personally to fall short of the presented ideality is not only the occupational hazard of the poet, but is a possible short-circuiting by everyone who reflects, because the reflection is abstracting (a coming of actuality and ideality into possibility), and therein lies also its value and power. The task of each one, then, is to transform or reduplicate the thought in one's own actuality. The pseudonymous Johannes Climacus in *Postscript* ventured the easily misunderstood theory of knowledge: "Truth is subjectivity."<sup>8</sup> By this it is not meant that subjectivity is the ground or source or test of truth but that what one understands is to be appropriated in one's own existence. "Spirit is the power a person's understanding acquires over his life."<sup>9</sup> One's understanding of the truth is the test of one's self, and therefore:

<sup>4</sup> See *Journal of Theology*, pp. 54–57, 81, KJCVI (81: II, 104–10), 139.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 81–82 (112). See Supplement, pp. 508–95 (*Phn*, VII: A 57.5).

<sup>6</sup> See Supplement, pp. 523–25 (*Phn*, X: A 88).

<sup>7</sup> *JFV*, 6: 1 (54); X: A 105.

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*, p. 169; XI: X.1.1 (81: VII 157).

<sup>9</sup> *JFV*, 1: 17 (34); X: A 136. See also, for example, *JST* 13: 19, 1: 3, (54; VI: A 293, IX: A 14).

subjectivity is unalterable,<sup>26</sup> which ethically is guilt and religiously is sin. An Archimedean point is required outside the individual's actuality and abstracting ideal thought. For the ethically bankrupt individual, devoid of any temporal possibility of actualizing the ideal ethical claim, the paradox of the eternal in time, apprehended in faith and received as a gift, constitutes possibility beyond impossibility, newness despite the burden of guilt, release from the past.

At this point the imperative of the ethical as the universally human and the ultimate imperative of the imitation of Christ become transformed into the expressive or indicative ethics of gratitude. In a journal entry with the heading "The Christian emphasis," Kierkegaard writes of the ethics of gift and the ethical-religious consciousness transformed at the point of imitatio:

Christianity the emphasis does not fall so much upon to what extent or how far a person succeeds in meeting or fulfilling the requirement. It is actually a striving, as it is upon his getting an impression of the requirement in all its infinitude so that he rightly learns to be humbled and to rely upon grace.

To pare down the requirement in order to fulfill it better (as if this were earnestness, that now it can all be done easily appear that one is earnest about wanting to fulfill the requirement) — to this Christianity in its deepest essence is opposed.

No, infinite humiliation and grace, and then a striving born of gratitude — this is Christianity.<sup>27</sup>

Johannes Climacus in *Postscript* stresses a kind of Christian nonchalance on the other side of the gracious gift. The expressive indicative ethics of gratitude does not lead to inertia and social conformity:

But if a person existing, is supposed to bear in mind every day and hold fast to what the pastor says on Sundays and compare

<sup>26</sup> *Philosophical Fragments: or a Fragment of Philosophy*, pp. 13, 16, 28, 33, 47, 49, 52, 87, 92, 96, 101, 103, 86, 106, 206, 214, 215; *Postscript*, pp. 207, 213, 214, 215, 227, 231, 232.

<sup>27</sup> *JTI* 1991 (2007), 87A 287.

found this as the earnestness of life, and thereby in turn comprehend all his capability and incapability as just—does this mean that he will not undertake anything at all because all is vanity and futility? Oh no, in that case he will not have the opportunity to understand the best, since there is no contradiction in putting it together with life's earnestness, no contradiction that everything is vanity in the eyes of a vain person. Laziness, inactivity, stultification about the finite are a poor jest or, more correctly, are no jest at all. But to shorten the night's sleep and buy the day's hours and not spare oneself, and then to understand that it is all a jest: yes, that is earnestness.<sup>22</sup>

In more traditional language, Kierkegaard agrees with Luther that works are not a meretricious substitute for faith, because such striving leads to imititious presumption or despair;<sup>23</sup> but faith is a restless being and the major premise of faith is linked to the minor premise of works,<sup>24</sup> witnessing to and suffering for the truth, works of love, the fruits of faith through the infinite gift.<sup>25</sup>

The Christian life, with its imperative vision of human existence, its radical self-knowledge, the rescuing and renewing radical gift, and the expressive, responsive ethics of gratitude, entails what Kierkegaard calls the double danger.<sup>26</sup> The first is the inner suffering of self-denial and the infinite humiliation preparatory to receiving the ultimate gift, a process of becoming able to break the sod and disk the soil in preparation for seeding and new life. The second danger is that of the Christian's having to live in the world with its qualitatively different finite values and goals. For Kierkegaard an instance of the second danger was his action against The Censor: "If I had not taken this action, I would have escaped completely the double-danger connected with the essentially Christian. I would have gone on thinking of

<sup>22</sup> *Paraspe*, pp. 41–52, KJF XIII (S<sup>17</sup> VII 511).

<sup>23</sup> See *Supplement*, p. 392, 408 (q.v. VIII A 3; S<sup>17</sup> A 322).

<sup>24</sup> See the *Self-Examination*, pp. 15–16, KJF XIII (S<sup>17</sup> XII 526–14).

<sup>25</sup> See *Practical Ethics*, 1700–01 (see, esp., p. 16), KJF XVI (S<sup>17</sup> IX 5–31).

<sup>26</sup> See *Supplement*, p. 398 (q.v. IX A 474). See also, in essence, *Work of Love*, pp. 177, 194–95, 224, KJF XV (S<sup>17</sup> X 133–135, 154), *Ungodly*, p. 222, KJF XX (S<sup>17</sup> XII 204)–101 (573–51 654), *The World as I See It*, X A 751).



the difficulties involved with Christianity as being purely interior to the self.<sup>27</sup>

In accord with this understanding of Christianity and with Holy Scriptures, especially the New Testament,<sup>28</sup> as highway signs and Christ as the way,<sup>29</sup> Kierkegaard came to distinguish between Christianity and acculturized, accommodated religion, between Christianity and Christendom, and also to have second thoughts about Myster's presentation.

But where is the boundary between worldly wisdom and religionism? Myster's preaching is far from being waldy religionism at all times. He gives consolation by saying that everything will perhaps turn out all right again, that better days are coming, etc., which after all is not even a genuinely religious consolation, one shrinks from going out into the current—one tries to wade as long as possible. As long as this is not definitely decided, there always remains a doubt about the importance of actuality in one's whole train of thought.<sup>30</sup>

Christianity is a unity of gentleness and rigorism, in one sense infinitely rigorous, and the Christian shoulders at this unflinching confession of magnificent Christian leniency and roseolity, worldly sagacious weakness. First of all an eternity of memory, until the ethical requirement is honored (through suffering the penalty, through *restitutio in integrum* [restitution to the pristine state] where this is possible, through retraction or the like . . . and even an almost miraculous forgiveness); this is Christianity. This is also Christianity according to Myster's most remarkable and to me unforgettable preaching, which I have read, do read, and will read again and again to my upbuilding. But then is it not also Christianity to act accordingly? I do not think that it is Christianity to have a new sermon **about** the obligation to act according to the sermon, and then a new one **about** the danger in merely preaching **about** the obligation to act according to the sermon.

<sup>27</sup> *JW*, 1649 (*Op.*, 8: 231).

<sup>28</sup> See Supplement, p. 383 (*Op.*, IV: 3: 142).

<sup>29</sup> See *JW*, 204 (*Op.*, VI: 3: 59).

<sup>30</sup> *JW*, 207 (*Op.*, IV: 3: 71).

about, and then to the nth power's version about. In my opinion this constitutes a moving away from Christianity. And that simple middle class man, "the former clothing merchant here in the city," my deceased father, who brought me up as Christianity on Myer's sermons, was also of this opinion—is this not so?<sup>1</sup>

What had happened, in thought, was a confusion of categories, of customary social morality and the ethical, of the catholic and the religious, of the finite and the infinite. "Every cause that was served as an either/or (but as a both-and, also, etc.) was not God's cause; yet it does not therefore follow that every cause served as an either/or is therefore God's cause."<sup>2</sup>

As I have demonstrated on all sides, all modern Christendom is a shifting of the essentially Christian back into the esoteric. Another shift is that the conception of the preparatory condition for becoming a Christian has been insulated in a completely confusing way. Thousands of people who are a long, long way from having an impression of Christianity stand or lie, as if as a conclusion and summarily have been made Christians. In this fashion there has been such an advance that if such people are supposed to be Christians, then a mediocre manhood is an outstanding Christian. And this is just about the way it is in "established Christendom." Just as everywhere else, first place has been allowed to vanish, third place, which otherwise is alien here, has been promoted to an actual position, and class 3 becomes number 1. The apostles, the 1000 Christians, the truth-witnesses, etc. become Ignorant.<sup>3</sup>

What was needed was a "curative,"<sup>4</sup> not because of doctrinal operation, but because of lack of inward discerning, of a subjectivizing of the objectivity of doctrine, and because of an

<sup>1</sup> JPVI 87-8 (Pg. XI B 17), pp. 757-58.

<sup>2</sup> See Supplement, p. 125 (Pg. XI A 10).

<sup>3</sup> JPVI 6-60 (Pg. XI A 917).

<sup>4</sup> See Supplement, pp. 465-66, 468-69, 422-23, 452-53 (Pg. XI A 6-7, 68, XI A 103, XI A 104, XI A 106; XI A 25).

avoidance of the second danger, witnessing to the implications of the doctrine.<sup>35</sup> Nor was the corrective needed primarily because of the state Church, the established ecclesiastical order. In his "Open Letter to Dr. Rudelbach," Kierkegaard wrote that he was "suspicious of these politically achieved fine institutions" and that he had "not fought for the emancipation of the 'Church' any more than" he had "fought for the emancipation of Greenland,"<sup>36</sup> although he later would have welcomed disestablishment.<sup>37</sup> "A mismanaged established order . . . well, there is nothing commendable about that, but it is far preferable to a reformation devoid of character."<sup>38</sup>

The best form of the corrective in the interest of inward deepening and expressive action would be the application of pressure through the presentation of ideality by a poet "without authority."<sup>39</sup>

The ideality involved has been lost completely. As a result, being a Christian is construed to be something everyone can be very easily. And then it becomes a matter of distinction to go further, to become a philosopher, a poet, and God knows what.

To bring this to a halt, I have affirmed ideality. At least one ought to acquire respect for what it means to be a Christian: then everyone can test or choose whether or not one wants to be a Christian.<sup>40</sup>

The pressure must be applied by the locale. For example, in ideality a truth-witness is essentially higher than any actual truth-witness. Therefore from this elevation the pressure is even stronger.

The mitigation, again, lies in the fact that the whole thing happens through a "poet," who says, This I am not.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>35</sup> See *JF VI* 68-12 (*Op.*, X: D 232).

<sup>36</sup> "Open Letter to Dr. Rudelbach," in *Christen-Åbne*, 3: 34, XIX-XIII (MF XII 132).

<sup>37</sup> See pp. 98, 107-99.

<sup>38</sup> See Supplement II, p. 112 (*Op.*, X: A 297).

<sup>39</sup> *JF II* 1:98 (*Op.*, X: A 392).

<sup>40</sup> *JF II* 1:99 (*Op.*, X: A 393).

From the beginning of the authorship war (*Ligeia/O*), the pseudonymous writers are poets<sup>11</sup> (in the elemental sense of imaginative makers) of ideality and their writers are Kierkegaard's poetic productions.<sup>12</sup>

Essentially I am only a poet who loves what wounds: ideals, what infinitely detains: ideals; what makes a person, humanly speaking, unhappy: ideals; what "teaches to take refuge in grace", ideals; what in a higher sense makes a person indescribably happy: ideals—if he could learn to hate himself properly in the self-concern of infinity. Indescribably happy, if though annealed, deeply, profoundly humbled, before the ideals, he has had to confess and must confess to himself and to others that there is the infinitely higher that he has not reached; yet he is unspeakably happy to have seen it, although it is precisely this that casts him to the earth, but, consequently, he is unhappy one. . . .

And in other weather, when life seems to be tranquilized in illusions, one may think one can do without all this fancy about ideals, think that all they do is disturb everything, and quite right—they will dissolve all the illusions. But when everything is taming, when everything is splicing up into parties, small societies, sects, etc., when just because everyone wants to rule, ruling is practically impossible—then there is still one force left that can control people: the ideals, properly applied. For in the first place, the ideals, properly applied, do no outrage upon anyone, do not give offense to the ambitions of all, to the ambitions of anyone, which one who oneself wants to rule can so easily do; and in the next place ideals spring up every crowd, seize the individual and keep control of him.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> See, for example, *Johannes de Silentio*, who starts the work of a poet and wittily dismisses the title of *Philosophy and Poetry*, p. 90 and note 21, and VI (SI III 158); Johannes Climacus, who starts as a poet and who in the solution of the imaginary construction asks "how do I become a Christian?" in *Two Ages*, pp. 15–16, 6–7, 619; NW XII, (SP VII 7, 537–38, 539).

<sup>12</sup> See *Requiem*, pp. 625–27, RP XII, (SI VII 545–47).

<sup>13</sup> *SP VII 8*, pp. 106–07 (RP IX B 173, pp. 275–76).

Through the series of pseudonymous works from *Über/Otto* to *Postscript*, the presentation of the idea's took various forms. In *Ethik/O* there are the multifaceted expressions of the esthetic life of immediacy and the ethical consciousness and the distinctions between them, with the adverb last word that in relation to God we are always in the wrong. *The Concept of Anxiety* is an algebraic discussion of hereditary sin. The lyrical *Love and Trembling* poses the relation of the ethical and the religious through a consideration of Abraham and the sacrifice of Isaac. *Repetition* centers on the impossibility of esthetic repetition and indicates the possibility of a transcendent repetition. *Stages on Life's Way* gathers together the earlier elements in the theory of the potential stages of life or spheres of existence: (1) the esthetic as the life of immediacy and individual satisfaction, (2) the ethical as the universally human claim upon the individual, who is obligated to actualize the ethical ideal, and (3) the religious as the dethroning of the esthetic in its frustration and despair and of the ethical in its bankruptcy of guilt and concomitantly as the possibility of the qualitative repetition (unavailable in the other spheres) through forgiveness and grace. *Fragments* is an imaginary construction in thought about the question of how one can go beyond Socrates and presents the paradox of the eternal in time (the distinction between religiousness A and religiousness B or *Ønsøgt*<sup>46</sup>) as the only way for an existing temporal being to go beyond what otherwise is the highest. In dealing with Climacus's question about how one becomes a Christian, *Postscript* clothes the algebraic thought of *Fragments* in historical costume. Alongside this series of pseudonymous works, six small signed volumes of uplifting discourses (1843, 1844) were published, and in 1845 *Three Discourses on Imagined Occasions* (confession, wedding, burial).

The qualitative spheres of existence had already been suggested in the various means of repetition in *Repetition* (1843), although the book was written "in such a way that the heretics are unable to understand it."<sup>47</sup> And in the companion volume, *Love and Trembling*, published one same day (October 13), the

<sup>46</sup> *Ønsøgt*, pp. 220–61, KJH XI (1951) VII:285–300.

<sup>47</sup> *Repetition*, p. 226, KJH XI (1951) II:279.

reader is told of Dutch spice merchants who sank a few cargoes "in order to jack up the price."<sup>17</sup>

Do we need something similar in the world of the spirit? Are we so sure that we have achieved the highest, so that there is nothing left for us to do except proudly to make ourselves think that we have now come that far, simply in order to have something to occupy our time? Is this the kind of self-deception the present generation needs? Should it be trained in a virtuosity along that line, or is it not, instead, adequately perfected in the act of deceiving itself? Or, rather, does it not need an honest earnestness that leadlessly and incorruptibly points to the tasks, an honest earnestness that lovingly maintains the tasks, that does not discipline people into wanting to attain the highest too hastily but keeps the tasks young and beautiful and lovely to look at, inviting to all and yet also difficult and inspiring to the noble-minded (for the noble nature is inspired only by the difficult)?<sup>18</sup>

Of the whole series of paronymous works, Kirkegaard wrote in 1851:

So my idea was to give my contemporaries (whether or not they themselves would want to understand) a hint in humorous form (in order to achieve a lighter tone) that a much greater pressure was needed – but then no more, I aimed to keep my heavy burden to myself as my cross. I have often taken exception to anyone who was a sinner in the strictest sense and then promptly got busy teasing others. Here is where *Clouding Postscript* comes in.

Later I was horrified to see what was understood by a Christian state (this I saw especially in 1848). I saw how the ones who were supposed to rule, both in Church and state, hid themselves like cowards while opportunism boldly and brazenly reigned, and I experienced how a truly unselfish and God-tearing endeavor<sup>19</sup> (and my endeavor as an author was that) is rewarded in the Christian state.

<sup>17</sup> *Essays and Lectures*, p. 179. KJ 61:247-1166a.  
<sup>18</sup> *The Copenhagen*.

That seals my fate. Now it is up to my contemporaries how they will bear the cost of being a Christian, how terrifying they will make it. I surely will be given the strength for it—I almost said “unfortunately.” I really do not say this in pride. I both have been and am willing to pray to God to exempt me from this terrible business; furthermore, I am human myself and love, humanly speaking, to live happily here on earth. But if what one sees all over Europe is Christendom, a Christian state, then I propose to start here in Denmark to list the price for being a Christian in such a way that the whole concept—state Church, official appointments, livelihood—bursts open.<sup>48</sup>

Although Kierkegaard intended to conclude (hence the title *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*) with *Postscript*, daring and after the intense experience of the Casan affair and the revelation of the pusillanimity of the cultural and ecclesiastical leaders who could and should have spoken up, Bishop Mynter<sup>49</sup> in particular, he concluded that a rigorous auditing of Christendom needed to be made:

It is neither more nor less than a matter of an auditing [Revision] of Christianity; it is a matter of getting rid of 1800 years as if they had never been.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>48</sup> See Supplement, p. 401 (Pap. X, A 141).

<sup>49</sup> “It was a ideal necessity at the time for the Christian Church, the chief hierarchy figure, *M. Mynter*, to do an ecclesiastical study call for review. But someone would do it, a substitute, had to take the job, so much so for the reason was in Denmark I suffered from what I call [Kierkegaard], with the an just in addition in Denmark and with a just god, his sense of an ecclesiastical figure against me with his talent (and he is indeed, true of a most talented authors); see Mynter, by whom he is now covered in anxiety by some sense as, for example, an expression of Mynter to ‘Abraham Mynter, myself, and seek others among us. I was the only one who seems to have his previous veneration’ to the old generation, for whatever criticism there was in M.’s silence, or ignorance, could be concealed—and I do not matter—I only manage to maintain M.’s reputation standing the same as before.”—JP VI 670 (Pap. X<sup>1</sup> D 171, p. 264), n.d., 1851.

<sup>50</sup> See Supplement, p. 395 (Pap. X, A 12). This is not a rejection of history or of the “historical Jesus” but a rejection of the falsification of substituting cultural accommodations and historical information for the contemporaneity

The nothing and the needed “greater pressure” came in the form of what may be called Kierkegaard’s “second authorship” in a series of signed and pseudonymous works beginning with *Upholding Discourse in Human Spirits* (1847) and ending with *For Self-Examination* (1851) and the posthumously published *Judge for Yourself* (written in 1851–52).

The series is marked by a heightened level of idealism in the requirement of *being a Christian* and in the venture into the second danger, possibly martyrdom, entailed by witnessing to the faith.<sup>47</sup> Part of the subtitle of *Sickness into Death* could be used as the subtitle for the entire series: “For Upholding and Awakening,” as could also a contemplated subtitle of *Praxis*: “An Attempt to Introduce Christianity into Christendom . . . A Poetic Attempt Without Authority.”<sup>48</sup>

Another clue to the entire series is a pair of synonymous words: *negotiation* and *admission*.<sup>49</sup> Kierkegaard was not a reformer in the ordinary sense of one who wants to change structures and manipulate concepts and language. *Judge for Yourself* ends with a denunciation of stalling reformers of externals and with the call for an honest admission of having scaled down Christianity:

If, however, there is no one in this generation who ventures in character to undertake the task of “reformer,” then – unless the established order, instead of making confession of the truth

<sup>47</sup> *Christianity as a Culture*, See *Praxis*, pp. 10–11; *KJF* VII (SU IV) 221–22.

<sup>48</sup> See, for example, *Discourse 2 – Suffering*, pp. 217–29, 213, 245; *KJF* XV (SU VIII) 305–25, 325, 351; *Christian Discourse*, pp. 181–87, 178; *KJF* XVII (SU IX) 164–83, 168; *Praxis*, pp. 106, 206–09, 255, 277–87; *KJF* XX – *SU* XII D. 1., 196–92, 215, 217–37; *For Self-Examination*, pp. 67–70; *KJF* XXI (SU XII) 311–31; *KJF* 351–84; *Judge for Yourself*, pp. 156–58, 187–96; *KJF* XXI (SU XII) 413–14, 155–71.

<sup>49</sup> See *Støvelsen*, p. 398 (Pap. IX A 306).

<sup>50</sup> Danish: *forhandlings* and *indrømmelse*. See, for example, *Praxis*, pp. 7, 227, 232; *KJF* XX (SU X) 150, 209, 214; *For Self-Examination*, pp. 68–70; *KJF* XXI (SU XII) 313; *Judge for Yourself*, pp. 105, 112–29, 133–43, 156, 206, 211–12; *KJF* XXI (SU XII) 384–85, 407–410, 431–33, 438–39, 456–64; *Death or Prayer*, *KJF* XXII (SU XIII) 416–19; *Point of View*, *KJF* XXII (SU XIII) 522, 562; *Alone Standing*, *For Point of View*, *KJF* XXII (SU XIII) 607–pp. 282–92). See also *Supplement*, pp. 456–47 (Pap. XII B 15).



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