HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

Kierkegaard regarded *Either/Or* (1843) as the beginning of his authorship.[1] Previously he had written and published articles during his student days, *From the Papers of One Still Living* (1838), and his dissertation *The Concept of Irony with Continual 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 Fiddler*. 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."[2]

The earlier writings did, however, touch on some themes that appeared in the authorship proper.[3] They also had a polemical tone that emerged later in three episodes of direct polemics: the *Corsair* affair in 1845–46 with editor Meïr Goldschmidt[4] on the issue of destructive anonymous journalism, in 1851 with Andreas Gottlob Rudelbach on the issue of politicizing reformation of the Church,[5] 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

[1] See *On My Work as an Author*, in *The Point of View*, *KW* XXII (*SV* XIII 494); *The Point of View for My Work as an Author*, *KW* XXII (*SV* XIII 517).

[2] See Supplement, pp. 476–81 (*Pap*. XI[3] B 54–58).

[3] See Historical Introduction, *Early Polemical Writings*, pp. xxx, xxxiv–xxxv, *KW* I; Historical Introduction, *The Concept of Irony*, *KW* II, pp. xvi–xviii.

[4] See Historical Introduction, *The* Corsair *Affair and Articles Related to the Writings*, pp. vii–xxxiv, *KW* XIII.

[5] Ibid., pp. xxxvi–xxxviii.

was what the individual represented, not some personal antagonism. For Goldschmidt, Kierkegaard had a certain respect and high expectations. Rudelbach and Kierkegaard were acquainted through visits and conversations in the home of Michael Pedersen 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 Communion on Fridays* (August 7, 1851),[6] 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 Postscript*[7]).

[6] *Two Discourses at the Communion on Fridays*, in *Without Authority*, pp. 165–66, *KW* XVIII (*SV* XII 267).

[7] *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to* Philosophical Fragments, pp. [629–30], *KW* XII.1 (*SV* VII [548–49]).

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—this, or this view of life, which is the thought of humanity [*Menneskelighed*] and of human equality [*Menneske-Liighed*]: 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 seventy 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 bemoan 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 consolation that it will not be to their discredit that I have written it.

One of the elements in the summation above is what Kierkegaard elsewhere calls the "Archimedean point,"[8] the fulcrum outside time and finitude whereby time and finitude 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, Sæding in Jylland. There he wrote:

> 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.[9]

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."[10] Christ, the prototype of essentially human perfection, calls for imitation[11] and constitutes the occasion for offense or faith.[12] Self-knowledge comes through imitating, and spiritual progress becomes retrogression in light of the ideal requirement. "In relation to God we are always in the wrong."[13] We are exceptions in need of a "tele-

[8] See Supplement, p. 383 (*Pap*. III A 73). See also, for example, *JP* II 2089; III 3426 (*Pap*. X[3] A 430; IX A 115).

[9] See Supplement, p. 383 (*Pap*. III A 73).

[10] *Works of Love*, pp. 17, 44, 61, *KW* XVI (*SV* IX 21, 47, 63).

[11] See, for example, *Upbuilding Discourses in Various Spirits*, pp. 197, 217–29, *KW* XV (*SV* VIII 282, 305–16); *Works of Love*, p. 288, *KW* XVI (*SV* IX 275); *Practice in Christianity*, pp. 231–46, *KW* XX (*SV* XII 213–35; *For Self-Examination*, pp. 67–70, *KW* XXI (*SV* XXI 351–54); *Judge for Yourself!*, pp. 147–213, *KW* XXI (*SV* XII 423–80); *JP* II 1833–1940.

[12] See, for example, *Works of Love*, pp. 197–201, *KW* XVI (*SV* IX 188–91); *The Sickness unto Death*, pp. 83–87, 125–31 *KW* XIX (*SV* XI 194–99, 234–41).

[13] *Either/Or, a Fragment of Life*, II, p. 339, *KW* IV (*SV* II 306).

ological suspension of the ethical,"[14] in need of the paradoxical justification of forgiveness in faith,[15] and in need of grace.[16]

As a kind of poet-thinker Kierkegaard saw his special task as that of presenting 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—no, I strive continually, but that I am a "poet" expresses that I do not confuse myself with the ideality.
>
> My task was to cast Christianity into reflection, not poetically to idealize (for the essentially Christian, after all, is itself the ideal) but with poetic fervor to present the total ideality at 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.[17]

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 all reflection is abstracting (a casting of actuality and ideality into possibility), and therein lies also its value and power. The task of each one, then, is to translate 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."[18] 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 exercises over his life."[19] One's understanding of the truth is the test of oneself, and therefore

[14] See *Fear and Trembling*, pp. 54–67, 81, *KW* VI (*SV* III 104–16, 129).

[15] Ibid., pp. 61–62 (111). See Supplement, pp. 394–95 (*Pap*. VIII[1] A 673).

[16] See Supplement, pp. 423–25 (*Pap*. X[5] A 88).

[17] *JP* VI 6511 (*Pap*. X[2] A 106).

[18] *Postscript*, p. 189, *KW* XII.1 (*SV* VII 157).

[19] *JP* IV 4340 (*Pap*. X[3] A 736). See also, for example, *JP* I 1049, 1051 (*Pap*. VIII[1] A 292; IX A 154).

subjectivity is untruth,[20] 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 motivation:

> *Christianly* the emphasis does not fall so much upon to what extent or how far a person succeeds in meeting or fulfilling the requirement, if he actually is 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 the more 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.[21]

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 compre-

[20] *Philosophical Fragments, or a Fragment of Philosophy*, pp. 13–16, 28, 32, 47, 51–52, *KW* VII (*SV* IV 183–86, 196, 200, 214, 218); *Postscript*, pp. 207, 213, *KW* XII.1 (*SV* VIII 174, 179).

[21] *JP* I 993 (*Pap*. X^3 A 734).

> hend this as the earnestness of life, and thereby in turn comprehend all his capability and incapability as jest—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 jest, 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, snobbishness 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.[22]

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

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.[26] The first is the inner suffering of self-denial and the infinite humiliation preparatory to receiving the ultimate gift, a process of becoming akin to breaking the sod and disking 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 Corsair*: "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

[22] *Postscript*, pp. 471–72, *KW* XII.1 (*SV* VII 410).

[23] See Supplement, pp. 392, 408 (*Pap*. VIII[1] A 19; X[3] A 322).

[24] See *For Self-Examination*, pp. 15–25, *KW* XXI (*SV* XII 306–14).

[25] See, for example, *Works of Love*, pp. 5–16, *KW* XVI (*SV* IX 9–20).

[26] See Supplement, p. 398 (*Pap*. IX A 414). See also, for example, *Works of Love*, pp. 192, 194–95, 204, *KW* XVI (*SV* IX 183, 185, 194); *Practice*, p. 222, *KW* XX (*SV* XII 204); *JP* I 653; VI 6548 (*Pap*. VIII[2] B 85:18; X[2] A 251).

the difficulties involved with Christianity as being purely interior to the self."[27]

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

> But where is the boundary between worldly wisdom and religiousness. Mynster's preaching is far from being wholly religious 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.[30]

> Christianity is a unity of gentleness and rigorousness, in one sense infinitely rigorous, and the Christian shudders at this confounded confusion of magnanimous Christian leniency and cowardly, 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 then an almost miraculous forgetfulness: this is Christianity. This is also Christianity according to Mynster'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

[27] *JP* VI 6548 (*Pap*. X^2 A 251).
[28] See Supplement, p. 383 (*Pap*. IV A 143).
[29] See *JP* I 208 (*Pap*. VIII^1 A 50).
[30] *JP* V 5637 (*Pap*. IV A 71).

> about, and then to the nth power a sermon **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 in Christianity on Mynster's sermons, was also of this opinion—is this not so?[31]

What had happened, he thought, was a confusion of categories, of customary social morality and the ethical, of the esthetic and the religious, of the finite and the infinite. "Every cause that is not served as an either/or (but as a both-and, also, etc.) is *eo ipso* not God's cause; yet it does not therefore follow that every cause served as an either/or is therefore God's cause."[32]

> As I have demonstrated on all sides, all modern Christendom is a shifting of the essentially Christian back into the esthetic. Another shift is that the conception of the preparatory condition for becoming a Christian has been broadened in a completely confusing way. Thousands of people who are a long, long way from having an impression of Christianity stand on the same level as a catechumen 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 catechumen 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 2 becomes number 1. The apostles, the no. 1 Christians, the truth-witnesses, etc. become fanatics.[33]

What was needed was a "corrective,"[34] not because of doctrinal aberration but because of a lack of inward deepening, of a subjectivizing of the objectivity of doctrine, and because of an

[31] *JP* VI 6748 (*Pap*. X^{6} B 171, pp. 257–58).
[32] See Supplement, p. 425 (*Pap*. X^{5} A 119).
[33] *JP* VI 6466 (*Pap*. X^{1} A 617).
[34] See Supplement, pp. 403–06, 410–11, 422–23, 452–53 (*Pap*. X^{1} A 640, 658; X^{2} A 193; X^{3} A 565; X^{4} A 596; XI^{1} A 28).

avoidance of the second danger, witnessing to the implications of the doctrine.[35] 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 free institutions" and that he had "not fought for the emancipation of the 'Church' any more than" he had "fought for the emancipation of Greenland,"[36] although he later would have welcomed disestablishment.[37] "A mismanaged established order—well, there is nothing commendable about that, but it is far preferable to a reformation devoid of character."[38]

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."

> 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.[39]

> The pressure must be applied by the ideals. 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.[40]

[35] See *JP* VI 6842 (*Pap*. X^6 B 232).

[36] "Open Letter to Dr. Rudelbach," in Corsair *Affair*, p. 54, *KW* XIII (*SV* XIII 439).

[37] See pp. 98, 157–59.

[38] See Supplement, p. 412 (*Pap*. X^4 A 296).

[39] *JP* II 1798 (*Pap*. X^4 A 282).

[40] *JP* II 1796 (*Pap*. X^4 A 80).

From the beginning of the authorship with *Either/Or*, the pseudonymous writers are poets[41] (in the elemental sense of imaginative makers) of ideality and themselves are Kierkegaard's poetic productions.[42]

> *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, although humbled, 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, him, consequently the unhappy one. . . .
>
> And in calm weather, when life seems to be tranquilized in illusions, one may think one can do without all this fantasy about ideals, think that all they do is disturb everything, and quite right—they will disturb all the illusions. But when everything is tottering, when everything is splitting 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 not infringe 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 split up every crowd, seize the individual and keep control of him.[43]

[41] See, for example, Johannes de Silentio, who does the work of a poet and yet modestly disclaims the title, in *Fear and Trembling*, p. 90 and note 21, *KW* VI (*SV* III 138); Johannes Climacus, an outsider, a humorist who "in the isolation of the imaginary construction" asks "how do I become a Christian," in *Postscript*, pp. 15–16, 617, 619, *KW* XII.1 (*SV* VII 7, 537–38, 539).

[42] See *Postscript*, pp. 625–27, *KW* XII.1 (*SV* VII 545–47).

[43] *JP* VI 6749, pp. 400–01 (*Pap*. X^6 B 173, pp. 275–76).

Through the series of pseudonymous works from *Either/Or* to *Postscript*, the presentation of the ideals took various forms. In *Either/Or* there are the multifaceted expositions of the esthetic life of immediacy and the ethical consciousness and the distinctions between them, with the added 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 *Fear 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 intimates the possibility of a transcendent repetition. *Stages on Life's Way* gathers together the earlier themes 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 in *Postscript*[44]) 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 upbuilding 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."[45] And in the companion volume, *Fear and Trembling*, published the same day (October 13), the

[44] *Postcript*, pp. 555–61, *KW* XII.1 (*SV* VII 485–90).
[45] *Repetition*, p. 225, *KW* VI (*SV* III 259).

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

> 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 piously to make ourselves think that we have not 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 art of deceiving itself? Or, rather, does it not need an honest earnestness that fearlessly and incorruptibly points to the tasks, an honest earnestness that lovingly maintains the tasks, that does not disquiet 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)?[46]

Of the whole series of pseudonymous works, Kierkegaard 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 terrifying others. Here is where *Concluding Postscript* comes in.
>
> Then 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 barbarism boldly and brazenly raged; and I experienced how a truly unselfish and God-fearing endeavor[47] (and my endeavor as an author was that) is rewarded in the Christian state.

[46] *Fear and Trembling*, p. 121, *KW* VI (*SV* III 166).
[47] The *Corsair* affair.

> That seals my fate. Now it is up to my contemporaries how they will list 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.[48]

Although Kierkegaard intended to conclude (hence the title *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*) with *Postscript*, during and after the intense experience of the *Corsair* affair and the revelation of the pusillanimity of the cultural and ecclesiastical leaders who could and should have spoken up, Bishop Mynster[49] 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.[50]

[48] See Supplement, pp. 401–02 (*Pap*. X^1 A 541).

[49] "It was indeed necessary at the time for that Christian Bishop, that chief literary figure, M., personally to enter in and sternly call for order. But no one would; so I, a subaltern, had to take the job, which also for that reason was undertaken with suffering. So while G. [Goldschmidt], with the largest circulation in Denmark and with privileged, free-reined unconstraint raged against me with all his talent (and he is, indeed, 'one of our most talented authors'; see Mynster, by whom he is now accredited in exactly the same sense as, for example, our talented Martensen, Paludan-Müller, myself, and such others among us), I was too pleased for words to bow 'in profound veneration' to the old gentleman, for whatever dubiousness there was in M.'s silence, or ignorance, could be concealed—and I do not matter—if I only manage to maintain M.'s reputation shining the same as before."—*JP* VI 6748 (*Pap*. X^6 B 171, p. 264), *n.d.*, 1851

[50] See Supplement, p. 395 (*Pap*. IX A 72). This is not a rejection of history or of the "historical Jesus" but a rejection of the falsification of substituting cultural accommodation and historical information for the contemporaneity

The auditing 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 *Upbuilding Discourses in Various 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 ideality in the requirement of *imitatio Christi* and in the venture into the second danger, possibly martyrdom, entailed by witnessing to the faith.[51] Part of the subtitle of *Sickness unto Death* could be used as the subtitle for the entire series: "For Upbuilding and Awakening," as could also a contemplated subtitle of *Practice*: "An Attempt to Introduce Christianity into Christendom . . . A Poetic Attempt—Without Authority."[52]

Another clue to the entire series is a pair of synonymous words: *confession* and *admission*.[53] 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 dabbling 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

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of encounter with Christ. See *Fragments*, pp. 55–111, *KW* VII (*SV* IV 221–72).

[51] See, for example, *Discourses in Various Spirits*, pp. 217–29, 240, 245, *KW* XV (*SV* VIII 305–16, 326, 331); *Christian Discourses*, pp. 181–87, 278, *KW* XVII (*SV* X 184–89, 288); *Practice*, pp. 106, 206–09, 233, 237–57, *KW* XX (*SV* XII 101, 190–92, 213, 217–35); *For Self-Examination*, pp. 67–70, *KW* XXI (*SV* XII 351–54); *Judge for Yourself!*, pp. 136–38, 187–204, *KW* XXI (*SV* XII 413–14, 455–71).

[52] See Supplement, p. 398 (*Pap*. IX A 390).

[53] Danish: *Tilstaaelse* and *Indrømmelse*. See, for example, *Practice*, pp. 7, 227, 235, *KW* XX (*SV* XII xv, 208, 215); *For Self-Examination*, pp. 69–70, *KW* XXI (*SV* XII 353); *Judge for Yourself!*, pp. 101–02, 129, 133–43, 156, 208, 211–12, *KW* XXI (*SV* XII 384–85, 407, 410–19, 430, 473, 478–79); *On My Work*, in *Point of View*, *KW* XXII (*SV* XIII 506–07); *Point of View*, *KW* XXII (*SV* XIII 532, 592); *Armed Neutrality*, in *Point of View*, *KW* XXII (*Pap*. X^5 B 107, pp. 292–93). See also Supplement, pp. 436–42 (*Pap*. XI^3 B 15).

that Christianly it is only a toned-down approximation of Christianity, claims to be in the strict sense true Christianity according to the New Testament and thereby judges and destroys itself—then the established order should stand, be maintained. Dabblers in reforming are more corrupting than the most corrupt established order, because reforming is the highest and therefore dabbling in it is the most corrupting of all. Let the established order have faults, many of them, say what you wish—if you are not willing to walk *in the character* of being a reformer, then hold your tongue about reforming. Oh, the most horrible of all lack of character—fraudulently to want through subterfuge to look like a reformer, or to want to be a reformer through a little party alliance, through balloting, etc. etc.

No, if there is no such man among us, then let us hold to the established order; let us see the error of our ways, let each one individually confess before God how far behind we are in Christianity, but you, my God, you will surely keep me from making things even worse by fraudulently wanting to reform.

So let it be said as loudly as possible, and would that it might be heard, if possible, everywhere, and God grant that wherever it is heard it may be earnestly considered: *The evil in our time is not the established order with its many faults. No, the evil in our time is precisely: this evil penchant for reforming, this flirting with wanting to reform*, this sham of wanting to reform without being willing to suffer and to make sacrifices, this frivolous conceitedness of wanting to be able to reform without even having a conception, to say nothing of a lofty conception, of how uncommonly elevated is the idea of "to reform," this hypocrisy of avoiding the consciousness of one's own incompetence by being busy with the diversion of wanting to reform the Church, which our age is least of all competent to do. When the Church needed a reformation, no one reported for duty, there was no crowd to join up; all fled away. Only one solitary man, the reformer, was disciplined in all secrecy by fear and trembling and much spiritual trial for venturing the extraordinary in God's name. Now that all want to reform, there is an uproar as if it were in a public dance hall. This cannot be God's

> idea but is a foppish human device, which is why, instead of fear and trembling and much spiritual trial, there is: hurrah, bravo, applause, balloting, bumbling, hubbub, noise—and false alarm.[54]

At times during the years 1846–51, Kierkegaard delayed publishing completed writings because he was waiting and hoping. A work written in 1851–52 (*Judge for Yourself!*) was not published because he was waiting and hoping for an honest admission, in particular from the foremost representative of the established order, Bishop Mynster, whom he personally loved and to whose writings he was indebted.[55]

Kierkegaard's position with regard to Mynster was in part something personal and in part a concern for Christianity and the Church. He therefore refrained, "with only one exception,"[56] from publishing his most explicit critical thoughts of what Mynster represented. Climacus, however, toward the end in the last of the first series of pseudonymous works had already affirmed that "honesty is preferable to half measures," that confession is better than indifference.[57] After the publication of *Postscript*, Kierkegaard visited Mynster and told him, "I am in complete disagreement with you."

> My thinking was: Privately I will tell him how much I am in disagreement with him—I owe that to the truth—but outwardly he is not to be diminished by an attack; on the contrary, he is to be elevated even above his actual worth; he represents what must be made known.
>
> Bishop Mynster replied: You are the complement to me.[58]

With the publication of *Upbuilding Discourses in Various Spirits* (1847), the so-called "second authorship" began, and Bishop Mynster was irritated by Part One, "An Occasional Discourse"

[54] *Judge for Yourself!*, pp. 212–13, *KW* XXI (*SV* XII 479–80).

[55] See, for example, *For Self-Examination*, p. 21, *KW* XXI (*SV* XII 311); Supplement, pp. 397, 410–11 (*Pap*. IX A 85; X^3 A 565).

[56] Presumably *Practice*. See Supplement, p. 436 (*Pap*. XI^3 B 15, p. 37).

[57] *Postscript*, p. 589, *KW* XII.1 (*SV* VIII 513).

[58] See Supplement, p. 437 (*Pap*. XI^3 B 15, p. 38).

("Purity of Heart Is to Will One Thing"). "*Works of Love* [1847] offended him. —*Christian Discourses* [1848] even more."[59] Kierkegaard continued to write but did not publish—he waited, waited for Mynster's admission. In November 1848 he wrote in his journal:

> The question is: When should all the latest works [*Sickness unto Death*, *Practice*, *Armed Neutrality*] be published! I cannot thank God enough that I have finished them, and if I had not had the tension, with the addition of new pains I perhaps would never have completed them, because once I have come out of the momentum of writing, I never get into it again in the same way. This time I succeeded, and for me it is enough that they exist, finished in fair copy, containing the completion and the entire structure of the whole, going as far as I in fact could go in an attempt to introduce Christianity into Christendom—but, please note, "poetic, without authority," because, as I have so definitely maintained, I am no apostle or the like; I am a poetic-dialectical genius, personally and religiously a penitent.[60]

The first was finally published the next year, the second the year following, and the third remained unpublished until 1880 (in *Efterladte Papirer* V). As the auditing was intensified in the two volumes by Anti-Climacus (*Practice* and *Sickness unto Death*), Mynster's negative response increased correspondingly. "And so it mounts. *Practice in Christianity* distressed him very painfully."[61]

> What Bishop Mynster has sown I am harvesting. For Bishop Mynster has proclaimed true Christianity but—in an unchristian way—has derived great advantage from it, has enjoyed all the good things of life because of it, has gained enormous prestige, and also has ingratiated himself by making Christianity into "the gentle comfort" etc.

[59] See Supplement, p. 419 (*Pap*. X^4 A 511, p. 331).

[60] See Supplement, p. 400 (*Pap*. X^1 A 56).

[61] See Supplement, pp. 418–20 and also 408–10, 436–42 (*Pap*. X^4 A 511; X^3 A 563; XI^3 B 15).

> As a result he in many ways has distilled Christianity out of the country.[62]

> And yet I love Bishop Mynster; it is my only wish to do everything to reinforce the esteem for him, for I have admired him and, humanly speaking, do admire him; and every time I am able to do anything for his benefit, I think of my father, whom it pleases, I believe.[63]

Having completed the writing of the two Anti-Climacus books, Kierkegaard again decided to write no more.

> Just as a cabinet minister steps down and becomes a private citizen, so I cease to be an author and lay down my pen—I actually have had a portfolio.
>
> Just one word more, but no, now not one word more; now I have laid down my pen.[64]

But just as he previously had been unable to cease writing, he continued to write copiously in his journals and in 1851 wrote and published *For Self-Examination* and wrote a companion piece that was laid aside, *Judge for Yourself!* Then no more writing for publication. Kierkegaard remained silent—and waited for Mynster's admission (*Indrømmelse*) and confession (*Tilstaaelse*) of accommodating Christianity to "the demands of the times."[65] Appended to the manuscript of *Judge* was the brief statement dated March 1855, over a year after Mynster's death and a few months before Kierkegaard died:

> This book is from the time when the old bishop was still living. Therefore it has been kept at a distance both because at the time I understood my relation to the established order that way and because out of respect for the old bishop I also very much wanted to understand my relation that way.

[62] See Supplement, p. 396 (*Pap*. IX A 81).
[63] See Supplement, p. 397 (*Pap*. IX A 85).
[64] See Supplement, p. 400 (*Pap*. X^1 A 45).
[65] See, for example, *Two Ages: The Age of Revolution and the Present Age. A Literary Review*, pp. 8–11, 21, *KW* XIV (*SV* VIII 8–11, 20); *Point of View*, *KW* XXII (*SV* XIII 557, 572–73, 590).

> Now I speak much more decisively, unreservedly, truly, without, however, thereby implying that what I said earlier was untrue.[66]

Kierkegaard had seen his task to be the application of a corrective to the established order and the evocation of a cleansing admission. For over three years after his latest publication appeared on September 10, 1851, he was silent and waited for Mynster, as a representative of the established order,[67] to speak. But Mynster, too, was silent.

On January 30, 1854, Mynster died.[68] A month later Kierkegaard wrote in his journal:

> Now he is dead.
>
> If he could have been prevailed upon to conclude his life with making the confession to Christianity that what he has represented actually was not Christianity but a mitigation, it would have been exceedingly desirable, for he carried a whole age.
>
> That is why the possibility of this confession had to be kept open to the end, yes, to the very end, in case he should make it on his death bed. That is why he must never be attacked . . ..
>
> Now that he has died without making that confession, everything is changed; now all that remains is that he has preached Christianity firmly into an illusion.
>
> The relationship is altered also with regard to my melancholy devotion to my dead father's pastor, for it would indeed be too much if even after his death I were unable to speak candidly of him, although I know very well that there will always be something enticing for me in my old devotion and my esthetic admiration.
>
> My original desire was to turn everything of mine into a triumph for Mynster. As I came to a clearer understanding later, my desire remained unchanged, but I was obliged to request this little confession, something that I did not covet for

[66] *Judge for Yourself!*, p. 215, *KW* XXI (*SV* XII 481).
[67] See Supplement, p. 410 (*Pap.* X^3 A 565).
[68] See Supplement, pp. 434–42 (*Pap.* XI^1 A 1; XI^3 B 15).

> my own sake and therefore, as I thought, that could very well be done in such a way that it would become a triumph for Bishop M. . . .
>
> . . . Something he frequently said in our conversations, although not directed at me, was very significant: It does not depend on who has the most power but on who can stick it out the longest.[69]

The occasion for Kierkegaard's renewed auditing of the established order was the declaration by Professor Hans Lassen Martensen in his memorial service sermon that Bishop Mynster was an authentic truth-witness in "the holy chain of truth-witnesses that stretches through the ages from the days of the apostles."[70] Kierkegaard's first article,[71] printed in the newspaper *Fædrelandet* on December 18, 1854, was written in February 1854 and the last, *The Moment*, 10, was written in May-September 1855.

The series of articles is marked by satire, irony, and humor, and a steadily intensified bluntness of critique that many readers found repulsive. Kierkegaard's method is an adaptation of the method of the thinker he admired most, Socrates, who thrust away, repelled, in order that the learner might be independent of him in confronting the issue.[72]

The first phase of the attack, beginning with the initial article in *Fædrelandet*, is a protest that utilizes the criterion Professor Martensen had applied: truth-witness. Under that criterion and in the light of the New Testament, Christendom and also the poet-auditor fall short. Luther had ninety-five theses and Kierkegaard has only one—New Testament Christianity does not exist.[73] An admission[74] is needed and the reception of the gracious gift of renewal, a theme that continues also toward the end

[69] See Supplement, pp. 434–36 (*Pap*. XI[1] A 1).

[70] Cf. p. 3 and note 2.

[71] Pp. 3–8.

[72] See Supplement, pp. 390–92, 397 (*Pap*. VII[1] A 181; IX A 343). See also, for example, *Fragments*, pp. 10–11, 23–24, *KW* VII (*SV* IV 180–81, 192–93); *The Book on Adler*, p. 42, *KW* XXIV (*Pap*. VII[2] B 235, p. 80).

[73] See p. 39.

[74] See p. 15, also, for example, pp. 28, 38.

of the series of polemical pamphlets titled *The Moment*.[75] The next phase is signaled by the pamphlet *This Must Be Said; So Let It Be Said* (May 24, 1855) and is marked by ridicule, irony, humor, and a negative appraisal in light of the New Testament. The relation of state and Church also comes under scrutiny. After the first two numbers of *The Moment* (May 24, June 4, 1855) comes another division piece, *What Christ Judges of Official Christianity* (June 16, 1855). Christ's rigorous judgment of the Scribes and Pharisees is applicable to Christendom. Kierkegaard had spoken in his own name as poet-auditor, and now Christ should speak.[76] The next division piece is *The Changelessness of God* (September 3, 1855), which is both the climactic piece and a return to the Archimedean point and to Kierkegaard's favorite text, James 1:17–21. Thereafter two numbers of *The Moment* (September 11, 24, 1855) appear with an emphasis on the contemporaneity of the Christian life in the context of the eternal and on the necessity of proclaiming ideality. The last portions are a harrowing characterization of the clergy. Number 10 of *The Moment*, including "My Task," was in final copy September 1, 1855, but did not appear until the publication of *Efterladte Papirer* (VIII, 1881).

In the meantime, the response to the articles in *Fædrelandet* and to *The Moment* was considerable and mostly negative. Bishop Martensen and J. Victor Bloch's responses are given in the Supplement (pp. 360–71). Replies to a number of the responses were given in Kierkegaard's articles. Martensen, named Mynster's successor on April 15, 1854, responded[77] to Kierkegaard's first article but made no admission and thereafter was silent. Professor Rasmus Nielsen wrote in support of Kierkegaard,[78] but with scant appreciation from him.[79] Only a brief announcement[80] of *This Must Be Said* appeared in response to the three interspersed small division pieces. Single editions of *What Christ Judges* and

[75] See p. 292.
[76] See pp. 131–32.
[77] See pp. 360–66.
[78] Rasmus Nielsen, *"En god Gjerning," Fædrelandet*, 8, January 10, 1855.
[79] See p. 343 and note 250.
[80] Anon., *"Literatur," Dagbladet*, 120, May 25, 1855.

The Changelessness of God appeared in 1855 and two printings of *This Must Be Said*. Three printings of *The Moment*, 1–4, and two of 5–9 were made in 1855.

Never particularly strong physically, Kierkegaard became progressively ill in September. At a party at Jens F. Gjødwad's (see p. 538 and note 175), he slid from the sofa to the floor, winked, and said to the friends around him, "Oh, leave it—let—the maid—sweep it up—in the morning."[81]

A few days later he collapsed on the street. After a time in his quarters at Klædeboderne 5–6, he was taken on October 2 to Frederiks Hospital, where he died November 11, 1855. He had come to the end of his money,[82] he had finished what he had to say, and for the last time he stopped writing, but he left a legacy of inestimable value, a legacy that has been rediscovered in this century.

[81] Reported by his former amanuensis, Israel Levin, *Hr. Cand. Israel Levins Udtalelser om S. Kierkegaard 1858 og 1869*, D. Pk. 5, Læg 31, Søren Kierkegaard Arkivet, Kongelige Biblioteket, Copenhagen.

[82] See *Efterladte Papirer*, I-VIII, ed. Hans Peter Barfod and Hermann Gottsched (Copenhagen: 1869–81), VIII, p. 598.