

A STUDY OF SUFFERING IN THE THOUGHT OF SØREN KIERKEGAARD

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A STUDY OF SUFFERING IN THE THOUGHT OF SØREN AABYE KIERKEGAARD

INTRODUCTION

"The danger is not lest the soul should doubt whether there is any Bread, but lest, by a lie, it should persuade itself that it is not hungry. It can only persuade itself of this by lying, for the reality of its hunger is not a belief, it is a certainty".

Simone Weil

The hunger of the soul is the existentialist suffering of the believer. Existentialism is that force by which the participant in life decides, acts, philosophises. Eventually he takes hold of the freedom of will to choose. He leaps from subjective drive. Beside him the spectator with his detached and distant commentary is only of academic interest. For the dedicated existentialist, the logical sense of objectivity has little connection with the "divine assignment of suffering entrusted to Christians"¹ for whom "searching leads only to error. Obedience is the sole way to truth".² He refers to the suffering obedience of subjective truth which is the heart of Kierkegaard's massive tome, 'Concluding Unscientific Postscript'.

The Goal is Truth through Suffering.

Søren Aabye Kierkegaard taught and lived the belief that only in one's own subjective existential experience was truth to be found. This and the will to decide freely to accept, act, exert the renowned 'leap', is what matters, for the cardinal rule of existentialism is that man is only what he makes of himself and believes in himself, and freely chooses to make of, and believe in, himself.

In Kierkegaard the paradox of life is always present. The suffering 'fear and trembling', which he stresses, arises from dialectical tension when the force of committed, willed, personal choice overrules or enriches any other choice. It permeates the existential predicament and is **a situation unlikely to resolve itself**. The hallmark of existential suffering is that, whether chosen or imposed by circumstances, it possesses the biblical "quietness and confidence" of complete **calm**. All suffering is a paradox. Stress and peace are intertwined. Jesus cries out from the cross, but Jesus never rails, as did His tormentors, who were observers, not existentialists.

The Dialectic is an Accepted Choice through Freedom.

The dialectic of existence tends towards varying degrees of misery, demonstrated in Scripture, literature and history. Kierkegaard asks for honesty, not bitterness, because no deceit is possible during emotional crucifixion. As Simone Weil writes: "We are forced to recognise as real what we would not even have believed possible."³ This goal with its grandeur of existential suffering is the ultimately totally free positive objective result of chosen subjectivity. Far from the uncertain ephemeral speculation of Hegelian-type philosophising, the existentialist accepts that he is his existence, rejecting any theory that suffering is a form of punishment. He sees it as an enriching stimulus, the seal of God's approval, the means to an end. Christ's chosen suffering **saved** the world; Handel's period of suffering **produced** "Messiah"; Job out of anguish **became** a highly-publicised positive example of patience. Kierkegaard's suffering **gave** thinkers the intellectual evangelism of existentialism. In every case existential suffering indicates choice. By choosing a life of responsibility, Job chose suffering. By choosing even to love, we choose **the inevitability of**

suffering. Each category has the paradox, in subjective living.

Some Examples, invariably criticised.

Reincarnation, the religion of hundreds of millions, reflects the cleansing of suffering. In ancient Israel, Lot travelled East after choosing the well-watered Jordan. Abraham's hardier suffering existence led to glory. Moses, Mother Theresa, David, all men and women of stature, have suffered. Muhammad suffered deep grief in the loss of his beloved wife. In every case the freedom of their love became the paradoxical freedom of their suffering.

Being opposed to straight-forward logical argument, which discounted feeling and intuition, Kierkegaard carried the unfulfilled longings of typical Romanticism into philosophical maturity. Romanticism had been at its height in Europe during the late 1700's and its suffering content either found release through dramatic irony or was avoided in the escapism of many Romantic writers.

Existentialists, encouraged by the suffering of the lonely Christ, or the seeking Buddha leaving wife, child, and luxury, have to live with the charge that they always imagine that they are right. Jesus was accused of having a devil. It is interesting to study the portrait sketch of Kierkegaard⁴ at the zenith of his suffering, in the Corsair periodical, with which he came into serious conflict. He, too, gave the impression of megalomania. And Moses, above, faced rebellion because he knew he was right to lead men through suffering.

Identification.

The religious existentialist is difficult to understand. Each reader must work out his own solution because

Kierkegaard's tortuous thoughts become a polemic. Such writers are bound to leave their marks because the thinkers, whom they in turn have confused, will be confronted by the paradox of God's suffering made their own, which for Kierkegaard is the highest category of calling amongst believers. This helps to explain why the man Jesus, who is not once recorded as having laughed, appeals to millions as their Saviour, for as Dr. Diogenes Allen says,⁵ the paradox of the cross always confronts one in Kierkegaard, and is always relevant because of the paradox of suffering life that no-one can deny. Suffering is a great leveller. It is the point of identification of all men with their suffering God. It is the common denominator, the basic ingredient, the link between the Almighty and each individual.

The Relevance of Existential Suffering.

Regrettably, the word existentialist is not commonplace. Very few existentialist groups exist. Death, for example, is kept remote, instead of being taught as the most important day of one's life. Man must will to choose to pass through the final suffering with all fear and doubt removed. Teachers should prepare students of religion for the existential vitality of death, so that, when the paradox of life is at last offered up to God, it will be a reflexion of His own Passion. Kierkegaard is therefore the most relevant of philosophers. Again, he has an answer to the inevitable "Why?", when the innocent suffer. He explains that they have to bear some of the suffering even though they do not share the punishment.⁶ This ties up with Kierkegaard's theory that we are always wrong before God,⁷ an enigma and a suffering that puts each man into the position to receive the paradox, and to respond. Robert Fripp, leader of the prestigious King Crimson Progressive or Art-Rock Band (sic) says: "No-one works well

in a comfortable situation. What I've done is to construct a financial situation at which I'm at maximum risk for the next three years."⁸ An opinion-maker in the beat generation here admits that higher standards come from the hidden dialectical tension where there is freedom to choose.

The Impact.

What has to be estimated is the importance and impact of suffering within the Kierkegaardian framework. Other writers, eminent before and after Kierkegaard, have dealt with anguish and dread. He was not mistaken about its being the central emotion in life. The paradox asks how totally free man can be anxious? Only the completely free are completely anxious. Their burden is not shared. Kierkegaard's important contribution to modern thought is in defining the self as suffering freedom. **Man, by virtue of his free choice, is a self-constituting being.** By giving immense significance to this choice, the suffering is magnified. Paradoxically, this is linked to man's dependence upon God. Choice is the link. Man's intense individualism and subjectivity can imply a notion of sin that severs this link between Creator and creature. This danger lurked in Kierkegaard. He lacked the peace of suffering, but in his defence he must be hailed as the trumpeter, and trumpeters are never peaceful.

A First Glance at the Writings.

In his early major work, 'Either/Or', Kierkegaard drew a scenario in which suffering begins in the unsatisfying drifting from aesthetic pleasure to aesthetic pleasure. At the next higher, ethical, stage, man's freedom imposes of its own volition an acceptance of more serious attitudes. As 'Repetition' and 'Fear and Trembling' portray, this second stage is not final. Having risen to a more

exalted state, closer to the power of inspiration, God's presence is felt in some transcendent power that prevents the now-ethical individual from fully realising his all-important freedom. There was nothing Job could do that would ward off his sufferings. And such power cannot just be ignored, or laid at the door of cold fate. How then can the individual resolve the paradoxical anguish? How does one maintain both freedom and transcendence? Only by accepting that this ethical stage is not final, for in it one cannot fulfil the law of one's own self-constituting being. The third, religious, stage of commitment to God provides the answer. Was Job not so committed that he was held up by God Himself as an example? The reply of Kierkegaard is that he became the existential sufferer **by accepting the freedom to be under opposing good and evil**. The enigmatic teleological suspension of the ethical in the traumatic command that Abraham kill Isaac, is proof of the ultimate victory achieved through the freedom to choose by both God and man.

The Life-Long Dimension.

The dimension of suffering in Kierkegaard offers only the ongoing cross. Fear and trembling do not ease. Being always guilty before God, one will continue to suffer, though purified in the freely-chosen pain of true discipleship. This is indissolubly linked with Jesus's prophecy concerning the vast Church body: "Many are called but few are chosen". Once one sees God staring at one, one understands the disciple of John 13 pleading "Not just my feet". Abraham would have continued to suffer nightmares, Job would still have grieved the loss of so many loved-ones. **Neither would have known when God might strike again, but both would have chosen to be there in the existential experience that constitutes genuine religious living.**

The Individual in the Moment.

J. Sl6k speaks here of the "eternal consciousness".⁹

It is the stark Kierkegaardian anthropology of the single person in the single moment before God, who waits for an answer to this "choice by which one is willing or not willing to place oneself under the opposition of good and evil".¹⁰ Man is not simply sorting out good from bad.

Self-constituting man is to freely decide what he is.

Therefore the awesome suffering of decision and rejection bearing down upon him makes his implementation of freedom of resolution a heavy burden to be borne in isolation.

The spotlight is upon the lonely **decider** caught by the Almighty in **the moment**, which is the 'totum simul' of Boethius. Kierkegaard writes of the concept on which everything turns in Christianity; **the instant that makes everything new**. The fullness of time is the moment become the eternal. Past and future merge, so that the totally free single person is caught in a constantly recurring paradox of immediate dialect, looking to no other reference as absolute, but God.

Early Philosophising.

Suffering is not lessened by the attitude of which Kierkegaard wrote in his Journal in 1849: "What matters is to have a childlike relation with God." One might ask how this would be possible if placed in Kierkegaardian circumstances. Furthermore, it becomes awkward to ignore other philosophers who present more flagellative views, which would be similar to Kierkegaard's. If we are capable of nothing, as he suggests, and grace alone assists us, where is the border-line between abandonment to non-fatalistic Christian fate, and immobile mind, drifting in a quiet despair that is not **Angst**? How does one receive grace successfully when centuries of suffering Christendom has thrown up many **unintentional** failures?

In Kierkegaard there is so great a qualitative difference between God and man that his reader at times can scarcely discern any relationship between the exalted Almighty and the individual earthling, in the quest of how to become a Christian, which is Kierkegaard's basic concern. The seeker could be forgiven for quoting St. Augustine's refutation of scepticism, *Si fallor, sum*. Kierkegaard would reply that such divergence is part of the paradox which one has freely chosen. A disquieted, suffering mind can never be sterile, and the essence of Kierkegaardian suffering is a non-sterile mind. Again one sees the immediate relevance of Kierkegaard to the unhappy and disturbed millions.

Understanding the Ever-present Immediacy of Suffering.

In order to prepare himself, man must ask how much he understands of existential suffering, and whether he perceives fully what Lithuanian Catholic prisoner Jadvyga - Gemma Stanelyte meant, who wrote out of 'unimaginable moral and spiritual misery' and 'the naked amoral side of life': **that one should fall in love with humiliation**, the lowest depths, and perceive everywhere the Lord's hand. Every moment for the **drenched** sufferer is the immediate condition. Hence, as in the **totum simul** movement, it is essential to stress Kierkegaard's **immediacy**. Stanelyte speaks of "everywhere". This implies every second of time, because suffering is an endless repetition of separate tensions. Waking from the relief of sleep, sorrow returns as if for the first time. This term 'immediacy' links the dialectic of time and eternity which co-exist in Kierkegaard's teaching, the moment by moment independence-to-be-independent upon God. Immediacy is referred to in contemporary theatre, in the form of improvization. It is found in the thought-processes of the Sestige writers. The leap of faith is a risk coming

from the heart of a natural paradox. Paradoxes in existence, and in metaphysics, will inevitably arise from man's reflections. Christian faith is existence far more than ideology; it is a suffering "becoming", out of which immediate moments one never arrives this side of the grave. This becoming could be suggested as a completely new history in each Christian, each Christian thus becoming a contemporary of Christ in an excitement of time-eternity and of chosen moment suffering-living.

Humility.

This in turn for the Christian existentialist implies a continually renewing kenosis of the Lord, for the humility of the God-servant is never lost sight of even though He remains the object of our faith and worship. The paradox and the mirror continue. Christ is in hidden majesty the Saviour of mankind, yet with each new association, with each new believer, He is humbled. He is this moment-to-moment Saviour. Were it not so, He would be a general overseer perhaps reviewing man's situation periodically. Kierkegaard's thought - the ongoing never-ending suffering of the often kenositized, humiliated existentialist believer, is mirrored back to the Saviour, and the concept is caught up in the dialectical tension between man and God which yields all man's knowledge, including history, apparently irrelevant. Yet ironically this tension is the very fabric of God's understanding love for one. The loneliness of such a position leads always to suffering as the nature of existentialism. Faith rests not only on one's own will to believe, and to live out Christian doctrine, but also on the remembrance that the single person category must experience despair as he works out his relationship to Truth as known in his own subjectivity. It must help man to remember constantly that God is beyond reason, and that therefore a reasonable and academically-

understood humility is man's proper place.

Loneliness/Contact

Consider one of Kierkegaard's three female studies, Margaret (and Faust) as interpreted by him. "She lacks what might be called the situation of sorrow, for she cannot grieve alone," he writes.¹¹ The craftiness of grief in the dialectical paradox, hints that God on the cross could not grieve alone either : the true fellowship of existential suffering is God to man and vice versa, as against the empty crowd or mob-relationship which Kierkegaard despised. The student notes that Regine Olsen, Kierkegaard's erstwhile fiancée, had to suffer in order to complete his suffering. Suffering emerges as the richest contact. There is the need for the echo-cave of the fairy-story above, where each sigh was wafted to the loved-one "a tabernacle where the sigh never ceases". Only he (Kierkegaard now referring to the Christ, to himself, to all men) who has been bitten by a serpent knows the suffering of one who has been bitten by a serpent. At the commencement of the passage, Kierkegaard likens his reader to Saul, who came not out of curiosity to the Witch of Endor, but for the purpose of contact-learning **superior thoughts and judgement**. This does not display the spiritual arrogance which seems to emerge in any cursory eclectic study of Kierkegaard. Rather is it his passionate insistence that he has the truth, that in existential suffering felt from the earliest stirrings of disquiet in the aesthetic stage, his path has opened up to touch the God he paradoxically keeps so distant. He believed it was the only road to an Eternity more important than Time, which is opposed to man's reason; Christianity, being "opposed" to this world, must suffer as borne along by single egotistical man, who in the shadow of the paradox is never alone. In his darkest

misery, Kierkegaard knew that he was not. "Awake, thou that sleepest", is one of his titles. Man must first be able to see his condition; then be in a position to engage dialectic with himself and freely to choose in some degree of the fear and trembling of existential awareness, to advance intelligently, ultimately, to the religious stage of true Christianity and final salvation. Kierkegaard, so famous for his melancholy, sadly offers a sombre contact with the horizon he is convinced of.

Challenge.

In his thinking and outspoken commentary, Kierkegaard challenged the Danish Church on whether it were not easier for a non-Christian to become a Christian than for a Christian to become one. In the final analysis, man might renew his enquiry and ask what has become of that "obedience dearer to God than the fat of rams" which haunted Kierkegaard. Such obedience can exist only in existence. The Christian must hold the mirror to himself and don the suffering of God as He witnesses the paradoxical non-suffering of His earthly body. Such sympathy of spirit can only assist in evaluating a thinker who believed Christian ethics was only realizable in Eternity, yet who would have agreed with American writer Ruth Graham, who asked what in the world God was waiting for, because "If God doesn't bring judgement soon, He will have to apologize to Sodom and Gomorrah."¹² What S.K. observed then was as distasteful to him as is the sexual revolution to us today.

S.K.'s Nature.

Kierkegaard's existentialism was born of a nature about which one might suspect he was less than honest. He had undoubted afflictions. He chained existentialism to himself by free choice. It could never be God's will that

man emulate Kierkegaard's decision to seek out loneliness (if such was behind the strange affair of Regine Olsen) as the essential pivot of torture. It was illogical, also, when Christ had set aside the "sins of the fathers unto the 3rd and 4th generations", and when Kierkegaard repudiated historical alliance in other respects, that he should have clung to the guilt he meaningfully inherited from a parent who, as a cold and hungry child, had supposedly cursed God on the Jutland heath. The overshadowing cloud of God's healing was for Kierkegaard heavy and black. He suffered all through life and then excruciatingly so in the Corsair affair, and even feared physical harm in the civilized town square. "My manuscript was sent in every word is true should I take it back because of personal danger? The moment I catch myself cravenly fleeing any danger in which He has willed to take me, I will collapse into nothing. God knows how I suffer." ¹³

His Views versus Hegel: S.K. the Missioner.

Surprisingly few commentators consider the emotional cost to a sensitive, nick-named, and caricatured personality, as he challenged the Hegelian philosophy that held sway, and fought the Church which was still so central in his life. The loner individualist, somewhat frustrated, he reacted against Hegel's belief that the real is rational. He objected to its background of dialectical logic that fascinated great minds with its thesis, antithesis and synthesis. He defied the believer to check what he believed, by throwing away every prop, not least the miracle 'works' to which Our Lord referred and which had convinced men for centuries. His call was to suffer alone as did the Christ, **alone even in mind**, and to believe, only by freedom of choice, what one was prepared to live and die for. Kierkegaard may have been petty towards his

only surviving brother, curiously silent about his fascinating-looking and obviously intelligent mother, and lacking in magnanimity towards the Bishop from whom he had learnt more than he admitted. He may have been, along with most of his family, the despair of psychologists and the exasperation of orthopaedic surgeons. He certainly was insensitive to the command and value of corporate worship and its nurturing of faith and mission. But he unfolded before men the stages of life and made them aware of where they stood, and what suffering was expected of them - a matter far removed from Hegelian ideas. Kierkegaard warned of the danger of Christians inadvertently, after a respectable life, being told, 'Depart from Me, I never knew you.'

Hegel's thought, which was then dominating The Church, could, if left unchallenged, have swamped Christianity by altering it. Thereby, the old problem of the relationship between Christianity and philosophy would be solved. By stressing **the paradox**, philosophy had to bow to practical Christianity, because in real life, the absurdities and contradictions remain. There was no hope for Hegel's Synthesis of Both/And; there could only be sense in Either/Or. Hegel's idea of removing contradictions was worthless, because the solution was merely logical and verbal and in the realm of abstract thought. The crucial relationship - and inevitable suffering - by which life is constituted is too often avoided in private and in national affairs because the responsibility of decisions inevitably leads to some sort of suffering - tension, failure, blame, etc. Kierkegaard realised how aloof the Danish Church was.

S.K. The Catalyst.

He made no immediate impact on the Church in his day but his thought made a profound impression on the free Church movement in Scandinavia during the late 19th Century.

Since his rediscovery (not only by "contemporary social pessimists"¹⁴) and translation, the philosophical world, always intrigued by ontological and ethical matters, has devoured his involved mind with its intricacy and purpose of suffering. It is to his credit that his preaching is so rich with uncovered exposition that the difficulties continue to challenge brilliant, often agnostic minds. As Kierkegaard's writings are perceived existentially, new insights into the paradox of the Christ are engendered. This, his sweetest gift to posterity, demands recognition as the work of the Holy Spirit. Such is the mission harvest of existential suffering. Suffering calls inspiration out of intellectuals. Because this is an elevated suffering beyond commonplace cruel troubles, it produces an echo in great minds to the extent that the present-day burgeoning of Kierkegaardian discussion appears as no coincidence, but an academic preparation for the extraordinary troubles of the 20th Century.

Contrasts in S.K./Church.

Almost a French fideist, some part of Kierkegaard's philosophy could be that of the Alexandrian Plotinus whose near-ascetism in giving wealth to the poor, in exchange for true meditation, **set the soul directly opposite God in absolute solitude.** The early Church refuted the charge that this was negative. Yet Kierkegaard paradoxically maintained domestic comfort to the end. He socialised with people in the cafés and streets, but his leaning was towards ascetic meditation. What should be more positive for the believer in God, than the subjugation of self, working towards closing the insuperable gap separating nature and spirit, time and eternity? This is stressed and dialectically contrasted in Kierkegaard's suffering, the very working of the Spirit that he saw being obliterated by an official Church establishment that went through the motions but only vaguely remembered what it

was all about. The Danish Church was smug and comfortable. Their contemporary clergy in England were the "shootin', huntin' and fishin'" parsons who were equally out of touch. Kierkegaard, forced by personal anguish to search his soul, asked what genuine Christianity meant anymore when "here in Copenhagen we have Christian prostitutes" (a catch-phrase that sticks) and when clergy never risked their popularity by confrontation.

The Disquieting Circumstances.

He is in the noble tradition, although it may become necessary to probe the "not in spite of, but because of" aspect of something sadly amiss in his character. Apart from the intensity of suffering already continually stressed (- even Barth, receiving his award in Copenhagen, felt compelled to commiserate with his Danish audience on Kierkegaard's personal sadness -) there is some Pauline thorn, deeply imbedded, well hidden. Tragically, in Kierkegaard, able enough to deflect Hegelianism, and capable of such immense output of genius and genuine sermon, there too often seems absent the same unquestioning, subjective trust that he proclaims. He had too much to say ever to rest awhile and be truly calm. The haunting memory of his father's curse, the unexpected silence regarding his mother, the disquiet with brother and Bishop, the question mark over Regine Olsen, all hover. The individual-category chosen suffering (e.g. no-one else dreaded what would become of his father's soul, as he chose to do) passing through each successive permanent-moment, exudes a quivering paradox. There is no calm, yet there is no punishment. We are always in the wrong before God, conceived in sin, born and dying in suffering, until the accolade of peace descends at the end, and the becoming is - only at the end - gathered up in arriving. The reader is reminded of Ibsen - depressing yet with a

strong message to be contemplated.

The Sadly Enigmatic Believer.

Kierkegaard reached the last of his own "three stages", the Religious stage, without appearing to be astride it as prince. It was the enigmatic situation he had willed, the never-arriving of his doctrine, even though he believed that he was philosophically secure. "Who then, Lord, can be saved?" was asked of Christ. "With God, all things are possible," came the reply. Despite pointing man to God, despite his life of trust, the reader searches in vain for the childlike faith by which metaphysical poet John Donne could gather up the unspoken suffering of his own life in the immortal words, "I shall not live until I see God ; and when I have seen Him, I shall never die." That is the beautiful philosophical evangelism of true existentialism - the never becoming -. That is the calm of Pascal, his brilliant young 17th Century precursor who also suffered existentially, and with whom the modern period of existential thought began. Thus unveils the proviso that must be given before embarking on any study of Kierkegaard: it will be an agitated course because of his teaching that, even after forgiveness, **one must continue to suffer**. This prevented him from accepting the peace that passeth all understanding. James Collins¹⁵ refers to his "employing catastrophically the 'category of suffering' ... in a strategy which is to quote at its very highest the price of becoming a Christian." Hence Kierkegaard's dialectical contrast between what true Christianity demanded, and what the Church-Government-Royalty Establishment demanded, for salvation; and the ultimate "break with one's given natural state" by subjecting it to the test of freedom. He sought suffering. His students confess that they, too, seek suffering in reading him, because his true meaning often eludes them.

Depth of Thought.

In following his conscious experience, one sees the torment that reveals truth - sometimes as confusing in him as were conditions for Pilate asking the ultimate question. Kierkegaard's defiance of understanding forces his reader to explore the value of suffering. Suffering is an area in which the student feels that a solution, in terms of understanding, has to be found. This seldom happens. The existentialist proves God at work, in his journey through agony, which is not to say that God is only revealed in trouble. But life, as against speculation, does corroborate that anguish accomplishes what ease cannot. Buddhism confirms that suffering is the beginning of the road that leads to wisdom.

Kierkegaard wrote that life, though lived forwards, could only be understood backwards. With hindsight one perceives that the suffering of Israel for 2 000 years matured them to the point where the Virgin Mary could be produced, a human vehicle satisfactory enough for God's miraculous coming to earth. Hegel understood life forwards only. Evolutionists indicate that, had fish not been attacked by predators, there would have been no suffering to drive them to exist on dry land. The two millennia of early Hebrew history, or the immense evolutionary period, therefore represent two types of suffering on the grand scale, that has produced universal benefit. To quote Peter Marshall, oaks grow strong in contrary winds and diamonds are made under pressure. The corollary according to common viewpoint at Princeton, world centre of Kierkegaardian study, is that in a century's Time philosophical gems will still surface in original state from Kierkegaardian pressure.

What did he mean?

One of the difficulties is to assess what Kierkegaard meant by suffering, with his penchant for paradox and cover-up. He liked to regard himself as a sleuth. No suffering is as simple as the face-value of the cruel but childish period when he was nicknamed and caricatured. Simone Weil mentions migraine as a special gift, and hunger as the **welcome sole proof** of God as our only sustenance. The truth is a paradox far beyond the world of headache or stomach-ache, an exploration of serendipity. When Simon Weil writes that misery must be eliminated, for misery is useful only in respect to grace ...

and there will always be enough misery for the elect, one realises why Andre Gide refers to her as the most truly spiritual writer of this century. She plunges the reader into typical Kierkegaardian theological confusion. As E.L. Allen warns, each man must find Kierkegaard for himself.

The Importance of Suffering for his Reader.

Significantly, the student who traces the clues most closely will be the one who has also suffered. James Loder's book The Transforming Moment describes positively acute suffering. This "transforming moment of suffering, Loder believes, is **the threshold of knowledge**."¹⁶ Obviously endless examples could be cited. Such awareness is at the heart of the Kierkegaardian leap. Decision becomes intelligence refined by sorrow and beyond authenticated historical facts. Kierkegaard we know taught that the facts as recorded in Palestine in the 1st Century cannot provide comfort. All that is too vast, too sublime. Once man stands alone as this suffering individual, believing what he has alone freely willed to accept by faith, a fresh look at Christ's history takes on a significant additional tangential fullness, although the paradox will always be present.

Subjective Action.

Kierkegaard recognised day-to-day confusion and harnessed it. It is a factor common to man. The student has seen how he stressed the decision to act rather than to indulge conjectural opinion and the sometimes contradictory intellectualism of his time. Education means action in advancement, but education tends to rationalise. Kierkegaardian suffering cannot be rationalised. Furthermore, it is literally an unavoidable companion, demonstrating that the momentary paradoxical subjective is the real. Kierkegaard threw out the satisfaction of objective doctrinal truths in his fight to make religion a personal search. Philosophically, he began anew. His prolonged inspection of the Christian faith is "the profound humiliation of man, the boundless love of God, the endless striving born of gratitude".¹⁷ Endless striving had to mean never arriving, because ultimate acceptance depended upon enduring to the end. Many existentialists stress that one can never decide for somebody else, simply because the ethos insists on the individual protracted commitment. This atmosphere of repetition is essential because it appears and reappears in S.K.'s works. He is not a systematic Theologian and any attempt to systematise him is doomed. The true student of Kierkegaard himself becomes thoroughly subjective. It is in fact doubtful whether an objective appraisal neatly compartmentalised genuinely understands the man in his suffering.

The Risk.

Before proceeding to S.K.'s setting, space must be given to the risk he requires. Objective theorising is comfortable, avoiding soul-searching and side-stepping blame. One does not set in motion a course of events for which one can be held accountable. In Kierkegaard, without the

anguish of risk, faith is an impossibility. Faith has nothing to do with knowledge as a comparative or superlative. Consider the risk in his major beliefs : the wholly other qualitative distinction between God and man; the risk in satisfyingly interpreting genuine indirect communication which in Christ starts with rebuff or chasm or ability to shock (c.f. Barth); the risk to the simple mind when S.K. throws out the historical point of view; the risk in the crucifixion of the understanding because the paradox of the Christian faith cannot and should not be understood (objective incertitude as highest truth is a major point in Concluding Unscientific Postscript); the risk when intellect must surrender to will (Barth's obedience and surrender to the Word of God); the risk of everything subjective in a generation wherein psychology has made man suspicious of his emotions.

Deciding for God in life adds intellectual anxiety because it is indisputable that it takes intelligence to admit that faith is reasonable. Existentialist risk is excessively academic. It discards as in S.K. the clear-cut Hegelian dialectic of thesis, antithesis and synthesis which Marx and Engels appropriated to show that essential change comes from the struggle of opposites. The committed, pulsating, spirit of Kierkegaard would be more likely to grapple with Camus' suggestion that resistance is a form of collaboration, almost the dialectical paradox borne out in S.K.'s life, or in the hint of Dostoievsky that man is forlorn with nothing to depend on within or outside himself, hence he is without excuse. Existentialist risk takes into account that faith is a relation from personality to personality. Man being a personality is related to this faith within. The struggle not of opposites but of stages has finely-drawn overtones in the freedom/non-freedom of reality.

The answer to the agonising search for truth through suffering does not lie in Leibniz's consistent rationalism or in Hume's scepticism and perceptions. It is far closer to Kant's healthy logic that morality requires belief in God, freedom and immortality; or to Karl Heim's "I, me, understanding on the ground of my existence". Such brings Kierkegaard's philosophy closer to common sense, and makes the leap more feasible.

CHAPTER 1

Kierkegaard's Background and the Influences on him.

The Development of Thought amongst his Precursors.

The Personal/Emotional Background.

Søren Kierkegaard was born on 5 May, 1813, at Nytorv, Copenhagen; his mother was 45 and his father, Michael Pedersen Kierkegaard, was 57. Dialectic began in the womb and it is essential that the student sees the subjective suffering background as it existed before Søren even entered this world. His mother was "a nice little woman" according to granddaughter Henriette Lund, but quite unable to take part in the intellectual development of her children. She is relegated to some minor role, something most strange from a sensitive, subjective, youngest son; something Walter Lowrie felt to be "ominous". M.P. Kierkegaard had married Ane Sørensdatter Lund, a "help" in the first wife's home, before the usually-expected year of mourning was up, and the baby Maren Kirsten arrived four months and eleven days later. After several more children, Søren Aabye was born, the offspring of emotional conflict between an aggressive father, ashamed of his poorly-suppressed sexuality and haunted by having cursed God on the Jutland heath, and a still-dominated, frightened mother who, according to Bishop Mynster, counted little even as housekeeper, "seeing M.P.K. ordered every bit of food".

Clearly the father's unresolved struggle between sex and ethical thought lingered on in Søren Kierkegaard until he broke his engagement to Regine Olsen three years after his father's death. The background of considerable security, investments in "Royal Loan", and profits from food and merchandise trade with China and the Danish West Indies, which father and great-uncle had developed, was posed dialectically against memories of considerable poverty. Here again was conflict. The very word "Kierkegaard" means 'parsonage with cemetery,' ironically appropriate where religion and sorrow dominated formative years.

Søren's ego bore heavy guilt, yet he rejoiced at being the favourite child, Rudolph Friedmann speaks of him as the Petroushka of Philosophy.* Father and son held hands and whispered words of comfort to one another. Much was placed on his shoulders, too young, forcing a depth of thought. Even if Kierkegaard did not present a thorough phenomenology of styles of living, he did try dialectically to contrast personages at various stages and thereby to make a misunderstanding more difficult. Undoubtedly his father hoped to save him from sensuality, and it requires little imagination to see the dominating power of repression, guilt, Oedipus, or possibly homosexual leanings that catapulted S.K. towards the **Angst** of fear and trembling. Nulla dies sine lachryma. The stages of life were in a sense thrust upon him long before he outlined them in writing.

Early Years.

At 15, he was confirmed in the Vor Frue Kirke, and at 17, in October, 1830, he registered at the University of Copenhagen. Soon afterwards he was drafted for military service, but was discharged less than a week later as unfit. His first Journals were begun in 1834, the year his mother and favourite sister, Petrea, both died. Love and death became indissolubly united in his subconscious mind. In 1837, he met Regine Olsen, who was only thirteen. The next year his father died. 1840 was a milestone : Søren completed his theological degree, Magna cum laude, got engaged to Regine, now sixteen, entered the Pastoral Seminary with hopes of the Ministry, and was confronted with the first number of the Corsair, a radical magazine with Meir Aaron Goldschmidt as editor, bent on criticising the establishment. Its name was apt. Korsar means

* Petroushka was an inanimate puppet who, after receiving life, broke his heart, went mad, and died.

a Barbary pirate or his vessel. It was - by his own baiting - to become a pirate against Kierkegaard. In 1841 his dissertation was accepted for the Magister degree : The Concept of Irony. This had constant reference to Socrates, who believed that the unexamined life was not worth living, and who sought truth and goodness by means of the dialectic method. The next month he returned Regine Olsen's ring, calmly dined with the distraught family, and left for Berlin for an experience he had long anticipated with pleasure - Von Schelling's lectures. The Either/Or of later Kierkegaardian fame was already exerting itself. The great philosopher of romanticism, whose transcendental idealism influenced Coleridge, was a disappointment to him.

His Writings. Thought Development.

He completed eight years of work on his Journals in 1842. Either/Or was published the following year and remains his best-known manuscript, on the aesthetic and ethical stages of life. It included his Diary of a Seducer and dealt at length with how an aesthetic might refuse marriage as limiting his possibilities, whereas an ethical man would accept the limitations of his choice and thus become a real person. The same year, 1843, Two Edifying Discourses was written, based on James I, 17-22; Fear and Trembling, and Repetition followed, these being the pointer to a finer, richer, stage - the religious. Philosophical Fragments in 1844 was followed in 1845 by Stages on Life's Way, again man's three possible attitudes to himself, Aesthetic, Ethical or Religious. Concluding Unscientific Postscript in 1846 was, together with Philosophical Fragments, his most technical writing, elaborating the relation between freedom and faith. The Present Age was published in 1846 and more Discourses on James together with the Works of Love, in 1847. Point of

View and Sickness Unto Death came next, and in 1850 the contrite path to the Kingdom was beautifully embodied in his late-in-life Training in Christianity. Young as he still was, he knew the symptoms of his health. This may hold some significance. More work on the Journals, 1850-1854, led up to The Attack upon "Christendom" and The Unchangeableness of God. Essentially throughout his writing he was maturing the thought that the resurrection, that basic happening, is not a proof for sceptics but in itself an article of faith, an eschatological event. In willing to adopt this revelation, the student finds the key to the way S.K. proceeds, if such a key exists.

The Corsair.

The Corsair had begun to provoke Kierkegaard nine years before his death; he had replied as "frater Taciturnus" in 'The Fatherland'. Goldschmidt had resigned as editor in October, 1846, and in January, 1847, Kierkegaard had acknowledged the benefit of being tormented by print. "God be praised that I was subjected to the attack of the rabble," he wrote. "I have now had time to arrive at the conviction that it was a melancholy thought to want to live in a Vicarage, doing penance in an out-of-the-way place, forgotten. I now have made up my mind quite otherwise."¹⁸ In the November of that year, Regine married Johan Schlegel, destined for a diplomatic post abroad. By the following April, 1848, that "tremendously fruitful year" (running short of cash and considering an academic post, while controversially writing to offend Church dignitaries and jeopardise his chances) the student hears him crying out joyfully, "My concealment and enclosing reserve are broken - I am free to speak."¹⁹ But the hesitant, dialectical, paradoxical making-a-virtue-out-of indecision that is sometimes part of existential thought, reasserted itself and "No, no" he cries in his Journal.

His reserve was not yet broken, even though by now his health was failing. His penetrating conviction that man is always wrong before God cannot be divorced from his lifelong periodic indecisiveness.

Attacks on Church and Press.

Bishop Mynster died a year before Kierkegaard and H. Martensen was named in his place. By December 1854, only eleven months before his own death, Kierkegaard began his polemic against the old and the new Bishop in The Fatherland. This was the time of his Christ's Judgement on Official Christianity. It was the outpouring of a reserve finally broken, the time when he wrote against "Christian" apathy the chillingly prophetic tale of the geese who went to Church every Sunday and waddled off home, never listening to God's command to use their wings. And at the feast of St Martin they were all cooked for dinner.

Kierkegaard now attacked the Corsair, (avoiding) the realization that if personal subjectivity is truth, the very Churchmen he took to task were presumably religiously unknowable. He went out in a blaze, "shaking his fist at the world and announcing that God had certified his rightness. All he forgot was one of his favourite sermon themes : As Against God, We are Always in the Wrong,"²⁰ the closing section of his first book, Either/Or.

Death.

Refusing to see his brother and refusing Holy Communion if it could not be administered by a layman, he died on November 11th. Even his funeral became polemical. As far into the future as 1979, Frederick Sontag would write "Kierkegaard is a puzzle to his biographers and to theologians because there are so many of him."²¹ Such is

the suffering of a man whose God, although his all, remained too distant for comfort, even though S.K. pushed metaphysical thought to an extreme point. His life, he wrote, was a daily martyrdom. Even when apparently happily engaged to Regine Olsen, he could say, "To the one God gave joys, to the other tears and permission to rest every once in a while ... the Divine reflects itself far more beautifully in the tear-dimmed eye, just as the rainbow is more beautiful than the clear blue sky." ²² To Kierkegaard this was not melancholy. It was the necessary suffering prerequisite to the religious life. In the same section of his Journals, he wrote: "The significance of my life corresponds directly to my suffering."

THE PHILOSOPHICAL BACKGROUND. THREE IMPORTANT ASPECTS:

The Individual. Guilt.

- (a) Suffering is unavoidable because each individual is composed of an existential pathos that is his alone in the essential moment. He is simultaneously temporal and eternal, finite and infinite; his values are both relative and absolute. His dialectical tension is part of his existence, as a free and spontaneous single-entity being. Man is in charge of himself. There is a self-interested reflection upon his own destiny; a process of inner thought-acts not necessarily rational, even as suffering is irrational. An individual is always becoming, which is the definition of his existence. Therefore relief, the opposite of anxiety, has no foothold. Few would deny that they are never entirely free of S.K.'s "always guilty". Thus the themes tumble over themselves. History shows the endless free-will decision-making process, the ever-present leap which is qualitative and has nothing to do with deductive reasoning. Real people in real

situations resolve to act. They must be what they become, which dialectically, ironically and paradoxically both confirms and opposes Shakespeare's "to thine own self be true". This is faith, the hallmark of the sufferer, Kierkegaardian faith for the individual, and it is the only antidote to guilt. Exoneration is not the antidote. Lack of soothing relief must be the existential Christian's true peace in Kierkegaard. Even though he dismissed certain Hegelian views, he appropriated and adapted the dialectic of existence. One has to be strictly oneself, which is the Godly pattern. Who is more subjective than God? His feelings, His will, are all-important to Him. He does not escape or wish to escape that dialectical paradox. It permeates the manger, it surrounds the cross, it hovers over any teleological suspension of the ethical, as in the frightening story of Abraham and Isaac. God's subjective will is aimed at man's individual objective good. He is "working His (subjective) purpose (objective) out, as the waters (subjective) cover the sea" (objective).^{*} So individualised is God's purpose that many could die apparently uncared for in the Old Testament history, as long as God's people survived.

The Time Factor.

- (b) Suffering is unavoidable because no man can escape time. When someone jokes about it as 'the enemy', he is on serious ground. Finite and infinite in the individual synthesize in the moment, which is where time and eternity meet. Each moment is a new becoming which has arrived and yet remains a becoming. Genuine temporality is the fusion of now-ness and

* Hymn : A.C. Ainger

forever-ness in the individual's moments, during which his free-will leaps from the alternatives before him to one final decision, thereby opening the door to anxiety. Man is continually making up his mind about his future, on behalf of his own self-realization. Man becomes anxious that he will make the best decisions towards his salvation. This is a lonely and personal process. It is the moment of time that makes such a situation existential. It is in a flash of time that a war is declared by one individual. It is also in the instant that a doctrine is accepted or rejected. Consider again the Kierkegaardian dismissal of the historical. A critic has every right to immediately stifle argument by pointing out that belief in the Resurrection is impossible if one is not convinced that the Resurrection happened in history.

Zuidema²³ comments on the "anxiety aroused by the moment in the dizziness aroused by freedom" from Stages on Life's Way. The position is always new, always outside of time, yet paradoxically in the moment it decides the individual's eternity. Man meets God within the time factor. His anxiety in this situation cannot be alleviated by looking to historical events for guidance, if existentially history is not important. Kierkegaard's theology of the moment and the philosophical and anthropological actualism implied, led to his anti-historicism. What was significant for him was that the individual is alone without props in the existential reality of becoming what he must be by his own situation and decision.

Inwardness.

- (c) Thirdly, suffering is unavoidable because of inwardness, a different matter from individuality. This is the subject of Kierkegaard's Concluding Unscientific Postscript. Man has to stand by his Inwardness even though he has no direct expression for it.²⁴ The inner strength required is great, because God eludes man if he seeks Him outwardly. God is a subject discoverable only through the indirect, through subjectivity in inwardness. Kierkegaard writes, "Communication assumes that the subject ... exists in the isolation of his inwardness".²⁵ Once man progresses by choice from the aesthetic stage of superficiality, he has to look and be inward, existential, whether on the ethical or the religious plane. "Christianity is an existence-communication",²⁶ must rank as one of Kierkegaard's most important statements. He is known for his dislike of 'direct communication'. Every possible indirect communication has to be sought if communication is to be from and to the personality of the inward, because direct communication shows that what should be inner self is really self-orientated outwards.²⁷ (Some study of the link between inwardness and the Holy Spirit would be worthwhile). The tragedy of any age is to forget inwardness. Kierkegaard saw the shock of the Inquisition in that the Church killed men because they would not openly say certain words, no matter what was transpiring in their hearts. The sequel in his own personal progress cannot be missed: he did believe that in 'suffering inwardness' he had become elevated. At one stage he pondered whether one should tell others how good one had become. Christianity, however, must include the outward. The fruits of the Spirit must be experienced and communi-

cated. Paradoxically, inwardness had to be "attacked", because Kierkegaard believed teaching in his age left students inwardly too secure; he wanted men to suffer inwardly; even joyful services should not forget suffering; **all trials belong to the inwardness of religiousness.** ²⁸ All who seek/teach must be what today would probably be called "committed inwarders", themselves suffering the tension of existential living, i.e. truth from I to I. (Martin Buber) Kierkegaard saw preachers as "giving swimming lessons on dry land", i.e. having never been involved.

The indirect way leads to tension. Direct communication is objective. When a poet romanticises about trouble, he produces an object of beauty. "Jesus", writes Sontag, "used an indirect method and appeared as a servant". ²⁹ He was paraphrasing Kierkegaard, but from anyone's pen the horror emerges : As Jesus was forced into directness, He was also crucified, as was the dismissed priest Adler, (- the case intrigued Kierkegaard -) from the Island of Bornholm. Adler was a Hegelian, even as was Bishop Martensen, but one who was too open.

The paradox remains : no useful life can be totally inward if it is to communicate, yet no life and soul will be eternally blest if it is not totally inward. In the present objective age of homo homini lupus, it is significant that the revival of Kierkegaard has coincided with the inwardness of contemporary Charismatic religion and with renewed interest in the comparatively inward-looking sects of the East. In the latter, outward suffering, whether self-inflicted in ritual, or accepted as coming from the relentless cycle of Karma, constitutes the inward growing of God-awareness.

Comment.

"This is the real basis of my power : my suffering is my superiority" takes on a new meaning when one tries to uncover Kierkegaard's tracks. Suffering for him was not suffering in the form of an overdraft, or cancer. It was his natural life's blood. He interpreted forgiveness of sins not as peace and gratitude, but to mean that he must bear his "punishment of remaining in this painful prison of inclosing reserve all my life" - yet was paradoxically "so indescribably happy in the activity of mind and spirit" - then paradoxically, again, unable, like Paul with his thorn in the flesh, to reach such heights of faith that he might "believe that painful memory away". Such a human see-saw, too brilliant to be pitiable, comes into clearer focus in Mary Warnock's "compound of emotional and intellectual factors to an equal degree, unusual for philosophy but the secret of its success One has to succumb to the emotional pressures before one can expand the philosophy with any plausibility." ³⁰ The student must hope to find in this suffering theory the answer Kierkegaard would have given to his contemporary, Tennyson's, question in 1850, after the death of a close friend.

'But what am I?
An infant crying for the light;
And with no language but a cry.' ³¹

or to Aldous Huxley, '... the riddle of the Universe requires a theological answer men want to know to what end they suffer,' ³² or to Eugene Ionesco (Theatre of the Absurd) who wrote:

'Everything I have experienced, has merely confirmed what I had seen and understood in my childhood : vain and sordid fury, cries

suddenly stifled by silence, shadows engulfed forever in the night.'³³

or to Adam Schaff, rejecting all religious answers and hoping that Marxism will find convincing ones:

'Philosophy must take the place of religion ... it must tackle a number of diverse questions which have remained from the wreck of the religious view of life - the senselessness of suffering can this be done scientifically?'³⁴

Would he in reply to them have quoted himself, "...the direction of promise, learning to become more richly subjective," eliminating the word 'suffering' because it would state the obvious implicit in his advice?

"Jesus' ethic was meant for this tough world where there is no hope hatred met by hatred ... injustice calling out injustice The only escape lies in those who break through it" ...³⁵ - i.e. existential, individual, decision and action as in Bonhoeffer's life or Dostoevsky's writings.

"We even have Christian brothel-keepers", reads a Kierkegaardian epic, "but if one considers the rigor of Christ's commands, an entire populace will never meet them." Christ said, 'Narrow is the way, and few are they that find it'. Christianity demands an absolute commitment. Christianity thus sits in judgement on every culture in every nation of the world, and, if we believe this and in a personal judgement, we must take action and in faith step forward through bold will and

decision, which somewhere along the road
can never totally avoid suffering."

Herbert Read, the English Art historian, emphasises the
personal nature in Kierkegaard's Christian faith.

"The whole of Kierkegaard's philosophy re-
volves around this axiom : the concept of
faith is in this purely personal relation
between God as personal being and believer
as personal being (the) absolute intrans-
igence of the egoism which Kierkegaard made
the basis of his faith." ³⁶ (Review in The
Listener of The Last Years : Journals
1853-55 ED. & transl. R.G. Smith, Collins,
1965.)

There is this uncompromisingly personal yet paradoxically
irreconcilable quality because one is always guilty be-
fore God. Faith in Kierkegaard belongs completely in the
existential, "This anti-intellectualist philosophy of
life holding that man is free yet responsible, and which
assumes that reality as existence can only be lived and
can never become the object of thought." *

Faith is not in knowledge. Faith deals with personality,
which is within a man. Faith is will. The paradox remains
that the Christ Himself referred the sceptics to The mi-
racle proof. Perhaps Kierkegaard would have turned
quietly to Isaiah and read aloud:

But He endured the suffering that should have been
ours,
the pain that we should have borne.
All the while we thought that His suffering

* (Concise Oxford Dictionary, p. 424, O.U.P., 1964.)

Was punishment sent by God.
But because of our sins He was wounded,
Beaten because of the evil that we did.
We are healed by the punishment He suffered,
Made whole by the blows He received,
.... He never said a word.
(Isaiah 53, 4 ff)

Peter, suffering grief because of his three lies, could not have missed the point in being asked three times, "Do you love me?" The suffering moment was emphasised there. The Risen Lord was in effect requesting Peter to take hold of his existential suffering, which was the catalyst to stir his faith, and to lead the Disciples. John, cousin and Evangelist, the last who should have doubted, did not see that his own suffering, and subjective outbursts against the King's personal life, would bring an evil queen to such degradation and downfall that she would choose for her daughter his useless, mortifying head rather than half a Kingdom. "Go and remind John what has come from our suffering (his and Mine) - the blind see and the lame walk." That is what Jesus virtually said in Luke 7,22.

In A Deceiver's 'Hidden Inwardness' and How the Case was cracked,³⁷ we have an example of indirect Kierkegaardian parable. The tale concerns a false priest and a young Christian, and the purpose is to shame ministers who have no 'hidden inwardness'. But part way through the story, God listens in as the priest talks to himself (inwardness is there, after all), and Kierkegaard comments : "Existence is wonderfully constructed acoustically. What a blessed comfort for all who suffer." He here recommends the inner tension of anxiety.

The special love, in the chastening we read of in Hebrews 12, 6 was Kierkegaard's ultimate strength. "The prototypes and others, have all had to suffer in this world".³⁸ To pray for happiness, or at least for avoidance of suffering, would therefore be to pray to God to stop loving us. In Concluding Unscientific Postscript (a rather abstract definition of Christianity) he does not mention the Second Coming, but later on suggests this hope as a comfort to endure the ongoing agony of real religion. It was Christ's complete silence in suffering that put the seal on His divinity. The positive joy of suffering could have been the impressive contribution of Kierkegaard to the Church. It pleased God to set Himself before man in Christ, concretely and historically, in a situation that controls man even though he has to choose an existential situation in regard to it. To choose Christ has to mean accepting His cross. Man wills to choose suffering. He chooses the belief in God-in-Christ, the gracious paradoxical dialectical truth paradoxical not least because this is still the totally other God. No matter what the cost of the suffering, he is then an heir to eternal life as a justified sinner, compared with which his suffering is as nothing. Once man has chosen, sin - which Kierkegaard stresses is equally existential and passionate - has no more power over him.

Kierkegaard's Precursors.

Before singling out the men who influenced him most, a word on Romanticism is appropriate.

It became prominent in the late 1700's as a protest against Rationalism, which the Romantics felt was hollow, abstract and dead. Understandably, it was German Romanticism that influenced Denmark, bringing with it the subjective emphasis upon inward spontaneous feeling, dialectical contradiction, romantic decision and not least the cult of the Genius. Goethe and Schiller represent the North European Romanticism, and suggest that there is something beyond our reach and understanding. Reason having been dethroned, feeling and intuition exert their undeniable power with the passion that is built into every person's nature. The Genius was exalted because of his inspiration, not because of his reasoning. He was the hero who acted according to his own will.

Allied to such culture is the concept of Irony - the chosen topic of Kierkegaard's University thesis. Romantic heroes were often ironic and tragedy appealed. Life is tragic and it requires only a moment's thought to see the influence on him of the time into which Kierkegaard was born.

Franz Baader and Schelling contributed their immediacy and individualism; but Kierkegaard could not accept the prevalent idea of the Genius, which to him meant rebellion against God. There are times when subjectivity seems close to Pantheism;^{*} but the subjectivity of the man who wanted "the Individual" inscribed on his tombstone, Kierkegaard, is not the subjectivity of a perpetually enriched ego that draws closer and closer to becoming (Kierkegaard's keyword) identical with the Divine. Kierkegaard refuted the notion that in Genius or in Pantheism, man could be

* Subjectivism theoretically has pantheistic connotations, but subjectivity is more panpsychic, relating to the propensities of all human beings.

elevated to God's level. His inward feeling was not poetic escapism. It was involvement in the reality of living.

Blaise Pascal, 1623 - 62

It is not always clear whether influence reaches a thinker direct. Did Luther influence Barth directly, or through Kierkegaard? Did Pascal's Augustinian thought come to Kierkegaard mainly through Luther? Pascal, himself a mystic in the Augustinian tradition, was 27 when Descartes died. Descartes, father of modern philosophy, began European Rationalism, by which man's consciousness held the criteria he used to ascertain truth. Honest, systematic doubt was necessary to establish that elusive substance. "My first rule was to accept nothing as true which I did not clearly recognise to be so." There is guarded subjectivity implicit here, and tentative dialectic in Descartes' "As we are finite, there must be an Infinite Being." Such was the speculative atmosphere challenging Church philosophers. Cogito, ergo sum.

Pascal's personal similarities with Kierkegaard are remarkable. Each was affected by his father's misfortune, each had poor health, each plunged into worldly attractions and considered marriage; each waited some years before dropping his pseudonymity. **Each suffered.** Each in some way lacked the mother figure. Pascal's died when he was three. Each died relatively young. Each had a remarkable mystical experience. Pascal was a mathematical genius who understood Euclid without having read him, wrote on conic sections, contributed to the Theory of Probability, laid down the Principles of Calculus, and broke new ground on the vacuum and barometric pressure. He constructed the first mechanical calculator. It is of some importance to establish the intellectual acumen of the existentialist.

Descartes himself envied Pascal's 1640 Essai pour les coniques.

His father's accident brought him and his sister to religion, but again, like Kierkegaard, he never deserted the parent while still alive. In his thought, he did not accept a necessary separation between Theology and Philosophy. Nor did he repudiate theoretical reasoning. He used dialectic in his first Provincial Letters which came about after he had become involved, through his brilliance, in the argument between the Jesuits and his own Port Royal monks. He had been asked to speak on fact versus law, and his system was that of pseudonymous author asking questions of various men, pretending to know little about religion, and touching on the doctrines of sufficient and efficient grace. Later, as with Kierkegaard, he became embroiled in far more heated argument with the orthodox Church and bitterly resented such issues as casuistry and the end justifying the means. There were eventually nineteen such letters, which were literary masterpieces full of humour, but condemned in Paris and Rome. As failing health took its toll, he never achieved the masterpiece which he hoped to write to convince his clever contemporaries.

Dialectic, pseudonymity and heated argument with the Church, are the pattern Kierkegaard followed. Amongst Pascal's writings the best-known are Les Provinciales. (18 Lettres écrites par Louis de Montalte à un provincial, 1656-57). The Provinciales stressed inward religion as against the continuing Jesuit emphasis upon obedience to ecclesiastical authority. Charity would aid the soul's union with the Mystical Body of Christ. The comedy and dramatization of the Provinciales is Kierkegaardian, as is the way Pascal carries the argument into the enemy's court, quoting them freely.

Pascal's Pensées sur la religion (edit. H.F. Stewart, London, 1950) reflects his superlative conviction regarding inwardness. * Long before Kierkegaard, the Wesleys used Pascal's Prayer for Conversion in their campaigns across Britain for revitalising true inward spirituality in the Church of England. His Yes/No is that of many great Christians. His first conversion was while hearing the Abbé preach. On that occasion he believed God was speaking to him. His second conversion was on November 23rd, 1653 (two sources give 1654), which is the experience of ecstasy he recorded on the amulet which he wore until death, secretly sewn inside his coat. From 10.30 until 12.30 at night he was aware of elements of fire, of absolute certitude of union with Jesus Christ, of joy and of peace. This highly subjective experience convinced Pascal that the path to God was through Christianity and not through Philosophy. The only perfect knowledge was through inward revelation. He made distinction between "the intuitive spirit" (heart) and "the geometric spirit" (reason or mind). S.K. was to make his life's work the compelling of the cleavage between faith and reason.

Thence followed the Letters which were his answer to the Sorbonne, which had condemned his superior Arnauld for heresy. The Port Royal order he had joined first as a layman of 32, was strongly Jansenist, teaching the corruption of man after the fall, hence Pascal did not expect reason to supply any answer. Only inward grace could.

- * Martin Turnell's translation of the Pensées, Harvill Press (1962), are more sensitive than Stewart's edition. cf. p. 163 where Pascal suggests: "The heart has its reasons which are unknown to reason ... it is the heart which is aware of God and not reason."

Turmoil, anxiety and suffering are reflected in his *Pensées*. Throughout his collection of material for a defence of the Christian Faith against rationalism and certain Church doctrine, he experienced trials and vicissitudes, not least because of his insistence, as with Kierkegaard, that he was on the side of true Christianity. This must be the keenest suffering, to show good men where they are misguided, and to defend oneself against brothers. Kierkegaard's argument was so often with his friend and Bishop.

Pascal's position was that man finds himself between two realms, neither of which he understands. It is the paradox. There is no answer to the question of self-consciousness. We can neither validate our convictions nor surrender to scepticism. Reason confounds dogma, but nature in its subjective force confounds the sceptic. Intelligent assumption and intuition discern principles. This intuition which Pascal sums up in "The heart has reasons that the reason knows not of", linked to his "Spirit of finesse", which is both essential to the working of geometry, and **feeling** God rather than **knowing** Him by pure reason, is subjectivity at its most intelligible. No-one can reach **the incomprehensible** by reason. He ends up atheist or deist.

His famous wager answered the question as to whether it is worth while to gamble on faith:

If one believes God exists, and He does, he is saved.
If one believes God exists, and He does not, nothing is lost.

If one disbelieves God exists, and He does not, nothing is lost.

If one disbelieves God exists, and He does exist, he is lost.

Christianity cannot be proved by reason but neither can it be disproved. Man has lost nothing if it turns out to be false, so man should accept the inevitable risk of faith and gamble on Christianity. Humility and grace are uppermost in his thought. Man's "very seeking" shows he "once knew happiness", and the abyss of suffering longing can only be filled by infinite means, more infinite than the deflecting calm of philosophy. Man's misery is not aided by Stoicism. The "stiff upper lip" does nothing for anxiety, but, like all philosophy, it prepares man to accept faith. His dialectic stated that man's reasoning might give knowledge of God, but not salvation.

Like Kierkegaard, Pascal saw the Almighty far off, too distant for man's knowledge to determine how He exists, or how He is related to man, yet so close that, in direct revelation, which both he and Kierkegaard had experienced, He is proven. Man may search with his reason, observe miracle, survey the historical Christ, examine prophecy as suggesting to reason that Christianity is the true religion, and develop good habits; but actual faith is a gift of the Divine Grace, which comes separately and directly and not through reason. The result is absolute certainty and blessedness, the inspiration coming from Christ. The self-denial and contemplation of the mystic is what leads to sanctification. This is virtually Kierkegaard : Christ confronting man with God is the key that unlocks the meaning of self-denial and suffering. The choosing of immediate freedom to exalt suffering is man's gateway to everlasting freedom in everlasting life. It is the faith that has no limits, whereas knowledge has. Doubt leads to faith. For Pascal, the answer to the epistemological question is that no rational answer exists. Hence man can only use faith.

David Hume, 1711-1776.

The Scottish philosopher-historian, called The Father of Scepticism, and who is famous for extending Locke and Berkeley to the extreme of scepticism, maintained that man had no right to be certain that the sun would rise. That was purely a matter of "belief", which is within one, therefore subjective. That was his first effect upon Kierkegaard. The second was in his attack on Rationalism and Natural Religion, in his two religious works, The Natural History of Religion (1755) and Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion (1779). Kierkegaard, being at ease amongst Denmark's philosophers, had realised also the effect of Rousseau upon Hume. Jean Jacques Rousseau was born the year after Hume and died two years after him. Their lives coincided.

Hume and Rousseau.

Rousseau's was a dialectic of seemingly muddled aesthetic-ethical almost Kierkegaardian stages - no further. He was an enthusiastic convert to Catholicism at 16, but returned to Protestantism in middle age in order to get Swiss Nationality; he had a succession of mistresses; he indulged in money-making ventures; this needs noting because it convinced Rousseau that man is good by nature and spoiled by civilization and that he must get back to nature, even protecting children from unnecessary worldly influence by seeing to it that education is an opportunity to develop their natural gifts. The child must learn from inner realization, the student notes, not from books. This is totally subjective and would lead to argument. It may be why Hume could only put up with this "Father of Romantic Sensibility", who influenced both German and English Romanticism, for a year when he offered Rousseau sanctuary in 1765. The year ended in a violent quarrel and parting.

Hume in questioning traditional beliefs and basic assumptions is well-known for the way he formulated his argument that it was impossible for a dead Christ to rise. His importance for Kierkegaard is that while he challenged the very ethos of Christianity, which arguments (uniformity of natural causes in a closed system is established fact, etc.) others in S.K.'s time onwards were to use in different forms, he nevertheless came close to Kierkegaard's position on the futility of proving from history. S.K.'s dictum in Concluding Unscientific Postscript cannot be too fully stressed: Objective incertitude, clung to and appropriated with passionate inwardness, is truth, the highest truth that there can be, for one who exists. Hume taught Kierkegaard paradox in that with his perceptions differentiating between lively and less lively forceful units of experience he

- (a) doubted man could prove the world to exist outside his consciousness : subjective senses equal truth for the individual, yet
- (b) attacked the idea that nothing can happen or exist without a cause. It is perplexing that what cannot be proved can exist without cause. The stages of Church history linked back in time would make interesting observation here.

Footnote: See: (a) 1748 Philosophical Essays Concerning Human Understanding in Hume's Philosophical Works ed. T.H. Green and T.H. Grose London 1874

(b) Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion ed. N.K. Smith
Edinburgh & London 1947

In particular :

- (c) Hume : An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding : Section X,
of Miracles : Collins Fontana, pp 210-213 and 222-3

Hume's Thought.

Hume said that man could not hope to go beyond his senses. We perceive the data of our senses and we cannot hope to know anything beyond what they tell us".

(Treatise of Human Nature: David Hume. I : II : 6)

Hume on his "philosophical melancholy and delirium"

(Ibid 1 : V : 1)

For him, the greatest miracle was belief. Dialectically, Kierkegaard accepted Hume's right to be a thorough empiricist and reject miracle. He was aware of Hume's Yes/No, Either/Or : Hume would dine out, converse, be merry, then return home and admit that there was "no heart for the cold and strained and ridiculous" philosophising. This suggests that he may have been dissatisfied with his own theory that there are only moral arguments for God. It could be suggested that Kierkegaard's tenacity of conviction was a reaction to Hume, who ".... saved his 'reason', or as we might say, his 'philosophical personality' ... by refusing to take the implications of his philosophy to heart".* Possibly then Hume's belief lived on, despite his much-vaunted "reasoning". This is construed as another of his effects upon Kierkegaard, that in the turmoil and suffering of seeking, the emphasis must be on a will to choose to freely believe. Hume rejected outright the existence of definite knowledge through the senses. He attached importance to custom, which is extraordinarily close to the heart, rather than to reason.

Hume's attitude that mind itself is a mixture of concepts benefited Kierkegaard's Paradox.

* Kathleen Knott : Objections to Humanism, Penguin, 1967, p. 62.

His atmosphere of dialectic in intellectual debate encouraged Kierkegaard. It is one thing to be an Aquinas using Aristotle to work out a theology of truths deduced by reason, such as God's existence, and those arrived at by revelation, such as the way of salvation. It is another to have the benefit of past dialectical comment. Hume's analyses were acid. He also taught Kierkegaard a barbed tongue. But essentially he confirmed in him the possibility of finding definite knowledge or truth through the subjective senses.

Immanuel Kant, 1724 - 1804.

This German Professor of Philosophy explored empiricism and stated that not all knowledge came from experience, i.e. sense alone is also valid. Kant could not accept Locke's tabula rasa concept, because the mind does condition what it perceives. It plays a part. Man has innate ideas and his mind can be a hurdle. Dialectic must decide what climate is acceptable, and how completely the will to believe must replace it. He criticised Metaphysics and he believed in pure reason, devoid of experience, which Kierkegaard assimilated into pure faith, the lonely course of suffering.

For Kierkegaard, concerned with the Angst, Kant's phenomena/noumena theory was important and the distinction acceptable because the ground of much anxiety would be removed if man understood the essentials of the truth of what he sees, and what he does not, which is beyond time and space. Man's acceptance would be more tranquil. The existential nature of sin contributes to the fear and trembling that man's decision will be the right one. In Kant, no-one could know God, freedom or immortality by speculative thought, but in his moral philosophy his transcendental dialectic showed the necessity

for their existence. Man should act morally as an **ought**.

The Junction.

Kant formed a bridge between what can be sensed and what cannot be experienced. His influence was therefore incalculable. He spoke of synthetic a priori truths and applied the concept that morality required belief (in God and freedom) to the aesthetic and the teleological. Otherwise there would be no morality. Religious beliefs plus the anguish of living them out must seek their origin in the moral consciousness, with its anxiety of validating itself. Kant stated that he had found it necessary to deny knowledge in order to make room for faith. Kierkegaard added, "Christian beliefs are an offence to the reason." Kant concluded that the individual had the right to his conscience and decision.

He referred to the absence of contradiction in a universal maxim which is virtually one of abstract identity.³⁹

This abstract identity would pass amongst many laymen as another name for subjective existentialism, because they fail to realise the almost real, materially emotional content of the subjective. In denying that pure reason could give content to knowledge without reference to experience (such would lead to illusion), Kant insisted on a sense of duty if any action was to have moral worth.⁴⁰ The motive would have to be obedience to moral law. There is no option held out to man. Morality is categorical, in fact it is natural, because even in an unphilosophical state, the intellect is in possession of certain cognitions a priori. Indeed, this is one of his sub-headings.⁴¹

Soon after, Kant went on to define Metaphysics as being dogmatical, taking upon itself the problem of solving the problems of God, freedom of will, and immortality, without any previous investigation of the ability or inability of

reason for such an undertaking. 42

Repeatedly in the above, one is reminded of Kierkegaardian attitudes. Hear Kant in *The Science of Right* : the subjective condition of the use of anything is possession of it. 43 This is existentialism. It is how Kierkegaard would teach awareness and possession of the Christ.

Johann Georg Hamann, 1730-1788.

The Magus of the North was a forerunner of existentialism. He exercised a positive influence on Kierkegaard, part of it being to take a stand in the criticism of the Enlightenment, friends included; this Kierkegaard put to use nearly a century later. "Friendship", said Hamann, "is like Mount Etna : fire in the bowels, but snow on the head." He ranks as the single greatest influence on Kierkegaard's Subjectivity, teaching that Belief is more important than understanding.

Like Kierkegaard, he had financial and spiritual crises. One such period led to the writing of his Biblical Meditations and Fragments in 1758. His main concern was the relationship of Philosophy to Christianity, in which he believed he was carrying on Luther's work. Then it had been Faith/Law, but now it was Faith/Philosophy. He also saw Socrates (cf. Kierkegaard) as a forerunner and prophet of the Christ. Like Kierkegaard, he is difficult to classify: like him he saw philosophy in its true light only in the context of Christianity. The ripple effect of his criticism of the natural religion of the deists, the separation of knowledge of God from revelation, and the "idealistic vanity" of basing philosophy on "undeniable rational truths" was that Schelling, Hegel and Schleiermacher were influenced, each of whom affected Kierkegaard.

Hamann believed that Hume's scepticism indicated the bankruptcy of reason. Reason was empty if stripped of intuition and taken out of its religious milieu and historical experience. He gave Kierkegaard his suspicion of generalised religion and mob feelings, for suffering was the single person's burden. In a disaster involving hundreds of people, each individual carries his burden solely and no matter how much help is offered, the cross of grief or doubt or pain is his personally. There is ultimately no comfort in an explanation that others have suffered or that others have sent messages. To sift through Hamann's influence, it is this belief that individual awareness and **acceptance** is the most important aspect, more important than understanding or knowledge, that highlights the richness of suffering. Once again, alone, a person is constantly becoming, never arriving, never resting in peace and relief. Truth is a constant process, which is the Kierkegaardian position. In Purity of Heart there is the Kierkegaardian parable of the misunderstood horse, which illustrates the above. After attending many Horses' Meetings, the animal came to understand himself less and less because no-one cared about his problems, despite all the talks on suffering. This was not merely a satire against an uncaring church. It also demonstrated man's state of dialectical **disunity** of suffering **with himself**. But the horse did end up understanding better and better what the other horses were concerned about, and so became a horse of a higher stage through his ability to accept that he was on his own in his suffering, and must alone look inward, and try to be more concerned with other horses than they had been with him.

Hamann emphasized the **existence** aspect of Cogito, ergo sum : I am. Religion must be in the whole man, not only

in the intellect which tends to be the abstract part. He maintained that all suffering in life needed grace more than man's effort, singling out dilemma perhaps more than had Pascal, from whom he absorbed much. He made the sublime remark that all concepts of metaphysics eventually come up against the Cross, and here human thought has to stop. If a man tries to clear up paradoxes, he destroys the very centre of Christianity, which is paradox. This equates Kierkegaardian suffering. As with S.K., Hamann believed that there was no comfort available from getting to know God (in the contemporary, popular sense). Human reason could not make pronouncements upon God, Who is on a different level and of a different species. Any philosophical proofs of God's existence were as reasonable as their denials. Hamann had a dislike of any and all metaphysical speculation. One could reflect on faith but that would not demonstrate it. Reason cannot attack faith because faith is not an operation or process of reason, nor does it result from argument.

For Hamann, there had to be anguish and uncertainty because he saw an infinite (cf. Kierkegaardian distance and "always in the wrong") misunderstanding between man and God. The sense of sin leads to fear, passionate and subjective, because all religion is an inward movement. The Kingdom of God is **within** you. Man can never be logical, the object of an objective view. His way to God is through the suffering confession of failure and through a leap, which is man's anguished decision, with God taking the initiative. Because of the movement and the becoming, in thinkers of this persuasion, any non-suffering peace suggesting 'once saved, always saved', would be ruled out. This cannot be too-strongly emphasized. Hamann, and then Kierkegaard, rejected tranquil religion, at any stage.

As a young man, Kierkegaard decided that the Christian religion and philosophy were reconcilable. He read Hamann and retained Christianity. Hamann's attack on the demonstrability of faith by reason, and his insistence on the primacy of belief, contributed immensely to Kierkegaard's development of his principle of Subjectivity using will.

Georg Wilhelm Friederich Hegel, 1770-1831.

Hegel was Kierkegaard's supreme enemy. Kierkegaard's reaction to him is vital in understanding his thought. In fairness to Hegel, he was a political theorist with clear judgement who could see a complex situation as a whole. He accepted history as proving God's intelligible plan. Philosophically, there was a unity of Being and Nothing, in that, when a man thinks nothing, he is thinking something. A "post-Renaissance Aristotle", he gave the world dialectical logic, a unified and systematic philosophy of the spirit which was an idealism knitting together every aspect of learning : physics, art, religion, politics, chemistry, and history. He observed them together, from the point of view of eternity. Absolute Spirit was Reason.

He demythologized Jesus and His cross to represent Reason's dialectical struggle, so that Reason was enthroned as the supreme reality, and the subjective example of the Lord's suffering lost in its meaningfulness. His dispassionate unproven logic took little account of suffering. It opened the door to arbitrary pronouncements. Reason in the form of Draconian laws must follow, bringing suffering that was not intended by Hegel as useful for the soul's progress and culminating in Hitler's atrocities and Communism. It was inevitable that the sensitive Kierkegaard would react, and the student sees the purpose of suffering which spurs the sufferer to wisdom.



The corollary was the movement towards the State as Reason's "onward march".

Reason = Absolute Spirit = God.

The charge of Pantheism could hardly be avoided. The State is for Hegel the highest embodiment of reason at any time or place, and any revolution or civil disobedience or individualism must be forbidden as madness against reason.

Nothing could be further from Kierkegaard's exaltation of subjective individualism and loathing of the mob; his horizontal indirect communication through pseudonym and parable, his verticle leap to the distant Godhead. Hegel objected to what he called "autonomous individualism" - only in the community could morality or religion have any significance. "Subjectivity in its universality reflected into itself is the subject's absolute inward certainty of himself that which is the determining and decisive element in him, his conscience." ⁴⁴ Man's inner being here appears as a reflection of a vast assimilated force. Such "subjectivity" was unacceptable to Kierkegaard.

Hegel wrote in the last paragraph of his preface, in Berlin, dated June 25, 1820, that "if a topic is to be discussed philosophically, it spurns any but a scientific and objective treatment." ⁴⁵ Yet he went further in saying that only in the will as subjective could freedom or the implicit principle of the will be actual. ⁴⁶ And then further still in the remark that understanding pushed the infinite into the distance as something alien, whereas in free will, the Truly infinite became actual and present. ⁴⁷ Kierkegaard's eclectic reaction was to build a philosophy in which individual humiliation,

suffering, and obedience are joined. * His response to Hegel was passionate. Hegel's thought required complete detachment and objectivism; it was logic without proof; his "Pure Thought" was the epitome of the balcony attitude contemplating world history, and regarding feeling as semi-animal.

In vastness his overall grand plan is only equalled by Marxism, with its Economic Matter predominant. It is necessary that we see the expanse of Hegelian Monism which spurred Kierkegaard. God is Hegel's whole aim and end of history, and, if faith and knowledge are the same category, then Religion cannot contrast Reason. Everything, including the State, is caused by the spirit. **Religion must justify itself in terms of intellect and therefore clear up all paradox.** All resultant suffering would consequently be only of irksome value against the comfort of objective mob asphyxiation. Individual lives seemed to count for little, just as in Pantheism the individual is subordinated to a relentless system. Possibly this is where Kierkegaard's distrust of the Establishment began, for the Hegelian State Church in Denmark had done nothing to sustain his unhappy father.

How, Kierkegaard, asked, could suffering in dilemma, decision or paradox be mediated in this abstract, philosophical "Higher Unity"? Where was the possibility that "Philosophy escapes from the weary strife of passions that agitate the surface of society, into the calm region of contemplation"? ⁴⁸ Worthwhile dialectic seemed unlikely in Hegel's Dialectical Principle, for, if everything were caught up in overall evolution throughout history, good and evil and all contradictions such as time and eternity, could never exist. Because of his Professor, later Bishop, Hans Martensen, Kierkegaard came

* cf. Philippians 2, v.8.

to realise that Christianity was being altered and would be moulded into speculation. Humanism would take over, if Faith meant accepting Absolute vague Spirit, if Religion meant self-consciousness of Absolute Spirit, and if Revelation meant discovering the powers within one. The Trinity for Hegel was three aspects of universal dialectic.

The Father = idea of God, as He is in Himself with relation to the world :

The Son = the World Process, i.e. nature developing to Spirit, through state and religion, Christianity being the highest form.

The Spirit = that which shakes man loose from non-philosophical thought.

Reconciliation is the removal of all opposites, paradox and tension, between God and the world.

Kierkegaard attacked Hegel with humour and irony, especially in Concluding Unscientific Postscript where he used savage sarcasm. He accused Hegel of playing God's role in the world theatre, as Supreme Spectator, with a (Nietzschen) "will to power". Hegel had rebelled against limitations and consequent suffering, seeking, decision and perpetual becoming. The crucial relationship of tension and anguish had been avoided, and this was "the deathblow to Biblical Christianity".⁴⁹ It was a scheme devoid of commitment and existence. It was artificial. Man exists in that he strives. Truth is grasped existentially from within life, not by pure thought. Only through acute suffering could a man become a Christian and this must continue through a life of constant penitence. Outward suffering which might be observable by onlookers would be virtually misfortune. Religious suffering which Hegelians could not conceive, was also a knowledge of relationship to God, which came with instantaneous

decisive action. Hosea leaps to mind as an example, in the suffering for and forgiving of his faithless wife. Hegel's abstract system would not make the slightest impression on life, yet Kierkegaard's own Bishop and Church were being affected by it. **Hence his crusade, that man should not try to understand Christianity philosophically, but decide for God in life,** a God who has no other means available with which to sift his creation and evaluate character, than suffering, even to the teleological suspension of the ethical, which may well increase suffering, especially at the time of the event.

In addition to influence in the above, two important features of Kierkegaard's thought, both of which give rise to suffering in the process, are attributable to Hegel. Out of the much-pondered basic idea of Being and Nothing, Hegel had developed the concept of

- (a) Becoming and
- (b) its various phases until the Absolute Idea realizes itself.

Every phase for Hegel was a period of history in which evolving, gradually articulating ideas filter upwards, replaced eventually by a higher scheme. One remarkable event in history renders Hegel's philosophy of history useless - the Incarnation is beyond and outside the reality investigated by historical science, and the history of the Christian era is in fact a hindrance to our becoming a contemporary disciple, if we follow Kierkegaard's mind. In fairness to Hegel and the Danish Church, one sees the attraction for philosophically-minded pastors who accepted that they saw God at work. Hegel believed that he was setting out the thoughts of God. He did not suggest that suffering was non-existent or non-fruitful. He was following Leibniz's Principle of Sufficient Reason and its corollary that God is not only suggested

by the law of continuity but **demand**ed by a teleological argument. But in such a relation between God and the world (even though it was some refinement of Descartes' unworkable dualism) Kierkegaard saw a pantheistic, rationalistic, ersatz religion, having neither revelation nor supernatural, both of which insist on suffering. Had obedience been possible to learn apart from sufferings, Christ, the Man, would not have needed to learn it in the classroom of Gethsemane.

Hegel's abstract thought, removing the suffering of contradiction/paradox, was a mere **verbal** argument of logic, and life is not logical. Man is always up against the mirror of the illogical suffering in the limitations placed on the Christ. Hegel's Both/And, his "endless approximation", was firmly opposed, and Kierkegaard replaced it with his Either/Or, "appropriation", **the direction of promise**. One is faced with Kierkegaard's Qualitative Dialectic which brings out absolute distinctions. The paradoxical dialectic of life here is that pairs of ideas do not necessarily negate the opposite in each case ; they seem to rest upon it, even though polarities remain and philosophical harmony is absent. Consider : Holiness - love; grace - responsibility; eternity - time. In real life, these polarities rule, and only beyond this life will matters conform to a systematic God. Prof. J.N. Jonsson has stated, "Kierkegaard admires Hegel's work as an admirable construction of the classroom, but in real life it does not exist, because Logic cannot cope with life. For Kierkegaard, the Realist, life is full of grim, illogical, incalculable factors, whereas for Hegel, the serene Optimist, the world is a closed, understandable system. 50

The Absolute Spirit idea falsified Christianity, with its "Quasi-Personality" posed as the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ. This was a gnostic substitution of "knowledge" for faith, and intellectualism for the existential suffering of the search for truth, knowing all the time that dialectically and paradoxically God's otherness is coupled with His nearness in love. Jesus, now transfigured in glory, now spat upon, could never be understood in Hegel's system. Nor could the idolatrous pride identifying human "world" spirit with Divine Spirit understand the chosen freedom of man to suffer even as Jesus chose to suffer, for while Hegel in no way denied Christ's earthly suffering, its significance was lost on him, as clearly as was the existential meaning of freedom when he wrote: "Subjectivity is the ground wherein the concept of freedom is realised".⁵¹

In assessing the part Hegel played in stimulating Kierkegaard's reaction, the student must understand the necessity for identification between man and God, without which it would not be possible to make comment upon the Almighty. The unacceptable is that, in Hegel, the infinite rises first to consciousness of itself in the development of the finite mind. God would thereby have required the world to be made in order to establish His reality in the thought-process of the created believer. History, according to Hegel, was God's realization of Himself. The uniqueness of Christianity was lost in an Incarnation that was some sort of self-evolution of absolute reason in space and time. As Jonsson puts it, Christianity becomes the first-sketch of all-inclusive metaphysics; and suffering, faith-requiring Christianity is eclipsed by Philosophy. Hegel thus "solved" the problem of the relationship between Philosophy and Christianity. It was ironical, that Hegelianism would influence the emergence of state systems set to spawn incalculable

suffering. Hegel aimed to **explain**, said Kierkegaard, but Christianity aimed to cure through the suffering choice to suffer.

Friedrich Schleiermacher, 1768-1834.

The student can appreciate Kierkegaard's attitude to Schleiermacher with the latter's intensity of feeling and total and immediate consciousness that everything is dependent on the Infinite. Anything that cannot be traced back to an experience or awareness of feeling, he rejected. The pre-existence of Christ would have no meaning; one could never freely take the leap of decision unless convinced of feeling. One might feel controlled in an almost pantheistic way, so that God would not exist unless existing in man's feelings.

Schleiermacher was a son of the clergy who rebelled against his strict pietistic background, but retained a certain degree of pietism. He became an influential German theologian, a Romantic for whom religion was never reason or morality but primarily pure expediency and feeling. He spent time as a hospital chaplain, fell in love with a married woman who opted to remain with her husband, and in Berlin mixed with the brilliant Romantic writers of the day, whose flowery escapism from any real solution to suffering joined forces in Schleiermacher's mind with his passionate but at times vague sublimation of suffering to feeling. He witnessed the Napoleonic invasions, and the political scenario had a considerable influence upon him : with the defeat of Napoleon, Prussia rose to great heights and it was Schleiermacher who preached the unification of the nation through the unification of the Protestant churches.

He began the Sentimentalist era theologically. This essence of experience and feeling is religion's "irreducible feature".⁵² Such absolute dependence is one's finite self depending upon the infinite. Man is totally dependent on God and sin is when he fails to depend, which is possibly an inferior understanding of sin. Schleiermacher lacks the true leap of the will. When man rebels against God by standing on his own feet with his own assumptions, he is no longer depending on Him. This marking-time in one's life appears to be a veiled leap, but is no more so than the total feeling of dependence, because it fails to use the freedom of independence of will of Kierkegaard, which Jesus expected when He commissioned the disciples. Schleiermacher saw the godliness in Jesus as the Son's total dependence on the Father. Jesus's work was to impart to man his need of dependence upon God in all suffering. There is some anticipation in Schleiermacher, of Tillich and John Robinson. Sin, per se, appears to vanish and there seems little need of a Saviour, perhaps an overreaction towards a thinker whose desire was for man to see his individual obligation to goodness. In his Addresses on Religion (1799) and in his The Christian Faith (1821-22), he urges man towards the command to be perfect, which undoubtedly influenced Kierkegaard. Christianity was a religious experience, quite unaffected by any opinions of Philosophy or Science. It is the heart, and not the intellect, he taught, that perceived the validity of faith and behaviour.

Some argue that feeling is a sphere of activity independent of any other. There are no ultimates, opposites, paradoxes, no personality of God because there is no historic revelation. This area influenced Kierkegaard. Schleiermacher was anthropocentric, inevitable because

pantheism of any shade lacks once-and-for-all Revelation, personality of God, and Concept of Sin. The sufferer has nothing intellectual to cling to. Jesus is the "agent of the divine being in achieving the oneness of God and man". Man's personal feelings must guide, his experiences of feeling must shape his destiny. Doctrines that one absorbs are nothing other than reflections on the immediate feelings of individuals. The margin between this and Kierkegaard's self-conscious suffering single-category becomes blurred; there is a thread of influence towards Kierkegaard's glorified individual, one of his particular contributions to the thought of the century. What one sees is that a movement originally protesting against the primacy of reason in Theology, ultimately all but joined hands with the rationalism/pantheism of Hegel. Human and divine reason appear very much the same, but the significance of suffering is diluted.

Friedrich W.H. von Schelling, 1775-1854.

Schelling's contribution to Kierkegaard's Existentialism was considerable. Pre-eminently it was the voluntaristic element : Schelling stressed the will in both thinking and living. Belief lays hold of reality by an act of the will, and chooses. Furthermore, the will is of primary importance in the deeply mystical.⁵⁴ Hence the leap. Hence also the invitation to suffer.

Soon after breaking his engagement, Kierkegaard left for Berlin to hear Schelling's lectures. His : Of Human Freedom,^{*} was published in 1809 in Philosophische Schriften. It shows the development of his philosophy of Nature.

* English translation by J. Gutmann (Chicago 1936)

The 1841 Berlin lectures dealt with the opposition of negative and positive philosophy. Even though the talks did not satisfy Kierkegaard's intellect, they contributed towards his dialectical standpoint. Schelling's friendship with Kant, the Dutch Jew Spinoza, and Fichte had influenced him. Spinoza was a metaphysicist whose moral philosophy accepted a subjective definition of good. "The good is that which we know certainly to be useful to us." ⁵⁵ This suggests a good or bad that is relative to the purposes of finite creatures and not necessarily to the Infinite; there are times when the reader senses Kierkegaard manipulating suffering subjectivism to the all-important individual's ends.

Schelling rejected moral good as the peak of subjective behaviour, thereby removing considerable guilt-suffering; from his discussions with Spinoza, pharisaical attitudes to moral rectitude appear to be wrong. This was of interest to Kierkegaard in his polemic with Christian leaders. Fichte maintained that revealed religion proved a spiritual principle in man that was not derived from his empirical nature. Fichte had experienced suffering and privation. He accepted Kant's respect for duty, but saw speculative understanding as superior to Kant's reflective understanding. He stressed that man's calling is towards increased freedom, but a freedom more devoted to spiritual ideals. Freedom and loyalty must be emphasized as unique and personal, with consequential subjective suffering. Much here is Kierkegaardian. Then, too, Schelling had married, as his first wife, F. von Schlegel's divorced wife, Schlegel being a leader of the German Romantics. His major thought centred around Irony (Kierkegaard's thesis), Genius (a development of suffering) and Dynamic Universalism, which embodies the comfort of pantheistic, therapeutic suffering. Kierkegaard

rejected Schelling's view of Genius : that Genius works intentionally as Nature does, while Nature works unintentionally as does Genius. To Kierkegaard's way of thinking, it was faith that was the Genius. Genius works through a deeper remembering of the past, recapitulating. This could be considered in regard to Kierkegaard's personal life.

Schelling's first academic appointment had been at Jena where the Romantic poets and philosophers gathered. Like many of his peers, he lent towards the revolutionary with its moral indignation over suffering, but moved to a philosophy of Identity, i.e. that subject and object coincide in the Absolute, a condition that is realised by Intuition. Intuition in turn cannot be separated from individual decision, no matter how free the will, or from subjective suffering. It is bound up in reflection and knows nothing of that which is insensitive to conscience. Schelling's philosophy of Nature suggested two avenues : a quasi-pantheism with suffering inherent in the process, and a concept akin to the suffering Stages developed by Kierkegaard. It culminated in transcendental idealism with Nature and Spirit linked in unfolding, maturing, powers so that one great organism resulted. History was the progressive revelation of Absolute Spirit. Yet Schelling apparently rejected Hegel's primary relation between God and humanity. Nature to Schelling was dynamic Visible Spirit and Spirit was Invisible Nature. This is mysticism, the department that disembodies true suffering. Kierkegaard was unimpressed, even though some have been tempted to investigate pantheism in him also.

Schelling's insistence upon freedom is as important in his influence on Kierkegaard as the aspect of will. The third significant contribution was his insistence that God could not be known by speculative effort. In his

Berlin lectures he violently attacked the eminence of Reason and all vague abstractions including 'Being' and 'Existence' as substitutes for real life. Hegel came under fire for creating a dead and empty monster. **Abstractions presuppose that there is something, i.e. the real, from which they were abstracted.** God has to be experienced, observed, in an awareness of suffering that one cannot deny. Decisions of will are part of the sense-data. Schelling coined a useful phrase : **metaphysical empiricism**. He believed that the history of revelation taught God's nature and that even well-substantiated myth helped as "God's own spiritual history" or "positive philosophy" culminating in the Incarnation and Resurrection. Kierkegaard reacted against this notion. His freedom to believe required no assistance from history and he relegated it to speculation.

The fourth influence from Schelling concerns identity. It is **the Individual**, the suffering reality Schelling quite rightly found lacking in Hegel. The Individual is the only true relationship between man and God. The truth of individual choice and commitment is unassailable. In Kierkegaard it assumes alarming proportions where the individual is the suffering python of choice that swallows up all concept of the co-operative or the corporate, so that very congregations themselves were expendable.

In summing up Schelling as freedom, individual, will, and one denying speculation, an interesting pointer emerges. Modern psychology holds that in obliterating abstraction yet retaining subjective freedom and individuality, the subject is driven to introspective anxiety, because his dream-world that gives release from tension and unbearable memory has been removed. Escapism into speculation means expanding speculation, not only about the reasons for God. Confinement to facing too-existen-

tial a situation can even lead to physical pain. No matter what the nature of the shell, Kierkegaard would have all shell-shocked believers suffer the tension of anxiety not as punishment but as freely-chosen paradox, permanently. Kierkegaard through Schelling was to push aside the enriching help of reason, whether abstract or not, whether untrue to the subject's concept of reality or not, in understanding what is real life, what is the will, what is individual identity, what is insistent freedom to choose, and what is intelligent suffering.

G.E. Lessing, 1729-81.

It was from him that Kierkegaard borrowed the slogan "Subjectivity is Truth". Kierkegaard praised him for "having shut himself within the isolation of his own subjectivity". He was a "labyrinth of self-knowledge". Lessing searched for truth through the activity of the subject, a point Goethe appreciated in him.

His subjectivity was reflected in his first two plays, both tragedies, about 'common' and 'middle class' suffering people. He inspired Kierkegaard by his controversy with Goeze, chief pastor of Hamburg (to defy ecclesiastical authority) even though Kierkegaard did not agree with the universal religious tolerance advocated in Nathan the Wise. Even so, the Moslem, Jew and Christian in the plot did represent a dialectical, subjective argument. His views on history as a law of progress hint at Kierkegaard's stages although they are closer to Hegel's progress. The "occasional retrogression" Lessing finds necessary for advancement, echoes the paradoxical, ironical, fallible individual human effort of Kierkegaard. Essentially Lessing introduced the fresh air of enthusiastic ideas to drama and religion, through his association with J.A. Ernesti, J.F. Christ, and

A.G. Kästner. He brought suffering into the interesting focus of Greek tragedy and Shakespeare, and his human anguish situations impressed Kierkegaard, as did his critical acumen in the 1753-55 collected writings * and the excitement generated by the famous Wolfenbütteler Fragmente. This was the Zur Geschichte und Literatur, 1774-78, which brought condemnation from orthodox theologians. This is all in the spirit of Kierkegaard, as are the replies back and forth, not least that to Pastor Goeze (Anti-Goeze, 1778), full (as is Kierkegaard) of thought and learning that is permanent in value.

The leap is implicit in Lessing. Even if experts could positively verify a historical Resurrection, it would not establish any individual's religion. Man has to take the plunge. Truth cannot lie around waiting to be picked up. Its value only emerges when it is appropriated by personality. Kierkegaard said that religion, in Lessing's case, was "concerned with Lessing and Lessing alone", just as it should concern every other being in the same way. "Lessing understood that he had to deal with God, alone." Kierkegaard learnt from him his defiance of the stuffy authoritarian "Churchianity" that could not appreciate suffering. Kierkegaard was not the first to tolerate broadminded views when it suited him. Lessing had pleaded for religious tolerance in Nathan the Wise, so now Lessing's universalism was by-passed; the man was long since dead. Lessing's inspiration had been exciting. Interpretations of Kierkegaard's many Parables show distinct influence from him.

* (Schriften, 6 Vols)

Franz von Baader, 1765-1841.

von Baader had a direct influence on Kierkegaard in that he was another mystical thinker (he used mystical symbols, and left no systematic works) and Romantic who rejected Hegel and "comfortable" Rationalism. He believed that God could only be known as He manifests Himself in the joy and grief of the heart. (cf. Schleiermacher). Reason had to be supplemented by faith and Church tradition. von Baader believed the ideal state would be ruled by a Catholic Church with principles distinct from mere passing pietism or a faith that knows nothing.

He had encountered Hume's empiricism while in England as a young man, and, on returning to Germany, met Schelling, ten years his junior, whom he alienated by writing to Alexander I of Russia, denouncing modern philosophy. The influence upon Kierkegaard was that, once again, Kierkegaard was able to sift the mental processes of great men; Schelling standing for the will and the individual; von Baader for man not being obedient to the moral law but realizing in himself his own moral law which could deal with life and suffering. Man himself must realise the Divine Life and that no ethical theory that neglects the facts of sin and redemption, prayer and sacraments, is satisfactory. Schelling had insisted : No speculation. von Baader wanted Reason assisted by Faith and Church tradition, and knowledge with a consciousness of God. He opposed a faith that would **know nothing**. Reason must clarify the truths given by authority and revelation. His influence is also apparent in his dialectical counter-balance between immanent/emanent, temporal/eternal, State (man) / Church (God), and relevant overtones that are contiguous with not only isolated/general suffering but also with Kierkegaard's personal paradoxical handling of Christian history as relative and there-

fore insufficient.

Kierkegaard's assimilation of systematic thought must not be underestimated. Few clear thinkers proceed without the testimony of history at some stage. Kierkegaard's genius was to proceed alone with Amazing Grace. Men like von Baader were prominent in the filtering of his original, tortured mind. Kierkegaard, with his rejection of, and in a sense by, the Church, would have been interested in the 1838 dismissal of von Baader as Professor of Philosophy and Speculative Theology in Munich, because of an order prohibiting laymen from lecturing in those subjects.

Corollary.

Kierkegaard inherited many generations of dialectic. The intelligentsia amongst whom he moved were aware of all the lesser-known philosophers. Joseph Joubert (1754-1824) was a French religious essayist whose interesting concept of the Almighty was also of a subjective God, whose example was that He, too, was withdrawn within Himself. He was a suffering God of loneliness. Hobbes in the 1600's used negatives (incomprehensible, immutable, etc.) about God, which reflected his own suffering speculation. Basil Willey writes: "For Hobbes, the word God is really little but a symbol of his fatigue ... in speaking of God, his main endeavour is to empty this conception of all content."⁵⁶

John Locke (1632-1704) dispensed with the subjective in redeveloping empiricism with his tabula rasa in his An Essay Concerning Human Understanding in 1690. The mind for him was like a sheet of white paper getting all its impressions from the outside. All knowledge is ideas or reflections on ideas, with impressions returning.

What is implied is that there must be some connotation between subjectivity and influence suggesting ideas begin inside and transfer to the outside in order to be appropriated. Reflections of the mind cannot simply appear externally as if flashed onto a screen. The concept of the Imago Dei has to be accommodated. Locke stated: "No principle can be received for divine revelation, or obtain the assent due to such, if it be contrary to our clear intuitive knowledge." ⁵⁷ This inner reason, plus experience, made up knowledge in Locke's empiricism. His intelligent acceptance of simple logic in his well-known suggestion that the works of Nature sufficiently evidenced a Deity, and his emphasis that faith can stand on the credit of the proposer as coming from God, bracket the Spirit of Locke amongst Kierkegaard's muses.

Voltaire (1694-1778) had fumbled through scepticism, ending up with a god of Nature, an architect, a geometer, a prime mover, and conceding in a letter of 1741 : "I shall always be convinced that a watch proves a watchmaker, and that a Universe proves a God." Darwin was four years older than Kierkegaard, but his Origin of the Species was only published after Kierkegaard's death. No survey should omit his name because 19th Century thought is incomplete without him. There is evidence that Darwin was confused, that he suffered the journey back to agnosticism, that the intelligence of the common cuckoo baffled him, that a lady friend regularly read him the Bible during his latter days. He is on record as stating, "My theology is a simple muddle; I cannot look at the universe as the result of blind chance, yet I can see no evidence of beneficent design." Sophisticated ape or not, Darwin's own life was an existential leap into Kierkegaardian believing what he could live and die for; it was also the essence of argument

and paradox. His contribution to this background is the suggested existential and clearly suffering leaps and stages of evolution.

Socrates the student knows through his pupils Xenophon and Plato, and through Aristotle and Aristophanes. It is Plato's Dialogues which reveal that Socrates was not concerned with ethics alone, but also with a series of forms which identify the quality in an idea that remains constant. Socrates was, of course, part of Kierkegaard's field of particular study. There is a discernible link with the stages in S.K. Mainly, however, his dialectic conversation, and reasoning from particular facts to a general idea in the inductive method is Kierkegaard. Socrates believed that self-examination was the most reliable method of religion. Who indulged in the self-torture of S.K.? Socrates had been the first philosopher to teach the category of the individual and his self-knowledge. Kierkegaard rejected his theory of a pre-existent soul with a memory, but built upon Socrates' insistence on man's involvement in reality and non-avoidance of suffering. Augustine saw every ethical decision, including suffering, as in some way an act of faith because the unconditional, i.e. God, meets us to some extent in moral obligation. His City of God, a history of mankind, presents the struggle between those who depend on God and those who rely on themselves, which in itself is a dialectic containing many paradoxes and arguments.

Martin Luther stressed the personal and inward. Like Pascal, he had undergone an intense religious experience. His Small Catechism of 1529 became known as the layman's Bible, summarising what a Christian should believe and how he should live. One's knowledge, or acceptance of

dogma, was of less importance than one's subjective condition of heart. At the end of Either/Or, Kierkegaard insisted that the category "for thee" - inwardness and subjectivity - was precisely Luther's. The Protestant setting was Lutheran and Lutheranism stressed the subjective and personal experience that must precede knowledge. Luther's polemical suffering requires no elucidation.

The ultimate influence upon Kierkegaard was the New Testament with the Ethico-religious relationship of the Individual. It is the personal, subjective, individual work of the Holy Spirit upon the individual transforming him/her, that provides the basic root. Kierkegaard's suffering and dialectic originates further back than Middle-ages philosophers, in the Bible. Jesus suffered existentially and alone. Jesus used the dialectical method. When sufferer Job had become an outcast and was approached by his critics, the conversation in verse between him and these men was joined by God taking part in the drama * Here is paradox, God talking to man. It is an extended dialectic.

Undoubtedly, too, Proverbs : true wisdom starts with God : 1,7 ; 1,29 ; 7 ; 9,10. Ecclesiastes has existential content : 2,1-11 and 3,19-20, are the story of life lived without God by a powerful, wealthy king who realised he would face death like an animal. For all the apparent gloom there is the paradoxical joy in 2,26 ; 3,12/13/22 ; 5,18-20. The final message of the book is reminiscent of Kierkegaard's stages and individualism : Get to know God when you are young ... because the real man is the one who has learnt to fear and obey God - Eccl. 12, 1/13.

* See Job, Ch 38.

From a psychological perspective it is interesting to note Kierkegaard's fascination with King Saul. Saul found no comfort, and in desperation went to a witch. Kierkegaard's father was apparently never comforted. It is abundantly clear that Kierkegaard worried about his father's soul after his death. Abraham hovers over Kierkegaard's shoulder.

The Bible.

This study of suffering then suggests special reference to the Christ as Man of Sorrows. "Be ye therefore **perfect**, as your Father in Heaven is perfect" must be seen to include **perfect God-suffering** as well as the paradoxical impossibility of the command. This perfect suffering occurs in three ways. Firstly, the early suffering of God in Lucifer's rebellion could be likened to David, with Absalom's rebellion, but to the degree of infinitude. (Kierkegaard would never tolerate any comparison with the existential suffering of the individual Infinite.) Lucifer's defection alerted God. Bishop Dr. Kenneth Cragg pictured the hesitation of the Almighty before creating man. "I see God hesitating", the Bishop lectured.⁵⁸ "If I create man with free will and he chooses to disobey ...?" God's suffering mind ushered in a perfect creation which He chose to accept would give Him grief and temporarily cost Him His Son. Only in the positive paradox of not moulding an obedient puppet could He be certain of genuine existential affection and duty from those prepared to leap into the **perfect** suffering of existential life, with the attendant moment, paradox, guilt, etc.

Secondly, the incalculable God-suffering of the Cross is sublime **perfection**, to sublimate the physical agony (in the excruciating contortions revealed by scientists from study of the Turin shroud) to consideration of His Mother's future well-being; to begging forgiveness for

His murderers; to immediate decision in saving a criminal at His side. Man cannot enter existentially into the Cross-experience where the guiltless Christ existentially became conniving cheat, lusty adulterer, liar, murderer. The cost in shame, and accepted guilt, is beyond human word-power, but it achieved man's final existential presentation, perfect before God, at the end of time. It also explains, in a sensitive Kierkegaardian mind, the always-guilty aspect.

Thirdly, there is the ongoing suffering of God who observes the burgeoning sin of mankind. This aspect continues the perfection because the increasing weight of Sin never becomes too great for God's toleration or ability. The cross grows in power and efficacy, as the sinful population explodes. The continuing choice to share suffering invigorates the soul.

Kierkegaard's 'hidden inwardness' is everyman at his time of suffering, seeing the Christ's reflection in his own mirror. The uniqueness of Christian existentialism is the Absolute Paradox of the Incarnation set against, yet part of, each single-category person's essentially **silent**, essentially **acceptable**, burden-commodity throughout the progress-stages of individual decision and solution. **Man's essence is his existence** which cannot be regimented or systematized, even though his thought may be moulded. The awesomeness of Kierkegaard's suffering existentialism is that it provides the answer to remorse. It is a godsend to the concerned pastor. It completes the circle of its own chosen anxiety by catering for anxious man. Peace and fulfilment modify suffering in the explanation : suffering is unavoidable; its causes are set out in Scripture.

Repentance brings forgiveness, but for many, especially deep thinkers, the Pauline thorn continues, not as punishment but as sharing the experience of existence. Suffering existentialism gathers up all participants in the time process. Based upon eternal Christ, Christianity alone as religion stands up to the numerical, the intellectual, the emancipated, and the sinful immensity of the 20th Century. S.K. hints in his writings how casually the Hegelian pastors took their heritage.

The experience of the Christ existentially tempted "in all things", and His consistent choice to suffer and overcome towards His own earthly existential perfection as Very Man, vindicates for Kierkegaard His position as the only Master omnipotently fitted to be the Saviour.

Finally it is existential reality that religious Forgiveness is always costly. It is God's laws that are broken. It is His life that is crucified. Suffering seen at the highest level has to be an example.

Phenomenology.

Phenomenology is the movement, begun by Husserl, which concentrates on detailed description of conscious experience, without explaining or elucidating. Bearing in mind assumptions and intuition, it aims at a straight objective account of the events that represent the phenomena in a given (philosophical) situation or sequence, coherent and systematic.

It must be remembered that in existentialism, man is in possession of himself (Sartre)* while man is also separated from himself and from the world, driving home the questions, if not the answers, to engage man fully as a human being.

* See appendix

The Discipline.

In the philosophical world, the argument pertains that substance is illusory. In Metaphysics, Ontology is the essence of things in the abstract. The student recalls the problem of Berkeley, * that objects are perceived phases of mind, and of Hume, that substance is as supposed and unknowable as is the ego. The subliminal self of psychology cannot be ignored. The word phenomenological, by no means common to all dictionaries, refers to the study of phenomena perceived in experience. The philosophical method that uses phenomena to find out what lies beyond them, whether prior to them, inside them, or subsequent to them, was Husserl's * position. While concentrating on the immediate data of consciousness, he manipulated psychology to reflect upon the subject and his/her conscious activity. In a sense, one is here exploring the theme of Kierkegaard's fulfillment, restricting to experiences without prior comments. Husserl would suspend all beliefs, in the search.

A balance must be struck in setting down significant events, in chronological order, showing Kierkegaard's conscious moulding experience, but without presuming too in-depth an explanation, or regularly resorting to assumption. One recalls that Heidegger * and Sartre * found no content in consciousness; and that of all philosophers, Kierkegaard is sometimes the most mysterious. His discipline was to take his epistemological question to its logical conclusion: there is no rational answer.

An author who sees 20th Century metaphysical thought as founded in neurosis and therefore degenerate, would seem biassed, yet Rudolph Friedman⁵⁹ provides a useful start for a description of Kierkegaard's conscious experience.

* See Appendix

More than any other commentator he singles out Kierkegaard's turmoil as he feels in absolute measure the divinity of the Father, yet also clings to the awareness that only those who have been chosen for loneliness can understand loneliness.⁶⁰ To set the stage of his conscious experience, Friedman piercingly reminds us of The Duchess of Malfi* where there is joy in penetrating deeper than others into the darkness, away from the mob, alone. Such a picture could be allusion to Kierkegaard.

Early Tension from the Past.

Kierkegaard was born into what Jaspers* would later accuse him of presenting: "forced Christianity". His home was a house of tension where the mother was the former servant who had fallen pregnant. Immediately,

* See: The Duchess of Malfi. John Webster (b \pm 1580) Ed. Elizabeth M. Brennan (Ernest Benn Ltd., London, 1964)

Kierkegaardian overtones:

- i) Mental turmoil penetrating into darkness, alone.
"They pass through whirlpools who the event weigh"
Delio in Act II, Sc VI, ll 82-83.
- ii) Fight with the Church: the Cardinal complains about her and shares in her death. Accusation of jesting with religion.
- iii) Ambivalence in attitudes towards the play, and ongoing dialectic.
- iv) She was a person of purity, piety and integrity in a corrupt Court, society, Church.
- v) She accepted suffering and persecution as the necessary means of divine guidance.

* Karl Jaspers (1883.1969)

Suggested man learns most about himself in guilt, failure, death, i.e. limitations. Hoped to disturb the individual into philosophizing. See his: The Way to Wisdom (1949) and: Philosophy (1932)

intuition demands priority in the student's mind. Some writers dismiss the father's sexuality, together with his having cursed God, as having no effect upon the young Kierkegaard, but even apart from the earliest conscious experience of concern which one immediately senses, by his own admission on July 22, 1839, the early years were uneasy: "My journey through life is so unsteady because in my early youth my forelegs were weakened by being overstrained".⁶¹ His life was philosophically debilitating for another reason, the larger than life energy of his new thoughts - a Journal observation on the same day. Kierkegaard was overactive mentally and over-burdened emotionally. At the time, he blamed this straining of the intellect for his unhappiness.⁶² He remained so concerned over the "dissipations of my youth", that, when his singing-master suggested a position at Court, he worried that he had not, after all, broken completely with the world. This was the normal lad who would sit alone in his Kayak on the ocean and harpoon a fish. It is also the deeply aware, subjective, suffering theologian-philosopher, haunted by past sin, whether his or his loved ones'. It is the dialectical paradoxical Kierkegaard, epitomising Sartre's dread; subjectivism; Being within Experience.

The Melancholy Guilt-ridden Youth.

Whether in childhood there had arisen the classical sublimated incestuous link with his father that Friedmann hints at,⁶³ is arguable.

It would be illogical from the contemporary age of Freud to look back and interpret a sensitive relationship as ipso facto homosexual. Kierkegaard's earliest conscious experience was to try to be close to his earthly and heavenly fathers, and therefore to suffering, which differs from Friedmann's suggestion of a schizophrenic who "found reality in the shock treatment of the cross".⁶⁴ It is unlikely that a very bright student, and friend of many, was totally melancholy, despite his own frequent references to unhappiness. His youth and maturity were serious-minded; they were not mad. The early scene that unfolds is that obedience to worship that was normal in Victorian homes; except that with S.K. it was charged with an atmosphere of remembered guilt because the head of the house had committed the unforgivable: he had once cursed God.

Home was fraught with dialectic and domestic paradox as the mother-figure retreated, frightened and intellectually inadequate, while Kierkegaard took over as the conversationalist and companion she could never aspire to be, nor was required to become.

There is little suggestion that S.K. enjoyed all this. The necessary assumption, if the subjective is to be the source of the objective world of existence, is the basic innate fear which any sensitive student observes occasionally in children, clearly apparent in Kierkegaard.

Unease becomes Angst.

There was a family history of illness and anticipated early death, which must have had some influence. Friedmann interprets the servant-mother as the Biblical Martha, but there is little logic in his idea of Kierkegaard as Mary. Father and Son walked up and down in the study, chatting intimately. Far more likely that Kierkegaard

saw himself as Isaac, sacrificed to the father, but saved to carry on God's work. Friedmann reserves the Isaac figure for Regine Olsen. The introductory conscious experience was one in which he visualised himself cast in Biblical destiny of suffering, a suffering he sought to suffer. He seemingly wanted to be lonely and overlooked by others. He quietly accepted responsibilities beyond his years, as did Jesus in the temple at the age of twelve, not playing with other children on the caravan trail, but concerned to guide the nation's leaders. Undoubtedly he was terrified for his father's soul and to a lesser degree for his mother's, considering the puritanical attitudes then towards sex. His life would have to expiate them. Reflective analysis observes the subjectivism of always being guilty, despite the joy of salvation.

Youthful Freedom and Maturing.

As he grew older, he severed the relationship with his father; the suggestion of a super-ego becomes confused. At this point it is too early to comment on any desire to be recognised as a prophet of the truth, but a superiority complex begins asserting itself and there are indications of selfishness and intolerance. Still introspective, Kierkegaard might have referred to himself as a Janus Bifrons ("I smile with one face, I weep with the other") but now an adult determination beyond rebellious youth, albeit religious youth, is emerging. By 1830, still a teenager, there had commenced an 8-years break with the home, and his personal freedom of decision was acting out what his writings would formulate as his own Aesthetic Stage of decadent romantic life. Freedom of choice had chosen pleasure; with it came awareness of emptiness and anguish. Any Oedipus was gone.

The Student.

What Walter Lowrie refers to as 'studiosus in perpetuum' had begun. Kierkegaard was now a student at the University of Copenhagen, from October 30, 1830. Two days later he was drafted into Company 7 of the Royal Guard; three days later, again, he was discharged as unfit for military service. By the following April he was achieving magna cum laude for Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and History, and summa cum laude for Mathematics. There would come the typically student neglect of study, the attempted break with Divinity, life in boarding houses, dressing in high fashion, and running up of accounts. By day he frequented the smartest café, discoursing with the intelligentsia. By night he was at the theatre. He gave little indication of concern for family even though indications were that his mother and favourite sister Petrea were ailing. In fact, psychologically it might be argued that subconsciously he was punishing his father by getting more and more money out of him for his mounting debts. As it happened, in the midst of devouring the Mozart that fascinated him and the Don Juan with whom Kierkegaard identified himself, mother and sister both died. There was no trauma.

Symbolical Music - Expanding Existentialism.

It is important to follow his next experience through Faust, with its fear and damnation, and The Wandering Jew. Even superficial reflexion uncovers beneath the culture he was imbibing, a life outside religion. Such was the condition of Kierkegaard at the time. Metaphorically, Faust was Doubt, Don Juan was Sensuality, and The Wandering Jew was Despair, "the petrified wife of Lot brought to consciousness".⁶⁵ He would have liked to use the Mozart Don Juan music to usher in "new light" but he could not complete a 'novella' to fit it.⁶⁶

The infatuation with Don Juan suggests the experience of normal feelings as well as his awareness of the ethics of his own love-life. This is important in a religious person. It also raises an interesting aspect, the manly being of pride which can be detected within the experience. Even in sensuality, did he aspire to be perfect? Was there a falling-short from a suffering Don Juan which later influenced the breaking of the engagement? At sixteen he himself had written in his father's letter copy book, "I do not know what it is with Søren ... is it that he will write nothing except that for which he could expect praise?" Was he counselling himself as if through his father, that he must refrain from seeking "illusory objective universal answers"* and set out to "make himself and get his experience"? And as late as the Corsair affair and Goldschmidt's resignation, the latter remarked on Kierkegaard's intense and bitter glance in the street, his 'higher right' and loftiness; a defence? S.K. was later to accuse Regine of lofty pride.

Distrust, Disgust develop.

By now his old distrust of crowd was growing. Early tormenting at school had been forgotten in healthy communication at student level. He experienced the inevitable pleasure and regret when Charles X suspended press liberty in the Five Ordinances of St. Cloud. Rabble opinion was stifled. This was good, because mass opinion lacked the individual/moment/inwardness etc aspects and truth never emerged from a mass of people lacking the preparedness-to-suffer of one person. His own individual literary efforts might also be affected which would be unfortunate because by this time the student senses in S.K. that holy

* H.J. Blackham, Six Existentialist Thinkers p.152

conviction of all prophets that they are right. His philosophy was becoming a way of life. Alongside this, his need for suffering grew "just as Christ feeds us with His body and blood". The Angst in The Wandering Jew had its prototype for him in the figtree which Christ commanded to wither and die.⁶⁷ His respect for punishment from the Almighty in the aesthetic stage was not typical of the non-Christian romantics whose joy was summed up in Mozart. For when Don Juan Kierkegaard accompanied his companions (i.e. the crowd) to the rooms of a prostitute, there was premeditated confusion and revulsion that one might pay to sin (not pay for pleasure) and possibly father a child, thereafter to go through life uncertain of this monumental happening. If, of course, this was the cause of the disgust and not some quirk of nature masked by doctrinalised anguish. Would he have reacted differently alone, seeing alone he cast Regine aside?

The Stages .

About this time, he applied the stages more seriously to himself. He seemed after the effect of the brothel visit to be beyond his ethical stage yet fearing he was still trapped in the aesthetic. The increasing volume of writing criticised any attitude content to rest in the ethical stage. His curious Protestant genius halted the non-Catholic march and sifted it. He wasn't even content that he himself had conclusively made the leap. He wrote that there are no logically compelling reasons why a man should opt for Christ or the world. Choose to remain at the stage of pleasure or cultivated humanism, but one would be haunted by conscious or unconscious despair. (The Sickness Unto Death). Duty can be where principles and (disapproved) collective aims blur the awareness of individual responsibility; any intimation of

dread, in one's situation, then leads to the choice and decision. Any preoccupation with objectivity proved man wished to remain a spectator.

Growing steadily was his intractable, anything but docile, final position. His intensity was already shortening his life and his prayers^{*} at this period show the self-flagellation of the maturing soul preparing to have controversy with editor Goldschmidt and Bishops Mynster and Martensen. S.K.'s conviction was that his subjective faith was the highest form. Next, he would go as far as to defy the command regarding the Sacraments, in his conviction of righteousness.

The Eucharist.

Having chosen existentially to see to it that he was never ready for the end, his seemingly petulant refusal of the Eucharist from a priest was in effect S.K.'s monumental proclamation to the Church. Those ordained represented the historical body of Christ inspired by reasoning scholars. A layman would have represented subjective decision and leap in consecrating for him what only priests were authorised to do. Kierkegaard wanted a fellow layman to suffer the responsibility of such action which would probably have meant excommunication. His own army would have begun to defy nominal, unsaved, ecclesiastical authority. Furthermore, he had written profoundly his observations on Grundtvig's Theory of the Church and Sacraments.^{68*}

* Because God had chosen to reveal Himself as The Word, he was careful in his use of words.

* Grundtvig founded the Danish Folk High School movement. Even though culturally far apart from Kierkegaard, he took existential thinking seriously. A teacher of co-operation rather than Kierkegaardian individuality, he disliked speculative philosophy and resented any merging of life's contrasts. He believed tensions were inevitable and that suffering was unavoidable.

Some Assessment.

The tragedy was that the tranquility of Justification by Faith had eluded him. He continued orthodox by persuasion always hopeful of the priesthood and unworthy in his own eyes. The refusal of the Last Rites had also been because he wanted Communion from one still arriving. Paradoxically it was because of his awesome respect for the intimate yet unknowable Almighty, before whom he maintained to the last that we are always in the wrong⁶⁹, that at the end, in the final analysis, God had to be seen to be in the right. Had there been one person who could claim that he had repented, "cried to God, and got no relief", he had written, then one might despair of Providence. Ironically, both he and his father had cried out, without relief. There is no anomaly here : from youth, his conscious choice was a commitment to revealing himself as seeking perfection in continuing turmoil. He found God in the darkness. He cried without relief. The developing Kierkegaard and the seeds of existentialism are in the great writers: the helplessness and failure of dreams in Chekhov's, The Three Sisters, where nothing turns out as one would want; the decision to isolate oneself from society in Conrad's Victory; Graham Greene's The Quiet American, who cannot avoid subjective involvement; and the unavoidable commitment in a world of diminishing size but burgeoning evil, portrayed in Golding's Lord of the Flies.

The Revelation of his Prayers.

Clearly, from Kierkegaard's prayers, the experience of youthful phenomena had been harrowing, phenomenologically. "Oh my God, my God (Kierkegaardian repetition, from the Cross), unhappy and tormented was my childhood, full of torments my youth. I have lamented, I have sighed, and I have wept"....

".... in a life of thirty, forty, perhaps seventy years
.... in Thy love Thou hast prevented me from buying for
this sum just the little sweets of the kind for which I
would have no memory in eternity, or which I would even
recall for my eternal torment - as having bought the
worthless".⁷⁰ His mental action was not to blame God,
but to appreciate the love "which placed me in these
sufferings." No wonder S.K. is written of as a martyr
of the Truth rather than as a poet of Religion. Each
suffering was "an eternal acquisition, for one remembers
only one's suffering". This was a dynamic attitude to-
wards suffering in a young man who saw no example of
beneficial suffering in his Church leaders, and who had
not the benefit of modern media which have acquainted
his present-day readers with universal suffering. He
deserves full credit. At the time he was ten years
younger than John the Baptist, and was referring back to
ten years earlier still: "Oh, in the time of silence
when a man consumes himself in the desert in which he
does not hear Thy voice ... it is only a moment of silence
in an intimacy of conversation. Bless then this silence
as Thy word to man ... Thou dost instruct by Thy silence".⁷¹

One charmingly impudent prayer hearkens back to his
childhood: a prayer that God will have a little patience
with us⁷² refers to the child mistaken at being thankful
to get his own way; the child fearing what would do him
good. The student interprets such paradox in the
Kierkegaardian mould. Elsewhere, he refers to God "cruelly
requiring" that we be like Him; to the "broken heart
(that) sighs under the weight of its guilt"; to the
"humbled with downcast eyes"; and to the fact that
"everything goes wrong for me".⁷³ The above is on a
plane beyond self-pity. The consciousness of Kierkegaard
was ad infinitum the working-out of the existential
spiritual bond of suffering chosen by God to inflict,

and by him to accept yet paradoxically vice versa.*

Genuine Existential Suffering.

In Judge for Yourselves, where he refers to untrue imitation of Christ, before Luther's time, in flagellation, crawling on knees, etc., he fearlessly denounces arranged suffering (as against genuine existential suffering): "No, a man is justified only by faith. And therefore, in God's name, to hell with the Pope and all his auxiliary assistants...⁷⁴" Kierkegaard was consistently experiencing chosen action as the demand of Christ, not non-suffering objective teaching or a style of accumulated credit balances in Heaven. Kierkegaard's major themes were never academic treatises. As with Christ, he believed his preaching came after suffering and temptation in the wilderness. To some extent this is indisputable.

The Desultory Mind.

In establishing his mind, the intense mental activity has been noted. The wealth of snippets, flashes that were never followed up, and vignettes of cogitation, can be found scattered like pearls amongst his pages. There are brief sentences. There are ideas rich in conversation material, such as Quidam in Stages on Life's Way where we are fed the thought that the more one suffers, the more one has a sense of the comic. A nice point, in the true meaning of the word, contained in one of his parables. To pursue this brain-feverishness, no matter how Kierkegaard might discard all Hegelian gnostic awareness as a faith in reason (and therefore idolatry), the reason and the ramifications and the explanations in his own mind were often the spur to continual concern

* The existential phenomenology here is the ultimate being-within-experience suffering.

whether for his father's tormented soul, the Regine affair, the state of the Church, or his own situation. It must be reiterated, how his monumental Angst was constantly nurtured. It is one thing to maintain from Prof. J.N. Jonsson's study of the man⁷⁵ that the gulf between man and God prevents the student operating on behalf of philosophy (human) and revelation (divine) from the same basis; it is one thing to erect a wall of logic that separates more than joins subjective faith and objective reason. It is another to prove that the mind was not creating the heart of Søren Kierkegaard. Those who make an idol of the subjective sometimes forget the feverishness of their own reasoning.

His conversion or progress to the final stage was going slowly. "One has to walk back by the same road he came out on earlier. It is easy to become impatient."⁷⁶ He had never been an angelic child. His father had had occasion to chastise and warn him. As he matured, he had referred to backsliding as a possibility.⁷⁷ The student intuitively questions how drunken the "drunken orgies" really were. The conscious experience was dialectically glancing from an apparent desire to taste the world, to "the mediated relationship through which man must always approach the divine".⁷⁸ He mused upon the personal "unrest which drove people to seek so zealously to become martyrs, in order to make the test as brief and momentarily intense as possible easier to endure than a prolonged one".⁷⁹ In all this, he had himself in mind. Even in the few references to the sensual, he was enjoying the thought more than sensual life itself. He was beginning to court his own final asceticism.

Genuine Existential Love.

His letters to Regine, long before the remarkable: "If I had had faith, I would have stayed with Regine"⁸⁰ and "her overweening pride how disastrous it is when a girl has had no religious upbringing"⁸¹, are reminiscent of the Brownings. They were beautifully existential letters: "Love never possesses its object in a dead and impotent way but strives at every moment to acquire what it possesses at that very moment. It never says 'Now I am safe' but runs on forever..."⁸² (the moment, the never-arriving, the paradox). The content of this letter with its poetry, and of the one in which he told her, "I have never doubted for a moment, no - I write this out of the deepest conviction of my soul - indeed not even in the most obscure corner of the world shall I doubt that I am yours, Yours eternally"⁸³ is of true love. The letter with the scarf, "I listen for your voice ... I see the open window ... you stand in your Summer dress ... and you are mine, united with me ..." ⁸⁴ reinforces the realization of his spiritually-physical love. It suggests the physically-spiritual association of Heloise and Abelard and the warning-bell rings that this must remain unfulfilled, like the love of Mary Magdalene for Jesus. Kierkegaard would have wanted the physical on spiritual terms, some reflection of the suffering of Daniel's three friends who emerged from the furnace without so much as the smell of fire. (Daniel, Ch. 3, v. 11).

His Complete Application.

If in establishing the mood of Kierkegaard one discerns at times the ethical dreamer, a balance appears with the ruthlessness of his exposure of all facets and possibilities of the Christian pilgrimage. He avoided nothing.

In referring to ascetic practices, he warned that being hopeful of praise before God was less likely to succeed than the simple 'God be merciful to me, a sinner.' Life becomes 'sheer torment all the more anxious does he become'.⁸⁵ It could even lead to seeking worldliness rather than being "ensnared in the trap of meritoriousness and self-tormenting". Kierkegaard's suffering conscious experience was a concern for the Christian Way of the 1st Century, existentially practical and existentially meditative. Douglas Reeman writes of war-time tension: "You go on and on until one day the problem has no solution, and the realization splits you wide open ..."⁸⁶ Kierkegaard's warfaring suggests a solution: "For every higher degree of grace, law must also be made more rigorous in inwardness, otherwise the whole secular mentality rushes forward and takes 'grace' in vain".⁸⁷

It would lack certain observation to suggest he built up personal confusion from too-rigorous an application of Socratic dialectic, seeking the difference between opinion and knowledge by debating first with himself before leaping decisively beyond his outlook to find essential meanings. In effect he was consciously putting together the same doctrine of non-arrival, the theme of constant marking time, spiritually running on the spot, strangely unable to rest cleansed and contented in the grace he recommended to others. He saw in his own almost-achieved but paradoxically incomplete third stage, the unlikelihood of peace; his Socratic-gadfly stinging of the Danish Athenians out of their lethargy and ignorance to seek wisdom and a nobler life, was exacerbated by ongoing personal memory. To offer suffering in the spirit of 1 Peter 2, 19-25 (The value of undeserved suffering) moved out beyond Kierkegaard's personal experience. It had become his general policy, an existen-

tial answer caught in every decisive moment of time; man's part in the two-way working of grace offered and accepted. Familiar though it sounds, the difference was the acceptability of the Angst as one's only hope, dwelling, as man does, forever in the wrong, with suffering unavoidable. Such an unlikely answer to Christian living had to be repeated and repeated if anyone was to listen. Even today the most existential Christians seem free of suffering.

His Indirect Communication and the Mystical.

The one growing dimension of S.K.'s thought that linked his other doctrines was that of Indirect Communication. With the example of Hume and Kant that certain knowledge cannot be found through the senses, it was impossible to know the truth objectively. "The truth that is true for me" was communicated indirectly, and so one had to bet on faith. Therefore the moment, the continual anxiety, the decision, the leap, the consequences, the paradox had to be affected by inwardness, immediacy, subjectiveness, which came to the individual as indirect mysteries in Simone Weil's words: "... mysteries of the faith not a proper object of the intelligence, permitting affirmation or denial not of the order of truth but above it ... the only part of the soul capable of any real contact with them is the faculty of supernatural love"*

Appraisal and Comment.

Any cursory glance at Kierkegaard's emphases suggests that the individualism of this secret knowledge would preclude fellowship. Not only did he observe a lack of this (amazingly modern born-again type) mysticism, which defies expression in terms intelligible to any who have

* Simone Weil : Article in 'Theology'

not had a similar experience, in his Danish Church. He now observed in the comfort of congregation (the disliked crowd) the impossibility of those individual church members assimilating the "incommunicable and inexpressible knowledge and love of God or of religious truth received in the spirit without precedent, effort or reasoning".*

The Almighty furthermore could not be wholly other to a group or crowd. Any individual might bring forward his or her own sublime experience of God's knowable nearness and contact in the very, subjective, manner that was meant to serve Kierkegaard's own argument.

What Bonhoeffer was to describe as the decisive difference between Christianity and all other religions⁸⁸, the Almighty edged out of the world and onto the cross, weak and powerless in the only way he could share man's humiliation, such was S.K.'s now growing belief in his own situation. Bain points out how he saw in his contemporaries a worldly Christianity⁸⁹ that lowered the standard of the devout life by **the avoidance of suffering**. It remains a mystery that S.K. never read into the many New Testament situations the joy and peace which was meant to follow a confrontation with the Christ. But one example, is that of the despised Samaritan woman who had found no happiness with five husbands.⁹⁰ Jesus did not offer her anxiety but the waters of eternal life. Bain writes in the same passage that even if Kierkegaard did make suffering the sine qua non of Christianity, he deserves high commendation for pointing the Church to its agonising origin.

* See David Knowles, What is Mysticism, Burns and Oates, 1967)

Presentiment.

The dialectically imposed and wilfully chosen purifying process by means of intense metaphysical thought never let up in Kierkegaard's mind. "Presentiment is not linked to the direction of the eye's orientation toward existence and its future but to the reflex of the eye's direction toward the past, so that the eye, by staring at what lies beyond it (in another sense, ahead of it) develops a disposition to see what lies ahead of it (in another sense behind it)".⁹¹ These words he wrote about the time of mentioning "a family tragedy about the god who visited the father's sin upon the family unto four or five generations, told by a tattered stunted creature".⁹² Both these quotations supplement his neat lengthy writing, on presentiment, from which these lines are significant: "All presentiment is murky and rises all at once in the consciousness or so gradually fills the soul with anxiety that it does not arise as a conclusion from given premises but always manifests itself in an undefined something; however, I now believe more than ever that an attempt should be made to point out the subjective predisposition and not as something unsound and sickly, but as an aspect of a normal constitution".⁹³ What had developed appears here not as lugubrious melancholy, but a reading of the signs that fear and trembling is the only healthy normal way. He could return to worry about "a mentally deranged person who went around scanning all children, for he believed that he had once made a girl pregnant ... no-one could understand the indescribable concern with which he would look at a child".⁹⁴

Blessed Misery.

The doctrine of non-arrival and guilt-unrest was rooted in acceptable conscience and positive fear. Semantic

meanings now have to be re-judged, re-estimated, for the reader receives an impression of a growing phenomenon coming out of the suffering. Such is not despite the following quotation but in its spirit: "I could perhaps reproduce in a novel called 'The Mysterious Family' the tragedy of my childhood, the terrifying, secret elucidation of the religious which a fearful presentiment gave me, which my imagination hammered out, and my offense at the religious".⁹⁵ He would have it no other way until he died. As his mentor Socrates had insisted, to know how to lead a good life was a lifelong process.

Paradoxical and Unusual.^{*}

His earliest recorded letter at the age of 16 had shown a concern and family devotion devoid of bitterness. Kierkegaard suffered not because he was a misfit, but because he was a normal lad, concerned, clever and **involved**. As he had matured, to have defined his conscious experience would have been to define what was uppermost in his thinking, a thinking that from the earliest held important insights for his writing. "I think that it would be good to let the thoughts come forth with the umbilical cord of the original mood if what Hamann says is true ... that there are ideas which a man gets only once in his life".⁹⁶ Then in the margin, "entries so cryptic that I no longer understand them". This is quite usual in most writers. His ideas had been formulating and the early Journal pages are a haberdashery of subject matter ready to adorn themes, but he never departed subjectively from his Christian emphasis and the need for personal choice independent of assistance.

* K. as a lad would probably have been more unusual in a non-pathological sense. He could only be called schizophrenic in the sense that categories of reference did not cohere with the so-called "normal" (J.N. Jonsson).

His philosophy consolidated.

The existentialist thinks alone. Jesus did not send John a helpful answer to his query from prison. He returned a message that would force His cousin to decide for himself, which in every man is a form of suffering. Kierkegaard had accepted Socrates' non-requirement of **proven** immortality. Socrates' life was the existential proof; his martyr death completed the proof. That was existential suffering in decision. Socrates knew the authorities suspected him of corrupting youth by preaching the questioning of the old order. His decision was to carry on advocating that "the soul is that in man which has knowledge" so that with knowledge his pupils would question and decide. He could have escaped execution during the 30 days Delian festival but **chose** to suffer. From personal experience the convincing aspect emerges. Even if Jesus could be proved a historical certainty, it would not help, because S.K. never departed from his stressed "no transition from the historical ... can be made as the basis for an eternal happiness".⁹⁷ Kierkegaard observed that all other religions were oblique; *obscurum per obscurius*. "Another speaks, but in Christianity there is direct address: I am the Truth".⁹⁸ What the reader has seen again and again is eventually S.K.'s unassailable position. All the world's knowledge is nothing compared with the nourishment offered by Christianity, which pours out the very body and blood of its founder.⁹⁹ The intent was now clear: personal convicting, stressing the conviction, through Christ's suffering revelation in oneself as suffering individual.

His Scriptural Insight.

Where then does this lead? Cynics might say that Kierkegaard had no choice other than to create an inevitable philosophy out of the conscious experience of his combined

nature and situation. If the student is to establish phenomenologically his state or emotional phase at any point, certain observation on the border of assumption must be advanced. In proclaiming the bravery of personal choice, he was not preaching what he was not practising. No matter what his nature, or Friedmann's suspicions, Kierkegaard was clearly capable of turning his back on family problems; capable of following up his genuinely passionate letters to Regine with marriage (many a Scandinavian was married at 16); capable of returning at any stage to his life of comfort and wealth amongst his stimulating peers. **He chose none of this.** He chose the lonely situation he believed to be Scriptural and to have been given by God. God had given Hosea a prostitute wife against all the law: an example of existential decision-making by God Himself towards an ultimate overall good. God gave the Hebrews an earthly king in Saul. He knew the man had a jealous nature and would be a failure. Jeremiah was forbidden to marry, in a society where this was unusual. The prophet became an existential symbol of God's message, in which sorrow is intrinsic. Comment is repetitive because Kierkegaard's pattern is paradoxically repetitive. He took his stand upon the existential spirit of suffering Scripture, summed up by the psalmist (119, v.75) who wrote "In **faithfulness** you have afflicted me".

God's Subjectivity.

Considering its watershed effect, the student might question to what extent Kierkegaard's parent had merely **thought** the curse on the Jutland heath. To what extent are the grumblings of a child laid on his conscience? Such is not necessarily part of the **heart** which God looks upon. Jesus in the wilderness temptation (Matthew 4, 1-11),

had subtleties fed into His mind. To be given the kingdoms of the world was, in a sense, His purpose; His objective goal. But to be given them by a devil one had bowed to, would have been salvational suicide. Kierkegaard was learning the pre-eminence of the subjective also in God's assessment of man, and the wealth of his written ideas is to some extent the release of his mind with its multifarious darts. He pursued perfection through thought in search of any truth. Suffering, even infinitessimally, was never permitted to rest. In one of his letters to "My Regine" he tells how "I never drove alone, for sorrow, worry and sadness were my faithful companions".¹⁰⁰ Agony's sublimation was his vast output, just as Christ's relief, if it can be understood this way, was the approaching destiny of Calvary.

No Change.

If Friedmann is accurate, the force of Kierkegaard's encomium^{*} of Regine in at least one letter makes no sense. His use of Paul's "neither Death nor Life, nor Angels, nor Principalities" is paraphrased as his wish never to tear Søren from Regine.¹⁰¹ This is beyond any cover-up of abnormal tendencies that would in themselves have been the cause of intensive suffering. Two facets of his mood are again visible in this letter: the never-arriving and the time-moment concepts being then existentially experienced. "... he is in love, and yet at the same time he is constantly wishing to be so a longing makes him wish at every moment to be what he already is at that very moment", he wrote. The query returns. The sleuth has covered his tracks. All one can thoroughly establish is the paradox in the same letter - "in the stillness of the night ... or in the midst of the noisy

* his own word : a sort of formal praise

uproar when nobody understands me".

Rash Words are Sad Words.

The dialectical confusion persists of a personality that got peace neither from hyperactive intelligence nor from melancholy, so that there had begun an unfortunate turn of phrase: "I am so listless and dismal that I not only have nothing which fills my soul, but I cannot conceive of anything that could possibly satisfy it - alas, not even the bliss of Heaven".¹⁰² He was longing for an assurance that nothing would take away peace, "not we ourselves my wild lusts, not my heart's restless craving".¹⁰³ The mood reveals itself as he continues this passage: "My total mental and spiritual impotence at present is terrible precisely because it is combined with a consuming longing, with an intellectual-spiritual burning - and yet so formless that I do not even know what it is I need". Only so much can be observed. In his twenties he confessed: "All existence makes me anxious, from the smallest fly to the mysteries of the Incarnation ... all existence is infected, I myself most of all ... my distress is enormous, boundless ... no one can console me except God in Heaven and He will not take compassion on me - Young man, you who will stand at the beginning of your goal ... you will never know the suffering of one who ... must begin to retreat (supposedly from insubordination) weak and exhausted".¹⁰⁴ Possibly these lines begin to sketch the unknown Kierkegaard beneath the layers of commentary. And what he entered on May 12, 1839: "I say of my sorrow what the Englishman says of his house: my sorrow is my castle".

Friedmann's Comments.

Accepting that some assumption is necessary in gauging the conscious experience, Friedmann suggests that

Kierkegaard felt an erotically tinged dread that satisfied his masochism. There is little evidence that Kierkegaard was enjoying pain or humiliation. It grieved him that his father showed little remorse. It grieved him that others would sin and not realise the consequences. It grieved him that Regine might suffer. Friedmann analyses an ambivalent aggression in the young man he returns to, who had been heavily in debt by 1837: Love and hatred combined. Paying out 1262 rigsdaler, meant that Kierkegaard was forcing more money and more love out of his father; he in turn was loving the old man in gratitude and also helping to ruin him. Whatever the case, that had been the period of heaviest emotion when dread was formulating as doctrine.

A Closer Look at the Curse.

Then had come the discovery of the curse.¹⁰⁵ His gait and already-gaunt face had almost taken over the looks of his father. Friedmann is interesting in hinting that consciously, about this time, Kierkegaard was behaving like a psychological murderer, in that he had rebelled against his father, also cursing, in a sense, the parent who showed little remorse (M.P.K.'s photo is that of a man unaware of what is going on). Otherwise his conscious attitude might have been different. How could S.K. hope to arouse spiritually a father who was his spiritual mentor? Kierkegaard junior was then going through the liberating divine purification. This was his Burning Bush. It was the period of sharpest mental crisis, a reaction to his impatient dislike of the father. It was as if his own guilt over his wordly student living was fighting his concern for the unworried father, paradoxically as to which guilt-suffering should take pre-eminence. He spoke of leaving a happy party and wishing to shoot himself. He had left home. He was living at

Lovstraede 7.

Reconciliation with M.P.K. Calmer Waters.

It almost seemed he was aware that his own new theological activity was a mask and that God could not be fooled. Only an early death could expiate. Reconciliation came about, and Kierkegaard actually chose a reconciliation motto from King Lear. This read: "In a walled prison". Father was individual Lear; he was individual Cordelia. The old love was asserting itself and the relationship mercifully continued until Mr. Kierkegaard's death on 9 August 1838. This is of importance in establishing the son's conscious awareness then and his intent: there was minimal negative worry concerning their relationship, once the parent had died; no morbid regrets about that aspect, which could otherwise be inaccurately deemed the cause of later 'unbalanced' emotional behaviour. Kierkegaard now got down to regular study from 7 - 11 every night, not in what Freud calls "the return of the repressed", but in a calm and sensible time free of the storms that would return to memory. And so the immense influence of his father ceased.

The funeral took place on 14 August, in the family plot in the Assistents Cemetery, and life was normal enough for the publication "against his will" of From the Papers of One Still Living, on 7 September, about Hans Christian Andersen as a novelist. In some of the foregoing, in the heart of the relevant passages, there is evidence that Kierkegaard was a precursor to modern psycho-analysis. He understood the unconscious and the subconscious. Journal Entry 76 touches on how long-forgotten matters burst into memory. The connecting link is anxiety.

Regine Olsen.

S.K. had met Regine Olsen for the first time on a visit to the Rørdam's home in Frederiksberg, between May 8 and 12, 1837. They became engaged on 10 September, two days after his proposal, and almost immediately he regretted it. Behind the apprehension, one might again analyse. Oedipus guessed the Sphinx's riddle, and in ignorance married his mother. The student would require equal mental agility to decide whether Regine was the synthesis of the warm (?) thesis-mother and cool antithesis-father. Did Regine too closely resemble Kierkegaard's jolly, favourite sister Petrea? Is Friedmann extreme to suggest that he was secretly fearing incest? Was the inevitable break-up 13 months later because Regine would have rivall-ed the father-figure's love? "Thus the great man could shine forth and achieve his ethical works", wrote Friedmann. What was the position of the mother? Is there a hint of refusing female love as a reparation? If this were the case, why bother to become engaged? Rilke speaks of "an old hostility between a human life and a great task". Probably Lowrie is accurate. He writes of "the sublimation of Eros". It is clear that Kierkegaard wished to go on living his apparently selfish life, one that in one way was never really unhappy. In The Concept of Dread, he recognised that the erotic kept on intervening: It required courage to realise that genius ... in spite of its brilliance should be sin. One had to learn to moderate the hungry longings of the soul. Within weeks he had read the first number of the Corsair, published by Goldschmidt, and within two months he had entered the Pastoral Seminary. The first six months of the new year that followed were devoted to his dissertation for the Magister degree, The Concept of Irony, with Constant Reference to Socrates, and it was accepted on July 16. Three weeks later, he returned Regine Olsen's

ring, and after two months he formally broke the engagement, had dinner with the distraught family, and left for Berlin where he attended Schelling's lectures for five months. The religious/suffering reasons he formulated for the break would exercise his mind and puzzle his readers.

Publications.

In this period, the aftermath of the plunge into near-marital bliss, he was working towards the publication of *Either/Or* (February 20, 1843) and *Fear and Trembling* (October 16, 1843); the latter has been construed as total aggression worked out against his dead father. Probably, despite the quotation from Luke 14, 26 "If anyone does not hate his father", the first signs were emerging of a more general, reclusive dislike of humanity, out of which was emerging a more refined thinker. It was becoming frighteningly clear that some individual message was being put across. Four times in the prelude¹⁰⁶ there is the repetition: Abraham and Isaac journey to Mount Moriah and eventually Abraham grabs Isaac by the throat, seizes the knife, and says: "Thou didst believe it was for God's sake I would do this, thou art mistaken I want to murder thee, this is my desire ... I am worse than any cannibal". In chilling vein he continues: "My work is like freshly-fallen snow", as if we perceive a paradoxical combination of foul thoughts and childlike innocence. The mystery of Kierkegaard was forever deepening. Recalling his interest in the police spy, who in the *Journals* was a rather demoniacal figure, "spy-ish" after a childhood of failures, moving about arresting anyone who spoke to prostitutes, sexuality cannot be ruled out as a feature of the general conscious experience at this time.

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The schizoid is somewhere present and the autistic hovers. The metaphysical emerges as a positive pursuit and also in reaction to past evil, just as the police spy was doing good to atone for past guilt. "The phallic 'he drew the knife' seems the clue",¹⁰⁷ and permeating arrest or killing, is the old friend suffering. Later Kierkegaard demonstrated that those who retain suffering, dread and despair, (thereby again and again finding their way to the distant, loving God) are the true individuals, the genuine existentialist sufferers. Again what of Divine existentialism through His mediation, death, forgiving etc? Friedmann felt S.K. could scarcely tolerate Christ's intervention between him and the father/Father, because Jesus was taking the place Kierkegaard wanted. His distant God, he suggested, was what precluded him from accepting Hegel's pantheism.

Always the Mission.

The mind of Soren Kierkegaard was not, in the 1840's, setting down solutions. He was unearthing problems, and his awareness was moving irrevocably towards unmasking local Christianity. He tells how from his youth up he had been stirred by the thought that in every generation there are two or three sacrificed to the rest, who discover with terrible anguish something by which the rest profit. Sorrowfully he had found out that the key to his own being was that he was destined to be one of these. Luther had 95 theses. He had only one, **that Christianity does not exist.** This was the dread intellectual fate that respectively surfaced. Behind any sexual hint affecting his thinking at this time, there existed always the more compelling missionary concern.

The Individual and Commitment.

Consider the well-known tale of the bookkeeper, in Quidam,¹⁰⁸ the lost youth, the carousing, the adage: "No man - not even married - can know how many children he leaves behind". The conscious experience of Kierkegaard set out purposely to leave a double entendre. This is an example: Apart from unknown illegitimate children, there are the figuratively-meant children. In the tale, the poor of the town were to benefit from the bookkeeper's will. The poor in spirit, poverty-stricken because of Church neglect, would benefit from the unmasking of hypocrites. These were Kierkegaard's children. His destiny was clear; he must project the Father and Christianity into the future, and in so doing, bring forward the concept of the individual as disciple, saint, martyr, the highest aim of religion. He was bent on focussing new light in a nominal age on being born again, on his terms. Charlesworth writes, "For Kierkegaard, Christianity is not a body of truths or doctrines to which we give intellectual assent; it is something that demands a life-commitment from us".¹⁰⁹ This would sum up contemporary non-conformist attitudes. Repeatedly the reader sees it could be the modern hot-gospeller who would agree with Kierkegaard and class himself as a Christian existentialist if he were aware of the school. That is until faced with denial of peace and joy, or corporate worship. When S.K. insisted faith belonged with the existential, he was right, but sadly so much of existential thinking leans towards the lugubrious and edges religion into philosophy which is good, but out of worship, which is not. To Kierkegaard's shake-up of religion may be attributed the growth and contemporary importance of the lay ministry. The resonant preaching voice of General Booth who began the Salvation Army, was that in the Holy Spirit one can do better than his best. The best of man was not

good enough for S.K. Seen against their times the Danish Christians were doing their best. Mention of the above is important to balance out the positive and even charysmatic side of Kierkegaard.

The aesthetic stage of most men moves to the religious stage of the few, via the link-stage of deep thinking, which for Kierkegaard was ironically an almost permanent ethico-religious stage, never quite arriving until the paradoxical peace of naked strife at the end.

Some Recapitulation.

Some recapitulation on Kierkegaard's environment and heredity may now unmask more clearly his mood and intent. Walter Lowrie compares his father with the cold (?) and hungry (?) David, taken to great heights by Samuel's anointing. His Uncle Niels had chosen the poverty-stricken M.P.K. to come to Copenhagen. Two licences for trade, 1780 and 1788, had led to an amassed fortune. Søren's father saw in this the hand of God. God dominated the home into which S.K. was born. Even the dedication of the Edifying Discourses, to his father, was obedience to honouring father as much as a gesture of affectionate gratitude. Undoubtedly the youthful suffering and the 'guilty secret' inspired his musing on the divine Father-love. Søren had to hold to "the one unshakeable thing in life". He had to paint his father in the fairest tones before the Almighty. Any criticism of the parent is immediately counter-balanced. The worthlessness of earthly security had been impressed on S.K. by life. His father had emerged richer from the inflationary crash when the Government over-issued notes to pay for the Napoleonic Wars; M.P.K. had invested in Royal Loan backed by gold. Even after they moved to the great house next to the City Hall, emotionally there was no security. The father conveyed severity and gloom to his family.

Moravian Influence.

What added to the early fear and trembling was the interest the family head was showing in the Moravian Brethren. The Moravians, descendants of the Bohemian Brethren, had reconstituted their Church in 1722, with no creed. Scripture was the only rule of faith and practice. The Creed would have supplied regular comfort by reminding of the belief in forgiveness, whereas sombre passages, chosen eclectically, increased the fear of hell fire. The reader poses against this father a mother who, according to granddaughter Henriette Lund, was never so happy as when she got ill and they all flocked to hold her hand. This indicates affection, whether or not S.K. was influenced by his father to regard the late first wife as the real wife, which Bishop Mynster indicated was the general rule. Whether genuine connection exists between this and Søren's later behaviour towards Regine, one cannot insist. His Head Master referred to his "comical sauciness" and humour. There was some merriment beneath the sombre Kierkegaard. As is often the case, those privileged to have intimate fellowship usually tell of charm and brilliant wit flashing sporadically from the most morose temperaments, as long as they are clever. A dullard never entertains. One of the joys of reading Kierkegaard is the subtle humour with which he presents so much food for thought. This in itself is an indication of the character that eludes us. Lowrie writes, "It seems to me that there was a child-like quality in Søren Kierkegaard to the very end, and this is a characteristic which especially endears him to me".¹¹⁰

The Family.

The elder brother, Peter Christian, had to resign his bishopric because he was close to insanity. He, too,

believed he had committed the unforgivable sin.¹¹¹ His son, Søren's nephew, was placed in an asylum, but remained witty enough to remark: "My uncle was Either/Or, my father is Both/And, and I am Neither/Nor". Yet another nephew committed suicide. Søren himself contemplated suicide; what Lowrie calls "straight thinking" saved him, the existential inward-moment-decision that led to a fuller faith. It is interesting that in *Fear and Trembling*, Johannes di Silentio quotes Seneca, ex Aristotle: *nullum unquam exstetit magnum ingenium sine aliqua dementia*. Lowrie debates the mastery over madness, which must be masterful or else the man would be mad and locked away. Certainly, as already suggested, Kierkegaard anticipated depth psychology by analysing his own symptoms, repeatedly. There is delicious irony in *Repetition* where the young man whom Constantine Constantius thought was a little mad, writes to him to ask whether he is really normal, seeing he analyses every mood and emotion. To read Søren's brother Peter on the subject of home, is suffocating in its morbid religiosity. Nor could the following succession of deaths have added any gaiety to life:

When Kierkegaard was six, his brother Søren Michael died, aged twelve. When he was nine, Maren Kirsten died. At nineteen he lost his sister Nicoline Christine and her still-born baby; and the following year brother Niels Andreas died at twenty five. This last-mentioned affected him deeply. They were close in age and ways. Had he lived, he might have been a bastion and safety-valve for the sensitive Søren's foray into marriage with Regine. What heightened the issue was that M.P.K. had sent Niels to America. The father developed a conscience when Niels wrote with affectionate references to his mother, but none to M.P.K. This was not lost on Søren in his role

of weighing sins and admitting loved ones at the Pearly Gates. As if all this were not enough, both mother and happy, gay, Petrea died the next year, within two months of each other, Petrea in childbirth. Only difficult ex-Bishop Peter, the eldest, and Søren, the youngest, remained. Even here there was tension. Søren and Peter were incompatible. Furthermore, Peter regretted he could not take Holy Communion. In his own diaries, the reason given was because they were not reconciled. But M.P.K. lived on - conscience and all. Existing in this atmosphere, one analyses S.K. as surprisingly strong in his brilliant dedication.

S.K. on Himself.

In 1838 Kierkegaard recounted some memories of happy childhood, but added that the only thing that remained to him of childhood was to weep. He was not popular at school: "a regular little wild cat"; "an object lesson of compassion"; he was taunted as Søren Sock - because one of M.P.K.'s businesses was hosiery; as Choirboy - because M.P.K. indulged the one thing destined to give the most normal child a complex - ridiculously cruel garments. Despite all the money in the bank, his coats had to be of coarse material, rough on the skin, and skirts were added to the coats. S.K. detested his poor physique. Curvature of the spine had resulted from an early fall from a tree. And even safe at home, he was sometimes called Fork because once when reprimanded for eating greedily, he had cried out: "I am a fork". In Point of View he remarked "I helped myself out ... with some sort of counterfeit ... I suffered the pain of not being like the others ... It is the greatest torment of that period not to be like the others. When one is a youth and other young people make love and dance ... in spite of the fact that one is a child, then to be.. spirit ... frightful torture"! He knew he had a shrewd wit. He referred to it

as "my power". From the earliest age, he felt he had been "nailed fast to one suffering or another ... to the very verge of insanity", so that his spirit had acquired "a tensile strength, which is very rare". But of all his poignant references to youth, the one that cries out Kierkegaard's conscious experience is this: "I was already an old man when I was born".

Early Education.

M.P.K. had no need to check that he was studying. "I got a thoroughly deep impression of the fact that there was something called duty and that it had eternal validity", S.K. wrote. He even had the strength to tell a school-master to report to the Principal that his classmates were drinking boisterously. The teacher promptly subsided when Søren said "This is what always goes on". M.P.K.'s arbitrary instructions insisted that he should come 3rd in class. Not 1st. When they walked the study, M.P.K.'s magical fantasies describing the Spain they were in, the seashore, carriages rattling past, or a cake-lady's buns, Søren's own imaginative power was further inspired. From the autobiographical in Johannes Climacus, we know that when grammar was taught, Søren's intuition and imagination took over. Lowrie has provided this research. "What delighted him was filled space he could not get it thick enough. He was fanatically in love with thoughts".¹¹² Thought-building and logical consequence were a scala paradisi. Then, as he grew, he sat in on M.P.K.'s philosophical evenings. A subject would be chosen. Each intellectual present would state his case. "Is that all?" M.P.K. would ask, and proceed to demolish and confound. More replies. More rejoinders. Soaked in the dialectic, Søren "became attentive to this inexplicable power" from a parent who had had little formal education. However, the student should underline in

red his remark, "What wonder Christianity appeared to me the most inhuman cruelty ..." for he was first taught the misery and ignominy of the Cross and not the joys of Christmas. It was in the relevant passage In Point of View that Kierkegaard noted a danger, paradoxically, not when a father was a hypocrite, but when he was a godfearing man. The child was compelled to draw the conclusion about God, that He was not infinite love.¹¹³ Lowrie's observations about Kierkegaard being M.P.K.'s Benjamin and Isaac, suggest the father was therefore bent on preparing him for another world, not this one. The Journal for October 13, 1853, gives foreboding of predestined sorrow. The inescapable cross was always there. At least he would never have the added burden of working for a living, "with my peculiar cross". Hence the student is back to Paul's hidden thorn. Søren's hidden mystery. Then in Quidam's Diary, in Stages on Life's Way, there is the sketch of The Quiet Despair, the old man in the Asylum he had founded, where the son is a mirror in which the father sees himself and says, "Poor child, you are going into a quiet despair". The "peculiar cross" was part of, yet paradoxically separate from, some unspoken burden. Either M.P.K. knew the facts, or he was part of them. Or else S.K. realised and accepted more about himself than some critics give credit for.

The New Category Angst.

Kierkegaard's realization that genuine spiritual trial was separate from temptations and adversities, that it was of "the sphere of the essentially religious" and that it "increased in proportion to religiousness",¹¹⁴ has a Gethsemane quality which is still avoided and unrealised. To be up-to-date over the centuries often means to wait and wait for acceptance. If some Heavenly computer were able to reveal the hearts of all men, how

many would prove to have accepted Jesus' commands? He believed with the "rashness" of faith that the only answer was to be silent, to wait, to know that "the old devotional literature" is right in its teaching that the individual honoured with such crucifying treatment, is **innocent, thoroughly involved**, and loved as the suffering existentialist. The experience of regular bereavement had had one positive result. Kierkegaard finally had nobody to talk to. His one lifelong friend was not an understanding confidante. "Do not **complain** about a troubled marriage - it is part of the position", he wrote.¹¹⁵ So were the troubles of being a Christian. Do we even have the right to console, "to **blather** everything to each other"?¹¹⁶ "The uttering ... is ruination he has become objective about himself"¹¹⁷ Silent acceptance of humiliation - "guiltless wretchedness" - made one aware of one's nothingness before God.¹¹⁸ The dedication, the acceptance through choice, was unique. Release and relief had beckoned, and Regine had waited, but Kierkegaard had looked past her to where he believed his distant paradoxical God, before whom he was guilty, was instructing.

The first four years of the prolonged University period, had been less melancholy than usual, according to Kierkegaard. Lowrie doubted it. At any rate, the first three years seemed to have been relatively free of indecision and vacillation. Kierkegaard's mood was more buoyant and tendencies towards dialectical hesitation were clothed in wit. In an entry parallel to one of the Diapsalmata in Either/Or, he wrote, "Do it, or don't do it - you'll regret both".

He completed the first part of the advanced examination in April 1831, and the second section at the end of October, having now written seven subjects, three being achieved with various grades of distinction. It is as

well to establish Kierkegaard's intellectual ability. He was in no sense unsteady as an academically-inclined student. The "note-books" (Journals, after 1842) were begun on April 15, 1834 (Lowrie insists on 1833). He did not record "occasional observations" at first because of the fear of subsequent publicity. Had he done so, they might have given some confirming indication of his then mood. In 1837, he taught Latin for a term. He had originally begun as a Divinity student to please his father, and to please himself he had switched to literature and philosophy. His assessment of himself was complimentary; his tastes were developing in typically student fashion, individual and extravagant. One senses early that he would never finally take Holy Orders - a mammoth indecision for the existentialist prophet of choice, to whom **existence** was not nature which prevaricates but **human subjects** whose inward lives were constantly involved in **crucial decisions**, not ideas. Yet S.K. demonstrated that the freedom to leap accepted the freedom to alter course, because the concept of the importance of the moment, between time and eternity, and the eternal paradox, were always present. An example was when Kierkegaard and Prof Martensen were set to study Schleiermacher; Kierkegaard soon decided otherwise and insisted on discussing general theological themes. He felt that Martensen never got to the bottom of any subject. Academic Truth was becoming paramount for him, and it was unfortunate that he could not work with his brother Peter, who was known to be the best tutor in the University.

Comment leading to Enriched Doctrine.

The determination to diversify his thought rather than stick to one philosopher, even for a short while, was natural in his indirect Socratic communication, "a device

evidently by which different facets of Kierkegaard's own mind might talk to one another".¹¹⁹ Pseudonyms were part of it. When he used them, few were fooled. Quasi-dialogues would give himself, always becoming, and his readers divergent possibilities without necessarily divulging basic belief on the subject. As with J-P Sartre a century later, never make up anyone's mind for him, yet the individual should exalt his views above those of the group. Kierkegaard's conscious experience was to force the consequences of decision, hoping they would be positive. He was sometimes like a player still in his own aesthetic stage, entertaining interesting angles and ironically remaining an objective observer, and also part of the ethical and religious phases. He was subjectively objective when attacking Hegel; when Unscientific Postscript emerged, it was quite objectively aimed at and against the possibility of a system of existence that reduced faith to any logical impersonal statement. A system of ideas might work if it possessed the responsibility to decide. He referred to such syntheses as "interesting" when preparing for Either/Or, the aesthetic discourse. Kierkegaard was finally accepting from his experiences that **the stages were not periods but differing states of mind which can exist together in conflict, causing suffering**, which one has seen in him. Such suffering was not specifically Christian. **To choose the suffering one could avoid, that was Christian**, just as Christ in God chose to descend and suffer: "soul-suffering". Then, Kierkegaard realised, one could give consolation, as he had given it to his father, "Healing for another's pain is prepared in the inward agony of a deeply but secretly suffering man".¹²⁰ His mind was forever delving deeper and deeper - that the consoled would recover; he, **never**. He had now almost a megalomaniac's conviction that **some have to share God's own suffering**.

A Magnificent Obsession.

His destiny was discoverable in a type of St Vitus' Dance of the mind. He could never be comforted. He only found peace in what he expressed as "to be dumb". Sorrow never stopped dominating existence. It was "almost a force of nature", so that he could write, "Boundless sorrow is egotistical this way. It makes the person dumb in order to keep control over him".¹²¹ The voluntary interplay quivered dialectically. In the same passage he spoke of using his energy to **force himself** out into suffering, and then of using it to endure the suffering. Solidifying in his mind was the need for someone then to actually suffer intensively on behalf of others - even in the tiring, endless writing to show what it was to become a Christian. The necessary **shock-tactics** of subjective Indirect Communication (which Barth accepted could wound or heal sufficiently) branch out into the aforementioned indirect guiltless wretchedness. As in fasting, **living** an identification as sufferer par excellence was the sole God-source of ability to save others. The sins a sufferer groaned to eliminate in them would be truly remitted. **This is what the Fear of God meant to Kierkegaard. It was superbly positive.** Against such a vision of duty, jelling in mind through the University years, the break with his fiancée had been inevitable. He approached a category of martyrdom which in vain he would expect his Bishop and reader to understand. Ironically he still could not share it with brother Peter. Christ's suffering, he pointed out, had also failed to be comprehended by the disciples. Ultimately these were S.K.'s words: "Now believe, throw yourself down in adoration and **believe**".¹²² The merit in the loneliness and silence of such training in suffering, reaches its pinnacle in the Cry from the Cross - "the ultimate point of the dialectic of responsibility"

when God lets man feel that he has in fact freely taken it upon himself.

The Great Earthquake.

The investigation must now pause at two matters of supreme phenomenological significance in Kierkegaard's chronology. These are his father's guilt, and his own irrevocable destiny. To present some background, the parables of Either/Or were taking shape. The Fenris Wolf contained bondage and anxiety; Kangaroo Legs had terror; The Distant Flash used darkness and dread; The Cave of Echoes rang with rejection, isolation and grief. In Volume 2, The One-person Skiff offered loneliness and despair. S.K.'s sense of tragic solidarity with his father's guilt moulded his prodigious output. When he said, "All sin begins with fear" he could have been subtly explaining the withdrawal from normal marriage. Such a jilting in the Denmark of his day was a shock and a scandal. The event of inestimable consequence occurred on Søren's 22nd birthday, soon after the heavy bereavement period, when the state of relatives' souls was uppermost in his mind. Walter Lowrie believed that on May 5, 1835, M.P.K. made some sort of confession to his son. This was The Great Earthquake. Three years later, again on the birthday, there came the father's second and complete confession.¹²³ What the student is faced with is the gilt-edged document that has puzzled commentators:

"Three sheets of fine letter-paper, small octavo, with gilt edges". What secrets about the police-spy-paradoxical author are concealed in the document, what revelations regarding his true consciousness, intrigue scholars still.*

* Barfod originally got the Journals and Papers from the half-insane brother, Bishop Peter K., 12 years after Søren's death. The actual printing process was muddled - 'garbled' would be a more accurate description - and at least some of the MSS vanished; lost, presumably. Gottsched then took over the papers. Prof Hirsch considered part of this "dramatic area" to be irrelevant! At the least, he contends, the date and significance remain in question. Knowing Kierkegaard's volatile nature, a fourth or fifth lost page, or a page removed and destroyed by the often holier-than-thou brother, might have presented a very different reason for the aftermath.

The Contents.

What the full details are of the father's cursing of God may well be lost. S.K. would have shuddered in fear at the Biblical warning not even to think evil. M.P.K. had been a cold, hungry, no doubt frightened lad on the Jutland Heath. Somewhere in the paper, covered over, is the deepest secret of Kierkegaard's life, the direct cause of the melancholy, the phenomenon-repository of the compelling inspiration for his study of suffering.

The document gave a brief appraisal of his early years:

- (a) Childhood
- (b) Youth
- (c) 25 years of age.

Under each was a poetical motto characterising that particular period. Each prose piece fits beneath its motto although the mottoes were printed consecutively and the prose itself follows '25 years of age' as if referring to that. Between Barfod's carelessness and Hirsch's comment: "Irrelevant prose to mottoes? That's Kierkegaard's contradictory dialectic", any assessment of what might have illuminated his state, becomes blurred.

Lowrie may have hit on the truth of the document, i.e. that Kierkegaard's youth was in fact happier than one is led to believe, viz: "... the a priori apprehension the child receives of God as the God of love, is the principle thing". (S.K.) Presumably this was gleaned from his father, although it would be refreshing to believe that his words indicated that normal mother-love was prominent.

Again on his 25th birthday, the time of the second revelation, Kierkegaard recalled the happy childhood already hinted at in this treatise. He then later in his paradoxical way referred to "weeping"; whether in youth again,

or later in remembering it, one cannot tell, The student is moving in time towards the above significant shock concerning his father. In Quidam's Diary at the 5th of each month, there appear autobiographical insertions. One particular insertion is of Solomon's dream and how he discovered his father David in despair before a God of the ungodly, not a God of the pious. (Should the student assume that being always guilty, Kierkegaard basically only knew a God of the ungodly?) Solomon "became wise, a preacher but not a believer ..." His strength and awakening were Kierkegaard's. So was the weakening. Neither Solomon nor Kierkegaard in their youthfulness could comprehend the significance of what was happening. What was to move like a troubled sea, ebbing and flowing, in Kierkegaard's subjective depths, had been thrust upon him. Whether or not the lasting reaction was logical, he reacted in the only way he could, hence the broken romance, the polemics, the estrangement from a brother who as a minister was no help to him, and the vast canvas from embarrassment to dire spiritual and physical melancholy. He carried in his facial features, and suffered in his nature until he died, the suffering which one has noted Karl Barth was compelled to single out as genuine: They **laid hold** on one Simon, a Cyrenian. Him they **compelled** to carry the cross. Kierkegaard's conscious experience was living out Scripture with a dreadful personal impact, namely that whatever burden is thrust upon man will be part of the greatest work he could ever accomplish. The experience and the inspiration of its worth - the injection of a new thrill into suffering - was also clearly Kierkegaard's salvation. The testimony emerges unhampered from the rich confusion of his writings. It throws into relief whatever one makes of what he put down shortly before his 5 May 1843 Journal entry: "After my death no-one will find in my papers (this is

my comfort) a single explanation of what it was that really filled my life". There is the enigma. It's value in assessment is not unlike the comfort for all guilt-sufferers that the thief on the cross, forgiven immediately in Christ's suffering, represents hope for every death-bed repenter, for one knows nothing of that man's background.

In February 1846 he would write ".... the dreadful case of a man who when he was a little boy suffered much hardship and cursed God - the man was not able to forget this when he was eighty two years old". The effect of the discovery on Kierkegaard remains incalculable. This was the unforgivable sin of M.P.K. against the Holy Spirit, confessed to him on his 22nd birthday. But for his acceptance of suffering as an opportunity to actually share the Cross, he might have followed others of his family into near-insanity. The Bible offers sufficient examples of unwarranted suffering, and Kierkegaard's conscious experience had by now repeatedly realised that suffering humanity must be taught the saving virtue of unavoidable Angst.

CHAPTER 2

THE UNFOLDING AND DEVELOPMENT OF HIS
THOUGHT IN PHENOMENOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE.
SOME DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS, WITH SUFFERING
ALWAYS IN MIND.

Some Results of the Emotional Watershed.

Lowrie quotes Kierkegaard as he speaks of susceptible children imbibing some vague hint which grows and leads them to the very goal Satan foreboded. His awareness was of a "horrible impression" when he first heard that indulgences included the statement, "etiam se matrem virginem violasset". The living force of this emotional subjectivity was the essence of S.K.'s Truth and Self-knowledge, and of his subsequent unmasking of the aesthetic who does not wish to examine himself. When Kierkegaard showed naive enthusiasm for the master thief, M.P.K. had reminded him with great seriousness that certain crimes needed God's constant help. How good, he suggested to Søren, to possess "a venerable old man as a confessor". The dates for these references are 12.9.1834 and 15.3.1835, near to that fateful 22nd birthday. So subjectively was he viewing events that he rushed to look in a mirror to see whether he was as mad as he imagined his father thought he was. A major aspect of his thinking now developed. Kierkegaard maintained that far from being an alternative to subjectivity, **objectivity in fact cannot exist**, and where it exists, it is imaginary. An observer would have concluded objectively that the old man's regrets together with the gifts God had showered upon M.P.K. showed that God had forgiven. Not so, felt Søren. Whom God loves, He chastens as the object of His wrath. The father was precluded from peace of mind while the son wore the halo of anxiety. It is an unhappy thought that M.P.K. probably continued to persecute himself because he sensed his son's reaction, and that Kierkegaard realised this after M.P.K.'s death, hence the loving prayerful tributes.

Tension - Two Breaks Hover. Literary Symbolism.

The next conscious experiences were two partings because of his offense at the religious. He did indeed leave home and then he broke with the Church. Home meant religious father. The Periander^{*} story came at the time. Periander, a tyrant, killed his wife and a younger brother was never reconciled to him. Confusing as it may sound to his reader, this was relevant to S.K. with his odd family history.

So, too, was his Antigone in Either/Or, evidently related to Solomon's Dream, if one correctly interprets a later 1843 Journal entry: "I must again occupy myself with my Antigone. The task will be to develop and explain the presentiment of guilt. It was with this in view (that) I reflected upon Solomon and David, Solomon's youthful relationship to David. For it is perfectly certain that both Solomon's intelligence and his sensuality were consequences of the greatness of David". Despite the temporary break with parent, Kierkegaard was inevitably prepared to honour M.P.K. by association. Yet the paradox continued: they were at loggerheads and he did blame his father for the sensual as Solomon could blame David. Apprehensions and presentiments, he wrote in the Journals, awaken the intellectual qualities and the imagination, and the combination of these, where the will is lacking, "is properly what constitutes the sensual". E.L. Allen places in perspective what was gripping Kierkegaard. He deals with man's citizenship in two kingdoms, which is what it was all about in the religious atmosphere of the lusty old M.P.K.'s home. "As compounded of body and soul, his existence is still on the natural plane". The Spirit binds the two. "The union of finite and infinite is at once the deepest mystery of our being".¹²⁵

* Stages on Life's Way, p.298

The Church is Challenged.

This coagulating theme was to burst upon the Church of Copenhagen as the message of The Sickness Unto Death in July 1849, when Kierkegaard wanted Bishop Mynster to publicly confess that the Christianity he had stood for all his life, had nothing to do with the New Testament. He wanted the fear and trembling to take hold and purify from the top downwards, including special pressure on the parsons he so completely condemned at the end of his life. Even less-official Lutheranism he believed had failed by making the Lord's suffering an excuse that man need not suffer.* Ultimately the pent-up mind had poured out with amazing rapidity the essence of his schism from Church in two great attacks, Sickness Unto Death and then Training in Christianity (ready the following year but typically held back.) Family friend Bishop Mynster would die aware of Kierkegaard's total commitment to the cleansing process, if not to the desired ascetic view of Christianity which he paradoxically was both contemplating and not wanting. It could have meant fellowship.

Antigone Explained.

The Antigone "experience" is noteworthy because it clarified his destiny. He kept returning to it in thought. Antigone, the fruit of Oedipus's marriage to his mother, slowly suspected the truth, and in his writing later, meant for Regine Olsen (and thinly disguised through the female aspect of Antigone) Kierkegaard would explain it all: Antigone cannot divulge her family history to the man who falls in love with her. She would have to be nothing less than open. If Kierkegaard was creating a

* Isaiah 53, v.4: (He took our infirmities and carried our sorrows - New International Version, p.874)

monster of guilt, in his temporary lonely break with home, it was because dread "is not sudden like a dart, but slowly bores its way into the heart" - unconscious poetry from The Concept of Dread. M.P.K. did finally accept forgiveness¹²⁶, but S.K. was chosen to suffer and suffer he would, as a latter-day classical martyr.

The Epic Decision.

The home break was never all that severe. When M.P.K. made possible a holiday in the old family haunts, Kierkegaard spent the Summer of 1835 in North Sjaelland, discovering nature and countryside for the first time. He also confirmed his destiny. In a letter to his favourite sister Petrea's brother-in-law Peter Lund (botanist, zoologist and palaeontologist) in Brazil, he hoped he might "reach a certain repose by entering a different faculty". But "The important thing is to perceive what the Deity wants me to do". Dru's translation of the Journals between pp 16 and 22 supplies the famous Kierkegardian decision. His destiny and his doctrine were uniting : to find the truth which is truth for me, and "to find that idea for which I am ready to live and die". What good would it do him to discover a so-called objective truth, or to find a world he did not inhabit but held up for the gaze of others? "An imperative of the understanding must be livingly embodied in me, and this it is I now recognise as the principle thing. It is for this my soul thirsts as the deserts of Africa thirst after water". This decisive revelation of his conscious experience was written during the holiday, at Gilleleje, and closes with the words, "I cross the Rubicon".

Independence.

He returned from holiday to a more dialectical concern and argument with himself, the preoccupation with the process of becoming that was essential to his developing philosophy. Confrontation with M.P.K. was in the air but Kierkegaard now had a genuine escape in study. When Judge William spelt out what had been coalescing in his creator's mind, it was in effect the Biblical injunction that a choice must be made. It was not so much a struggle between good and evil that formed the Either/Or of life. It was the need for decision, for if the will failed to do so, the baser instincts would. In Kierkegaard's case the decision was radical, if not defiant: a new independence from his father and in a sense from God.

Early Battle with the Church.

In his letter to Lund, he wrote that he was leaving Christianity's fundamental positions "in dubio". His new joyful independence¹²⁷ held a certain selfishness, an excuse for critics to question the views of a man who had dispensed with the objective. No sooner was he home than his Journals began to criticise Christianity and Christians. In fairness, Kierkegaard was working out his view that faith and revelation could not be involved in a dialectical synthesis, for they themselves were the only original sources of truth. He was realising why the early Christians deferred their decisions to the last. The faith of a qualitative leap, the faith of an existential free choice, was not a process of thinking about what one could lean upon. It was personal resolve, acceptance of what early martyrs also had to be ready to live and die for. And so some early attacks began against "narrow-breasted asthmatic conceptions" in the Christian body, even though Kierkegaard still had to complete the run-up for his own final leap. He was again holding back.

He had accepted Lessing's quest and decision that an eternity in blessedness was not contingent upon knowing the details of history circa 33 A.D. The Absolute Paradox, the "impossible" fact of the Incarnation, the freedom and joy of accepting Jesus alone, not a consciousness of this or that, but as God's becoming-incognito, (a very important word) - all this had pierced through and combined with his own individual awareness of himself, an existential comprehension that he now realised was incapable of knowing the inside soul-personality of another. He had learnt on holiday with nature, that human communication only magnified the individual island that everyone is. It was proved in the Regine affair.

In phenomenology, assumptions about the subjective are essential if the student is to arrive at the objective being within the experience. Therefore, was S.K.'s withdrawal from the historical not because the historical represented crowd? Had S.K. ever considered that if fear is the beginning of sin (his words) then his permanent guilt dread implied he was wrong. Was the never-arriving a fear of the Communion of Saints?

Brief Respite into New Areas.

One would have expected that this clearer thinking would have driven him into his mission and message. Instead, the personal paradox of Kierkegaard again exerted itself. He reverted to student affairs, debates and addresses. Four political articles, his first literary venture, were written for The Flying Post, the organ of the University. These brought acclaim. The short spiritual silence was necessary; he believed genuine ethical action presupposed silence, because of its link with the eternal. There had been silence in North Sjaelland and the ascetic in him resented returning to the general hubbub. He would never find peace in the Church; rather than expose himself

by a first outburst, a revelation of his stand (as with Jesus's hesitation to expose His powers, and His strange rebuke to His mother at Cana) he had written to Lund contemplating repose in another academic discipline. In the Edifying Discourses, silence is the gateway to obedience, to the ethical-religious. He could not be silent for long. Hegel must be fully answered, the Church again rebuked, the injustice that caused, and the anxiety that surrounded his father's spiritual sin, must be atoned for. Until he was ready, he would divorce himself from great matters of religion and speak out a warning for his country against mob rule and the abstractions of the French Revolution.

Some Pause.

Such is the glimpse one gets from Dru's translations of "A Literary Review". Another diapsalmata pause, the unspoken dialectical hesitation, the inner psalm. It was the dichotomy of Kierkegaard - the restless suffering expansion of his mind, signifying everything or nothing until the reason for his life already revealed should reveal itself. The non-arrival was played out to the end. How significant was the Button parable where the man who both founded a brothel and published a new Hymn Book was neither debauched nor a worshipper. Ironically he was now back into the aesthetic gaining pleasure from experience rather than from sensuality. It led him to the despair he warns of in the introduction to Either/Or, the colloquies between Judge William and the young friend, himself satirised. Here he struck a note of sanity : theatre and music were not evil, to be banished. They were "not abolished but dethroned". The conscious experience was now a phase of relief in the intellectual side of life after the shock of the great earthquake.

Dread Again.

The above probably roughly coincides with the brothel visit already mentioned. Dread, the student finds in S.K.'s Journal of May 17, 1843, was like the eye of a serpent which repels and yet attracts. Fuller reading suggests he blamed the Church and weak Christianity for sensuality including his own "uncommonly erotic" condition. Now there followed bouts of drunkenness and thoughts of suicide. Memories of the sexual jaunt recurred and S.K. actually wondered whether he should publicly confess it. Common sense prevailed but even so this very proper young man would lump together the melancholy of his father, his aberrations from the truth, and "my lusts and excesses".¹²⁸

Ongoing, Repetitive Thoughts.

His sin, he felt, was truly against God. It was what he would describe in *The Sickness Unto Death* as "Sin is : before God in despair not to will to be oneself". He was caught now somewhere in his own stages, as usual unable to accept any peace from a God too distant, and the Church, His earthly mouthpiece, too false. His very real passion meant "the violent shaking of the whole existence as the Divine is apprehended. It means that life is now faced in heroic, passionate resolutions".¹²⁹ His minor hell had taught him that man is a subjective philosopher whose thinking starts from the real self, in real life, in the presence of the real God. "The individual man stands before God alone in an empty space. No other thinking is in ethics and religion relevant". Experience had discarded Hegel. Direct communication of truth would mean passing on finished propositions. Actual suffering existence had taught him that philosophy was a person asking and answering questions in actual suffering existence - a Kierkegaard still distant from the Kierkegaard of Wednes-

day in Holy Week, 1848, when he would understand the experience of forgiveness of sins.

Progress.

The road back was hesitant, and filled with anxiety but it brought him firmly from the aesthetic into the ethical stage and to the brink of his leap into the religious. The Point of View reveals how much of this period was employed in personal dialectical exercises of the mind. "But I was not really living", he wrote. Was he a Christian, was he nominal? Even later he reflected, "A man I had never been, a child ... even less". Reflecting on the impressions of his youth had become a new "power", as if independence and intellectual propositions and worry had matured him to the point of realising that he hadn't even dared to **think** critically during his youth. Here was progress, from 12.6.1836: "Reformation goes slowly", through to 11.10.1837 when he reviewed the process and wrote that the enchantment of the fairy King was broken only when one played his music backwards without a mistake. The enigmatic, the non-arriving, the detective attitude, was never absent.

Further Watershed.

Ironically, it was the same Poul Møller that had taken him carousing, who was responsible for another awakening. Prof. Brandt and Walter Lowrie maintain that "the mighty trumpet of my awakening", used in the earliest draft of The Concept of Dread, which is Kierkegaard's analysis of his situation in the "perdition phase", was Møller saying to him at a party at the Heibergs' on 4th June 1836, "You are so polemicalized through and through that it is perfectly terrible". An undated Journal entry describes himself as "the soul of wit" at the party, and the situation was confirmed in the Willibrand and Echo

play written for the Student Association in 1838. Identical circumstances are pictured. Kierkegaard remembered Møller's warning to the end of his days. It ranks high in significance in understanding him. The year before his death, an entry is aimed at "the demon of wit", his own, defying God and man. To try to understand him, the reader must realise that even his humour had another side to it.

Møller died on 13 March 1838, two months before Kierkegaard's religious awakening. His voice, as M.P.K.'s had done, called louder from the grave.

Back to Study.

Three months after the Heibergs' party, on 10 September 1836, Kierkegaard became aware of the late George Hamann, the man who in Lowrie's words had "an almost mystical intimacy with Plato". He now noted Hamann's comments on Hume's Enquiry Concerning the Human Understanding, where Hume speaks of the need for a personal miracle to support belief: "Mere reason is not sufficient to convince us of its veracity: and whoever is moved by Faith to assent to it, is conscious of a continued miracle in his own person which gives determination to believe what is contrary to custom and experience". He was riveted by Hume's comment that his own doubts "are proofs of the proposition". He began to consider Hamann's warning that it was useless to speak to a sleeping man. Even God Himself would be "obliged to dispatch in advance the authoritative word and bring it to pass : Awake, thou that sleepest!" About this time there are hints that Kierkegaard was supercilious, unfeeling, insolent, and possessed a harsh, grating voice. He had written a cold, formal receipt of thanks to the bewildered, grieved, father when M.P.K. was paying his not inconsiderable debts. It is unrealistic to suppose that he had not been

aware of his moods. It is highly possible that he sought to use them in order to cover his tracks. Be that as it may, S.K. now really got down to tackling Hegel and concluded that his philosophy had no reality. He used a delightful quotation from Lichtenberg: "It is like reading out of a cookbook to a man who is hungry". Comparing Hamann's realistic Christianity with Hegelian thought-experimentation, became his sublimation.¹³⁰

What Kierkegaard resented was that Hegel tended to ignore religion, not even having the courtesy to explain it away. Hegel's prevailing popularity challenged Kierkegaard to turn religion over and over, producing the insights of thorough reading. This is why he remains the source of much study. His conscious experience now was to take yet another look at philosophy (to quote his own Johannes Climacus in Postscript: "away from speculation". After the forays into Hume, Hamann, Hegel, etc., he decided that he **had realised** he was moving away from its primacy, but that he would keep philosophy at hand as a useful weapon. Lowrie writes: "This is the point where the modern Existential Philosophy derives from S.K."¹³¹ Kierkegaard decided that Philosophy and Christianity had nothing to fear from one another. His only known doggerel portrays his thoughts:

If a body meet a body
Carrying a spade,
And if a body has a rake
Need either be afraid?

Like other philosophers, he sought the harmony of disciplines; like all existentialists, he wrote for man's intensified education. As only he could, he warned that man should pull out of aestheticism, but that he must be careful how he achieved this, lest the intellectual

despair he found himself in drive him into deeper despair.

Yet Another Religious Experience : Healing with God.

There followed a further occasion when, Lowrie believes, M.P.K. had made a clean breast of **everything** to his son. He was too old and too wise and too lonely not to realise that he had driven his son from home and almost from God. He knew that Søren was as critical of the Church as his brother Peter was enamoured of it. Søren was deeply moved. There were quotations from King Lear to illuminate a changing relationship, yet in his truly paradoxical fashion, as if to confuse his readers, the man who defies the student to know him had left off Lear's humble

"I'll kneel down
And ask of thee forgiveness".

In the great reconciliation, Kierkegaard realised that M.P.K. had meant well; that in his severe way he had hoped to save his children from what he had been, "and thereby I got a conception of the Divine father-love". In prayers he thanked God for his father who might "find more joy in being for a second time my father than he did the first time". After M.P.K.'s death he would write: "Not only has he died from me but died for me, in order that if possible something may be made of me still". Profound yearning followed. "The understanding ... was so deep, because in returning to his father, S.K. returned to God".¹³² This shows that no matter how the lonely, tragic Kierkegaard has been understood and misunderstood, he was primarily what LeFevre in his preface to Kierkegaard's Prayers calls "a man struggling for his own soul".

Whether combating Hegelianism, whether fearful and confused by events, whether sad or happy, indeed whether

there really was a break, on his side, he took refuge in God. Years later the suffering mood had not altered. The prayers for his father continued and he wrote a plan for a romance about a father and two sons, one of whom came to himself like the Prodigal.*

A More Mature S.K.

Lowrie sees it all as having been necessary for Kierkegaard's full return to God and the faith he would defend. "We must say ... that his father broke down the barriers, the 'closed doors', so that Christ might enter in".¹³³ As if to confirm, Kierkegaard wrote Nebuchadnezzar into Quidam's Diary, expressing conviction of God's reality. Whether it was only then, about his 25th birthday (as some argue) that he heard of the Jutland curse, is immaterial. From then on he took upon himself the combined guilt of father and son, calling himself a penitent to his friends. Judge William would put it thus: "And of it was a guilt of the father which descended to the son he will repent of that together with his own guilt". And "The pious Jew felt his father's guilt he could not repent it, because he could not choose". On July 9, 1838, exactly one month before M.P.K.'s death, Kierkegaard wrote, "How I thank you, Father in Heaven, for having kept an earthly father present for a time here on earth, where I so greatly need him" There is thought-provoking coincidence in the entry immediately prior to M.P.K.'s death, headed, 'The Relation between the Old and the New Testament'.

* cf. It is known that Churchill longed to please his dead father, Lord Randolph Churchill, who had often written vicious letters to his literary son. Winston did not at the time realise that his father was dying of Syphilis. For many years afterwards, he would ask friends: "Do you think my father would have approved?" of whatever he was then accomplishing.

Peace.

His father passed away at 2 a.m. on August 9, 1838. Within days he had written that his good mood, his tranquility, "soars upward like a dove" pursued by Saul's evil spirit, by "a bird of prey", and that it could only save itself by mounting and "getting farther and farther away from me". His own description of his state needs no qualification. There can be no suggestion of morbid regret or self-pity after the death because as much as three months earlier at 10.30 a.m. on May 19, he had written of the "indescribable joy which glows all through us just as unaccountably as the apostle's outburst for no apparent reason: 'Rejoice, and again I say, Rejoice' - not a joy over this or that, but the soul's full outcry ..." The reunion with God and with M.P.K. gave Kierkegaard sporadic authority. There is an echo of Pascal. The deeply subjective experience of positive, creative, joy, gave validity and strength to the positive, creative work of suffering. The temporary joy and peace of those months gave him a breathing space. It led to the rich insights and original interpretations of Scripture with which Training in Christianity is filled. It ushered in the calm devotional of his prayers, such as Send Therefore Thy Spirit, based on I Peter 4,7 - when he asks that first the Spirit might make us sober, as the prime condition for the rest of His gifts.

Back to Uncertainty.

1838 had been the most sober period. It began the maturer Kierkegaard, but one in whom the paradox was also more adult. Soon he was "without authority", again always "becoming", refusing to date his conversion, pursuing the authority of apostleship, writing of the thorn in the flesh, and stating "With me everything is

dialectical". 1838 was the year when he decided his position was "Armed neutrality"; the year the spears began to slice his pages and ricochet more steadily at the Church: "Take off your shoes, for the place where you are standing is holy ... It does not help, of course, that many of them are - trouserless!" The storm clouds were gathering in the distance. The battle with himself raged on. By January 17, 1839, he was admitting that his state of mind "always follows two declensions ...". He was capable of hurtful parodies, (cf. Repetition p.74) and he was worried about his abnormal psychic state: he consulted a Doctor to "draw out" the thorn; he actually attended Holy Communion, which Pastor Kalthoff attested to 30 years later. He was orthodox enough to become pre-occupied with sin, and not because of family guilt. He studied diligently. This S.K. called the 'Great Parenthesis' period.

Another Look at his love and hate.

In the light of what has been seen, let the reader glance again at the two conflicting emotions which were so very personal - his love and hate relationship with Regine and similarly with the Church. Stages reveals how deeply and beautifully he was in love^{*} but no sooner the peace and progress, than the malady of disquiet returned. An undated sheet not in the Journals revealed that he hoped to die having confessed "in the hour of death the love I do not dare to reveal so long as I love". He had begun to die from the world just as he saw within his grasp the remedy of his melancholy, fulfilment with Regine. In his thinking, her nearness was accommodated as having God's blessing - a blessing doomed to uselessness. The parental reconciliation had been Kierkegaard's first "return" chronologically, after "worldly" living.

* cf. pp 193-5, Lowrie

"Dying from the world ... the first and the last word of Christianity strictly understood",¹³⁴ now involved in his active mind the idea, then the unavoidable conclusion that the established church had not died from the world. This is important: He had discovered that dying to the world ironically meant involving oneself in its suffering. He had **chosen** to return and accept the burden of his father, a burden that included making M.P.K. feel wanted, loved, forgiven, all of which should have been the province of the pious elder brother Peter. S.K. decided that he would henceforth expose the hypocrisy he detected. He would endeavour to make the church admit that "this preaching of Christianity which in a worldly way, with worldly securities, is the preacher's career ... is not really Christianity ... no one for a long while past has made the admission that this whole thing of the 1000 parsons is not really Christianity, but a softened form".¹³⁵ Decision had taught him that "there is an existential determinant of Christianity which is the unconditional condition".¹³⁶ Note the caustic story of the preacher who insists that to die to the world costs ten dollars, paid "to me", for it is my livelihood ... me, the poor man who (has) a fat and good living and a rank equivalent to that of a councillor, and the prospect of advancement".¹³⁷ Because he was living out his obligations, everything he would write of a Christianity without obligations as being a "peddling (of) indulgences (and) trafficking with Christianity",¹³⁸ began to formulate now.

A Final look at that epic Engagement.

In 1840, at 27 years, he had passed the official degree in Theology, changed his address twice, and from July 19 to August 6 made the journey already mentioned to the ancestral home. The significance of later events demands

detail. On his return there came the wooing, the fortuitous meeting outside Regine's house and the invitation upstairs. She played the piano for him - not very successfully. At last he closed the score and said, "What do I care about music? It is you I have been seeking for two years". One knows that he visited Councillor Olsen, who was non-committal, but allowed him an appointment to see Regine the next day, September 10th, when she accepted him. There followed the extraordinary state of affairs which offers some elucidation of Kierkegaard's mind and psychological state. It points charitably to the overwhelming conviction of his lonely calling and the realization of his own nature. It points penetratingly to the strong hints the student has from Friedmann: "Immediately I extended the relationship to the whole family ... But inwardly - I saw that I had made a mistake a penitent, my melancholy, this was enough". The probability is that he accepted medically the inadvisability of marriage. Only because the student now returns to review the situation in 1840 in the light of later events can he charitably accept that S.K. was not blind to his shortcomings. Simply recording step by step would have missed the essence. One does not know what the doctor had told him or what details brother Peter suppressed when he first got hold of the papers.

Possible Light on the Situation.

Nine years later, on August 24, 1849, Kierkegaard wrote, "I suffered indescribably in that period". The sad saga comes out interminably in the following: Stages on Life's Way; 38 entries which Dru has translated in the Journals; Fear and Trembling; and in Repetition. He talked of debating whether he could become engaged when he already was. He referred to himself as a lover with an

artificial leg, unable to take a step without reflection. The visit to the brothel loomed out of all proportion. "I might have kept silence: there are many marriages which conceal little stories". And then: "Had I explained myself, I must have initiated her into terrible things, my relationship to my father, (healed ?), his melancholy, the dreadful night (figurative ?) which broods in the inmost depths, my wildness, lusts and excesses (?) which yet perhaps were not so heinous in the sight of God".

Hail Paradox! Is this the God before Whom one is always guilty? Pure, reflective analysis, or naturalistic evolved analysis, either would use intuition to suggest that S.K. did accept that man was guilty but forgiven; but that the Church to which Christ had committed His Kingdom's souls would not be forgiven if they disobeyed as S.K. believed the Danish Church was doing. It is a reasonable contention that Kierkegaard's warning was to Churchmen and not to laity. Furthermore, that whether or not Friedmann's hint had substance, S.K. simply could not bring himself to involve Regine in his struggle. Her family were part of established Church. As one who hoped sporadically for ordination, S.K. knew the dire-warning injunctions put to pastors. Some part of his suffering was the bitter disillusionment he felt because of the earthly Church.

Perhaps something was concealed, or else on the threshold of the happiness that he had never known, a great martyr **was** inspired to sacrifice everything to his destiny. The only other explanation in unmasking Kierkegaard is, as hinted, some psychological illness far worse than one realises.

At last then, the sufferer had known forgiveness. Nine years later he was to warn his reader of the sin of despairing over sin. During the 13 months of engagement, Regine sometimes had to induce him to sit on a chair. He would read her Bishop Mynster's sermons, a certain admission of value in the orthodox Church, or he would just sit weeping. On August 11, 1841, he returned her ring with a sad note. She desperately hunted for him, eventually leaving a letter. Her family pleaded. He wrote that he could then "have married her like a tyrant" which would have been "a scoundrel indeed". His reason, his conscientious scruple, compelled him: "I had to fight the case before a much higher tribunal". In all the above, Walter Lowrie the intimate expert shows charity.¹³⁹ Kierkegaard had been able to work steadily, and the Master's dissertation was completed less than a month before the break. Regine "fought like a lioness", but by October 11 it was all over. There was an argument and he sought out his only close friend, Emil Boesen, bumped into Councillor Olsen and actually went back to have supper with the family. There is no suggestion of melancholy on his return home. Next day Mr. Olsen sent a note, and Kierkegaard called. When Regine asked, "Will you never marry?" he replied flippantly: "Well, in about ten years, when I have sowed my wild oats, I must have a pretty young miss to rejuvenate me". At her request, he kissed her - "without passion". "Merciful God", he added, and passed the night weeping. In order to deceive Regine, he waited two weeks before leaving for the five months in Berlin, and Schelling's lectures. "When the tie was broken, my feeling was this", he wrote "Either you **throw yourself** into wild dissipations, or into **religiousness absolute of a different sort from that of the parsons**". This latter italicised statement precludes one from altering the understanding assumption and analysis of recent paragraphs.

Regine did not die as she threatened. Twenty-one months later she became engaged to Fritz Schlegel who was destined to be Governor in the Danish West Indies. Walter Lowrie's assessment of the episode was that, though dying daily, he at last laid down his life in a very different cause. While scandal erupted, however, he was anything but laid low. He was calm and objective enough in the intellectual capital of Europe to criticise Schelling's lack of reality. He was into his "religiousness absolute" and putting it all down "while Schelling drivels inordinately" - in a letter to Boesen - so that by the February, *Either/Or* was virtually complete. On March 6 he returned to Copenhagen and suggested a reconciliation if Regine would take him "exactly as I am" which she had endeavoured to do.

"If I had had faith, I should have remained with Regine", he wrote in early 1843, while as late as 1851, four years before his death, he was still apparently seeking her company, which Schlegel understandably forbade. His will declared all his works dedicated to her and to his father. "My work as an author", he prophesied, "may also be regarded as a monument to her honour and praise. I take her with me into history". He also left her what remained of the fortune, which she declined. The reader is driven to accept the sincerity, within the turmoil, of a man who summed up his own conscious experience with this perception: "It would be impossible for me to be religious only up to a certain point. My engagement to her and the breaking of it is really my relation to God, my engagement to God, if I may dare to say so".

Authorship Reviewed.

The appearance of *Either/Or*, pseudonymously, on February 20, 1843, caused a sensation. A facet of his nature and mood is revealed in Kierkegaard slipping into the theatre

night after night for ten minutes in order to be seen "doing nothing else", thus throwing people off the scent of authorship. "Oh you dear gossips", he wrote, "how I thank you". Partly he hoped to ridicule himself as a loafer and thereby increase Regine's "resistance", yet he must have realised that her relationship with Fritz Schlegel was heading towards engagement. There was a remarkably selfish streak in someone who toyed with the feelings of others, failing to display the power of decision proclaimed in his writing. Clever reviewers like Heiberg and Goldschmidt wondered what Either/Or was all about, these accidentally-discovered papers of the clever young aesthete, the older man who recommended the ethical life, and Judge William the moralist; yet Kierkegaard's conclusion was successfully clear, that everything came to a choice between practical alternatives (and the metaphysical significance) - the complete opposite to Hegel's mediation. "Give that up and there is no speculation; admit it and there is no Either - Or". The heaving mind accepted that it had "too many ideas to expectorate off his chest", and work continued. May 16 brought Two Edifying Discourses. This was meant especially for Regine, he admitted in 1849. Lack of any financial gain showed the earnestness of his mission.¹⁴⁰ A month earlier on April 16, Regine had nodded to him during an Easter service. "She still does not think that I am a deceiver", he wrote, "to suppose that a person with my religiousness could behave in that way". He again left for Berlin. By October 16 he had completed Repetition, and Fear and Trembling. Despite the speed, for many they remain in a literary sense the best of all his works and show the clarity of his mind despite the added emotional upheaval. These works were partly a sublimation, dealing with his disappointed love, and disguised as the writings of Constantine Constantius and Johannes de Silentio. He was at another climax, the

culmination of the religious crisis begun by the break with Regine. His faith reached a new height, coping with what he had longed for and paradoxically discarded for the sake of that very faith.

Crisis Again. The Maieutic. More Works.

This next crisis suffering proved severe, more so than the later cruel taunting period with the Corsair. Respite had, as usual, been short-lived. Either/Or had indicated that the religious experience was his expression of "the confidence that man by God's assistance is lighter than the whole world" - the same sort of faith that makes it possible for a man to swim. It had been what he later termed as faith: "floating over 70,000 fathoms". But the melancholy continued in waves. Sublimation now came in a progression to a new sort of psychology/philosophy. Kierkegaard was now a Victor Eremita in a struggle, and he wrote as in a cloister, with some kind of idiosyncrasy. It was the period of his maieutic instruction, a Socratic form of enquiry serving to bring to the surface a person's latent ideas; - consciousness; there was the "map of emotional cosmos" which led to a comparative philosophy of values. The characteristic possibilities of the soul were considered, and characters themselves had to be inhumanly consistent, i.e. types, either good or bad, such as are not often found in life, unless as robots or perhaps in Hegel's speculations.

Freedom from the Aesthetic through Crisis.

The intention was that man could see and choose, act, leap, be decisive and definite. This dramatic form in Repetition, finds Constantius and the young man as examples of contrasting attitudes. Stages on Life's Way was in the pipeline, and had Judge William's dissertation on marriage, answering the frivolous speeches at a Banquet,

with Quidam pointing the reader to religion. Christian faith and metaphysical interest are predominant in these works. He revised parts of Repetition and completed the Three Edifying (or Upbuilding) Discourses, which were all published in the October. These he called the Aesthetic Works, and they illuminate the crisis he was weathering. The period exudes a sense of very great crisis, his own crisis with all its offshoots, not anyone else's crisis. The heart of the matter was his subjective feeling. Indignation and pride were not absent. The kernel of this phenomenologically sharp, keen, exposé period, was that each man must find the method of reaching results valid for himself. Sontag refers to this aesthetic as **distance from reality**.^{*} Meiosis, in root similar to the maieutic, refers to any phase of nuclear change in germ cells, implying a Kierkegaardian step which would proclaim that individual man, instead of replacing sorrow such as S.K. was living through, with pleasure, must accept the challenge of finding a new method to reverse the process. This would exalt the meaning and upbuilding of sorrow. Eternal life by this process was what he could believe in.

The Edifying Discourses were constantly expanded, to a final eighteen by May 1845. On February 24, 1844 he preached the terminal sermon in the Trinitatis Kirke. In June, Philosophical Fragments, by Johannes Climacus, Prefaces, and The Concept of Dread appeared under pseudonyms. Fragments was his confrontation with Hegel, in which the basic themes of Christianity were discussed abstractly without using the historical events of the Bible.

* Oscar Wilde's 'The Picture of Dorian Grey' perfectly illustrates distance from reality. It superbly captured the Aesthetic Life in the late 19th Century.

"Dread" was his psychological analysis of the experience of finding faith, that development towards the end of the stage which the average "worldly" person is in, and which in some respects he had been through. The mood was at the time a concentration on the bridge from aesthetic to ethical if indeed he could ever be categorised. He was at last looking outward more than inward. He described the work as a dogmatic treatment of original sin and dedicated it to Pøul Møller. The pseudonym used for "Dread" meant Watchman of Copenhagen, and suggested a more caring Kierkegaard. He moved house, and on April 29 and 30, 1845, *Three Discourses on Imagined Occasions*, and *Stages on Life's Way* appeared. The love story was repeated, but now with candour and released from the symbolism of Repetition and Fear and Trembling. The link from the ethical to the religious stage was clearly set down. Ironically, his own religious phase was now absurdly if romantically subjective: he was not free of the notion that Regine might still one day marry him. Her engagement was a long one. She never married J.F. Schlegel until November 3, 1847. In his Journal for May 17, 1845, S.K. wrote: "If possible, she shall become my wife". There is no hint as to why he felt more confidence.

The Corsair Affair.

On December 27, 1845, Kierkegaard wrote an article "The Activity of a Travelling Aesthetician" for *The Fatherland*. It contained references to P.L. Møller and *The Corsair*. He used the pseudonym of Frater Taciturnus. The new year of 1846 began with the *Corsair's* first attack on him. His reply was swift, for he had to consider his possible ordination. The unfortunate 12 months wrangle affected the years he had left. The magazine was meant as a comic paper and was founded by Aaron Goldschmidt. Kierkegaard was well aware that it had the largest circu-

lation of any periodical in Denmark; it was a type of Private Eye, lampooning and dragging down the great. Servants were paid well to reveal secrets and all this was concocted in the name of political liberalism. Decent men wanted the magazine silenced, and Kierkegaard was the man to do it, with his polemical nature. Highly academic articles and letters were appearing, many against it. What happened was that a series of cruel caricatures was published. The Fatherland did nothing to defend Kierkegaard, even when Goldschmidt hinted in print that the intellectual aristocrat S.K. was indifferent to the poor. Despite some sort of defence (his daily walks to meet with the people, his bequest finally being distributed amongst the needy, his writings) the accusation struck home simply because there was a grain of truth in it. He did remain aloof. And because of the friendship it upset Kierkegaard greatly that he had to expose P.L. Møller's connection with the political rag. Møller died in France, in disgrace, amongst the lowest classes. Kierkegaard had wrecked his career.

The earlier magazine sequence had been a supercilious review of Stages, meant as a personal affront, this being followed by Kierkegaard's reply. The review contained an "Aesthetic Annual" entitled Gaea, got up elegantly by Møller as a New Year's gift. The clever reply and the remark that where the Corsair was, there was Møller, demolished his friend. In time he compared the anonymous attacks in the Corsair with his hero Socrates, "to whom I personally owe much"¹⁴¹ - "ridiculed ... regarded as an eccentric, constantly attacked by 'nameless persons' (Socrates' words) ..." He realized that the "simple wise man of olden time" had been admired for over 2000 years, but not understood. The episode highlights Kierkegaard's mood then and conscious experience. This compares with

the preoccupation of Thomas a Becket, misunderstood by certain citizens of Kent who delighted in his death; Becket and his supreme worry, that he was courting martyrdom for martyrdom's sake. Kierkegaard's sensitivity in the matter has been noted by writers. "God knows that what I have suffered in this respect, I have suffered in a good cause, and because humanly speaking I did a good deed with truly disinterested self-sacrifice". Goldschmidt resigned as editor on October 2, 1846, and the periodical ceased to exist after he had left for Germany and Italy on October 7. The persecution, however, carried on. One point worth noting is that Friedmann's suggestions would surely have found subtle incursions into the pages of the Corsair, had the servants had anything to report.

1846 also saw Concluding Unscientific Postscript (to the Philosophical Fragments) published on February 27, and Two Ages on March 30. Postscript was the sequel to Fragments and dealt with the philosophical problems of Christianity. He was a would-be ordinand again hoping to prevent the demoralization that would come from the Natural Sciences. He also hoped that Postscript would prove simple, pleasurable reading for those not used to philosophical language. But simple it was not. An examination of Kierkegaard's mentality must acknowledge Postscript as a complicated work. It was another turning point. He later described it as central to his thought. It was a "mimic-pathetic-dialectic". The word concluding showed that he intended this as his final contribution to philosophy. The nom-de-plume Johannes Climacus had been a 6th Century monk on Mount Sinai, and a famous author. Despite Lowrie's romantic conjecture¹⁴², a cool appraisal identifies Kierkegaard's hint of his own ascetic life and his own importance as an author. Three years

had passed since Either/Or. Humble, Kierkegaard was not.

In May 1846, he again visited Berlin, and on June 12 he acquired Magister A.P. Adler's books and began studying the Adler case. To try to analyse Kierkegaard's state in 1846, a glance at four of the parables in Postscript might assist. "The Royal Theatre"¹⁴³ is as brief as it is clear; it poses God as the only one who can be a spectator in life. "The Wise Men of Gotham"¹⁴⁴ is amusing, with a straightforward message about the presuppositions of Christian philosophy. However, read "Bang, the Earth is Round"¹⁴⁵ and one may re-read the ending several times before being certain that nothing has eluded one. As for "The Postponed Answer"¹⁴⁶ the simple reader unused to philosophy might easily persuade himself that he sees what Kierkegaard is getting at "in the Greek spirit, beautiful and ingenious". He might also be mistaken. What he wanted to be, the direct preacher advising man on how to become a real Christian, Kierkegaard could not easily be.

A Declaration.

His overflowing mind and indirect communication, meant to force people to think and decide, resulted too often in confusion. The picture is clear enough of one who was on the Lord's side. But steady and repeated reading is essential to grasp his reasoned philosophy of moving from the aesthetic to real Christianity, by deliberate choice and will. This in turn is impossible to understand unless one is awakened, by word or by experience, but within the framework of decision. His 1846 mood also described the more down-to-earth philosophising towards Christianity, i.e. away from the system of speculation. Part of S.K.'s immense contribution to religion has been his reasoned injection of philosophy. With Postscript

complete, Kierkegaard emerged from the shadows. He added a declaration that he was the author of all the pseudonymous works; he was the Johannes Climacus who asked in Fragments: "Is a historical point of departure possible for an eternal consciousness ... is it possible to base an eternal blessedness upon a historical knowledge?" His missionary enthusiasm spoke of the "infinitely interested individual". He pleaded passionately in the Hegelian debate and he formulated his doctrine. "I, Johannes Climacus ... have heard tell of a highest good in prospect, which is called an eternal blessedness, and that Christianity will bestow this upon me I ask how I can become a Christian".

Reliability.

Such a question presented to speculative philosophy had to be personal or fail. It echoed Either/Or : "Only the truth which edifies is truth for you". In Postscript Kierkegaard wrote, "Objective uncertainty held fast by the personal appropriation of the most passionate inwardness is still truth the highest truth there is for an existing individual". The believer required "a fighting certainty without risk there is no faith". For risk, read suffering. The standards for Truth were bound to the individual. Again it was Socrates' "Know thyself". Against the subjective seeker S.K. set the speculative philosopher seeking objective truth without concern for his own relation to it. The conscious experience was now the proven reliability of subjective existentialism, which illumined the objective. Existence being communication with environment, Kierkegaard now spoke of inter - est, an intimate "amongness" - "he is", which involves passion. It was impossible to exist without passion, he declared. His Religion A and Religion B remain a talking-point.

Money Problems.

By now the money was becoming a problem and his consideration of the ministry had a salary in view. Possibly Bishop Mynster doubted his intentions. He ignored the hints for a position in the Seminary. Kierkegaard still feared that the 1835 sin would be revealed; yet he acted indiscreetly by moving eight times in all, always to costly apartments, always with a man and a woman as servants, and always with the best salmon, lamb, and wine on his table. He needed luxury "to keep ... in vein for such a prodigious literary production", a lame excuse. He paid many visits to King Christian VIII. By 1847 he was squandering his money. He sold books to his publisher, decided on a royalty basis for all future works, sold the great house and paid one third of the proceeds on his brother Peter's bond. For the first time his Royal Bond shares were dropping on the market. In examining his disposition, he, too, had human problems that were not swallowed up in a leap of faith. Even so, a growing "persecution" and now partial privation drove him to deep writing.

More Writing and a happier S.K.

Further Discourses in "Various Spirits" were published on March 13, 1847. These had a more direct communication, so that he was disappointed enough to comment: "With my right hand I held out the Edifying Discourses, with my left the Aesthetic Works - and all grasped with the right hand what I held in my left". Purity of Heart, also 1847, contained the parable of The Fugitive, about guilt and repentance. The Brook and The Changing of Raiment for a Feast included confession. The Last Bubble of the Drowning Man used desperation and hope. The Man Who did Wrong, and Eternity's Question, dealt with suffering. However, when The Works of Love appeared on Septem-

ber 29, love was indeed the hallmark. The Flowing Well-spring, The Strong-box, Sterling Silver, and The Artist's Sketch, all bear testimony. The themes of endurance, sacrifice, conscience, and commitment crept in. S.K. was changing.

The Adler Case.

Then as suddenly as one might expect from the volatile Kierkegaard, he came out with that most definite decision: "God be praised that I was subjected to the attack of the rabble".¹⁴⁷ He had decided not to be a parson "doing penance in an out-of-the-way place, forgotten". He had now made up his mind "quite otherwise". This was about the time that the Adler case came to the fore. A.P. Adler was a Danish pastor, deposed for his claim that a book he had written was dictated by Our Lord. Kierkegaard was naturally intrigued that an individual, independent spirit was under fire. All that the student has of his writing on the subject (date of Preface coinciding with the date of his decision, above: January 24, 1847; not published at the time, MS in *Papirer*) is the two Ethico-Religious Treatises, now included in *The Present Age*. The relevance is that entering and sharing the controversy, in his heterogeneous way, provided opportunity for more contemplation on martyrdom. He was getting ready for further attack on the Established Church. Out of persecution and sharing with Adler, Kierkegaard became a religious author, which was the overall final conscious experience, gathering up the storm and the ending. All his work had been "religious". Either/Or had finished with a sermon, the much-quoted "Before God, we are always in the Wrong" - a reflection of his life-long inbuilt proviso, and a phrase that comforted him.

Even the renewed S.K. lacks Peace.

There follows another example of the necessity for hindsight in this thesis. One returns to the quotation, to follow, drenched in the suffering atmosphere which has permeated the first time around.

August and November of 1847 make thoughtful reading. On August 16, he decided against another trip to Berlin. There was the dawning of some new awareness of himself; a new interpretation of what lay ahead:

"I must remain where I am and be renewed inwardly Something is stirring within me which hints at a metamorphosis. I will be quiet ... try to find myself think through the idea of my melancholy together with God ... Christianity may come closer to me".¹⁴⁸ Suddenly, no comment is possible.

The passage suggested faith that God had forgotten his guilt and that therefore he must also try to forget it - "dare to forget it in forgiveness" were his words. Was the guilt that he feared might be exposed after ordination; his conscience over the dastardly treatment of Regine? On November 3, she married Johan Frederik Schlegel. On Christmas Eve, when all Christians hold home most sacred, he sold his house. That was significant.

A Hint of the end Horizon. Feverish Writing.

On April 19, 1848, he made his memorable declaration that his whole nature was changed: "My concealment and reserve are broken - I am free to speak".¹⁴⁹ On April 24, he took it all back: "No, no, my inclosing reserve still cannot be broken"¹⁵⁰ Christian Discourses was

published on April 26. He had by now observed his deteriorating health and believed that he would die. Apart from his love of the theatre, there was a kindness that drove him to write his July 1848 appreciation of Fru Heiberg, *The Crisis in the Life of an Actress*. On September 1, he preached in the Vor Frue Kirke. "If ... one suffers, sympathy is immediately at one's service. Alas, but even Christ had to endure being pitied"¹⁵¹; and the idea of giving away one's **rank and dignity** to the poor, a brave remark amongst the exalted clergy.¹⁵² Soon he had completed *The Point of View for my Work as an Author*, which was eventually published four years after his death, by his brother Peter, although a "drier version" came out on August 7, 1851. *Armed Neutrality* completed the exhausting output of the period and was ready by January 1849, although it, too, was not published.

Contemplative.

The mood now was Kierkegaard setting his face towards his Jerusalem. At the time there was a short war raging with Germany and the end of the Absolute Monarchy was in sight. Kierkegaard discredited the new socialist tendencies. He had matured immensely, and Pauline references to suffering and to pleasing God¹⁵³ approximated a Pauline hesitation before the last onslaught of his apologetical challenge. The two aforementioned occasions, April 19 and August 16, had brought him as close as Kierkegaard would come to actually accepting forgiveness. His father's words rang in his ears, that he would be nothing while he had money, and now it was vanishing. Regine and melancholy and persecution were still there, for on that Easter Monday his "inclosing reserve" remark coincided with "I do believe in the forgiveness of sins, but I must bear my punishment"¹⁵⁴

Forgiven.

This same Kierkegaard said within months, "It was a miracle when Christ said Thy sins are forgiven - what marvellous boldness of faith is involved in believing that the sin is entirely forgotten, so that the memory of it has nothing alarming about it, thus truly believing oneself into being a new man, so that one can scarcely recognise oneself again". Did he or did he not accept it? The consistency¹³² of his suffering is remarkable. Written on a loose sheet was the sentence, "Such a man has become an eternity older, for he has now become spirit". His Religion A of immediacy and immanence seemed finally passed. His Religion B of transcendence had been appropriated. His determination to suffer would be understood by God. The existentialist sufferer had produced the fruit of the Spirit. Humanly old, he was eternally young.

From 1849 to 1854, the Journals grew enormously. There were periodic lapses, but no more pseudonyms or indirect communication. Christ was the example : "Henceforth I will not speak in parables, but plainly ..."* The passage continues with Jesus prophesying that He would be deserted. This was not lost on Kierkegaard. There would be no more "ventriloquism", as he put it. Lowrie summed up the new condition: "He learnt to believe in the forgiveness of sins when he realised that this was a must: Thou shalt believe in the forgiveness of sins".¹⁵⁵ On May 14, 1849, a second edition of Either/Or was called for. This embarrassed him; he needed the money and so he agreed to it. In a sense he was hoping to precipitate agitation, yet with his dialectical nature he conceived the Godly Discourses : The Lily of the Field and the

* St. John 16,25 ff

Bird of the Air appeared the same day. This was his "poetry to end poetry", not boastfully, but as a symbolical collapse of poetry as against Christianity.

Attack Renewed: Interview with the Bishop.

That month, he invited the Philosophy professor, Rasmus Nielsen, to accompany him on what had become his daily walk. S.K. wanted to discuss the old enigmatic uncertainty as to whether one had the right to let people know how good one was? The decision had delayed Point of View and it now delayed Training in Christianity, which finally came out on September 27 of the following year, 1850. Training in Christianity was his insistence on the Imitation of Christ : Discipleship. The conscious experience was moving through deep waters, humbly, inexorably towards his death. It was inevitable that his sharpest polemic against the church could not be held back. Training (Practice) in Christianity was just that. In it he developed his Christology : Begin with the assumption that Jesus Christ was a man; begin with the assumption that Jesus Christ was God¹⁵⁶ This set the scene : Their nominal, shoddy attitude to Christ's commands was a blasphemy against the Almighty. He thought out the paradoxical aspect, the totality of Christianity, as in Postscript, Part II, Section 4. Despite its Moral and the Preface, as Lowrie indicates it was clearly enough an attack upon established Christendom. In fact, the final 1855 open attack during which Kierkegaard died, contained nothing really new. It had all been there, in 'Training'. Bishop Mynster regarded half the book an attack on Martensen, then Professor of Theology, and against whom the 1855 attack was essentially aimed, and the other half as an attack on himself. He sent his son-in-law, Pastor Pauli, to summon Kierkegaard; once he had calmed down, he said, "I have no right

to reprimand you, " but he was very upset. One quotation suffices : Dealing with Nicodemus the admirer, the night visitor, never the follower of Christ, S.K. wrote : "You see in what a web of falsehood an admirer entangles himself - and do not forget that in established Christendom there is no real danger which might make it perfectly evident whether one might not be only an admirer".¹⁵⁷

More Openness.

The interview caused Kierkegaard some distress, but he published For Self-Examination promptly, without pseudonym or "edited by S.K." etc. By then, the breach had widened. For Self-Examination was used as sub-title to Judge for Yourself. He no longer cared whether anything affected the chance of his being offered a living or a position in the Seminary. His recurring regrets were poignant. Had he been able to "speak out" he would not have lost Regine. He had not felt 'close' to his Bishop, who paradoxically was a loved family friend. Mynster had not been available for an interview the day before Regine's father died, June 26, 1849. A month after that disappointment he had published The Sickness unto Death. Indecision seemed to be over. He had tried to join the clergy; Mynster knew his hopes. Shortly before publication, he had attempted to contact Regine, but Schlegel refused, returning the note. The same week he wrote of his struggle of desperation to will to go out beyond his limits. 1849 proved the year of the fearless goal of the soul: "The whole decisive new direction: not to comprehend faith but to comprehend oneself in believing, not to comprehend the paradox, but to comprehend that one cannot comprehend the paradox. The leap. Becoming open"¹⁵⁸

When Training in Christianity was at the press, he had rushed there to remove the pseudonym Anti-Climacus, but arrived too late. He wanted openly to state that it required humbling of oneself to know what it meant to be in the strictest sense a Christian, because to become one "has become a thing of nought, mere tomfoolery, something which everyone is as a matter of course". Witness and martyrdom had fallen to second place after "average Christian practice", especially in Protestantism. In his opinion, the Protestant Reformation had been one-sided. Danish Protestantism in particular came in for censure. Even Luther had stopped short, and the Church had slidden back to that mild accommodation of weakness that Kierkegaard expected the Bishop to admit.

On January 31, 1851, his Open Letter to Dr Rudelbach was published. In the August, with the lesser version of Point of View, ("On My Work as an Author") came his Two Discourses at the Communion on Fridays; and on September 10, without pseudonym, came For Self-Examination. The Discourses, dated August 7, Copenhagen, are not surprisingly dedicated To One Unnamed - a reply to Schlegel's rejection of any rapprochement: "How hard it is in praying to reach the Amen to the man who had a longing to pray he constantly felt as if there were something more upon his heart, as if he could not get everything said likewise how hard to apprehend the forgiveness of sins".¹⁵⁹ Wisdom, the "Lo, now Thou speakest plainly" of the Gospel, was emerging: "In reading God's Word thou must continually say to thyself, 'It is to me this is addressed' therefore the most expedient thing is to say to thyself immediately, 'I will begin immediately to keep myself from forgetting ...'"¹⁶⁰ In all, there was a total of 86 Discourses. Judge for Yourselves contained his superb 'Christ as the Pattern'.

It only reached the public in 1876.

Final Acceptance.

The last four years he believed were constantly in the service of God and man, doing God's will. He felt that, if he broke off, he would find out too late, in eternity. His relation to press and public worsened, with many cartoons, much sarcasm, some cruelty. Mynster in no way sheltered him, an indictment of a church bidden to love its enemies. He sought comfort in the belief that faith is a lack of knowledge and also a lack of comfort. Kierkegaard was no longer becoming. He knew, despite the recurring fears, that he was a Christian.

Final Words.

Sadly, though, fear remained. In an article ready for publication when he died, he wondered whether he would be asked in that very second, "Hast thou uttered the definite message quite definitely?" Hesitation too. His prayer in the final article is recorded: "... it has not been made quite clear to me what I must do". In March, 1854, he wrote words that reveal how differently he might have progressed: "If Bishop M. could have been prevailed upon, what could not have been achieved..."¹⁶¹ And Bishop M., he wrote, was a representation that carried a country.¹⁶² The Bishop had jested that there must be a little trumpeting at a funeral, but could it not be that a little truth must also be heard?¹⁶³ S.K.'s allusion here was Martensen lauding the late Mynster.

The Bishop's Death.

The Bishop died on January 30, 1854. On April 15, Professor Martensen was named as his successor. By December, Kierkegaard's polemic against the new man was ready. On the 18th, a week before Christmas, the first salvo

was fired in The Fatherland, purposely bearing the date of writing, February 1854. In all the bombardment that continued, well into May 1855, he must have felt Jesus's loneliness towards the end when His own disciples included a liar, a doubter, and a betrayer. There was no personal hatred. Kierkegaard had had a deep love for his father's old friend, Mynster, but he had represented a lukewarm Church. Every page of his sermons, he said, proved the Bishop's own doubts about how many of his flock were real Christians.¹⁶⁴ Although he disliked Martensen, he respected him as the finest theologian in Denmark. In his funeral oration, Martensen had, however, referred to the Bishop as a genuine witness to the truth. Kierkegaard replied with a scathing attack and an account of Mynster's shortcomings. More articles appeared:

Was Bishop Mynster a 'Witness to the Truth'?

Is This Christian Worship or is it Making a Fool
of God?

"Salt" - Because "Christendom" is the Decay of
Christianity.

Would it be Best Now "To Stop Ringing the Fire Alarm"?

That Bishop Martensen's Silence is Ridiculous

... Stupid Contemptible!

Christianity with/without a Royal License.

He spoke of the Professor and the Prelate ... what nonsense that, instead of following Christ and suffering, one should become a professor - of what?

"The Professor is a later Christian invention", he wrote. Unfortunately, he was hitting at Christianity in general, as one can see in his metaphorical story of the Captain and the white speck on the horizon, i.e. the young man in the heat of the real battle. Was he mad, asked his readers? Not so, maintained Lowrie, or he could not have

kept up the attack for so many months, and intrigued scholars after a century.

The Final Outburst: Avoid Public Worship.

On June 16, 1855, he published Christ's Judgement on Official Christianity, and two months before the end, The Unchangeableness of God, which had a farewell dedication to M.P.K. Never to his mother. The paradoxical persisted. Twenty articles had by now been printed in The Fatherland. In May 1855, his tract "The Cry" came out, referring to St. Matthew 25,6 : Behold, the Bridegroom cometh. It was devastating : "Whoever thou art ... by ceasing to take part in the public worship thou hast one guilt the less ... thou dost not take part in holding God to be a fool...."He referred to the suffering God of the Old and New Testaments. Again, the old date of writing was used, December 24, 1854. He wished it to be known how long he had stood for the truth. He wanted people to ponder why he had delayed publication. He expected to be arrested, but the Cultus Minister refused because he was a brilliant author and the youth were behind him. The clergy were exasperated. Anonymous replies trickled in, including a lame one from Bishop Martensen. The student recalls the warning that the paradox would always be there. It remained to the end. There is evidence that he had regularly attended services, yet he could write: "The Establishment is so demoralized that one can spit in its face, and it takes care to sneak away".

Death.

Nine pamphlets, called The Instant, carrying 7-8 articles each, were finally written by S.K. In the first he had asked for public subscriptions to support a new venture. It was the tenth pamphlet that he had ready when he died.

Lowrie felt saddened that this one was not printed, because in it Søren spoke of his oneness with the plain man. Yet it might have influenced impressionable youth: "For the sake of God in Heaven, and by all that is holy, shun the parsons..."

Writing this sentence, he fell unconscious. He recovered, but on October 2 he collapsed while on one of his walks. He was taken to the Frederiks Hospital. The irony of his original thesis followed him to the end. So did the paradox, the indirectness of a coma, the suffering. For the Biblical 40 days, he lay paralysed. He refused to see his brother, thus passing to him incalculable later suffering. He refused Holy Communion because he wanted it from a layman and that was not permitted. There was an unfortunate harangue about God's sovereignty being usurped by clergymen.

Søren Kierkegaard's niece and nephew later spoke of the literally visible beatific glow from his face, as if it were a minor transfiguration, shortly before the end. We have no reason to doubt this accolade. He died on November 11, 1855 and on the 18th was buried in the Assistants Cemetery in Copenhagen.

Regine Schlegel was not present.

Remind me, Jesu, yet again
Of all Thine anguish and distress.
Remind me of Thy Soul's deep pain.

(Well-known Danish hymn)

CHAPTER 3

CRITICAL ASSESSMENT

The Pattern of his Thinking.

Criticism of Kierkegaard's thought focusses on his principle of subjectivity: what belongs to the perceiving subject or ego, as opposed to real or external things (including history) is truth. This leads into subjectivism, which as a doctrine holds that knowledge is subjective and that man has no external or objective test of truth. Man must believe what is truth for him.

The above involves the individual, his Spiritual Inwardness and Selfconsciousness, his Decision and Faith, and the facts that he is always guilty before God and always subject to the Moment. Kierkegaard's subjectivity is never a dictionary definition alone. All the qualities mentioned are to be found in the supreme existentialist, Jesus Christ, even the guilt aspect as God turned His face from the Cross.

Kierkegaard indicates that "There is another dimension to being a Christian ... one of instituting reflection on a full level deeper and more inward..."¹⁶⁵ "To depict the story of Christ's suffering was a task I once thought of doing ... I do not doubt that in respect of inwardness heartrending it would have become a masterpiece".¹⁶⁶ The Individual has been called "his particular contribution to the thought of the century".¹⁶⁷ In his related writing he does not attempt to portray Scientific Truth. What predominates is the ethico-religious relation of the individual: this is the truth that transforms, the knowledge that saves in Christ.

Examples.

It is as well here to illustrate from worthwhile sources. Take the moment, to which he sees man forever subject. Camus writes: "From the moment that man consecrates

his rupture with his Creator, he finds himself delivered over to **the fleeting moment**"¹⁶⁸ Ernst Cassirer writes: "Man is placed in an infinite space in which his being seems to be a **single and vanishing point**".¹⁶⁹ The Freeze of the Mime" in Kierkegaard's own Parables¹⁷⁰ deals with the relation between **the moment and eternity**. The ancient Seder Meal on the eve of the Passover, depicts in its Christian interpretation **the point** where the clergy break their matzo^{*} unleavened bread. This is at the quotation, "This is My body broken for you". (Matthew 26, Mark 14, etc.) At that moment the crucifixion was present and achieved. It remained only for **the event to coincide with time**. Decision, immediacy, moment, all leading to suffering. A simple and picturesque example is to look through stained glass. One looks through **the immediate** to the beyond. In that moment there is the glimpse of the cross, or Stephen's stoning, or the slaughter of the Innocents. Finally Kierkegaard's thesis is depicted in many Shakespearean incidents. Take the greatest tragedy, the dramatic MacBeth, which can be seen as a nightmare of man's imagination where **the unhinged moment of decision in immediacy** plunges the individual into his eternity.

Scripture.

The subjective source throughout Kierkegaard is the Bible which dominated his home and religious upbringing. It is Socrates, the muse of his University thesis and his abiding interest. It is partly St. Augustine with the two ways of understanding Christian philosophy: by a metaphysic of Nature or by **self-consciousness**. Self-consciousness influenced much European thought, including Kant, and Kierkegaard is typical of it. It is a philosophy man understands. After Kierkegaard it came to be known as Existentialism. Subjectivity, as seen, is the

* Hebrew massah.

non-impartial personal view, and Subjectivism more the doctrine: in Søren Kierkegaard, chosen reliance on one-self, not only mind.

Scripture insists on a one-to-one relationship, the strict singular of the words : "... unless a man is born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God".¹⁷¹ His individual responsibility involves the trauma of personal choice and suffering, an anxiety that would be rendered less personally existential if shared, and almost negligible if immersed in the mob will which Kierkegaard despised. The genuine Christianity he stood for meant undiluted anguish. Compared with the procrastination of reincarnation and the simplicity of the five pillars of Islam, to take up the cross meant that the single-entity man accepted conscience, paradox, and despair as periodic life-long companions. Furthermore, this subjective battle is a once-for-all chance of achieving eternity, knowing in advance that Christ has warned even those who believe they are on the right road that He might deny them salvation. Such a difficult path, so "narrow" that the world encroaches with damnation to one's left and right, required a difficult philosophy and could not avoid an encirclement of misery. Kierkegaard's campaign was against carefree Christianity (he complained that in Denmark, recall, they even had Christian prostitutes) and hollow philosophy. A subject as apparently simple and disposable as the subjective, required depth of thought. It has proved inexhaustible. So are the Biblical references to the individual's duty.

Gauging Kierkegaard against Socrates and Augustine.

The Socratic roots point the individual to a knowledge of himself. Kierkegaard repeatedly referred to Socrates, whose suffering was the suffering of piety. His unpleas-

ant looks did not bother him because he had made the **inward decision** not to set value by such matters. He maintained a sense of the comic situation. Basically he was a mystic, with a "voice" that had instructed him from childhood. This voice forbade him doing certain things. It was neither intuitive conscience nor the symptom of a mentally-disturbed state. It has been referred to as an interior audition and it denied Socrates any relaxation of mind. In all of this, Kierkegaard was the copybook Socrates. He pursued truth in a complex combination of being subjectively fearful of God, and also afraid, which was acute suffering. The true existentialist has no rest, and Socrates was permanently committed to "convict the god of falsehood". He was convinced that he must seek deeper within himself for answers; this is highly subjective ; fraught with harrowing decision, and when Barth in Copenhagen expressed profound sympathy for Kierkegaard's suffering, he meant precisely that.

St. Augustine of Hippo (354.430 AD).

Augustine's life has remarkable parallels with Kierkegaard's. He, too, worried about his father, who was not converted until late in life. There were the self-reproaches over his licentiousness, possibly sometimes as unfounded as were Kierkegaard's. Certainly Augustine would not have been condemned according to local morals. He experienced the full force of temptation. Just as Kierkegaard feared fathering an unknown child, so Augustine became a teenage parent. In each, the natural bent was the inward ascetic. Each passed through a stage of disinterest when other studies took over. Each was disappointed with a great teacher, Kierkegaard in Berlin, just as he needed a rock to stand upon after breaking with Regine, and Augustine disillusioned by the eminent master Faustus, so that he fell back on academic scepti-

cism. Only after crossing to Rome where his influential widowed mother joined the small family, did the study of Cicero inspire his escape from the view of Pyrrho of Elis that judgements of values are relative. (Kierkegaard taught that God and exceptional individuals are above moral categories).

Then began his existential period with clear moral standards and the resultant baptism of suffering from attempts and **decisions** to tear himself away from sin. His common-law wife was sent back to a religious community in Africa as peremptorily as Regine was dismissed by Kierkegaard. The famous ejaculatory prayer "... give me chastity, but not yet"¹⁷² epitomises the physical and emotional challenge that constitutes the existential struggle of the committed Christian. This challenge before Augustine represents Kierkegaard's stages. The 3-way existential suffering of Christ, Pharisees, and the woman 'taken in the act', is an example from the Bible which one has seen to be Kierkegaard's source. Her situation was of shameful suffering. The decision to move to a higher stage was placed before her. The Pharises suffered or they would not have slunk away. They, too, were presented with a decision. Jesus would hang in suffering for the woman's action, yet He took the immediate **decision** not to so much as embarrass her further, and twice stopped to write in the dust. Augustine's ironic cry, above, is also worth noting from the point of view of Kierkegaardian **dialectic** and **paradox**, for Augustine took another concubine and once more hovered in a Kierkegaardian never-arriving of inward persecution. Even after his conversion, he was to suffer conflict as to whether he should continue in the Chair of Rhetoric in Milan, and the student senses in this something of Kierkegaard's indecision, as well as his aversion to the comparatively empty philosophical speculation of Hegel.

As with Kierkegaard, Augustine's dialectic continued to the last. In old age, he condemned as too Platonic his Dialogues and the unfinished Soliloquia.

Augustine and the Subjective.

Augustine accepted subjectivity and remained impatient with abstract rationalism. He taught Kierkegaard the fundamentals. Self-consciousness was the key to understanding reality. In self-consciousness one is aware of reality, because only the individual can discover his truth. As one theologian has put it: "We are not objective surveyors in a box, but actors involved in the stage, existing in space and time".¹⁷³ Jonsson suggests further, "For Kierkegaard, religion is the way in which the individual lives, in which he meets joy and sorrow. For this reason, Kierkegaard is anxious to give us the picture (not in teaching a dogmatic system) of a person genuinely living religiously". "The thing is to understand myself, to see what God really wishes me to do; the thing is to find a truth which is true for me, to find the idea for which I can live and die".¹⁷⁴ So it is that the Socratic-Augustinian Theme, the principle of Subjectivity, is basic to all Kierkegaard's thought. For him, the single-entity thinker must dominate philosophy, not vice versa; the emphasis moves from object to subject. Truth is the province of the self-conscious individual. Christianity can only exist through thinking, believing, individuals. Hence the Crowd is Untruth. All mankind must pass through the category of the Individual. For this reason, the triumphant giants of his thesis are the Old Testament prophets.

From Historical to the Historic.*

Kierkegaard would not reduce man to reason, despite his own consistent reasoning. Man must act, decide, and suffer, in his own unique personality as an ethical and

FOOTNOTE * Jonsson suggests S.K. was opposed to history in terms of the categories used and the method employed in and by rationalistic historizations. (cf. p. 219 of this thesis, lines 10-12.)

spiritual agent. This ruled out direct communication of Truth, which would be his handing on complete propositions. The connection with his repudiation of historical facts is clear. "Is an historical point of departure possible for an eternal consciousness? How can such a point of departure have any other than a merely historical interest? Is it possible to base an eternal happiness upon historical knowledge?"¹⁷⁵ Proof is ruled out, decision and leap are imperative; emotional passion and mental suffering are unavoidable. "The coming to birth of the new ego, and its life-long growth means suffering. The Christian with his perpetual choices and actions is involved in a mixture of suffering, dying, as well as peace and joy. Think how coolly we can reflect on the lives of others, and yet how emotional we are when things which affect us are at stake."¹⁷⁶ And because Subjectivity and Suffering are inseparable, if the individual is to think about God and Eternity, passionate suffering has to be involved. (The re-quoting is intentional)

Individuality to Paradox.

In keeping with his own life style, Kierkegaard believed that it was mortal sin to seek company on one's pilgrimage. Society cannot share a man's guilt. He must face God alone, without rules of conduct or generalizations. Kierkegaard's ethical principles are summed up by Judge William who states that the fundamental choice of a man is the perpetual choice of himself in time and space. By applying his gifts to his own situation, the Individual chooses, thereby becoming responsible and aware of himself, a far cry from Hegel's involvement of man in the swallowing-up process of life in world history. Very important is the assumption that, by seeking deep inwardness in his own personality (God's intended, useful, gift to him), the ethical will confront man, and his

consciousness of God will formulate; it can only come about in himself, the place where he meets and knows the ethical, the place where he realises and accepts the responsibility he is called to accept. It emerges how opposed Subjectivity and Subjectivism can be. In the latter, everything is centred in the mind, so that one person can decide on faith or on what is right in life: the Sophists had man as the measure of all things. It is with individual inward, subjective, wholehearted faith-commitment that man truly finds and worships God; this is what neither Mynster nor Martensen could argue with. Together with the Paradox, it is another plank in Kierkegaard's platform.

"The paradox (of faith) cannot and shall not be understood ... the task is ... to endure the crucifixion of the understanding. A believer ... takes the mystery of faith seriously and is not duped by the pretence of understanding. Objective incertitude, clung to with passionate inwardness, is truth, the highest truth that there can be, for one who exists. Christianity has nothing to do with a change in the intellect, but in the will. But because it is so terrible, becoming a Christian has been transformed into a change of the intellect".¹⁷⁷

Paradox.

Monistic Hegelianism had resolved all contradictions whereas Kierkegaard insisted that any profound knowledge would come up against either the Paradox or the Absurd at every stage, challenging his logic and allowing no solution because a quality is involved that is beyond philosophical reason. Plato in his 'Republic' referred to the waves of paradox that propelled him to all kinds of strange shores of truth. Man is faced with inadequacy of language to portray experience. One has to rely on

the device of the paradox, which expresses subjectivity and anguish, and because it is the language of the New Testament: the first shall be last; one finds one's life as one loses it. It is difficult to put into words a situation that is unique; there are few if any linguistic tools to fashion a detailed picture of individual suffering; what is most important cannot be expressed. Even in maturity, reason is unable to explain the infinite. The ontological exists in a concerned relationship between what is eternally believed and what is experienced here and now. The Paradox is positive: It is what is real to the individual, as his subjective suffering. Commencing with the paradoxical boredom-suffering of finding no ultimate pleasure in the pleasures of Kierkegaard's aesthetic stage, and continuing through the other stages, the Paradox is always there. Committed people testify to it.

Karl Barth.

Since Karl Barth, "the leader and prophet of the New Reformation thought ..." ¹⁷⁸ has dominated Protestant theology for several decades this Century, he seems the logical critic to begin with. To summarise him is in part to summarise Kierkegaard: the stress upon the absolute difference: God and man; the complete dependence on revelation and grace together with a man's inability to solve his own problems; that God cannot be grasped by some set of human concepts, which means there must be the dialectical argument about the wholly other nature of God. These have to include the subjective, the paradox, and always the individual.

The fact that Barth apparently jettisoned Kierkegaard with the statement that he was essentially a Catholic, has opened him to the charge of misrepresentation: Yet

in an 1837 Journal entry, Kierkegaard suggests that Paul's parallel between Adam and Christ would be valid only if all men were linked in the same social manner with Christ as they are with Adam. The obvious connotation would be the Catholic Church in its world-wide meaning. Brandes¹⁷⁹ and Høffding¹⁸⁰ take up this theme. Barth points out that Kierkegaard on the subject of Luther is highly critical, if not provocative: When he suggested that Luther did not go on to martyrdom, and that his fight was comparatively easy, making it more difficult for others, he was calling for infinitely more exhausting existentialism.¹⁸¹ ...The passage might suggest that he was on the way to becoming a Roman Catholic, but the stress is on the hoped-for suffering.

Barth and Luther.

The public had been elevated in place of the Pope. Christianity had been democratised and "something of considerable worth was destroyed, and very little has come to take its place".¹⁸² Presumably Kierkegaard meant in this that the dialectic he championed had in that situation ceased and should have continued. A syllogism infers a reasoning in which some conclusion is deduced from assumed propositions, yet if the rules of logic are not satisfied, the conclusion need not necessarily follow. The student therefore questions Kierkegaard's remark regarding Luther that "the strong emphasis on the spirit has turned into a 'syllogism of the flesh', of which the replacement of virginity by marriage as the ideal of Christian life, is an obvious symbol".¹⁸³* Had Luther not done incalculable harm to the Church, by his not proceeding the whole way to martyrdom? - in other words, had he become a martyr, the Catholic Church would have been more inclined to look inward, suffer subjectively, enforce

* cf the Regine affair

its own Reformation and remain stronger and more powerful for the work of mission. Kierkegaard, in Lowrie's view, revolted against the one-sidedness of the Protestant Reformation, just as he ignored the stricter Protestant Calvinists.

The Establishment - Adler.

It was significant that Kierkegaard actually felt the trouble with Adler to be Adler's lack of orthodoxy. Is this the same Kierkegaard speaking who apparently despised the establishment? If one examines Catholicism, there is keen subjective suffering, almost of the stages, in ritual confession; there is paradox in added doctrine such as Infallibility; there is subjective feeling in all things Mary. And so on.

Kierkegaard's complaint clearly was that discipleship in witness and martyrdom had fallen to second place after "average Christian practice in Christendom"... especially in Protestantism and more especially in Denmark . Many passages could be quoted in support of previous comment.

The Catholics had "counsels of perfection", duties imperative for every Christian. The Protestants did not. Yet they had broken away, presumably towards a closer walk with God. There was also his distrust (as seen) of historical "proof", and here Barth would agree. "How", wrote Barth, "can God's self-revelation be guaranteed just because the Bible speaks historically?"¹⁸⁴ He agrees over speculation¹⁸⁵: "The Lord speaking in a living voice to His own, was the Creator - not a dumb destiny, or irrational life-energy, or involuntary natural impulse". But while Barth teaches the absolute difference between God and man, he possesses richer existential faith than Kierkegaard in knowing the Almighty.

After all the time of divinatory and poetical myth/saga of the Old Testament, "from an unknown quantity God has become a known".¹⁸⁶ This is the insistence of the existentialist. It was to become Bonhoeffer's position in a family of well-educated brothers and father who had doubts about the Almighty's existence. The point one reaches is that Kierkegaard stands up well as against Barth, who has the edge.

On April 19, 1963, Barth gave an address¹⁸⁷ in Denmark which threw into relief his criticisms of Kierkegaard. The occasion was an award before the University and City of Copenhagen. Barth commenced by fantasizing a meeting with the shadow of Kierkegaard, on the streets. Kierkegaard speaks: "So! After your stormy eruption in the Epistle to the Romans, here you are receiving a State Prize! Apostles were not awarded prizes, they were rather - you know what I mean ...!" He goes on to observe that culture in Europe had once come from a theological environment, and only a theological answer, and the right one, could bring culture out of the crisis into which it had entered. This seems qualified support for Kierkegaard, who had vociferously pointed the cultural establishment back to theology, but, whether his was the right theology, Barth left hanging in mid-air. When he first read Kierkegaard (The Instant, 1909) he was studying Harnack. "Because I was preoccupied with ... Socialism ... Kierkegaard had a respite from me - and I from him!" - until 1919.

Barth had set out to give God his rightful place in theology as in Scripture, and Kierkegaard was the writer who spurred him on even more than the 16th Century reformers. He and others loved the criticism with which Kierkegaard attacked so much "... speculation which blurred the infinite qualitative difference between God and man, all

the aesthetic forgetfulness of the absolute claims of the Gospel personal decision ... in short all the attempts to make the Scriptural message innocuous, all the too pretentious and at the same time too cheap Christianity and churchiness of prevalent theology ..." But later Barth's references to Kierkegaard grew less and less. "His peculiar sound has not become silent, but has been muted by other sounds"* Was it, for example, necessary to regurgitate "the bitterness of training required" for the "poor wretches" who became Christians? Here Barth strikes home. He was not overlooking Kierkegaard's disregard for the authority that was a prerequisite for Catholicism, when he termed him a Roman Catholic; possibly, like some,¹⁸⁸ Barth saw respect and challenge in Kierkegaard, not a side-stepping of authority. However, Barth said in the same address: "It is odd how easily one is caught in the wheels of a law which can only deaden and make one sour, gloomy and sad". The suffering of Kierkegaard was an obsession.

It is this lack of warmth of any fellowship that is the saddest aspect of Kierkegaard. The situation with his mother must take some responsibility, for that is where early outgoing feelings commence; unless she was restricted in her influence more than the reader is told. What of the congregation, the people of God, the Church, in Kierkegaard? "Where her diaconal and missionary charge, her political and social charge?" asked Barth.¹⁸⁹ What did it mean that Kierkegaard agreed with St Augustine and Scholasticism that love of self take precedence over love of neighbour? Clearly this is again paradoxical - which in itself is a paradoxical statement. Kierkegaard challenged the Danish Church in its establishment but yet as individuals. He wanted a full personal commitment, which is at the heart of existentialism, but that must be individual decision. As in Bonhoeffer, it was not the

* This and above quotations from same article in Canadian Journal of Theology.

idea of God that mattered, but the living God himself. In love of self, one recalls the Regine affair. The phrase has to be divorced from its apparently selfish connotation. All evangelists have stressed a one-to-one relationship. Barth conceded that, in his own youthful preoccupation with Christianity and Society, he and others never suspected Kierkegaard's Heils-individualism. Barth knew that such a high-priority holy individualism had to be composed of two elements: a pride that must in turn find satisfaction in the suffering of loneliness, and a loneliness that must in turn take refuge in pride. For all his study of, and writing on, the New Testament, Kierkegaard seems oblivious of the believer's wholesome joy in the Man of Sorrows.

Barth pointed out¹⁹⁰ the anthropocentric in Kierkegaard - that Sartre, Heidegger, Jaspers, and their philosophy of existence could grow out of his work. Subjectivity regarding itself as the truth, was taken over, "an experiment with a faith founded in itself without object". The paradox of Kierkegaard's individuality continued: Was Kierkegaard not "the most consistent ... completion of pietism which in the 18th Century laid the foundations of the churchiness the pious portrayed yet which Kierkegaard opposed so passionately ..."? Barth viewed him as a man of tragic nature, yet possessing an extraordinary intellectual lustre in his work. "I consider him a teacher into whose school every theologian must go once ... so long as he does not remain or return". And again, "The Gospel is firstly the glad news of God's Yes to man. It is from on high, not out of us; and news the congregation must pass on to the whole world".

Barth, in the above, cannot be refuted. The relevance for suffering is to avoid an assessment of Kierkegaard

that implies created suffering. That he possessed unhappy circumstances, and an outlook that believed God has willed his lonely calling, and poor health, is acknowledged. What one debates is whether he enjoyed his condition; whether it was an escapism. Barth's criticism, more a silent observation than an attack, grew as he saw similarities with Bultmann whom he denounced. Kierkegaard begins with the subjective individual, whereas Barth insists that no theology can commence with self, but only in God's Word. The reader has to ask what course, or advice, Kierkegaard would suggest to the individual asking today what must be done to become a Christian? Also, to what extent the Church has grown in holiness and in numbers because of his effectiveness. But here one fact must be recorded: Barth introduced Kierkegaard into theology.

Bultmann and others.

Bultmann criticised Kierkegaard for a lessening of Saviourhood, yet, in much that he derived from Søren Kierkegaard's understanding of faith, he gives a remarkable assessment of the man. Arguing from the 1940's that faith did not require the resurrection as a historical event, he was Kierkegaardian. This was the positive existential assertion of faith which has come to be accepted by others. Ronald Gregor Smith writes: "So far as historicity is concerned it is necessary to explain: we may freely say that the bones of Jesus lie somewhere in Palestine. Christian faith is not destroyed by this admission on the contrary, only now ... are we in a position to ask about the meaning of the resurrection as an integral part of the message concerning Jesus". This is radical existential thinking and it is paradox.¹⁹¹

In other words, Bultmann supports Kierkegaard when he places emphasis on what the cross has to mean in the existential experience of the individual. "To believe in the cross of Christ does not mean to concern ourselves with an objective event turned by God to our advantage, but rather to make the cross of Christ our own ... to undergo crucifixion with Him ... the preaching of the cross as the event of redemption challenges all who hear it to appropriate this significance for themselves ..." ¹⁹²

In the same passage, Bultmann accepts Kierkegaard's Indirect Communication: "For us the cross cannot disclose its own meaning"; and committed existential living: "The cross and resurrection ... open up for men the possibility of authentic life ..." A significant passage states: "The historical event of the rise of the Easter faith means the act of God in which the redemptive event of the cross is completed ... the real difficulty is that the resurrection is itself an article of faith. Myth should be interpreted not cosmologically but existentially". ¹⁹³

Bultmann's sympathetic position does not suggest doctism in Kierkegaard. The human Jesus is not lost in S.K. Where Bultmann has taken over his version of religious epistemology, it is for each a leap "from truths of fact to truths of reason". Ralph P. Martin speaks of irrational faith in Kierkegaard and responsive decision to preaching in Bultmann. Bultmann clarifies Kierkegaard's commitment to pure faith. Faith was not allowed by either to rest on historical knowledge, which would mean it rested on less than Christ Himself. ¹⁹⁴

While reviewing the Kierkegaardian note in Heidegger and Jaspers (guilt, anxiety, conscience and temporality,

which they explain without taking Christian revelation into account), Bultmann points out that, for Kierkegaard, **self-evolving freedom** and becoming, with no distinct result, is equal to Truth.¹⁹⁵ Suffering guilt and anxiety are equated with truth. This leads to man being sovereign and in control of the situation even when broken.

R. Kruger states, "With Kierkegaard Man alone can really make true all that is objectively true. For him this applies not only to human life, but also to Christianity".¹⁹⁶ Kierkegaard elevates the saving power of suffering in the becoming process of his stages. These prepare the man becoming a Christian to accept greater degrees of awareness of suffering and paradox.

Further Assessment.

To assess whether Kierkegaard does show how to become a Christian, and whether the relation of his existential thought to revelation does enough, whether his Christian existentialism is in fact truly of Christian character, leaves the student with problems. The non-sufferer is left in limbo. The priority of existential decision with its attendant tension may or may not usher in suffering, which cannot be forced or even understood in some cases, and it may or may not always lead to truth.

The **truth that is truth for me** is an area which is prone to the accusation that it hides behind its own subjectivity. By accepting the joy and release of Christ's freedom from guilt, man demonstrates the ability of the Godhead. Dr. Allen of Princeton speaks of the transforming that indicates power from beyond; whereas the starting point of **me** suggests God's need for the existence of suffering sinners in order to extract Truth. The plethora of Christian sects claim self-evolving freedom as inspiration. They exalt the suffering of division

to the point where it is equated with the pouring-out of the Holy Spirit. If man alone can make Truth true, at what juncture does man advise God of his (man's) importance? Without suffering sinners, would He no longer be God? Is man virtually to demythologise the godhead within the personal Kierkegaardian temple - and thereby eliminate what is almost contiguous, a kind of pantheism? The student has always to bear in mind that Kierkegaard saw faith as irrational, and that his thinking often appears irrational.

Reinhold Niebuhr.

Reinhold Niebuhr saw the great Christian existentialists as Pascal, Luther and Kierkegaard, each in a different way the object of subjective suffering. His contribution to the Kierkegaardian debate, firstly, centres on the concept of the moment: conceptions of alpha and omega (small letters) are rationally absurd, but they "guard the Christian interpretation of life from both an empty Heaven and an impossible Utopia", which is an area that requires simple intelligence and understanding, if the suffering are to make sense of, and take comfort from, the Christian belief. To be vague here would be to fail the sufferer in his moment of need, e.g. grief and parting, which for many leads to the first tentative step out of the aesthetic stage. Niebuhr states that, when the eternal invades time and causes suffering of humans suddenly aware of the conflict of their lives, and the conflict of imperatives, man's and God's freedom has to take time into account.¹⁹⁷ When suffering is induced by time, the paradox of the beginning and ending times should be a comfort. Niebuhr being pre-occupied with modern social problems, applied meaningfully the relevance of Kierkegaard's writing on time and

moment. Von Hügel states that time won't stop in eternity. Eschatology means the culmination and fulfilment, not the annulment of the temporal process. The merciful power of Christ to make us realise ourselves beyond ourselves with forgiveness, which seems contradictory to Divine Will, is the answer. The existential realising is not always clear in Kierkegaard. It makes us, if we grasp it, able to be free within suffering and therefore free each moment in the truest sense.¹⁹⁸ This is the freedom of Abraham the slaughterer; the freedom of Job, rebuking any suggestion that we measure God's goodness by human standards of justice, and the freedom of Luther. No horrifying experience continues to exist objectively when immersed subjectively and existentially in the eternity of Christ's time.

Niebuhr writes that the mystery of history cannot be resolved except in the divine mercy. Man, as a creature of his time, must approach his problems piecemeal. Each moment in history gives man the chance for some new achievement. Bourgeois liberalism and Marxist utopianism have mistakenly introduced new forms of injustice into history in the attempt to abolish old ones. Christianity is a religion of events. Suffering history and therapeutic eternity meet in Christianity, which is what makes it unique. The essence of historical events in the Bible transcends history just as their meaning explains history. Abraham's call echoes the promise: You will be My people. The Crucifixion took place geographically where East meets West, Jew met Gentile; it paradoxically proclaimed both the end of history and the reason for its hopes. Suffering moments such as Judas' betrayal, Paul agreeing to Stephen's death, Peter denying Jesus, indicate that man's destiny as an existential suffering creature endowed with immortal soul, lies not in the moments of History but through History in Eternity.

This is the meaning of suffering freedom and the rights of man depend upon this divine quality and purpose. It is in this humanly suffering man that the student discovers the origin and condition of the sanctity of human life.

Niebuhr speaks to the intellectuals. Walter Kaufmann suggests he offered them a "Christian version of Marx, Nietzsche, Freud, and all the latest developments".¹⁹⁹ Yet he fails to acknowledge the intellectual nature of Kierkegaard's subjectivity and the ceaseless mental activity involved in suffering. One need not enlarge upon the insights born of suffering. Discussing Aquinas through to modern liberal theology, with the attendant compatability of faith and reason, as against Kierkegaard and Pascal (saying with Luther: "We know that reason is the devil's harlot. If you wish by your own thoughts to know God, you will break your neck ...") Niebuhr suggests this is "theology that glorifies in the contradiction between the foolishness of God and the wisdom of men".²⁰⁰ Kierkegaard is "comprehending the incongruous too simply", so that "reasonable affirmations of faith can appear irrational". Niebuhr suggests that Kierkegaard's protest against Hegelianism betrays him into discounting all forms of enquiry into essences and universal forms.²⁰¹ Also that, according to him, individuals embrace the contradiction in man in passionate subjectivity rather than avoiding the contradiction in us - in this way we come to ourselves and to God. Is it not possible that the Kierkegaardian self saves itself by choosing itself in its absolute validity?²⁰³ Passionate subjectivity could become the only test of truth in such a way that "a disinterested worship of an idol might be preferable to the wrong worship of the true God". "A passionate Nazi could meet Kierkegaard's test".²⁰³

It is in order here to refresh the memory: existentialism holds that philosophy is not a science with definite objective knowledge. The ideal of universal knowledge blinds the philosopher to the basic features of human existence. Rather, the individual's limited knowledge and time force subjective choice without knowing conclusively what the correct choice is. The existentialist has to sensibly acknowledge different standards, but, because of them, he has no ultimate objective standard that is trustworthy. The other man's contrary subjective decision is his own condemnation to freedom in suffering responsibility, and consequent anxiety and dread.

(It is as well, also, to constantly bear in mind in all of this the issues that had overwhelmed Kierkegaard: that his father had cursed God, and seduced his mother (the "great earthquake" news of his 22nd birthday), and that he had sacrificed Regine Olsen as Abraham did Isaac at God's command (Fear and Trembling), i.e. religious reasons.)

Niebuhr detected elements of universalism in Kierkegaard. In The Works of Love, Christian love is equated with universal love and a sense of duty, but duty lacks the very real freedom that was Søren Kierkegaard's concern. There is a hint of Kant: actions equal to universal law, so that an interesting point emerges from Niebuhr's criticism. In the essential suffering Kierkegaard expects, the power of human intelligence qualifies. Kierkegaard was grateful that God had allowed him to suffer. He demonstrated that the control centre for suffering stress is the human head where what Americans call "self-talk" occurs normally. Everybody talks to himself and complains to himself that he "hasn't got it right" - and he **never**

will. This is Kierkegaard's never-arriving, with the decision to accept the situation.

Intelligence.

Without the heightened power of intelligence, this would be intolerable. Yet Kant criticised Leibniz (who is not unlike sections of the 1781 Critique of Pure Reason), and Wolff, for assuming that human intelligence had powers which a closer examination showed to be non-existent. For Kant, pure thought could not arrive at truth without the aid of experience and objective result; yet thought emerges as possibly the major ingredient in the subjective/suffering process. For the sufferer, a hint of universalism could damage a hope of commitment, for commitment would then be pointless. Niebuhr talks about Kierkegaard being "full of the sweat of a plodding righteousness" - which spills over. He suggests further that Kierkegaard over-simplifies the problems of life and that we have to be more certain of two-way repentance/faith plus God's grace in any situation that espouses deep anxiety and soul-searching. "It is a warning that we cannot simply equate the Christian faith with a philosophy which embodies particularity and contradiction rather than with one which obscures the particular and the contradictory".²⁰⁴

Growth in Kierkegaard.

Whereas Barth would not explore the inner contradictions of life for apologetic defence, the existentialism of repentance and faith set out to expect and use particularity of suffering, paradox of suffering, and contradiction of suffering. Niebuhr wrote, "Whenever the vicissitudes from which the self suffers are appropriated ... as divine judgements and not as meaning-caprice, they result in the love, joy, and peace of a

new life".²⁰⁵ Possibly Kierkegaard was not inconsistent. He was maturing through his own fluctuating phases and there was change in his attitude towards suffering after the pseudonymous works. He had said through Johannes Climacus that there were stages in the realisation of the idea that he had conceived. The coherent whole which others had observed growing ended with the pseudonymous works, and the suffering content took on a new vigour when he became deeply hurt as the single-entity individual, and not as a partner in the suffering of his father or of Regine. He was holding the mirror to himself. The paradox had caught up with him. Niebuhr suggested the chaff had blown aside to reveal, as far as is possible, the true Kierkegaard.

Tillich.

Paul Tillich's third volume, Life in the Spirit underlines two aspects - (a) (S.K.'s) time and moment: God is creating now out of the past into the future. He creates always out of eternity into time. (b) Through insisting that God works through men who are "spontaneous and free agents", he refutes the criticism that Kierkegaard's concept of the Paradox is a revolt against Reason. Wherever man is the free agent with God relating religion to contemporary man's suffering spirit, the paradox is unavoidable and must both accommodate reason and be accommodated by it. Tillich accepts meaningful paradox: that it is normal to be the temple of Angst; that it is general and acceptable to be afraid, for the stressful syndrome of life is suffering (which cannot be reduced to personal problems or fears). Those who are committed have a responsibility for others. This engenders stress.

Tillich reconsidered Christianity in the light of existentialism, asking how one identified one's behaviour with

God's will. He saw God's order as so absolute (cf S.K.) that man can never reach it from his own presuppositions. Tillich's God, where revealed, is always the God above God. Clearly the subjective is supported in this, for there is little hope of any objective yardstick. Any religion claiming absolute truth would be an obstacle to God's self-revealing (cf S.K. Indirect Communication) to the man who seeks the faith and "courage to be".

Bonhoeffer and Others.

Bonhoeffer's observation that Kierkegaard's ethical person existed only in the concrete situation,²⁰⁶ was a remark full of meaning. His accepted suffering is legendary. Bonhoeffer saw no necessary connection with a concrete Thou. In Kierkegaard "the I itself establishes the Thou; it is not established by it. Kierkegaard thus established an extreme individualism which can only attribute a relative significance to the other".²⁰⁷ This is part of the paradox which may not be resolved.

Bonhoeffer is specifically included at the close of this thesis. Meanwhile in critical assessment of Kierkegaard, it is interesting to note the strong affinity: Concrete situation, individualism, involvement, decision, terrifying possibility of suicide, murder (Hitler), alienation from Society, the attendant moral questions, and the existential paradox of "religionless Christianity", a supernatural God in a "mankind come of age", yet still needing Christian values rather than Christian churches.

Continued Assessment.

The student is reminded of the Solipsists, modern Sophists, who claim that the only reality is me, excepting that, in Kierkegaard, the **how** in relationships is decisive. Relevant here, therefore repeated : The Christian who can

pray with the true idea of God is his mind, but who prays falsely. Another man, a pagan, prays with a passion for infinity to his idol. The latter is justified. This is the how, or manner of Christianity. It is the commitment of accepted stress suffering, and it demonstrates that the abstract, passionless, non-subjective approach to God is useless. Had Kierkegaard sustained one close friendship, he might have avoided the enthronement of Solitary subjectivity and had a vision of companionship of passionate individuals; one remembers his "A clear view is hindered ... I grew up in orthodoxy as soon as I began to think for myself, the enormous colossus gradually began to totter".²⁰⁸ One consistently gets the impression that contemporary Born Again congregations are S.K.'s godchildren. A critical assessment sees the acceptance of part of his views in a growing latter-day phenomenon.

S.K.'s Concept of Dread is virtually a psychological analysis of the experience of finding faith, with individualism/suffering, interaction/suffering, leap/suffering. What matters is to decide and to commit oneself. In the world, man appears afraid of prophecy or experiment with change. A ministry of calm, a preaching of the peace in suffering, is essential to late-comers, like Paul, who fear for what they caused others before changing. For it is only in the third religious Kierkegaardian stage that man experiences the baptism of suffering that will inspire him to reach out to others. Jesus said in advance that, when they lifted Him up, He would draw all men to Him. Existentialists do not make the traditional effort to grasp the nature of the world. They progress by decision and faith to a never-arriving. In a sense, Bonhoeffer never arrived, nor did Christ.

Klemke on Paton and Suffering.

E.D. Klemke²⁰⁹ indicates misinterpretations of Kierkegaard's theses. His target is Prof. H.J. Paton, who describes Kierkegaard's 'way of absurdity' as "not merely to abandon thinking, but to spurn and deride it, to welcome paradox and to glorify inconsistency".²¹⁰ The statement is echoed by some who have read too little of Kierkegaard. Far from abandoning thinking, it was his feverish mental activity that compounded the innate suffering and moulded his suffering-philosophy. Counselling shows that the lower I.Q. suffers less mentally for any criminal action, and seldom possesses the wherewithal to suffer existentially. Would Paton not accept that Kierkegaard's thinking directed unavoidable paradox (the 'foolishness' of the Gospel) into the bedrock of the narrow way? Paton considers that the rejection of reason, already seen in Luther, finds its most elaborate modern expression in Kierkegaard, so that his "popularity" is a sign of the dangerous desperation and suffering despair to which man has come. Whether modern "suffering despair" is necessarily desperate, is a matter of conjecture. It is reassuring that so eminent a philosopher has obliquely acknowledged the prominence of suffering in this age. As a religio-philosophical entity, suffering ironically seldom seems to be acknowledged by present-day orthodoxy. Kierkegaard was aware that what he recommended must eventually be commonplace. He strove to express it intellectually and to direct it. He stressed that it was not enough to know about Christianity; man must know what it is to be a Christian.

Kierkegaard as prophet.

In the above existential emphasis on subjective freedom, some commentators appear to have missed the prophetic in Kierkegaard. The present generation considers that

it suffers more than previous ones from pressures such as drugs, accommodating women's liberation, being expected to solve political crises, etc. Outrageous dress and introspective beat songs display discontent and individual desire for change. Anxious decision leads to action, and any situation less than subjectively experienced, is inferior, requiring the addition of suffering in individual contemplation of truly existential circumstances.

This means stress. It can be traced through the sexual revolution with Kierkegaardian dread at the consequences of personal decision, through Post-Vietnam, and through the tragic increase in suicide. Few have a clear definition to offer. Even less would use the term existential, yet they know that they are existentially nothing but that which they make of themselves. As they live out the moods and situations of human existence grounded in Heidegger's or Kierkegaard's care and dread, they plot a course that is phenomenological with a theory of being which is at times akin to Heidegger's historical existence. Again this is, as recently mentioned in regard to new Christian cities, centres, etc., very interesting in critical assessment. Certain existentialist writers portray the loss of individuality felt by people. This betokens a positive critical assessment of S.K. Pessimism and distrust are symbolised by youthful adornment of razor blades. There is a clear Kierkegaardian faith in the absence of a rational answer, while many are "delivered over to the fleeting moment"* which is the womb of suffering, always present in existentialism, always responsible. The individual must work out his priorities and values, and cannot impose them on others. This seems a contradiction of S.K.'s sermonising, but in effect it is not.

* Camus, The Rebel (1967, Penguin) p.47

The Situation in Job.

Kierkegaard's knowledge of Scripture had taught him the immediacy, and the personal involvement of matters of spiritual crisis. The didactic in the speeches of Job and God, and the profundity of answer, consists precisely that in a suffering existential situation one goes beyond logic. "It is impossible to document the moral authority of God by an empirical examination of what happens in history".²¹¹ The present generation has borne out the logic of lack of logic.

Sartre and Others - disillusionment in Writing has Meaning.

Roquentin in Nausea: "When I say 'I' I am so forgotten ..." Yet I possess myself as I am. Sartre felt the tension between Life's absurdity and the desire to exist. Sartre realised things also existed. In his Nausea, a dramatic version of his Being and Nothingness, Sartre writes: Every existing thing is born for no reason, carries on living through weakness, and dies by accident".²¹² The central character is a shiftless writer living in a sad village and working on a historical character. He has resolved to find some sort of meaning, some justification for suffering existence, in a new form of writing. Artistic creation will be his salvation. "An existent can never justify the existence of another existent",²¹³ (cf the isolation in Postscript) and so the historical writing is abandoned. He will write that "which could never happen ... hard as steel and make people ashamed of their existence". He is irresolute with the existential refusal to decide, paradoxically side by side with unavoidable decision. Summing up his tentative decision to write, he muses: ".... and thinking about this ... dismal moment, I might succeed - in the past, simply in the past - in accepting myself". In assessing Kierkegaard, the student sees corroboration

in such writing. The paradox then presents itself: Sartre's character declares: I hadn't any right to exist²¹⁴. The gloom of logical indecision floats back. The writings of Sartre, for whom it was important that there was no God, of Camus the devout agnostic, and of Simone de Beauvoir, continually reflect the bleak mood of disillusionment and shattered values that characterized European suffering before, during, and after World War II, which was the most extensive and permeating climax of suffering known until then. It is significant that Kierkegaard's beliefs were rediscovered about that time.

The suffering of Sartre would have been of a different calibre without the dialectical confusion. "If God does not exist", he said, "man is in consequence forlorn, for he cannot find anything to depend upon either within or outside himself".²¹⁵ Again, the problem is Kierkegaardian, i.e. that judgements had to be made, yet it was impossible to make them. At no stage did Kierkegaard resolve the Regine issue. Again, "I do not present these contradictions to condemn Christian morals: I am too deeply convinced that any morals are both impossible and necessary",²¹⁶ writes Sartre. So, with Gabriel Marcel's autobiographical thoughts, or Thomas Mann's description of a frightening world in which one cannot be certain of anything: "Out of this universal fear of death, out of this **extremity of fever** ... may it be that Love one day shall mount?"²¹⁷ It is pertinent at this point to notice the comparative emptiness or stupidity of existence and the desperate hope. S.K. saw all this in Danish religion. His desperate hope was passionate acceptance of faith, to genuinely become a Christian. Absurd, hideous, diabolical fates were common, so that Camus's 1942 essay The Myth of Sisyphus recaptured the pinnacle of absurdity in the punishment meted out to him,

to roll a stone to the top of a mountain whence it would continuously fall back to the bottom. The suffering dialectic emerges again: Camus suggests that it is in the recognition and willed acceptance of the ridiculous fate that man transcends his fate. Such is Charlsworth's view.²¹⁸ The stoical hope was blunted when Camus addressed a Christian audience: "I share with you the same horror of evil. But I do not share your hope". The meaningfulness of Christian existentialism is that a Christian believes he knows why he acts. In The Rebel, Camus insists that the injustice and the suffering of the world will remain ... and will not cease to be an outrage ...²¹⁹ In The Plague, the doctor is "fighting against creation as he found it". There are blinding insights: "Have you ever heard a woman scream 'Never' with her last gasp? I could never get hardened to it what filled his breast was the passionate indignation we feel when confronted by the anguish all men share".²²⁰ In Sisyphus's case, the task assigned to him could never have satisfied even the gods. The student is left to consider this as suffering existence, the only verbal condescension Sartre would make towards existentialism, a word he disdained. To Marcel, he said: "My philosophy is a philosophy of existence; I don't even know what existentialism is".²²¹

Assessment.

Here then, is the despair of some thinker emptiness, to which Paton's accusing words regarding Kierkegaard are a foil. What we have recognised is the meaning which Sartre and Kierkegaard have given to words such as anguish and commitment. Locke's empiricism enthroned observation and experience (therefore suffering) alongside reason, as knowledge. The subjective was involved. Paton must see the logic. Take Heim, for whom a propo-

sition was existential when apprehended in a person's total existence, not as a spectator; or Heidegger, whose real world had collapsed after World War I, and who even went to the roots of language in examining human existence in its dread, i.e. in any metaphysical assertion. The real life or existence was what mattered. This is totally supportive of Kierkegaard. Moral philosophy is critical reflection on moral thinking. Old Church discipline in a sense crumbled when Protestantism said No to priests as intermediaries. Thus the authoritarian aspect came to be something within, i.e. the subjective in action.

Interesting parallels might be drawn today, in subjective experiences, to uphold Kierkegaard's position. Locke's empiricism provided scholarly justification for Parliament's revolt against James II in 1688. The Americans also used his views against Parliament.²²² In Kierkegaardian fashion, the establishment was called in question by reason and experience, as well as by faith. (For one who preached faith supreme, Kierkegaard used considerable reasoning). In all the above, Locke's conviction of the existence of a God ("equal to mathematical certainty"²²³ through to Jean-Jacques Rousseau's 18th Century emphasis on the feelings of the heart, the common denominator tends to become subjective suffering, right up to Camus pointing out that Nietzsche, far from forming a project to kill God, had found Him dead in the souls of his contemporaries.²²⁴ The paradox emerges strongly in Camus' own character Mersault who, in The Outsider, reminds himself, while awaiting trial, "It's common knowledge that life isn't worth living ... whether I died now or forty years hence, the business of dying had to be got through, inevitably ...".²²⁵ Paton must see that civilization had shuddered from the remorse of the Garden of Eden through to the wholesale miseries of the present,

and that the lugubrious melancholy of Kierkegaard's nature must never be allowed to overshadow or distort his incisive perspective on the suffering of paradox and inconsistency.

That he advocated freedom has led to a subjective openness in which astute people have achieved the novelist's freedom Iris Murdoch speaks of as a natural gift, a freedom from rationalism which the academic thinker achieves, if at all, by a precarious discipline. The novelist sets out to influence by existential choice. This is the Sartrean aura in keeping with his idea that optimism consists not in saying that man is happy or that man may be happy, but merely that man does not suffer for nothing, which suggests finding oneself through I-Thou relationships. It is the positive in Marcel, or even Jaspers. It is the richness of suffering.

Return to Paton: Biblical Criticism.

Paton maintained that Kierkegaard wrote before the development of Biblical criticism, showing no interest in Science or its bearing of confusion/suffering on religion. Klemke points out that Kierkegaard was aware of developments in Biblical criticism, and that there is use of the critical method in his works.²²⁶ His emphasis was upon the personal search for Christianity rather than the historical or scientific questions. He resented the intrusion of Scientific methodology in any sphere of the Spirit.

Science, Hegel.

Although S.K. showed little interest in Science's effect on religion, Concluding Unscientific Postscript gives evidence of discussion on fact and fancy, cognitive and emotional meanings, statements of fact and of condition.

The relevance is that discomfiture had begun with the earliest queries. The Church forbade private reading of the Bible. Wycliffe was excommunicated, and Tyndale was strangled at the stake. The festering tension became the great debate between Science and Religion, and Paton has some argument: Kierkegaard, in discarding Hegel and two centuries of systematic thought, failed to stress the positive comfort of debate on evolutionary and anthropological issues. He let down his own dialectic. His unassailable position as master of subjectivity would have given Kierkegaard an enviable thrust.

Kierkegaard, Science and Argument.

With the Industrial Revolution well under way, Kierkegaard should have foreseen the dangers on the horizon. His prolific writing could have counselled the compatibility of Religion and Science, thereby pre-empting Tolstoy and Somerset Maugham asking what life was for, and Tom Stoppard bewailing that finally one is denied any explanation of suffering. The belief of the thinking Christian, then, can only be strengthened in dialectic or polemic with Science. Huxley, with his divination of existence, his beneficent evolution, sees Science "for the first time in history become the ally of religion instead of its rival, for it can provide a 'scientific' theology, a scientifically-ordered framework of belief ..." ²²⁷ His humanism, and Joad's suffering agnostic hope that Christian ethics would continue after belief was dead ²²⁸ - not unlike Plato's useful lie - still lean on religion. So too Darwin, who registered his disbelief in his Autobiography of 1876, yet died in 1882 apparently suffering certain misgivings. Suffering thrives on the notion that religion has been exposed as a sham. Kierkegaard showed that it is difficult to live

with the conclusion that life is meaningless. Consider Eliot's Sweeney: life is death.²²⁹ The relevant tentacles of Kierkegaard's Stages grip men until they break free. Colin Wilson in his philosophy of evolution demonstrates how meaningless freedom is without ultimate purpose, (e.g. the purpose of evolution).²³⁰ Re drugs, meant to avoid suffering, Brian Wilson of the famous Beach Boys believed his experience of God came from acid. H.R. Rookmaaker²³¹ documented phenomenal information before his death in 1977 - evidence that any search beyond religion becomes a suffering. Assessment in the above section is the pros and cons of polemics to some extent initiated by existentialism.

Further Underestimation of Kierkegaard by Paton.

Kierkegaard's passionate urgency in the realm of subjective knowledge as the highest form of inwardness, was in itself a personal suffering. Had Paton taken into account his built-in way of suffering and also his vision of suffering, he would possibly have qualified his criticism that S.K. welcomed paradox and glorified inconsistency. In Romans 8,17 Paul tells man that he suffered in order to be glorified. Can there be ultimate Glory therefore unless man glorifies inconsistency? The certainty of immortality lies precisely in the subjectivity of the individual. Kierkegaard showed how Socrates had the strength to question whether there was an immortality, and to risk his life on it, suffering the inner turmoil of knowing that he stood as an example. He also suffered risking his life on his words, with the courage and decision to meet the private suffering of death and consequently in that final stage to present a life worthy of acceptance. That was existential thinking in action. Paton should investigate Kierkegaard's supreme embarkation upon thinking, not his abandonment thereof. His

criticism is shallow in some sections. Neither Faith nor Philosophy can rest content with unintelligibility.

Paton on Kierkegaard and Hegel.

Paton questions whether Kierkegaard's polemic was directed mainly against Hegel's rationalism. Surely, he asks, Hegel was comical to Kierkegaard and not a threat? This sounds more reasonable, remembering Kierkegaard's concern that philosophy must never imperil human souls. The real threat was Christendom devoid of Christianity because of 'Churchianity' cf. 'Attack on Christendom'). In many of his passages, Kierkegaard regretted what he saw as the fruitless task of Hegel, even though he admired his intellect. There was no way in which Hegel's system would existentially engage suffering or become encapsulated by it. Hegel was too close to state thinking and suspicion. The danger with Hegelian objectivity was that it forbade an individual from coming too close, lest the very objective be lost. Clearly this was a great problem for parsons and humanitarians. Iris Murdoch's already mentioned blessed freedom from rationalism comes in here. The novelist is his own suffering dialectic, both controlling and directed by the subjective/objective.

Kierkegaard's logic is relevant in "A drop of water on the head of an infant - that is obligation! No - obligation is: the imitation of Jesus Christ".²³² One thinks of novelist Graham Green living in a period of immense choice, and how choice is now dwindling. Or again of Sartre saying that man does not suffer for nothing,²³³ and in his rejection of the Nobel Prize, ".... because I consider it the greatest honour I can have ... to be read". The Nobel is not suffering. To

be read, criticised, imitated, that is suffering. Hegel was far more subtle than comical. What is comical is that Hegel claimed to have stated truths which possessed objective certainty. Had this been his hypothesis, he would in Kierkegaard's view have been the greatest philosopher ever.²³⁴ What a concession to suffering dialectic! What an invitation to troubled thought! In effect Hegel seemed to know nothing of isolation and enforced inwardness, leading inevitably to the Kierkegaardian paradox of Abraham, i.e. what is sacrificed will also be saved. Yet in the sadness of his personal life he must have realised the truth and understood what was involved in "to reveal himself as a Knight of Faith ... which indicates the isolation which inwardness breeds".²³⁵ Was Kierkegaard perhaps smiling sadly for Hegel, and not comically at him? Objective certitude meant to cut oneself off from others and from all props and to display total faith.*

Paton Objectivity and the pursuit of Truth.

Paton underestimates Kierkegaard's ability to discuss Christianity objectively with detachment. The first part of Concluding Unscientific Postscript considers the objective problem. Robert Bretall: "the fullest truth attainable by human beings will be that relationship in

* cf. Nietzsche scorning those who give up Christian belief yet still cling to Christian values. Nietzsche believed that, in surrendering belief, they were automatically deprived of the right to Christian morality. Kierkegaard surrendered all supposedly or hypothetically in his very Title, Attack on Christianity, and then gave up his allegiance to Holy Communion, the central act of Christian belief, before he died. Yet he clung passionately to morality. See Nietzsche in The Joyful Wisdom (Robert Adolphs, The Grave of God, Burns and Oates, 1967, pp 13-14). Also A.J. Ayer: What I Believe, Allen and Unwin, 1966, p.14, where he fails to grasp the certainty contained in inward paradox: "Theists have failed to make their concept intelligible". In effect, unintelligible faith is frequently the mainstay of highly intelligent existentialists.

which the subjective element - the passion with which one holds to an object - reaches its highest intensity".²³⁶ How to become a Christian? The progress where Climacus became an author; through the thesis attributable to Lessing: If God held all truth in His right hand, and in His left hand held the lifelong pursuit of it, he would choose the left hand; through to four possible conclusions, two of which - the versions of Protestant and Catholic orthodoxy - by his very rejection of them and thereby a vast percentage of Official Christendom, Kierkegaard opts again for suffering decision. Man cannot escape suffering and paradox. This is objectivity.

The Same Goal.

To use "specific determination", or to "appropriate subjectively" (Kierkegaard's phrases in conclusion 3) means to have an aim in view, i.e. to discover truth and eternity. A case could be made out portraying subjectivity as the clearest objectivity. Kierkegaard nowhere denied that there was an objective basis for religion. He could assemble 'proofs' of logic or of Science. The observations of history need not necessarily be certain. In Klemke's views, as he supports Kierkegaard against Paton, probability hovers. In Kierkegaard, objective conclusions are far removed from the problem of how a person is to become a Christian, which is the ethos and area of suffering subjectivity, suffering truth, suffering reality. Postscript is religious suffering, "a dying away from immediacy". Whether the "momentary craving" or the "shrinking back" or the "human irritability," whether expressed in gentle phraseology or, as often, in Kierkegaard's satire, (e.g. the stinging, hilarious send-up of the average sermon) one direction is obvious: subjective suffering groping towards a suffering objective.

A Logical Paradox?

Paton objects to Kierkegaard's theory of a logical paradox in which opposite views are equally true.* He charges that existential or behavioural paradox is the particular paradox of Christianity, and of Kierkegaard. This introduces further suffering through interplay of the reasonable/unreasonable. Hence Kierkegaard's references to the Greek tradition of analogy.²³⁷ Grief profound arises not from lovers unable to realize their union, but from inability to understand one another; which strikes at the very heart of love, and wounds "for an eternity". Kierkegaard's earthly analogy is the king who falls in love with a humble maid, and the logical emotional consequences - poignant suffering: "What a rich abundance of grief is here the man who cannot feel at least some faint intimation of this grief is a paltry soul of base coinage, bearing neither the image of Caesar nor the image of God". The lovers analogy is transferred by Kierkegaard to the analogy of God as both Teacher and Saviour, for God had to be recognizable as and by man, and He, alone, could understand the lifetime of suffering endured by loving without understanding. Christ withholding facts because His disciples "could not bear them" has bearing on the logical paradox of God become man and men become apostles. The most primitive sculpture had to be recognizable as, and by, man. Therefore, since man experienced health, pleasure, etc. to be his reasonable lot, so, logically, must God. However, God

* See MacGregor, Introduction to Religious Philosophy, MacMillan, 1960, p.133, on the fierceness of resistance: "It is beyond scepticism that the deepest faith is to be found". Is truth innate, inherent, germinated by the struggling polemic necessary in Kierkegaard's man who is always guilty? In other words, truth present in opposing factions. Also, c.f. Kant, both repudiating and respecting the teleological argument for God; and Hume: some sort of acceptance with his "First Author".

in Scripture does not necessarily increase pleasure or prolong life, and the genuinely logical suffering paradox comes with the realization that one's ordinary set of values is disturbed and one's anguish increased by encountering God in Christ.

There is little that is systematic about this. It is irony that could be directed at Hegel. The student observes Kierkegaard's versatility in writing *Either/Or* - (See Bretall,²³⁸ he said it attracted all the attention) and *Two Edifying Discourses* - which showed the author as religious but not an aesthetic. Bretall paraphrases it: When Christianity is made so attractive that nearly everyone accepts it as a matter of course, then one can be sure it is not true Christianity.²³⁹ because the logical paradoxical state is missing.

Kierkegaard was not puritanical. He asked for dethronement, one reiterates, of the aesthetic immediacy of feeling and enjoyment. Paton would have been more positive had he elaborated the significance of apostolic behavioural patterns and suffering. Bretall remains one of the more concise commentators on paradox, logical versatility and suffering, in Kierkegaard. He questions as have others whether Kierkegaard was expressing his own views in the pseudonymous, demonstrating logical paradox from another angle. He all but suggests a moratorium on comment.

Teleological Suspension: Søren Kierkegaard's view?

Again the question of which works²⁴⁰ represent Søren Kierkegaard's own views, arises when Paton considers his suspension of the ethical, in the *Knights of Faith*. Klemke,²⁴⁰ rebukes Paton for apparently confusing the issue, which would cast doubt on other judgements. Did

Kierkegaard individually and personally exalt such great figures? The reader responds with conviction that he did. He would hardly in this case have hidden behind literary device. Men such as these were in keeping with his nature, which only once shirked, i.e. in the Regine case, again like Abraham because he believed it to be God's will. Kaufmann supplies strength to the situation: "... the mordant humour, the fantastic comedy he played out with his pseudonyms who attacked each other, keeping literary Denmark guessing whether these ... were written by one, two, or more writers...."²⁴¹

Kaufmann.

A nice balance is struck by Kaufmann, who elsewhere perceives not profundity but entertainment in Kierkegaard. He tires of his significance having to depend upon the significance of another's interpretation. Was Kierkegaard not already anticipating Heidegger in his essay, The Present Age? (man's moods and situation, the human historical existence brought to nothing in death: therefore what is Being?) In this there is some refutation of those who dissociate Kierkegaard from responsibility for the pseudonymous utterances. In attacking what he calls "the whole stuffy establishment", Kaufmann dismisses Klemke. Kierkegaard's "author", aesthete Johannes de Silentio, writing Fear and Trembling, A Dialectical Lyric,²⁴² is stating that religion may mean departing from the accepted ethic, i.e. normal behaviour. This means delirious suffering for the one involved. This is Kierkegaard. He wounded Regine so deeply that she never forgot, and he exposed himself to immense criticism. But the suffering was his chosen existence, paradoxically chosen also for her. The student concludes that there can be considerable detachment and an objective approach in Kierkegaard. cf. the neutral dialectical

structure of his Religion A and Religion B, or when he told Hegel that only God could adopt a balcony attitude and manipulate suffering, which leads to the Religious phase of becoming a genuine Christian.

It is necessary here to consider Paton's last criticism, that Kierkegaard was selfishly concerned only with himself, an individual preoccupied with his personal suffering. Paton having recurred in thought, it would then be useful to examine three significant quotations from him.

Was S.K. Self-centred?

The Works of Love shows S.K.'s remarkable concern for others. The essence of his revealed suffering is to warn that no man escapes anxiety. There is a parallel in Paul, who admits he might appear to be a foolish boaster. Christ, too, pointed out that He had nowhere to live. Kierkegaard carried a burden beyond his years, in his father. He wished to avoid suffering for Regine. He sought out the general populace in his daily walks, while in his youth he mixed well and was gregarious. His intention was to display the therapeutic destiny of suffering whereby men are won. This is undeniably concern. With the inherited wealth, S.K. could have sat back and enjoyed his café society life. What motivated Paton in this criticism was possibly that Kierkegaard taught that one must love oneself enough to be concerned with one's own eternity, for which to love "one's neighbour as oneself" seemed a directive from above. To do this meant never to categorise men and existence. Klemke: "It is the disposition provided by one's convictions and interests that explains the differences among men".²⁴³ Kierkegaard's challenge is that one can understand what Christianity is without becoming a Christian. If a thinker can extract phenomenological philosophy from

describing objects, such detachment knows little of commitment inside the other man's suffering. "It is a different question whether a man can know what it is to be a Christian without being one, which must be denied."²⁴⁴

It is not self-centredness to teach that true belief is measured by the sincerity and passion of the believer. Even though the critic may suggest that without objective/historical evidence, one might believe in a coconut, Kierkegaard is honouring the other individual with the supremacy of that person's subjective choice and leap of faith. The student could point Paton to Heidegger who, despite his problem that God was no longer a living God, still, in investigating Dasein, sought the answer in man's very real situation. Why was there something there, rather than nothing? In other words, a parallel interest in the other individual, even though Heidegger still denied being an existentialist. Not selfishness. Sartre spoke of lived experience, Jaspers wanted the rule of the personal being itself, and Marcel insisted man did not study problems of philosophy but was the problem. Nothing here suggests the out-of-touch introspection picture of philosophers so often painted. Where the concern is for others (cf. Jesus), self-confidence requires faith and personal authority in order to grapple with suffering. Any impression of selfishness is unfortunate.

Paton: some summary re Obsession, Attitude and Dialectic.

- (a) "this obsession (emotions, anxiety, as a corrective of complacency) is not merely primitive but neurotic - a mark of disease and not of health".²⁴⁵

Paton suggests a resemblance to mediæval demon-

obsession. He calls for separation of religious feeling (religion is always emotional) from the religious life, more as an accompaniment. It is common cause that Kierkegaard lacks the joy of salvation. Rather than the metaphor of demon-obsession, he has, as has been suggested firmly, the 'thorn' of St. Paul. He lacks the action Paton calls for. In someone who exalts decision and the leap, S.K. remained unresolved about Regine through to the end, and had he lived, would have continued dithering about the ministry. One admits the obvious, that this is not the leap into paradox and the absurd which he advocated. It is evidence however of past leap.

- (b) Paton decries Kierkegaard's maudlin attitude towards his Knights of Faith exalted above the moral law, and his suspension of the ethical. The nauseating part for him is S.K.'s suggestion that the Abraham/Isaac story is a "mystification" which reproduces his own life.²⁴⁶ It is awkward to condemn Kierkegaard for what appears to be his deplorable attitude to Regine, his own suspension of the ethical or for his intensely sublimating claim. On the face of it, he was either a consummate liar or a servant of God. It is in the last resort understandable that Paton, Professor at Oxford and Fellow of the British Academy, could say "We may pity his ... diseased temperament, but neurosis is a poor qualification for setting up as a religious guide". Kierkegaard's self-centredness is the antithesis of outgoing, modern religion. Possibly it was more understandable in his day. One accepts that his wish "to do the terrible for its own sake and for God's sake" is assuming a great deal, and could be seen as a contradiction in terms.

(c) Paton questions the benefits of dialectical thinking. "... followers of Kierkegaard and Marx ... sobbing on each others' shoulders at the wonders of dialectic".²⁴⁷ Man must realise his limitations and accept those puzzles unable to be solved. In fairness to S.K., he nowhere suggested the salvation of mankind through argument. He preached the object of Christian faith and the manner of apprehending it. He opened his eyes to the paradox and the continuing guilt situation, which will not be resolved in dialectic. It has to be remembered that the religious relationship in Kierkegaard is personal to a superlative degree. Personal detachment to him was virtually blasphemous, and dialectic involves considerable intellectual detachment.

Ethics and Judgement. Alternatives.

Kierkegaard's theory of ethics is nowhere explicitly stated; it must be inferred from his Doctrine of the Stages. Was he once again merely giving an interested judgement, as a religious man, in proposing progress from aesthetic to ethical to religious stages? Are there genuine alternatives, each possessing merit? Klemke lacked conviction in discussing this. A major criticism of S.K.'s critics always appears to be their apparent failure to realise that a man of this exceptional suffering could have held a balanced view. Klemke notes confusion amongst other critics and finally agrees with David Swenson²⁴⁸ and Paul L. Holmer²⁴⁹ that there are always alternative theories of merit. The pseudonymous characters each created a mode of existence without suffering, without complexities, impossibly ideal. Kierkegaard was not promoting an illusion he did not believe in. Hundreds of examples of his directness and religious decision could be cited. Consider two: his

subtle but direct anti-Church parable, The Untouched Food²⁵⁰ and his involved but direct argument in another (quoted), Bang the Earth is Round.²⁵¹ Ethics throughout writers has to assume some kind of judgement.

Interestedness.

In S.K. God is Judge, not because He is an object judged by us to be supreme, but because the supreme value is judging us. Klemke suggests that suffering inwardness demands an interested judgement,²⁵² but how dogmatic would this interest be? An astute disinterested observer might give equal judgement to the aesthetic or to the ethical situation, to Religion A or to Religion B. His lack of inwardness might generate little instinctive awareness of exact good, with no logical reason for the choice; it would give impetus to more useful alternatives, in each of which his level of intelligence would only increase the possibilities and multiply the suffering of confusion. So much for Hegel's enlightened reduction to one great good. Clearly the leap is impatient, and with it comes the possibility of the irreconcilable paradox. The intellectual man will invariably suffer more, as an individual asking the meaning of truth, and also suffer in proportion to the stage he is in.

Intellectual Maturity and Assurance.

The higher the intelligence, one realises, the more powerful the credence given to an alternative, and, because man cannot intellectually ascertain the right path, a non-intellectual resolution is obtained through inwardness, the suffering involved in concern and passion, a suffering that is the actualized alternative of becoming an experienced self and not Hegel's intellectual answer. It approximates the Biblical injunction, "Only believe". To accept the Kingdom of Heaven as a little child,

suggests to Kierkegaard a useful simile: As a child leaps by running without intellectual thought, his hands outstretched... Reflection must therefore be dismissed and the leap taken.²⁵³ The goal is to reach the condition of no longer questioning, but not in fatalism. It is S.K.'s reiterated "What it is to become a **Christian**": existential choice and action, with the self-perpetuating responsibility of decision, as persistent as is suffering. Involved thinking would produce alternatives permeated with an uncertainty that hinders objectivity. Klemke is firm at this point - unity at the existential level brings a subjective certitude which may or may not be God's will but which is man's decisive, positive right in the Kierkegaardian moment of never-arriving: "A proposition or truth is said to be existential when I cannot apprehend or assent to it from the standpoint of a mere spectator but only on the ground of my total existence."²⁵⁴ A total existence is committed in one direction, with no alternative, and never one to avoid suffering.

His Personal Ethical Situation.

In his campaign, Kierkegaard could never have been ignorant of the right of the Church to condemn him. His ethical insinuations (for want of a better word) nowhere demanded the right to be wrong. Yet the impression is unavoidable that, with one foot firmly inside the Church almost to the end of his life, he kept back certain private admissions. He made no impact on Danish congregations, and it has been philosophers, not preachers, who have studied him. It seems clear that he was affected by the non-corroboration of his Bishops. Despite the pseudonymous suggestions of valid differentiations, had Kierkegaard seen in his personal polemic, any likelihood of an alternative path being correct he would have

admitted it.

Dedication.

He was not distracted from this path even when death approached and the impartial love and power of the Sacraments were within reach. While the individual operates within the realm of accepted behaviour, seeking the religious stage, no other yardstick is left other than what he taught as his quest for genuine Christianity - i.e. what is subjectively right for me. The still-small-voice. Paradoxically, greater inward fear arises from the comforting fact that a just Almighty judges man only according to his knowledge, than from Church indictment. If he did not record every syllable of his suffering, there is conjecture that fear trembled within Kierkegaard at interpretations of, for example, John 17, on oneness in the Church. Regrettably, few existentially invade and share the suffering spring of his life, the suffering course with each tributary that swelled the ultimate broadening of delta into his ocean of suffering. Kierkegaard's whole ethical theory subsisted in this. Perhaps it is necessary for his readers to suffer also, in order to understand the agony 20th Century theologians from Barth downwards have appreciated in S.K. The reader is humbled at the depth of his personal prayer and the assumption that the Holy Spirit did not see fit to change Kierkegaard's unflinching determination.

The student is reminded of William Temple's comment of Jesus outside Lazarus's tomb^{*}: "We are not told of any prayer, there was no wonderful moment of prayer; he lived in prayer, and doubtless was in prayer from the time when the message of the sisters reached him". Perhaps it is not that Kierkegaard's critics are unsympathetic. Perhaps it is that they themselves have never

* St. John 11, 41-42.

reached the religious stage or trembled in faith at those words of ultimate existential suffering in John 12 :
"What shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour?'
No, for this purpose I have come to this hour". Later, in John 16, Jesus tells the disciples the time will come when they will ask nothing of Him - i.e. ask no questions, because they will learn from union with Him. It is a stern criticism of the theological critics that man is seldom invited, in contemplating Kierkegaard, to learn as much for his soul from S.K.'s suffering, as he does for his mind from the dialectic. The psalmist says: 'Blessed is the man who in going through the vale of misery use it for a well'.

The Voluntary Aspect.

Kierkegaard is possibly at his best in Training in Christianity when he deals with the voluntary and the possibility of offence to the sufferer. Here he is the deeply religious Kierkegaard for whom each individual must choose between Christ and the world. "From the poetic and intellectual standpoint, possibility is higher than reality, the aesthetic and the intellectual being disinterested".²⁵⁵ The voluntary is never disinterested. Reason, the intellectual, the aesthetic - these may be disinterested. Suffering, never. Mind can manipulate thoughts about experiences or objects but not the experiences or objects themselves. This re-opens anxiety, for there are two sorts of dialectic, interested and disinterested. Klemke refers to 'maximization of the intellect'.

If, in all this, the anxiety persists that truth can never be known, Kierkegaard has offered his reader peace of mind in the subjective. However, to what extent the voluntary subjective sufferer would be ethically a lesser

Christian by virtue of considering "proofs" or by "irreligiously" contemplating a rational justification for Christianity, is never satisfactorily spelt out. Nor is S.K.'s assertion that one would have to be God to see his intelligible plan including Hegelianism's claim to be Christianity rationalized, with all the implications. In essence, Kierkegaard never offers anything that could be called a metaphysical system or ethical doctrine or dogmatic.

Solitary Confinement.

Lack of sharing in Kierkegaard conflicts with his rules on being a true Christian. The matter goes some way towards explaining his exaltation of the individual. It disclaims guilt over Regine. It throws light on the attitude towards his mother. It confuses the matter of the oppressive responsibility for his father. The student is reminded of Klemke when he dealt with inter-subjectively valid judgements (- "Rules of behaving are inappropriate".²⁵⁶) What were the full implications of the agonizing suffering debate about publishing Training in Christianity, the fear about publishing The Works of Love, the qualms about publishing The Sickness unto Death? Training in Christianity was the attack on the established Church, Works of Love suggested renunciation of Lutheran dogma, and Sickness was about sin.

Suffering indecision surrounded him in his own struggle to burst into the freedom of existentialism. S.K.'s genuine friend, Lowrie, in his introduction to Training in Christianity, says that, smarting under an affront from Mynster, Kierkegaard handed the printer the manuscript with the words, 'Now let him have it' - "to himself". He came closer than anyone to understanding S.K. He felt that there was something childish in the glee Kierkegaard

felt in the discovery of the pseudonym Anti-Climacus. By now the impact of Barth's remark is clear, that one should make contact once, and learn in that the best of S.K., but not return. Paradoxically, there was considerable deference towards Mynster after the latter had summoned him about a work that "stressed so insistently the most decisive Christian categories". There was greater recognition for the unhappy S.K. than he was prepared to accept.

Self-judgement - Problems.

To be sole judge of oneself, presumably called in a Higher Judge, who inconsistently exonerated him over Regine, but condemned him for his father's sins. Apart from the inroads that totalitarianism could make upon Kierkegaardian thinking through subjective decisions and commands, consideration should be given to study of suffering derived from Kierkegaard's "A Logical System is possible, an Existential System is impossible".²⁵⁷ Behaviour constitutes existence more than thought, while suffering behaviour involves both more fully. Just as Kant asked whether reason was capable of solving the problems of God and freedom, so the subject may think another's prayers, yet never enter his interpretation or suffering. Thus far S.K. is reasonable - I as subjective suffer the realization that I can never know inside another. The old arguments for God invade the discussion, Aristotle's Cosmological self-contemplating and therefore changeless Deity re-interpreted by Aquinas to include contemplation of all else; the Teleological design; the Moral choice - to what extent, in various patterns, is man gripped and incapable of the judgement he would make were he the first man in existence? Does man judge a certain way or choose to judge a certain way?

Self-appraisal therefore brings Kierkegaard's readers through the fruitless search that he himself disapproved of, the argument which he supplanted with blind faith and its accompanying dread which "lays bare all illusions". The student must not forget that he believed man had no rational guarantee of what God wanted him to do, although Klemke seems to move towards an intuition - suffering in Religion B simply because no science of ethics seems possible, nor any ethical judgement between subjects. Hence, Kierkegaard's need for faith, a major theme in Point of View. In Postscript²⁵⁸ when he dealt with intelligence at behavioural and intellectual level, what neither Paton nor Klemke suggested was that the leap must imply judgement upon the alternatives. Barth maintains that understanding could only function through involvement, which is impossible without some judgement. The final end-result of an inward existential decision can become devastating, in questioning valid alternatives. Whether, in his polemical life, or the Regine affair, or in his refusal of the last rites, or to make peace with his brother at the end, the suffering was destined to follow S.K. to the grave. Such is the result of Kierkegaard's wholly other God who leaves one to be judge and jury. So much is repeated because so much he repeated.

Kaufmann on attitudes to Kierkegaard.

Walter Kaufmann's contribution to this debate has immediate bearing on suffering. His criticism is of those who approach Kierkegaard in the very manner that was *ana-* thema to him, i.e. the aesthetic point of view, Bretall's "the way of feeling and enjoyment, the way of immediacy",²⁵⁹ that has nothing to do with that other feeling or immediateness of the individual subjective state. He points out how Fear and Trembling directs against reading Scripture from the aesthetic angle, which is the attitude

of the average Christian. Such people admire much-discussed Abraham, yet would demand capital punishment for a modern religious leader who behaved in the same way.

Kierkegaard attacked the Church for betraying Christ by not insisting on the fundamental offence of Christianity. Kaufmann rightly insists Kierkegaard was never "an apostle of reassurance" and fears that he could have ended up "as a man who painfully groped his way toward the insights of orthodox Hinduism, of primitive Indian Buddhism and of Zen".²⁶⁰ A public inheriting this impression would never understand his interpretation of suffering. Kaufmann will not have Kierkegaard bowdlerized and inoffensive with no inducement to anxiety, "a good talking point at cocktail parties" for people who read interpretations and cleverly refer to him as 'profound'. What was the "forced Christianity" that Jaspers dismissed as he sought in Philosophy to find the nature of existence?

Why did Kierkegaard state in *Sickness Unto Death* that whoever invented the notion of defending Christianity in the weak form in which he found it, is de facto Judas No. 2? Christianity is not, for example, being polite. Nature is no substitute for the grace which is the promise and gift of God. Grace is being accepted unmerited after suffering and having one's eyes opened to a suffering need for God in Christ. Christianity should be the refiner's fire of Malachi. Kaufmann rightly discards the too-frequent weakening of Kierkegaard in innumerable articles. Similarly, because he is complicated and perplexing, Kierkegaard is twisted to fit a variety of theses. In effect, he was an evangelist, a man of sorrow, one who saw the foulest sin in the Church's bored and nominal attitude - a Church that remembered the words but had

forgotten their meaning. The Church should be inviting and inspiring men to walk with it the way of the Cross, which has to be the culmination of the final religious stage.

The Uniqueness of Kierkegaard.

Kierkegaard was asking Am I correct? The man who wrote The Book on Adler, wrote to offend parsons and professors and took for a motto in Fragments a misquotation from Shakespeare 'Better well hung than ill wed'. Academic honesty would not bracket him with Barth. He is unique for Kaufmann. He asked for two words on his tombstone, 'That Individual'. Kaufmann accuses others of "Dubious scholarship ... desiccated prose that ... leans on pointless footnotes"²⁶¹ leaving Kierkegaard innocuous for the average reader. Too many miss the challenge to man's whole existence for the simple reason that they have never experienced the genuine faith of the religious stage, which S.K. in effect was born into. Ironically, even Kaufmann often avoids the word, although he implies suffering. He objects to those who depict S.K. as saturnine and sluggish. What is important is to emphasize the unique vision of true dedication behind the gloom, the creativity of suffering.

Kaufmann singled out one miscalculation, where Kierkegaard said that a revolution was unthinkable* in 1846. There was suffering in Germany, Austria and Italy, there were early Communist-type riots in Paris, and Marx was steadily writing. This chance unprophetic remark has little significance. It could have stemmed from a hope of Church revolution or he could have been employing his old friend irony. With his insight, he realized the

* See: The Present Age

deeper trends. Even with Hegel, he realised the philosopher's agony as an illegitimate son, with a mad sister, and the worse suffering of standing remote from his own existential situation, avoiding the use of suffering to understand his own life-force.

"What our age lacks is passion"²⁶² and "The conclusions of passion are the only reliable ones"²⁶³ are comments indicative of the real Kierkegaard. Why was personality inseparable from God? He taught uniquely that, when God withdrew His mercy, and the relationship became objective, the personality of faith continued - that is His mercy. Any punishment was merciful (cf. Hebrews 12,6). S.K.'s thoughts were on the established Church as much as on the threat which Hegel's rationalism then held for religion. The student needs to imagine momentarily the 19th Century reticence, in order to see the force of Kierkegaard's criticism in Fragments, where he states that a million hired servants would not impress God, but a poor man's sigh would concern Him indescribably, because it moves Him subjectively.²⁶⁴

Application to the Earthly Church.

To apply this suffering philosophy to the (presumably) imitating Church, the Passion of Christ directs existential suffering to a degree man can barely imagine (sweat like blood) at the centre of the Kierkegaardian goal. It is significant that the reader gets the impression that God would not have refused to send the quoted "legions of angels" had Christ chosen a weaker path, without suffering. In Either/Or, Kierkegaard turned back to Shakespeare and the Old Testament, where men really seemed to existentially hate, love, murder their enemies, and sin, all of which involves suffering. Kierkegaard realized that God's teachings would not suit

the predictions of his age. When he lamented the loss of Church authority, he knew that man had always accepted the wrath of the Church. In Adler, he repeats that if the Holy Spirit singles man out for special blessing, it will mean suffering: man will suffer inside the Church or outside. He will be silenced, tense, frustrated.

When Adler published his Sermons in 1843 with the announcement of a special revelation of a new doctrine, he collided "with the universal which requires unity in the ranks".²⁶⁵ Kierkegaard describes the *extraordinarius*; he quotes Matthew 27, 39 where passers-by insulted Jesus. "This is the painful crisis, but it never will be easy ..."²⁶⁶ To suffer the wagging of heads is acute enough, but to suffer the scorn of fellow-believers is to share the Cross. S.K. obeyed to the letter. To remain silent would have been disobedience to God.²⁶⁷

Estimation.

John D. Wild refers to existentialism as "a cowardly abandonment of freedom and responsibility."²⁶⁸ On the other hand, Sartre saw the depth of the Kierkegaardian application when he wrote, "When we say that man is responsible for himself, we do not mean that he is responsible only for his own individuality, but that he is responsible for all men".²⁶⁹ Such individuality finally negates the argument that Kierkegaard was self-centred. Blackham refers to "the separation of man from himself and from the world the main business of this philosophy ... is not to answer the questions ... but to drive home the questions themselves until they engage the whole man and are made personal, urgent, anguished. Existentialism ... appeals to all men to awaken from their dog-

matic slumbers and discover what it means to become a human being".²⁷⁰

This is what Jesus asked, for His Incarnation was partly to discover what it meant to become a human being. It meant suffering. For Kierkegaard it meant risking all in the leap to engage the weight of the Church which, for all his criticism of it, was still the official body of Good, and still basically the Church he loved. Given better health, he might finally have entered the priesthood and found in corporate fellowship the milieu in which his preached suffering could be most effective.

The Martyr.

Like all great reformers, Søren Kierkegaard must have doubted his own wisdom and suffered here, too, momentarily. He could not have avoided the realization that critics would say subjective feeling only proves subjective feeling, or that, in an always-guilty situation of personal decision in the moment, before a totally-other God, concern for the neighbour would seem irrelevant. What of the periodic revision of man's concepts of God and good? What, for Kierkegaard, of the paradox of faith implying doubt?*

Kierkegaard extended Christ's promised sword-thrust into the hypocrisy and lethargy of His age. The sorrow and fears of his youth became a spiritual springboard. He had eventually to remove his mask so that his fathers-in-God could denounce him. None of this is negative. It is the triumphant vehicle of suffering, which offsets the depressing S.K. Why would he choose to inherit his

* Geddes MacGregor is entertaining on the persistent God coming out of our own arbitrariness. See Introduction to Religious Philosophy, MacMillan 1960, pp. 121,132-3.

father's curse, if not to share and lessen the guilt?

Genuine devotees led by Walter Lowrie see the martyrdom. What trumpets Kierkegaard's genuineness is the remarkable suffering by association that matures in his long-term reader. Most thinking students accept his inconsistencies as inevitable in the serendipity of dialectical discussion.²⁷¹

Sontag's Assessment.

One writer deserves the last word. That is Yale and Union's Frederick Sontag. His points are thought-provoking. To set the stage for the first, one observes in Training in Christianity S.K.'s lines, "The decisive mark of Christian suffering is the fact that it is voluntary" and "... specific Christian suffering ... a whole musical tone deeper than common human suffering".²⁷²

Is there some disparity between Kierkegaard's words on suffering and his own complaining? Where Sontag deals with Kierkegaard and the martyr, the reader is left wondering whether Kierkegaard was not subtly drawing a distinction in his own life between the self-induced and the submissive suffering he had dealt with in his writings.²⁷³

Sontag reminds us to place Kierkegaard's Point of View alongside our own. Sontag is systematic. He tries to put together many perspectives and concludes, "Perhaps, as Søren Kierkegaard tells us, no synthesis is possible. If so, we have to remain skeptical of any 'explanation'".²⁷⁴ Marriage often has an inexplicably moulding effect upon irritated thought patterns. There may be some explanation here. No-one, as has been suggested, was close enough to Kierkegaard to curb the volatile nature. It may yet be that a Superior Assessment will crown him.

In conclusion, Sontag's major issues: Bearing in mind that he is a specialist in the Philosophy of Religion,

and colleague of Prof. Niels Thulstrup of the Kierkegaard Institute in Copenhagen, these are insights that leave a lasting impression: Kierkegaard's suffering despair after learning in an unguarded moment of his father's (presumably sexual) offence, **disturbed his whole moral outlook.** Hence the effect upon the Regine, Goldschmidt, and Mynster-Martensen affairs. His writing was affected. Further comment would be presumptuous. Sontag sees the necessity for some event to force Kierkegaard into his most direct and suffering testimony. That was Bishop Mynster's death on January 30, 1854, providentially some short while before his own, and 17 months before the ominous title would appear on June 16, 1855: Christ's Judgement on Official Christianity. Next, the Adler writings were for Kierkegaard an insight into the confusion of the age. Yet despite all the freedom of religion today, no Adler would be tolerated in orthodox church circles.

Sontag throws the Kierkegaardian concept into disarray by ruthlessly pointing out that the man who disliked groups or crowds, and built everything on individuality, who constantly spoke of subjectivity and anguish, said after the Adler affair, "The misfortune of our age ... is disobedience, unwillingness to obey ... insubordination against religious authority..." Why did he request that others should read Adler, and "take a step backward to get the point of view?"

Sontag's final question has an obvious answer until one reads the words more carefully. If Kierkegaard expects Christianity to solve man's problems, how is it that for him the paradox is always there, never more so than in the supreme paradox of Christianity?

Or is the obvious answer intended - that the paradox of suffering inconclusive, subjective faith-decision, with whatever suffering consequences, is unavoidable for the elect who leap into the religious stage?

CHAPTER 4

Exegetical Analysis: The Main Themes.

Truth and Subjectivity.

Kierkegaard insisted man could not acquire religion as he does knowledge. He made a distinction between his Religion A and Religion B. Religion A possesses no guilt feeling. In B this was developed. The existentialist learns the Truth by the painful means of confession, decision, change, and by the inductive means in the form of dialectic with oneself/others. A satisfactory conclusion is not necessarily reached*, hence the need for the leap of faith. This subjectivity is the only genuine truth for the individual.

Suffering is inevitable and unshared.

The unacceptable for S.K. is lack of suffering. C.S. Lewis states the Theme in his book The Problem of Pain. In the 6th chapter headed The Necessity of Tribulation he portrays a man suddenly beset by trouble and becoming consciously dependent on God until the threat is withdrawn. Thus the terrible necessity of anguish. He likens man, when stress is past, to a freshly-bathed puppy rushing off to the nearest manure heap. That is why tribulation cannot cease until God sees man remade or sees the remaking to be hopeless.

The will of God was only possible in The Passion, which drove Christ to his surprise argument with God: Why have You forsaken Me? This demonstrates the individual involvement which is what it is all about. Unlike politics or art, the particular ego in any religious statement is personally concerned. The student has only to recall how his emotions are stirred when anything to do with him/her is at stake. The metaphysical involves each man's

* Footnote: Cf Socrates exposing his own ignorance, ironically, in order to remind others of theirs. Consider also his extremely difficult marriage to Xanthippe, the pressure of public opinion, and the ultimate death by hemlock .

integrity, his eternity, the suffering of his isolated thought and decision. At the heart of argument there resides unacknowledged decision-making which is proved by how high feelings tend to run. The single-category individual who makes no decision is incapable of escaping from Religion A. The paradox is that decision opens the gate to concern.

Isolation.

The exaltation of individual subjectivity is carried to unnatural lengths in the Journals. In 1854 Kierkegaard complained about the 3000 worshippers added to the congregation at Pentecost. This is a remarkable blindness: the Holy Spirit must have been drenchingly present to appear in 3-fold form and subjectively motivate individuals whose uniqueness flowered in different languages and later in different gifts, which S.K. would approve. One would have expected 3000 newcomers. Yet we read, "In Christ Christianity is The single individual In the apostle community. This concept has been the ruination of Christendom."²⁷⁵ It would appear that S.K. foresaw mass emotionalism. There may be some indication here of what John The Baptist meant when he asked "Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" of the many who approached him (St. Matthew 3,7). It is the admonition that lacks the sacrificial love of Jesus.

In the same year, he wrote, "To have to hold fast to this - to be saved as an individual in contrast to a whole world which is eternally lost is such an immense **exertion** that only the most terrible **fear and trembling** and the most terrible **pressure of passion** can hold a person...."²⁷⁶ He then suggests that the saved individual feels more comfortable when others about him are saved: his suffering responsibility of purity is lessened, yet the state of others should not affect the subject?

Who is to judge the inner worth of a crowd? Kierkegaard posits an individual "born of Christian parents, baptized, confirmed questioning whether or not he is a Christian **thus considered crazy**"....²⁷⁷ Baptism and Confirmation proclaim the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit. Man cannot impute hypocrisy with sweeping condemnation.

There is a balance that deserves a lengthy quotation, in what Patrick Brannan says about individual subjective feelings: "Because a blind person is not inspired by the Pieta of Michaelangelo or a deaf person is not overwhelmed by Mozart's Requiem, neither of them is justified in maintaining the non-existence of such works of art. Just because I thought it was a moose and not a man when I shot does not make the man any less dead. Just because I may get nothing out of Mass or **don't feel good** when I accept in faith all that God and His Holy Catholic Church teach, does not make the act of faith any less **sincere** or the **content** of that faith any less true. My personal subjective state may or may not be commensurate with objective reality".²⁷⁸ Is it not Kierkegaard's **real** person in **real** life whose faith is a blush in the presence of God"? Is that not suffering? Or Abraham Joshua Heschel's "Religion comes to light in moments of discerning the indestructibility sudden within the perishably constant".²⁷⁹ This is hidden inwardness. Kierkegaard sees no connection between the sinful majority's groping, and the suffering he depicts in the pseudonymous works as an inward relation between the sinful individual and his desire for salvation.

Historic Faith.

Subjectivity dismisses support, or props, which are (a) too direct (b) a hindrance to pure faith. Much of this goes against Christ's invitation to the leaders to

believe because of the miracles they had witnessed, just as isolation repudiates the oneness He called for in St. John 17. A former Archbishop of Canterbury points out the validity of history: "..... teaching about prayer lifts us into an eternal world by confronting us with the particular time and place of an event on the Hill of Calvary. What we learn is rooted in the early tradition...."²⁸⁰ W.H. Andrew saw S.K. as something like Pascal and Richard III; man had to love himself in order to love other situations (as in history). Subjectivity of the Kierkegaardian mould would need to transfer history to the subject's hidden inwardness, living those situations in the mind. To waive history would be to call in question the guidance of the long years of putting together the Bible.

Subjective Truth and Ethics.

Kierkegaardian uniqueness commands suspension of the universal, by which standard Abraham's agreement to kill his Son would appear criminal. One notes the added or exceptional suffering of the exceptional case. The unique requires a unique relation to God. Judge William says we choose by applying ourselves to our own time and space. Choice thus dominates ethics, making a man conscious of himself in the hidden inwardness of responsible suffering, which is God-confrontation as never experienced by the Established Church of Denmark. The ethical becomes man's consciousness of God, or true fear of God paradoxically in the search for Truth. This loses impact in Pantheism where suffering is reduced to the drudgery of cold fate. Disease or poverty becomes punishment in a relentless round where ethics is stifled and the true suffering of discipleship vanishes because man has become his own saviour. Kierkegaard's subjectivity is more Augustinian, more Biblical, in that man is promised help,

told that the Kingdom is within him now. God-confrontation within is real and there is no avoiding the ethical.

Paradox.

This is "the real pathos of intellectual life". Thought-provoking knowledge is confronted with paradox at all stages. The result is the incomprehensible, the absurd suffering, objectively and logically irreconcilable because a different quality is involved, one that is not accessible to reason. There is a chasm between the immanent, where logic can operate but often does not, and the transcendent. Suffering Christianity is the one adequate example of fusion - e.g. the Eternal restricted in Time, which is paradox.

Appalling suffering and consequential self-reflection leads to greater self-realization when the suffering is seen in terms of total love. Fortunately the numbness of shock provides a climate in which the subject is prepared to see that good can emerge. Where Hegel attempted a reasonable connexion of immanent and transcendent, Kierkegaard objected to mind comprehending reality, including God. There could be no systematic account of reality from an observation post, nor a single logic, dispensing with polarities, eliminating suffering. Hence paradox could not be eliminated either. S.K. objected to the implication that if Reason is infallible, Religion and paradoxical suffering emerge as inferior. Such thinking suggests utopian hopes of fading errors so that in time increased knowledge will prove the Divine to be a continuation of the earthly. In such harmony, not unlike Nirvana, Christianity would be explained away. Kierkegaard's attack on Bishop Martensen involved his resolving paradox and thereby avoiding suffering and missing the truth.

Because paradox demands faith, the value of suffering is that one is driven to believe despite the shattering of hope. The paradox constitutes Christianity. It becomes in effect a criterion. Paradox must always be expected and existential Christianity must never be without the suffering that offends.

Paradox and Reason.

Kierkegaard did not scorn reason. He believed it to be inadequate to express the infinite. He used subtlety in his dialectic. He accepts reason as far as its limits allow, but it has no use once man is inside the existential boundaries that no longer ask the eternal why?

Paradox is **SUPRA SED NON CONTRA RATIONEM**. Paradox is in some part ontological, although language invariably limits one. How does one reconcile the fact that Truth is objectively uncertain and yet must be described as objectively expressed where subjectivity is truth. This only makes sense within paradox. When Kierkegaard asked the difference between a genius and an apostle, he concluded that one is immanent, the other transcendent. The apostle may introduce paradox, but it survives, whereas the offering of the genius, no matter how brilliant, is assimilated.

The Absolute Paradox.

S.K. believed the Absolute Paradox to be that God became man. To a large degree his critics then and now are at a disadvantage if unaware of how far Christ went to make the situation assimilable. He mentioned that no-one had done what he had done publicly and invited the Pharisees to explain how, if they thought he had satanic power, the devil would cast out the devil. This raises the interesting point that paradoxical enigma never overlaps into a sphere that is unacceptable academically. The intellectual retains an interested regard for Paradox.

Paradox and Religion.

In Christian categories, Reason rubs against the incomprehensible - a God who cannot be understood philosophically by His creatures.* The Christian accepts Biblical Paradox and does not employ logic. He refutes Hegel's suggestion that paradox is a lower form of knowledge and accepts that the joy of faith is partly its pain.

Religious or eternal truths as such are not paradoxical. Man's expression thereof makes it appear so. Kierkegaard stresses this. He deals with the grasp of faith beyond what man understands and emphasizes that the vol-untaristic leap is never a gamble but rather a hope in action fed by subjective certainty of eternal guidance.

To avoid the leap is to evade challenge, and belittle faith. Aquinas saw God as ineffable. In his reaction to Hegel, Kierkegaard missed the immanence and nearness of God in Scripture and in life. Within the context of religion S.K. gives no thought to the impossibility of a God governing unconnected religious individuals.

The Stages.

God is present throughout.

These are what man would call spheres of existence, or categories, or states. In the experience of all men, they overlap. Kierkegaard's writing being autobiographical, he speaks through characters in "In Vino Veritas", for the Aesthetic Stage. Certain points emerge. Had Constantius not arranged things, the projected impulsive Banquet would never have been carried out (existentialism means action). The name Victor Eremita means Hermit.

* Cf. Luther's Deus Absconditus. Romans 11,33. Job 11,7).

- an Aesthetic is ego-centric and suffers loneliness. Aesthetes are impulsive; they destroy and all must be obliterated after the Banquet. The Rotation Method, drifting without choice and nothing inward, is true suffering. Man does not admit this.

The fragrance and music, i.e. Senses, is short-lived. The speeches, under the influence of liquor and therefore frank, show Aesthetes to be aware of ethics. Either/Or, Part I, has the Seven Aesthetic Essays, not least the part on aforementioned Mozart's Don Giovanni, sensual and wild. This amounts to suffering despair and boredom. Man awakens to the right sort of despair, lest he despairs deeper. He leaps at himself in a sense, but faces the situation and begins to understand ethics. This would be the optimum situation. Not all men experience Despair. The Ethical stage (Religion A) is the average nominal Christian or Thinking Agnostic. Choice brings commitment and wholeness interests, as against the past shallow ego-centricity of the aesthete. Here man is growing. He will not always choose the wrong. Choice may mean suffering in giving up weaknesses. Choice also means absolute choice, not reflective pantheist as in Hegel's case. Choice has to imply Forgiveness. This character-building is clearly choosing oneself. All the old aesthetic qualities are mastered and have matured. Responsibility has again meant suffering over the things the ethical man cannot help, and suffering in his realization of near self-sufficiency which he now hopes to avoid. He suffers further because for the first time he is master of his destiny. Major suffering begins to disturb him (Kant's Divine Imperative?) for he sees he is not in control! God is interfering. The universality of everyman's duty begins at all points to clash with subjective obedience to God. This obviously cannot be the final stage. Referring to Either/Or, Part

II, - Sermon of a Country Parson, Stages on Life's Way. Equilibrium between the Aesthetic and the Ethical, and The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage, religion is depicted as a natural religion. The ubiquitous Judge William hopes man at this stage will go bankrupt, and see the final light. Suffering is excessively present. All things in moderation has not worked.

Lessing's leap brought him to the Religious Stage, because the acute suffering was to realize that there was no continuity. Hegel had supposed easy progress through knowledge to the Divine state. The truth is the leap of despair, on faith that to God all things are possible. This is S.K.'s existential living. It is "existential appropriation". The individual comes into his own. His choice affects him personally. His Religion is so inward that man cannot pass it on. The Religious stage is essentially suffering. "Guilty - Not Guilty" has a subtitle: "Passion Narrative". Religious man cannot confide - Abraham could not tell of his sufferings, nor could Kierkegaard confide to Regine. Feuerbach was confounded, "Religion is the projection of man".*

Pascal believed that suffering was the natural state of the Christian, just as health was that of the natural man. Suffering will come now from man's loyalty to God. He will be persecuted. This will mainly come from within as he realizes the goodness of God, the command to be perfect, and his own unworthiness.

There is no clear account of the Stages and no objective presentation of the theory. What interests is the connected melancholy/suffering of aesthetes, and irony-resignation/suffering of ethics, portrayed with subtle humour as is life itself. This is apparent in the pseudonyms, which represent Kierkegaard at some stage of his life. The aesthetic Either/Or is surprisingly neither good nor

* Cf. Marx and Freud.

bad, but strong or weak Kierkegaard. W.H. Auden in *The Living Thoughts of Kierkegaard* suggests of the stages that in the first, the gods depend on their whims to get in touch with the subject. In the second, the relation of the ethical worshipper to his ideas depends on him. In the third, true Religion, the relation of the Creator God to man is unbreakable. If he banishes it from his mind, he will experience it negatively as guilt and despair.

Essentially the stages are not mutually exclusive, for man cannot compartmentalize pleasure, then action, then suffering. Living without choosing, a sort of continuity with nature and feeling before attempting moral distinctions, is not restricted to the beginning. After any amount of enthusiasm, one can despair - hence much of the suffering depicted in poetry. Outside factors decide. The "baptism of the will"²⁸¹ lifts choice into the ethical. No matter what man chooses, he is choosing and is liberated from chance.

In the third stage man is governed by the thought of eternal happiness, for which reason suffering is gladly accepted as the principle of life. This is a different suffering from outside misfortune.²⁸² The existential pathos of suffering expresses itself in the transformation of a man's life. One criticism is that Kierkegaard has injected into joyous Christianity a fear of not having completed a disciplinary programme. One does not find in any author an attempt to equate the stages with the life of Christ or other great teachers, which would be a fair test.

Dread. Acute suffering.

An exegesis of this concept realises that it rests on the psychological more than on original sin. Kierkegaard

deals with Dread as the Presupposition of Original Sin, as the Consequence of it, as the Consequence of Sin which suggests no sense of sin, as the dread of sin itself and finally Dread in conjunction with Faith as leading to Salvation.

Dread is the foreboding of what will happen. Dread is a spiritual faculty connected with man's freedom. The greater the possibilities given by freedom to decide issues, the greater the insight and the greater the dread. S.K. himself broke free from the Dread he had encountered over Regine. In some part he must qualify his assertion that before God we are always guilty. It is the hallmark of worthwhile religion that it keeps up with the times. Acute dread is not common today, not even at death, where Kierkegaard assumed it would catch up with man.

The Moment.

This is the final theme indispensable to Suffering. It is the pin-prick of misery. In 'Fragments', Kierkegaard occupies himself with Jesus' appearance as the becoming-God-into-time. Despite dismissal of history this "historical" contemporaneous fact is indispensable for salvation. How, he asked, could the eternal depend upon a past event? It is a matter of how man can become a contemporary disciple of Christ. The uniqueness of the Incarnation opposed in principle any philosophy of history. Nevertheless, one revealed moment spelt out saving grace. The original disciples, S.K. felt, were as far away from the divine event as is man now. That moment was when time and eternity, relative and absolute, met "as the result of an existential super-temporal choice".

The moment is the genesis of suffering because the agonizing leap occurs in the moment. This is the time in

which human guilt is conceived, displaying us in the moment as Christ's opponents. The theological present is created in the existential decision of the God-Man who awaits man's inescapable decision, the moment of cultivation of self-torment. This moment is also the moment of Faith, when "the finite is lost in suffering in order to regain in the infinite, as salvation, in and because of suffering".²⁸⁴ In the moment of suffering, man becomes a witness to truth. So it was that S.K. Bishop Mynster, through receiving honour and enjoyment and not the misery of an **existential** Suffering, could not be a witness to the Truth. God-assisted Faith in the actual decision to suffer, is the moment of Salvation. What is real about any sort of peace of mind, is the **in spite of suffering** aspect, which makes faith triumphant in each moment.

The moment would also hearken back to any suspension of the ethical, which rests upon the instant of decision. Depending upon the circumstances of that moment, ethics would be viewed differently. With an altered definition of ethics, suspension might become an inappropriate word. One of the misgivings about acting in faith in the moment is to ask how the religious man faced with enormous responsibility actually tests that **his time of action** is God's will. Brunner advocates a test of the will of God for individual man against Scripture. The moment may not be delayed. "We should have liked to have seen in Kierkegaard some hint of a safeguard, such as, God cannot ask me to act contrary to His character as revealed to us in Jesus Christ".²⁸⁵ Two of the Journal entries indicate S.K.'s puzzlement over the moment, as with Christ in Gethsemane.

"What I really lack is to be clear in my mind **what I am to do**, not what I am to know, except in so far as a certain understanding must precede every action". (Entry 22)

"The best help in all action is to pray; that is true genius; then one never goes wrong". (Entry 588)

Abraham remains the supreme example of faith in suffering moment. He used reason to believe that God would still carry out His plan for the nation/world, so in faith neither reason nor ethics was suspended. The moment was and is the moment of suffering triumph. Prof Pojman rates Kierkegaard's passion in all this as almost a mystical state. If no reasons need to be given, either for God's demands or in order to justify man's faith, why could the Nazi not say the same about his beliefs?²⁸⁶ He asks what becomes of the 'high passion' of suffering faith once man has accepted the truth of Christianity? "One would seem to have to keep losing his faith in order to have high passion because of it. Passion of this sort needs a paradox to maintain itself".²⁸⁷

Kierkegaard's Prayers.

"Keep me from becoming a fool who will not accept Thy chastisement,
or a rebellious fool who is unwilling to accept Thy chastisement,
a fool who is unwilling to accept it for his blessing, or a rebellious fool who wants to accept it for his perdition".²⁸⁸

In Kierkegaard, it is not surprising that the mainspring of his personal suffering is sensed in his prayers. These contain his individualism, his dialectic and his paradox. He saw prayer as a means of drawing suffering despondency and fear into the open.²⁸⁹ Man then experiences the ultimate in suffering by existentially seeing himself as he really is, because he cannot be dishonest before God. The existentialist does not halt when his image in Christ's mirror becomes uncomfortable. S.K. displays the joy of suffering:

"Each suffering bought is the communion in suffering with Thee, and is forever an eternal acquisition it was even Thy love which placed me in these sufferings"²⁹⁰

He unveils the purpose in suffering.

"Help me to thank Thee even when I do not understand that Thou art good but want to believe that Thou art less loving",²⁹¹

This may provide some clue to what can only be seen as his choice of suffering restlessness. Even before the Regine drama, Kierkegaard had exposed an inwardness which restlessly grasped at possibilities. His interpretation of suffering is honesty to the point of admittedly maintaining tension in indecision: "I will never get beyond the point where I once voluntarily stopped restlessness which ... my reflective self seemed to sustain".²⁹² Significant is the maturity in 1842, that could write "if the bitter cup of suffering is handed to me I will take it cheerfully for I know that it is for my health that I empty it, for my health, as I leave not one drop behind".²⁹³

S.K. asked that man consider and become, through suffering, "teachable, existent for God". This is what Le Fevre stresses in quoting his well-known: "Prayer does

not change God, it changes man". Prayer that looks inward is "what a man does so that God can do something with him. God can do nothing with him until man sees himself as he really is".²⁹⁴ S.K.'s analogy is rain that is most beneficial on prepared ground. Prayer that penetrates thoroughly can only end in silence. Restless inwardness concedes only one answer to the built-in Angst: the lifelong acknowledgement of total dependence in suffering upon unmerited grace. For once the individual chooses the paradox of **Christ's** freedom to confess **his** freedom in Christ, he is learning what it is to go through the refiner's fire, and become a true Christian. The hope is that S.K.'s readers understand his meaning, i.e. if prayer does not change God. Wherein lies the efficacy of prayer? God acting upon man in an internal way, in keeping with Kierkegaard's thought, "makes things possible" for the person who prays the sublime prayer of suffering silence. This agonising prayer helps man know the self that God was already aware of, but it does not explain the miracles of God's altered plans in the course of history. Hong's entry 4891 reads: Everything moves Him - Nothing changes Him.

Kierkegaard solves man's suffering through religious, not worldly, understanding. What is necessary now is to read his personal confession of his own insoluble suffering paradox:

"My tragedy is simply that I have been a genius, that I have had a strict upbringing in Christianity, that I have had money. Without the first I would not have begun with a gigantic jump my motives would have been cluttered; without the second I would not have had the idea of suffering which made me decide to act against prudence; without the third I would have been unable to gain position. All these three things, of which the first two actually are advantages, have become my misfortune, for people regard truth and piety as pride and vanity".²⁹⁵

Many lines could be lifted from his writing as examples of suffering as grace appropriated. The Hong's entries 4581 - 4614 read:

'Tears are like rain, heaven's tears yet no rain so fruitful'.

'Christ suffered once. One must suffer only once: the victory is eternal'.

'To suffer patiently is not specifically Christian but freely to choose the suffering which one could also avoid ... this is Christian'.

'Christ was God and yet chose to suffer'

'One must have suffered before there can be any question of beginning to love the neighbour he does not come into existence until in self-denial one has died to earthly happiness the immediate person is too happy for the neighbour to exist for him....'

'Healing for another man's pain is prepared in the inward agony of a deeply but secretly suffering man'

'To enjoy is to squander to suffer is like accumulating savings'

'There is nothing more difficult to stop than the dialectical in the suffering of the God-relationship'.

'If, then, fear of God has promise for the life to come and I know it, then my knowledge of it in time is the promise of the same fear of God for the present life'

'Keeping a wound open can also be very beneficial: a healthy and open wound; sometimes it is worst (sic) when it skins over'.

'It is and always will be the most difficult spiritual trial not to know whether the cause of one's suffering is mental derangement or sin. Freedom, which is otherwise used for the

struggle, in this case becomes dialectical with the most dreadful contrasts'.

Kierkegaard has three further points to make on suffering.

1. There is suffering Dread at Evil, which he calls Slavery to Sin. This contains the suffering fear of sinking into a worse state. The remedy here is not repentance, but faith.
2. There is also suffering Dread at Good, which is a form of anguish, an unfree relation to good which comes to light when evil is touched by good - as in the case of the Biblical man possessed. Here man finds acute suffering: Peter's bitter tears when he was touched by Christ's glance. Kierkegaard believed man here paradoxically feared God's attempt to control his life with His good.
3. There is suffering in the sphere of secrets and of imagination. Secrets were 'demonic', a revolutionary idea. What of the Regine relationship which coloured so much of his thought? He refers to secrets in Fear and Trembling. He resents the fact that Romanticism avoids the seriousness of real good that comes from facing suffering by permitting God's revelation to enter it and know its secrets. When dread combines with faith, suffering means salvation. In regard to imagination, the contemplative poet and/or Christian is cautioned towards Pauline thought and involvement, both intellectually and practically. "Imagination lacks the suffering of reality or the reality of suffering. The true perfection is this very perfection, only that the suffering is real. It is this very perfection which day after day and year after year is present in the suffering of reality. It is this frightful contradiction - not that

perfection does not exist in the more perfect man, but that it exists in the endlessly more imperfect".²⁹⁶ Here S.K. gives food for thought to the average man whose dread and secrets fire his imagination.

Suffering in Fear and Trembling.

One book deserves special final mention. This is **Fear and Trembling**, which proposes the Christian category of Existence as being individual responsibility in the suffering of perpetual decisions.

Confrontation with the levelling process amongst shallow mass-man, who could neither discover himself nor test his ethical values in any sense of freedom, brought response. Neitzsche replied with atheistic superman. Kierkegaard counters with emphasis upon individualism deciding what God desires of man which is life in the everyday world beyond the Aesthetic and Ethical levels. Being the antithesis of escapism, it is as rich in suffering commitment as is Kierkegaard's symbolism: Isaac is returned to Abraham just as the Christian breaks with the world and returns to it to live triumphantly.

The suffering theme, nicely balanced in the book, has a positive and Biblical side, i.e. Infinite Resignation and Positive Return. Kierkegaard mourned his personal lack of faith - had he possessed the faith of Abraham, Regine would have been returned to him. The theme teaches man to trust God in the most dire circumstances; in suffering worry that can only be called Absurd Choice. Kierkegaard quotes Luther's wife: God could not treat His Son like that! And Luther's reply: He did. Suffering obedience is the commitment of free choice of heart and free leap of mind - It is going beyond resignation.

The paradox in the book is that Faith may leap beyond reason, not contrary to it.

Fear and Trembling displays how unassailable strength of character and personality is developed in the anguish of decision. Kierkegaard's theme is the theme of life and could be applied to all the major decision areas: euthanasia, race, Nuclear disarmament, abortion, etc.

Conclusion.

From the Christian point of view, Kierkegaard claims it is

"a plain duty to seek suffering in the same sense that from a purely human point of view it is a duty to seek pleasure".²⁹⁷

"His (Christ's) suffering has another side also, where it is directly upbuilding for one who suffers".²⁹⁸

This is the practical help that fortifies. It is a therapy, attested to by the sick.

While one Journal entry calls for repetition:

"If you have the courage and the mind to will to be in the truth - then become a Christian; it is sheer suffering".²⁹⁹

there is a 2nd Century Damascus Document amongst the papers of the Qumran Essenes which lends validity to the Theme of S.K.'s life:

'And now, hear ye all that know righteousness,
And consider the works of God,
For He hath a controversy with all flesh'.....³⁰⁰

Note the righteousness and the knowledge of it, yet the controversy. It would appear that Søren Kierkegaard inherited the truth of the ages, for here is his double entry:

"Because you are a sufferer, therefore God loves you.
Because you love God, therefore you must suffer".³⁰¹

POSTSCRIPT

The theologians would have found little new to interest them in a call for suffering. Religious people have been concerned with the matter since the beginning of time.

Perhaps this explains why S.K. has had minimal impact on Church life-style. He is seldom mentioned in congregational seminars. Either they have missed the point, or avoided its poignancy. What Kierkegaard is mainly about is the suffering beyond normal suffering. Only through the existential, penetrating conflict of soul-anguish, can a man become a Christian.

When Edith Cavell took the leap and admitted having assisted 130 soldiers to escape into safe territory, she made a Calvary statement. Before they shot her at dawn on 11 October, 1915, she said, "Patriotism is not enough. I must have no bitterness to any man". As a spy, she could expect no sympathy. She chose freely the existential ultimate, devoid even of the blemish of understandable disappointment.

Such is soul-suffering. To overcome temptation and worship in peace is not enough for Kierkegaard. He asked at least of his senior clergy the sort of unrepeatable individual traumatic anguish into which the faithful are seldom invited, yet with which he challenges religious thinkers. The anxiety of the Holy Parents, not knowing where they had for three days lost the Holy Child, prototyped the hollow quest of the Three Days, before the Dawn. Was He alive or dead? Peter reeling from the crushing moment when, having been with The Christ for three years, he had just denied Him three times. The blaming of the utterly pure Saviour for all the filth and deceit of all time; the added drenching

existential loneliness that He Who was one with the Father felt when forsaken by God Who, in horror and grief, turned away from the sight of Calvary; the Source of all love, for and in the world, spat upon by the world. The ever-present Paradox.

If Kierkegaard sought an escalation of suffering, it was in order to take upon himself a didactical intensity of the Imitation of Christ, a stigmatum of suffering that the Church would shrink from teaching. Communism has consistently accepted its own suffering and that it must inflict suffering upon millions. Consequently it is capturing the world. Had Mother Church similarly mortified her pride by means of real suffering in a Faith that genuinely was death to self, she would have become the soul-sufferer Jesus expected when He prophesied that we would be hated for His sake.

Jesus might by now have returned to a world where, by our joyous suffering, Calvary and its overcoming would have been the Gospel preached to all men. That is yet to be. Despite all the sadness, we have once again had a prophet and a suffering servant in our midst.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945)

The finest example of Existentialism this century is the sacrificial life of Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

He demonstrated suffering, involvement, decision and consequences, alienation from society and the attendant moral questions, passionate individualism, subjective consideration of action including the terrifying possibility of suicide and murder, and the reality of paradox, not least in religionless Christianity.

Reinhold Niebuhr said that his story "belongs to the modern Acts of the Apostles". Karl Barth would not have him interpreted against the background of slow torture. He referred to the "Letters from Prison" as "only one, and indeed, the last, of the stations of his life's way..."¹

Bonhoeffer was born in Breslau. His family was well-to-do. His father and brothers could not understand his desire to study theology. He was intensely aware of the Almighty. He studied in Berlin and New York before returning to Germany as a Lutheran pastor in 1931. His books then earned him a reputation as a Scholar.

He went to the United States in 1939. Immediately he began to realise that a true Christian should return to Germany and fight against Hitler. Indeed, he felt that churches were no longer necessary because they had not condemned Nazism. Mankind had come of age and religionless Christianity could better preserve values without traditional ideas about the Almighty.

His friend and later brother-in-law, Pastor Bethge revealed his "energetic concentration on the Jews after

1933".² His attitude towards suffering could be summed up in these words:

"Whenever life begins to become oppressive and troublesome, a person just leaps into the air ... and soars relieved into so-called external fields. He leaps over the present".³

When he left Germany in 1933 in protest at the regime and its anti-Semitic influence on the Church, he looked after two small congregations in London before being asked back to found and direct a clandestine Seminary for the genuine, protesting Church in his homeland. It meant the great decision not to do what he had dearly anticipated, to visit Gandhi in India and study non-violence. The Gestapo closed the Seminary in 1937; it struggled on but was finally disrupted in 1940. In this period *The Cost of Discipleship* and *Life Together* had been published. It was a period of incessant decision and anguish and led to what can only be construed as the intense power of the Kierkegaardian moment to engender without any subsequent fluctuation a permanent change of course. Worried friends were urging Bonhoeffer to return to the U.S.A., egged on by the confessing Church in Germany. All their wisdom and all thought of what he might achieve in a "free" society were of no avail. Inward decision mattered.

Return he did, but "he had hardly set foot on the safe American shore, before his conscience told him he had made a wrong decision".⁴

The rest is history: his return, his banning, the Resistance, his "great masquerade of evil" in Military Intelligence, arrest, Tegel and Prinz Albrecht Strasse

and Buchenwald; then on April 9, 1945, execution by hanging on Hitler's personal orders at Flossenbürg days before the Fuhrer's own suicide and the Americans' arrival.

Few theologians have identified with the leap of Kierkegaard as did Bonhoeffer. His decision was a total commitment to suffering.

Unavoidable is the connection with Kierkegaardian anguish in Bonhoeffer's suggestion: "Could it be that the true God is the God who has become, dare we say, secular, because it is His World?"⁵ Instead of Christ prodding us to the Heavenly Heights, one sort of suffering, we are following Him into the world, losing sight of the halo, another sort of suffering with traditional or established crutches kicked away. Such gods for Bonhoeffer were beginning to become anachronistic. His mankind "come of age" meant that the adult world was not a world of sinlessness, with division between sacred and secular. It required Christian values rather than Christian churches. If man wishes to be where God is, he plunges into the suffering of life without any place to hide. Bonhoeffer sought Christological justification for God demanding that we be worldly. If God has reconciled the world to Himself, then Jesus "holds together God and world in a polemical unity". Man's duty is holy worldliness, i.e. greater involvement and suffering without cloistered protection. Involvement in Germany meant persecution.

He discovered freedom through suffering. One of his poems in prison is called, "Stations on the Way to Freedom". He speaks of the inescapable breach with all man's immediate relationships, nation, history, family, which is necessary if he is to know a new pure attachment

to them. "Our relationship to them must be Christ transfigured". Immediately Bonhoeffer turns to Kierkegaard's favourite passage: Abraham and Isaac, the suffering that drives to insight, the restatement of the martyr's cries. Christ came between Abraham and his father's house, between Abraham and his son. He gave back all in the moment of suffering and surrendering of all. But the whole situation has changed. He now possesses Isaac "as though he had him not - through Jesus Christ". Abraham has now left all and followed Christ. Everything has had to pass through Christ, and Abraham is now an individual.⁶ This is not only freedom and individualism taking meaning from excruciating anguish; it is also a very fine exposition of "choosing oneself" which seen in this light is not selfish.

Bonhoeffer's own words bear testimony. His Diary for June-July, 1939, on board ship and in New York, approximates Kierkegaard's hesitation over his MSS. Life can remain ethical enough, reasonably calm. Or it can pass the point of no return, the moment of decision, into the authentic Religious Stage. It is legendary what Bonhoeffer decided. From his own pen came the admission that Kierkegaard's suffering had influenced him:

"Kierkegaard has spoken as no other has done of man's solitary state. Each man must decide alone what he has to do".⁷

Again:

"Kierkegaard almost without equal in his ability to speak of the burden of loneliness".⁸

Bonhoeffer faced the subjective turmoil of deciding if necessary to be the one in his group who would actually

kill Hitler. As a pastor he had also to decide that if necessary his suicide would prevent his divulging secrets under torture.

To Richard Niebuhr he said on 4 July, 1939: "Safety! Can any virtue operate in the mere seeking of safety?" His favourite Psalm was No. 119 and one of his favourite verses was No. 71: "It was good for me that I was afflicted so that I might learn your decrees".

Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote the following words to the world while he awaited his execution. They are enshrined in the Letters and Papers from Prison.

"It is infinitely easier to suffer in obedience to a human command than to accept suffering as free, responsible men. It is infinitely easier to suffer with others than to suffer alone. It is infinitely easier to suffer as public heroes than to suffer apart and in ignominy. It is infinitely easier to suffer physical death than to endure spiritual suffering. Christ suffered as a free man alone, apart and in ignominy, in body and in spirit, and since that day many Christians have suffered with Him.⁹

Footnote: Pastor Bethge lectured the writer of this thesis for 3 days in 1963 at St. Augustine's College, Canterbury. He spoke of Barth's and Bonhoeffer's indebtedness to Kierkegaard in similarly entering into and understanding emotionally and inwardly (in almost a dedicated play-act) a "contemporaneous" suffering experience with earlier reformers.

Bonhoeffer : References.

1. Canadian Journal of Theology, No 15, 1969 p. 203
2. ibid p. 201
3. Essay, Thy Kingdom Come, 1932 p. 29
4. John D. Godsey, Preface to Bonhoeffer the Man p. 5
5. ibid p. 10
6. Bonhoeffer. The Cost of Discipleship p. 82
7. Bonhoeffer. The Communion of Saints p. 172
8. ibid p. 224
9. Bonhoeffer, Letters and Papers from Prison p. 164

The following survey indicates the amazingly
broad spectrum of Suffering to be found in
the works of Kierkegaard.

SURVEY

EITHER/OR, VOL. 1

<u>Parable</u>	<u>Theme</u>
The Distant Flash	Darkness, dread
The Cave of Echoes	Grief, rejection, isolation
The Arrows of Cupid	Separation, vengeance
The Falling Spider	Emptiness, insecurity
The Sign in the Window	Deception, disappointment
The Prisoner in the Dungeon	Monotony, grief
The Unhappiest Man	Death, emptiness
The Rotation Method	Boredom
The Free Distribution of Money	Boredom
The Death of Insects	Death
The Whipped Horses	Weariness, suffering
The Whipped Top	Doubt, falling
The Man with the Yellowish Green Coat	Pathos, alienation
The Artist Pair	Pathos
The Fenris Wolf	Anxiety, bondage
The Second Face	Grief, renunciation
Virgil the Magician	Temptation, caldron
The Essay on Immortality	Doubt, disenchantment
The Luneburger Pig	Meaninglessness, problems
Kangaroo Legs	Terror
The Hesitation amid Shipwreck	Indecision, pathos

The theme is epitomised in the Dwarf's Seven-League Boots.

The sub-title reads: Why is the pursuit of happiness so elusive?

The dwarf guarding a captured princess falls asleep, but then in his magic boots he cannot find her because he strides too far.

The Laughter of Parmeniscus has sorrow and suffering beneath the satire:

"When I was young, I forgot how to laugh older
I have not stopped laughing I saw that the meaning of
life was to secure a livelihood, love's rich dream was
marriage with an heiress, friendship's blessing was help
in financial difficulties, wisdom was what the majority
assumed it to be, courage was to risk the loss of ten
dollars, piety going to Communion once a year"

VOL. II

The Pleasures of Nero	Dread, cruelty
The Impossible Remittance	Guilt, conscience
The Beauty of the Poor Woman	Poverty
The Obituary Notice	Pathos
The One-person Skiff	Despair, loneliness
The Gambler	Moods, addiction
The Quiescent Sword	Attack
Playing the Music Backwards	Demonic, mistakes
Business as Usual	Tragic

FEAR AND TREMBLING

The Blackened Beast	Negation
The Theatre of Manikins	Isolation, paradox, Knight of Faith
The Bald Lover	Hypocrisy, concealment
The 50-word Sentence	Arbitrariness
The Knight of Faith	The Absurd
The Sleepless One	Abraham
The Death-warrant for Essex	Reproof
Agnes and the Merman	Demonic
Pegging up the Price	Delusion, rigour

THE CONCEPT OF IRONY

The Beneficent Arrest	Bordeom
The Fitting Punishment	Guilt, irony, death
The Grave of Napoleon	Nothingness

The Currency of the Ironist	Nothingness
The Man who searched for His Spectacles	Negligence
The Arrested Chancellor	Dissemblance
The Proposal	Deception
Intellectual Freemasonry	Isolation
The Shallow Barque	Negativity
The Anger of the Gods	Emptiness
The Cock	Masquerade

STAGES ON LIFE'S WAY

The Soldier of the Advanced Guard	Melancholy
Schedherzade's Worry	Desperation
The Dying Whale	Death, agony, pathos
The Homing Dove	Solitude
The Deceased First Love	Dread, separation
Cutting Capers	Death, impotence, weariness
The Tiresome Christmas Tree	Boredom, weariness
The Doctor and the Sufferer	Suffering
The Most Dangerous Seducer	Deception
The Messenger	Endurance, melancholy, death, illusion
The Child on the Esplanade	Melancholy, deception
The Mussel	Suffering
The Advice to God	Self-torment
The Protracted Creak	Disturbance
The Policeman	Suffering
The Advertisement about Corns	Tactlessness
The Bear and the Fly	Torment
The King's Swift Ride	Solitude
The Eel's Punishment	Injury
The Fox Trap Signs	Vulnerability, warning
Xanthippe	Jealousy
The Prussian Order of Merit	Unhappy love
The Meat of the Turtle	Complexity
The Woman who feared being Buried Alive	Finitude

The Arbiter of Fashion	Gullibility, naiveté
The Pope's Cough	Incongruity, contradiction
The Difficulties of Marriage	Worry, mourning
The Schoolmaster	Mockery
A New Mark on the Rafter	Poverty
The Desperate Man	Murder, conscience
The 2nd-Rate Pastry Shop	Deception
Rachel's Lament	Disappointment
Quixote's Confession	Unhappy love
The Diary of Louis XVI	Emptiness
The Error and the Text	Arbitrariness
The Prince who sent back a King's Daughter	Guilt, rejection
The Wild Horizon	Nothingness
The Peat Fosse	Solitude
The Children of Pericles	Reversal, inconsistency
The Demand for an Execution	Despair, guilt
The Generous Innkeeper	Hypocrisy
The Speediest Letter	Betrayal
The Ever-present Pain-Killer	Suffering, despondency

The Quiet Despair begins with Swift, in an asylum, looking into a mirror. It continues with a father and son tale, and how the son in loneliness after the father's death imitated the father's voice and told himself that he was 'going into a quiet despair'. Again Quidam tells the odd tale of a man placed on an uncomfortable wooden horse for punishment and how internal suffering is misunderstood by outsiders. Two thirds of Quidam's Diary is the story of Kierkegaard's unhappy love. The Leper's Soliloquy is set amidst gravestones and one can read what one will into the 'ointment which turns leprosy inward' The theme is consistently suffering.

THE WORKS OF LOVE

The Bookmark	Death
The Child in the Den of Thieves	Sin, evil
Lazarus and the Dogs	Inhumanity

The Puzzlement of the Children	Misunderstanding
The Travellers Attacked	Disability
The Slave's Reminder	Jealousy
The Educator	Conscience, rigour
The Valet's Arrest	Guilt
The Child and the Great Task	Despair
The City for Sale	Avarice
The Seven and the Seven Others	Irresponsibility
The Painter who tried to portray Mercy	Cruelty, nothingness
The World's Love	Rejection
The Bookkeeping Relationship	Sacrifice, debt
The Strong-box	Envy, loss
The Very Devil of a Man	Deception
One Lives only Once	Suffering
The Christian Brothel	Pretence
The Freethinker	Embarrassment, rejection
The Merry Drinking Song	Swindle
The Priestly Assurance	Untruth, disturbance
The Box on the Ear	Crime, punishment
The Poisoned Hospital	Illness, worldliness
The Interesting Marriage	Infidelity
The Frail Patient	Suffering, hunger
The Precious Stone	Poverty
The Fictitious Partner	Shrewdness, trickery
The Easiest one to Hoax	Deception, inequality

This work carries the theme to the Almighty's own suffering "as only infinite and almighty love can, as no man is capable of comprehending" i.e. when we do not follow His will. In the Kernells and Shells tale the emphasis is upon the sacrificed man of suffering whom the world rejects. God loves him more than the world could love anyone. The theme broadens into a discussion of the degree of faith as measured by the degree of Suffering. Kierkegaard then suggests the positive **proof of Christianity as seen in suffering**: what was able to inspire the sacrifices of early Christians but certainty?

FOR SELF-EXAMINATION, JUDGE FOR YOURSELVES, THREE DISCOURSES

The Awakened Appetite	Suffering, hunger
The Man in Summer Clothes	Solitariness
The Burial Plot	Forgetfulness
The 30th Percentile	Apathy
The Warship	Explosion, fire
The Ongoing Protest	Moral dissolution
The Robber	Stealing
The King's Sword	Sacrifice

In Luther's Return the question is posed: can there be genuine faith without self-sacrificial struggle? Luther is risen from the grave and protests that faith is not enough - description of one's faith proves a poet, weeping one's faith proves an actor. This is disturbingly different from Paul and the gaoler. Nevertheless, the theme is constant.

CONCLUDING UNSCIENTIFIC POSTSCRIPT

The God Who Fell in Love with an Earthly Woman	Anxiety, unhappiness
The New Bell-pull	Suffering, misfortune
The Epigram for Hegel	Doubt, misunderstanding
The Table-pounder	Deception, death
The Domino-player	War, shadow
The Stranger	Resignation
The Inspection	Resignation
The King's Transformation	Revolution
The Toothless Old Man	Emasculation
Shrimps, Oysters and Greens	Confusion
Napoleon at the Pyramids	Cowardice
The Brother of Aristocratic Acquaintance	Intensity
Icarus	Retrogression
The Embarrassed Lover	Shame
The Amusing Cleric	Pathos, pretension
The Man Who was not sure he was a Christian	Anger

The Diagnosis	Illness
Hegel's Dying Words	Misunderstanding
The Cry for a New Body	Suffering
The Guest hit by a Tile	Uncertainty
The Difficulty of Playing Hamlet	Disturbance
The Easy Guillotine	Death
The Thankful Man	Difficulty
The Postponed Auction	Urgency, contradiction
The Penance	Guilt
Wednesday in the Deer Park	Suffering
The Christmas Tree and the Bramble	Sarcasm
The Promise to Meet Again	Woe, forgetfulness
The Tenant and the Owner	Paradox
The Battle of Zama	Paradox
The Fullness of Time	Paradox
The Burial Deposit	Death, lukewarmness
The Licking	Penance, irony
The Aged Parent	Ingratitude

EDIFYING DISCOURSES

The Death-hour discovery	Misfortune
The Gaze of the Sailor	Danger
The Pool	Monotony
The Stumble	Rejection
The Hunter	Terror

REPETITION

The Carriage to Berlin	Discomfort
The Baby in the Pram	Danger
The Robber Chieftan	Farce

THE CONCEPT OF DREAD

The Path to Perfection	Danger
The Talking Machine	Spiritlessness
The Psychiatrist	Madness

The Conveyance
The Treatise
The Omen
The Fateful Report
The Dancing Master
The Anxious King

Indifference
Monotony
Battle, fate
Collapse, fate
Phoniness
Uncertainty

ON AUTHORITY AND REVELATION

Archimèdes' Discovery
The Hellstone
The Establishment's Teacher

The Dangerous Boiler
The Sick Man
The Modern Martyr
The Head of the Movement
The Tollclerk
The Author who published Four
Books at once
The Coachman
The Lottery
The Merchant
Love from Childhood

Offence
Sacrifice, harm
Revolution, cowardice,
responsibility
Danger
Disease
Risk
Pretension
Arrogance

Pretence
Dizziness
Abruptness
Offence, Philistine attitude
Self-deception

PURITY OF HEART

Eternity's Question
The Fear of Medicine
The Fugitive
The Man Who did Wrong
The Last Bubble
The Thinker and the Follower
The Schoolboy's Fearlessness
The Girl with Money
The Battleship and the Sloop
The Aim

Suffering
Anxiety, punishment
Guilt
Suffering
Desparation
Misunderstanding
Fear, ridicule
Deception
Risk
Accident

Purity of Heart contains the story of the horse that eagerly attended the elder-horses' gatherings, but only to be ignored and misunderstood. It portrays lonely suffering, unwanted talents and friendship rejected. It is possible that Kierkegaard felt more deeply than his critics suggest, the failure of the Church to make some position open to him. The tale stresses the vast amount of untapped ability in Christendom and the understandable 'Nobody wants me' suffering that is so common.

THE GOSPEL OF SUFFERING AND THE LILIES OF THE FIELD

The Hopeless Maiden	Impossibility
What Holds the Ship Together	Disintegration
The Physician's Voice	Severity, death
The Imperilled Lovers	Burden
The Field Birds	Anxiety
The Medicine Chest	Anxiety, hypocrisy
The Overtaxed Horse	Despair, burden, hopelessness
The Lily's Liberation	Boredom
The Imaginative Youth	Suffering
The Inquisitive Maiden	Anxiety, concern
The Driver	Waste
The Stock Dove	Self-rejection, anxiety
The Roaring Fire	Defeat
The Pound of Feathers	Suffering
The Lights that obscure the Stars	Suffering

The Lifelong Schooling in The Gospel of Suffering pictures the "school of suffering" as lasting throughout life because it is a tutoring for the highest; and for eternity. Kierkegaard's theme is here of immense practical value. The parable is beautifully worded to suggest continual observation of one's sufferings and to make them well worth while in terms of Eternity. The parable gets through in a simple, clear way.

CRISIS IN THE LIFE OF AN ACTRESS

The Light Burden	Anxiety
The Daily Visit of the King	Fraud

CHRISTIAN DISCOURSES

The Trap Door	Affliction
The Witness	Affliction, contempt
The Reed in the Wind	Woe, hollowness
The Man who carved Stone	Danger
The Assembly of the Esteemed	Suffering
The Ghost-ride	Nightmare
The Circumstantial Speaker	Sickness, death
The Dowsing-rod	Depths
The Grain of Corn	Affliction
The Insecure Girl	Risk
The Bird and Tomorrow	Anxiety
The Teachers of Silence	Anxiety
Death as Comedian	Suffering, illusion
The Ruinous Comfort	Despair
The Jet of Water	Pressure
The Stranger's Question	Strife
The Forced Confession	Pain
The Unused Wings	Extremity
The Pressure Spring	Affliction
The Villain	Affliction, assault
The Robber	Affliction
The Cup and the Triumph	Suffering
The Gold in the Fire	Bereavement

The Author of the Proofs in Christian Discourses is a brilliant piece in which the suffering of the Christ and His lack of help from man is compared with the suffering of man and his lack of help from the Church.

TRAINING IN CHRISTIANITY

The Melancholy Lover	Sorrow
The Youth who Suffered	Self-denial
The Calm of the Artist	Sacrilege, indifference
The Discovery of Gunpowder	Accident
The Shoemaker	Opposition
The Picture of Perfection	Suffering, endurance
The Puzzled Child	Anxiety, crucifixion
The Regretful Maiden	Suffering, self-reproach

THE SICKNESS UNTO DEATH

The Incognite King	Paradox
The Royal Visit	Affront
The Clerical Error	Despair
The Dwelling	Offence
The Direction to City Hall	Loss, reversal
The Cage	Philistinism
Eternity's One Question	Despair

THE POINT OF VIEW

The Spy in a Higher Service	Deception
The Reverted Fortune	Revolt
The New Year's Visitor	Repentance

PHILOSOPHICAL FRAGMENTS

The Book and the Toy	Bondage, predicament
The Army marching Backwards	Mockery
The Road to London	Paradox

THOUGHTS ON CRUCIAL SITUATIONS

The Single Pronouncement	Death
The New Year's Dream	Death
The Inconspicuous Man	Death

The Loan Association	Difficulty
The Buffoon	Sin
The Lover and the Rabble	Solitude

Many of the foregoing appear more narrative than parable, but the theme of suffering, in some form, is communicated throughout the writings in a parabolic persuasion. What strikes one as significant is the ever-presence of solitude, more often than not hidden, perhaps too poignant to express without suggesting self-pity. It is often a Christ-like loneliness.

* Edmund Husserl (1859-1938)

The father of Phenomenology, he sought to define The essence of conscious data, i.e. a descriptive analysis of experience. What lay beyond the variety of phenomena? Such perception adopts two approaches: The naturalistic analysis is the more scientific, treating man as evolved, while the "pure" analysis sees experience as isolated from natural causes, i.e. transcendental/reflective with man elevated above nature. Important points are that intuition has priority in determining knowledge and that analysis of meanings describes the basic meaning. This is a philosophy of existence in which assumptions are necessary, or else subjective experience cannot be the source of the objective world of existence.

N.B. The relation of conscious acts to meaningful objects, and existential phenomenology as subjectivism, or being within experience, such as dread, cf. Sartre: Man in Anguish.

See: Edmund Husserl and His Logical Investigations.
Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1949.

*George Berkeley (1685-1753), Anglican bishop and idealist - philosopher, tried to reconcile Science and Christianity. He hoped to show that matter does not exist, yet that the laws of Physics are true. To exist, he said, meant to be perceived: i.e. nothing exists unless perceived by mind. See: Selections from Berkeley, Ed Fraser (Oxford 1874)
Berkeley: Philosophical Writings (Edinburgh 1952)

A P P E N D I X

* Martin Heidegger (1889-1976)

What is true Being? Was even God alive and active?
Any investigation of man should take into account his mood and situation. He emphasized fate and dread.
See: Being and Time, 1927, and What is Thinking? 1954

* Jean Paul Sartre (1905-1980)

He investigated the nature and forms of existence. (Being and Nothingness, 1943) Human existence differs from the inanimate. There seems no reason why anything should exist. Not even a quality such as cowardice could exist unless someone chose cowardice. See also 1st novel, 'Nausea' (1938) describing the mystery a man experiences at the unexplainable fact of a thing's existence. Note this quotation from 'Nausea', denoting the individual's position and responsibility.

"I am beginning to believe that nothing can ever be proved. These are reasonable hypotheses which take the facts into account: but I am only too well aware that they come from me, that they are simply a way of unifying my own knowledge". (Nausea : Sartre, transl. Robert Baldick, Penguin 1965, p.26)

STUDY MATERIAL OMITTED.

The following material has been read and set down in first draft, but omitted because of length. It is available on request together with reference numbers.

Chapter 4.

An in-depth Exegetical Analysis of Kierkegaard's Writings with certain Thematic Treatment.

Truth and Subjectivity
Subjectivity and Ethics
God-confusion in Ethics
Paradox
Paradox and Reason
Paradox as seen from the Standpoint of

- (a) Intellect
- (b) Ethics
- (c) Religion

The Stages
Dread as Acute Suffering
The Moment
The Moment and Suffering
Suffering in Fear and Trembling.

Chapter 5.

Kierkegaard's Influence on Philosophy and Theology with regard to his Concept of Suffering.

Barth
Bultmann
Heidegger
Marcel
Jaspers

Berdyaev
Sartre
Camus
Buber
Bonhoeffer
De Unamuno
Tillich
Reinhold Niebuhr
de Chardin
Rilke
Kafka

Some of the above, already mentioned, are dealt with far more fully.

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