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## Kierkegaard's Claim about the Relation between Philosophy and Christianity in the *Journal AA*

Jon Stewart (U.S.A. / Denmark)

Kierkegaard's first journal, entitled AA, was written from 1835 to 1837 while he was still a student at the University of Copenhagen. It is known, among other things, for its famous statement: "What I really need is to be clear about *what I am to do*, not what I must know, except in the way knowledge must precede all action. It is a question of understanding my own destiny, of seeing what the Deity really wants *me* to do; the thing is to find a truth which is truth *for me*, to find *the idea for which I am willing to live and die*."<sup>1</sup> It has long since become obligatory to quote this passage in any introductory account of Kierkegaard's life or thought. With its preference for action over knowledge, this statement is taken by many to be a clear proof of Kierkegaard's rightful claim to the title of the father of existentialism.

This famous statement must be understood in connection with a handful of other entries in the *Journal AA*, namely, AA:13-18, which discuss the relation of philosophy to Christianity. With these entries there is a change in tone in the journal, which up until this point had the look of a kind of travel diary. This set of entries begins with the famous thesis: "*Philosophy and Christianity can never be united*."<sup>2</sup> In connection with the previous journal entry mentioned above, this seems to mean that Christianity is concerned with a truth for life, whereas philosophy is concerned with something more abstract or theoretical that is somehow removed from real life.

This discussion about the proper province of philosophy and theology was also a central one in Denmark at the time. In order to understand these entries it will first be necessary to set the stage with a brief account of the Danish and German debates about this issue that were

<sup>1</sup> SKS, 17: 24, AA:12 / KJN, 1: 19.

<sup>2</sup> SKS, 17: 30, AA:13 / KJN, 1: 25. See Hermann Deuser, "Philosophie und Christentum lassen sich doch niemals vereinen: Kierkegaards theologische Ambivalenzen im Journale AA/BB (1835-1837)," *Kierkegaard Studies Yearbook 2003*, ed. Niels Jørgen Cappelørn, Hermann Deuser and Jon Stewart (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2003), 1-29.

going on at the time. I wish to argue that Kierkegaard's claims about the necessary separation of philosophy and Christianity can best be understood as a response to contemporary discussions in the Danish Hegel reception, where figures such as Johan Ludvig Heiberg argued for the Hegelian thesis of the unity of philosophy and religion. Moreover, Kierkegaard's own position on this issue is, I argue positively influenced by Schleiermacher and the Danish reception of his works in the person of the philosopher, Frederik Christian Sibbern. Finally, I wish to claim, these early journal entries anticipate a number of Kierkegaard's later doctrines about the non-discursive nature of faith in his well-known pseudonymous writings.

### I. Hegel's View: The Conceptual Identity of Christianity and Speculative Philosophy

As is well known, G. W. F. Hegel (1770-1831) was a profoundly influential figure both for Kierkegaard and for other figures of the Danish Golden Age. Hegel's grand ambition to construct a complete system of all knowledge obliges him to give an account of how different forms of knowing and cognition are related to one another. His underlying idealist claim is that all reality is structured by the Concept, i.e., the unity of universality [*Allgemeinheit*], particularity [*Besonderheit*] and individuality [*Einzelheit*].<sup>3</sup> This means that this ideal structure is not just found in philosophy but also mirrored in the natural, social and human sciences. Religion as well can be conceived as an expression of the Concept. For Hegel, Christianity is the highest form of religious consciousness since in the dogma of the Trinity it reflects the abstract structure of the Concept. In other words, God the Father corresponds to the universal aspect of the Concept; the Son corresponds to the particular, empirical aspect, and the Holy Ghost corresponds to their unity in the individual aspect.<sup>4</sup>

Given that the Concept is the object of philosophical investigation and is mirrored in the structure of religion, it is a common feature of

<sup>3</sup> Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Encyclopaedia Logic. Part One of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, trans. T. F. Gerats, W. A. Suchting, H. S. Harris (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991), § 163 / Hegel, *Sämtliche Werke* (Jubiläumsausgabe), ed. Hermann Glockner (Stuttgart: Friedrich Frommann Verlag, 1928-41), vol. 8, 358-361.

<sup>4</sup> [Hegel], *Hegel's Philosophy of Mind*, trans. W. Wallace, A. V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), § 566 / Hegel, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 10, 455.

both philosophy and religion.<sup>5</sup> In Hegel's *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, which were edited and published by the theologian Philipp Marheineke (1780-1846) in 1832,<sup>6</sup> one reads the following about the relation of philosophy to religion:

Thus religion and philosophy come to be one. Philosophy is itself, in fact, worship; it is religion, for in the same way it renounces subjective notions and opinions in order to occupy itself with God. Philosophy is thus identical with religion, but the distinction is that it is so in a peculiar manner, distinct from the manner of looking at things which is commonly called religion as such.<sup>7</sup>

Thus, according to Hegel, religion and philosophy ultimately share the same content but interpret that content in different ways.<sup>8</sup> In the grand systematic scheme of things, however, religion is subordinate to philosophy since its interpretation is ultimately unsatisfactory.

According to Hegel's view, religion is able to grasp the truth but not with the highest cognitive faculty. In contrast to the philosopher, the religious believer operates at the level of *Vorstellung*, often translated

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Stephen Rocker, *Hegel's Rational Religion. The Validity of Hegel's Argument for the Identity in Content of Absolute Religion and Absolute Philosophy* (Madison and Teaneck: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, London: Associated University Presses, 1995); Edward Black, "Religion and Philosophy in Hegel's Philosophy of Religion," *The Monist*, vol. 60, no. 2 (1977), 198-212; Laurence Dickey, "Hegel on Religion and Philosophy," *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel*, ed. Frederick C. Beiser (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 301-347; Quentin Lauer, "Hegel on the Identity of Content in Religion and Philosophy," *Hegel and the Philosophy of Religion*, ed. Darrel E. Christensen (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1970), 261-278.

<sup>6</sup> *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion. Nebst einer Schrift über die Beweise vom Daseyn Gottes*, I-II, ed. Philipp Marheineke, vols. 11-12 (1832) in *Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's Werke. Vollständige Ausgabe*, vols. 1-18, ed. Ludwig Boumann, Friedrich Förster, Eduard Gans, Karl Hegel, Leopold von Henning, Heinrich Gustav Hotho, Philipp Marheineke, Karl Ludwig Michelet, Karl Rosenkranz, Johannes Schulze (Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 1832-45).

<sup>7</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, vols. 1-3, trans. E. B. Speirs, J. Burdon Sanderson (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul; New York: The Humanities Press, 1962, 1968, 1972), vol. 1, 20 / Hegel, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 15, 37. See also [Hegel], *Hegel's Philosophy of Mind*, § 573 / Hegel, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 10, 458-474.

<sup>8</sup> See "The Position of the Philosophy of Religion Relatively to Philosophy and Religion," Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion I*, 18-35 / Hegel, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 15, 36-52; Hegel, *The Encyclopaedia Logic*, § 1 / Hegel, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 8, 41; [Hegel], *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 479 / Hegel, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 2, 602; Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, trans. H. B. Nisbet, ed. Allen Wood (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), § 270 / Hegel, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 7, 349; Hegel, *The Encyclopaedia Logic*, § 45, Addition / Hegel, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 8, 135-136.

as "picture-thinking." Religious thinking involves images and stories. While these represent the conceptual truth, they are clad in an empirical dress. By contrast, the philosopher is able to abstract from this empirical dress and grasp the Concept as Concept. Thus, religious thinking is an inadequate or incomplete way of understanding the truth. It takes the specific empirical images to be in themselves true, and fails to recognize that there is a higher, necessary conceptual truth which lies behind them.<sup>9</sup> The key point here is that religion and philosophy are regarded as something continuous, i.e., as different forms of knowing. Since they are regarded as continuous, they can be compared with one another, and a hierarchy can be established.

Thus, unlike many of the Enlightenment thinkers of the eighteenth century, Hegel does not deny the truth of Christianity outright but rather recognizes that it has a truth, albeit not in the way that the religious believer would ordinarily conceive it. Thus, Hegel incorporates Christianity into his system and ultimately subordinates it to philosophical knowing. This is what Kierkegaard has his pseudonym Johannes Climacus criticize in the *Postscript*, when he writes: "By no means does speculative thought say that Christianity is untruth; on the contrary, it specifically says that speculation comprehends the truth of Christianity."<sup>10</sup> Much of Kierkegaard's later efforts are dedicated to sketching what he considers to be essential features of Christianity, which cannot be grasped by philosophy, i.e., the paradox of the Incarnation, faith, passion and offense.

## II. Heiberg's Hegelian View

With regard to the Danish discussion about the relation of philosophy to religion or to Christianity specifically, the original debate began

<sup>9</sup> Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, 463 / Hegel, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 2, 581-582: "This form is not yet Spirit's self-consciousness that has advanced to its Concept *qua* Concept: the mediation is still incomplete. This combination of being and thought is, therefore, defective in that...the *content* is the true content, but all its moments, when placed in the medium of picture-thinking, have the character of being uncomprehended [in terms of the Concept], of appearing as completely independent sides which are externally connected with each other." Translation slightly modified. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, 412 / Hegel, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 2, 520: "So far as Spirit in religion *pictures* itself to itself, it is indeed consciousness, and the reality enclosed within religion is the shape and the guise of its picture-thinking. But, in this picture-thinking, reality does not receive its perfect due, viz. to be not merely a guise but an independent free existence; and conversely, because it lacks perfection within itself it is a *specific* shape which does not attain to what it ought to show forth, viz. Spirit that is conscious of itself."

<sup>10</sup> SKS, 7: 203 / CUP1, 223. See also SKS, 6: 418 / SLW, 452.

with statements by the poet and Hegelian philosopher, Johan Ludvig Heiberg (1791-1860), who takes up Hegel's general scheme in his influential piece *On the Significance of Philosophy for the Present Age*.<sup>11</sup> In a letter dated March 30, 1833 to his exiled father living in Paris, Heiberg describes the main theme of the treatise thus: "This little book contains above all an investigation into the relation of philosophy to religion, and I assume that as a result it will occasion some rather lively literary debates."<sup>12</sup>

Heiberg's somewhat sensational claim in this work is that the present age is in the grips of a grave crisis.<sup>13</sup> He sketches a Hegelian view of history according to which peoples arise, develop, fall into contradictions and ultimately are destroyed. His diagnosis of the present age is that it has reached a stage where its main points of orientation have been undermined. In past ages the truth was found in images, works of art or religion, but, so argues Heiberg, in the present age these things have lost their value, and people have ceased to believe in them. Heiberg describes this as follows:

If we cast a glance at the present age, then we find first of all that certain undertakings, which among the uncultured have the life of the present and the interest of the moment, are regarded by the cultured as already concluded material, belonging to the past. The most striking example of this is our frequent theological disputes which are carried out exclusively for the edification of the uncultured, while the cultured, who have gone beyond that standpoint, are almost entirely unaffected by them....<sup>14</sup>

In the absence of any clear alternative to fill the empty space left behind, the present age is in a period of crisis.

<sup>11</sup> Johan Ludvig Heiberg, *Om Philosophiens Betydning for den nuværende Tid* (Copenhagen: C. A. Reitzel, 1833). Reprinted in Heiberg's *Prosaiske Skrifter*, vols. 1-11 (Copenhagen: C. A. Reitzel, 1861-62), vol. 1, 381-460. English translation: "On the Significance of Philosophy for the Present Age. An Invitation to a Series of Lectures on Philosophy," *Heiberg's On the Significance of Philosophy for the Present Age and Other Texts* (Texts from Golden Age Denmark, vol. 1), ed. and trans. Jon Stewart (Copenhagen: C. A. Reitzel, 2005), 83-119.

<sup>12</sup> Letter no. 29, *Heibergske Familiebreve*, ed. Morton Borup (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1943), 60.

<sup>13</sup> Heiberg, *Om Philosophiens Betydning for den nuværende Tid*, 3-5 / *Heiberg's On the Significance of Philosophy for the Present Age and Other Texts*, 87-88. Ibid., 12-21 / *Heiberg's On the Significance of Philosophy for the Present Age and Other Texts*, 92-98.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 14f. / *Heiberg's On the Significance of Philosophy for the Present Age and Other Texts*, 94.

After declaring the gravity of the crisis, Heiberg then moves to the positive part of his essay. He argues that there is only one solution to the present crisis and that is philosophy, specifically Hegel's philosophy. He puts forth this thesis in dramatic fashion:

What is it then that will bring order to the present chaos? Or... what is the goal towards which the present confusion strives? What is the unity towards which the present difference will be developed? The answer is easy after all the preceding considerations: it is *philosophy* which will put an end to the confusion. It is towards this that the conflicting forces are directed.<sup>15</sup>

His argument is that philosophy can perform this urgent function since it is able to discern the truth in the mass of confused phenomena. Here Heiberg comes to compare the respective roles of philosophy and religion. He claims that religion is no longer satisfying to educated people since it appeals to a lower faculty, namely, the senses. However, philosophy is concerned with concepts independent of their empirical manifestations, and thus educated or cultured people can find true satisfaction in its province. Thus, Heiberg argues for the Hegelian thesis of the ultimate unity of philosophy and religion. Indeed, he even goes a step further by claiming that philosophy will save religion and keep it from falling into complete disuse.

While religion and art are still fixed on the transitory and empirical side of reality, philosophy is concerned with the eternal, necessary and ideal side. Heiberg explains, "It is in this sense that philosophy can be said to stand above art, poetry and religion, even though it, like them, has the infinite as its object. For since the form in which it presents this object is the truth, all other forms of the infinite have their justification in it. Therefore, philosophy is the highest judge whose authority no one will underestimate."<sup>16</sup> While art and religion strive for the ideal, i.e., beauty or God, they are nonetheless bound up with empirical objects such as concrete works of art or empirical representations such as anthropomorphic stories about the divine. Given that philosophy has freed itself from the empirical side and can grasp the conceptual truth as

conceptual truth, independent of its various empirical manifestations, it occupies the highest place in the hierarchy of knowing.

But Heiberg hastens to add that this does not mean that art and religion are rendered meaningless by philosophy. On the contrary, their importance and enduring truth are only made clear in philosophy. He explains,

Far from wanting to make art, poetry and religion superfluous, on the contrary, philosophy wants to create for them recognition in actuality. It wants to do this for its own sake, since it cannot do without them. If at the moment they lack this recognition, it is not because people doubt the truth as substance but only because they question whether it is contained in the contingent forms in which these activities present it. Thus, it is a matter of grasping these three spheres of spirit as an actual relation of substantiality, that is, *as conceiving* them or understanding them in their *Concept*. But when one raises oneself to the Concept, one has raised oneself above substantiality; one has come out above the changing, contingent forms and has reached the only and the necessary form which is identical with its content, namely, the form of the Concept, which is the Concept itself, the truth, which itself is the form of truth.<sup>17</sup>

Philosophy is able to resolve the contemporary crisis of culture by demonstrating the eternal truth of art and religion, thus restoring them to their proper places as central pillars of the cultural life of a people.

Since religion is still bound to its particular empirical form, it is natural to talk about specific determinate religions. By contrast, in philosophy form and content come to coincide, and so there can ultimately be no distinction between different kinds of philosophy or different philosophical system. If they are truly philosophical, then they reflect the Concept and are thus one. Heiberg explains this as follows:

But insofar as philosophy is a *content* of religion, against which religion itself constitutes its own form, religion is thereby different from philosophy. Philosophy presents the same content, but

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 21f. / Heiberg's *On the Significance of Philosophy for the Present Age and Other Texts*, 98.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 23 / Heiberg's *On the Significance of Philosophy for the Present Age and Other Texts*, 99.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 27f. / Heiberg's *On the Significance of Philosophy for the Present Age and Other Texts*, 102.

in its own form, which is not distinct from its content and which thus does not exist separately as content. When regarding religion as distinct from philosophy, one regards it in its own *determinate* form, by which it is distinguished from philosophy. The form of religion is thus, to this extent, religion itself, that in which it consists or its essence. But, by contrast, the form, as contingent and opposed to substantial content, is itself inessential, so that the essence of religion can be said to be the inessential.<sup>18</sup>

Heiberg thus presents the Hegelian view about the relation between philosophy and religion in a Danish context. Moreover, he does so in a dramatic fashion that is intended to underscore the urgency of appropriating Hegel's views in order to save the cultural sphere from ultimate ruin with which it is threatened.

### III. The Critical Responses to Heiberg

Needless to say, these highly provocative claims evoked an outpouring of criticism from several theologians, such as Jacob Peter Mynster (1775-1854)<sup>19</sup> and Eggert Christopher Tryde (1781-1860).<sup>20</sup> They reacted with grave suspicion to Heiberg's claim that "art, poetry and religion receive their justification in philosophy."<sup>21</sup>

In his review of Heiberg's piece, Tryde in particular attacked the claim that philosophy and religion could be regarded as the same and as fulfilling the same function. Tryde argues that it is impossible for a conceptual understanding of a sphere of phenomena to take the place

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 30f. / Heiberg's *On the Significance of Philosophy for the Present Age and Other Texts*, 103f.

<sup>19</sup> Jacob Peter Mynster, "Om den religiøse Overbevisning," *Dansk Ugeskrift*, vol. 3, no. 76-77 (1833), 241-258. Reprinted in Mynster's *Blandede Skrifter*, vols. 1-6 (Copenhagen: den Gyldendalske Boghandling, 1852-57), vol. 2, 73-94. English translation: "On Religious Conviction" Heiberg's *On the Significance of Philosophy for the Present Age and Other Texts*, 139-159.

<sup>20</sup> Anonymous [Eggert Christopher Tryde], "Om Philosophiens Betydning for den nuværende Tid. Et Indbydelses-Skrift til en Række af filosofiske Forelæsninger. Af Johan Ludvig Heiberg. Kbhavn. 54 S. 8°," *Dansk Litteratur-Tidende* for 1833, no. 41, 649-660; no. 42, 681-692; no. 43, 697-704. English translation: "Review of *On the Significance of Philosophy for the Present Age. An Invitation to a Series on Lectures on Philosophy*. By Johan Ludvig Heiberg. Copenhagen. 54pp. 8°" Heiberg's *On the Significance of Philosophy for the Present Age and Other Texts*, 167-190.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 28 / Heiberg's *On the Significance of Philosophy for the Present Age and Other Texts*, 102.

of the inward longing of the religious believer. He thus rejects outright Heiberg's claim that religion is merely a form of knowing subordinate to philosophy. He argues, Heiberg "is *incorrect* in demanding that we seek that which gives the soul its peace and its rest in this *given itself*, or in the knowledge of its true essence, which philosophy provides. He is incorrect in not recognizing religion for more than a subordinate, mediated form."<sup>22</sup> Tryde argues that the depth and variety of religious experience cannot be reduced to a mere conceptual form. Moreover, such a conceptual understanding would never be satisfying for the religious believer.

Heiberg took up the debate again and published a rejoinder to Tryde's criticism.<sup>23</sup> Here he argues explicitly for the unity of philosophy and theology: "But philosophy is theology; otherwise it would not be what it is. And theology is philosophy; otherwise it is nothing."<sup>24</sup> A main point of contention was whether philosophy or theology was the higher discipline. Heiberg notes that Tryde has admitted that theology is a form of cognition, like philosophy. Given this, they must both work with certain universal cognitive structures. However, philosophy is the more abstract of the two since it operates with the Concept itself independent of its empirical incarnations. Thus, philosophy must be higher and theology lower. Heiberg is, however, anxious to claim that a conceptual understanding of religion does not mean an elimination or destruction of religious feeling. On the contrary, philosophical understanding is able to fortify this feeling by attaching it to something stable, i.e., the philosophical Idea. He thus makes an impassioned argument that all of the religious feelings that one seeks in religion can also be found in philosophy:

Everything which one demands outside philosophy is thus contained within philosophy itself. Everything which is needed for our satisfaction dwells inside this circle. My reviewer, who, dissatisfied with possessing the finite determinations within philoso-

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 701 / Heiberg's *On the Significance of Philosophy for the Present Age and Other Texts*, 188.

<sup>23</sup> Johan Ludvig Heiberg, "I Anledning af Recensionen over mit Skrift: *Om Philosophiens Betydning for den nuværende Tid*. (Dansk Litt. Tid. No. 41-43)," *Dansk Litteratur-Tidende* for 1833, no. 46, 765-780. Reprinted in Heiberg's *Prosaiske Skrifter*, vol. 1, Tillæg I, 437-452. English translation: "On Occasion of the Review of My Work *On the Significance of Philosophy for the Present Age* (from the *Dansk Litteratur-Tidende*, nos. 41-43)" Heiberg's *On the Significance of Philosophy for the Present Age and Other Texts*, 191-203.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 770 / Heiberg's *On the Significance of Philosophy for the Present Age and Other Texts*, 197.

phy, demands to possess them *outside* philosophy, demands the impossible if he does not want to give up philosophy entirely. If, by contrast, he wants to continue with philosophy, then he needs only to take a step forward, and he will then learn, if indeed he has not already learned it, that the occupation with the speculative Idea produces all the joy, excitement, love, enthusiasm, in short, all the noble and elevated feelings, which he now seeks outside the world in which their existence is grounded. For all these feelings are the Idea itself but not yet developed; in the development therefore they do not stop, but they are purified and made clear and thereby win in energy.<sup>25</sup>

This response did not satisfy Tryde. In a rejoinder,<sup>26</sup> he goes on to list a number of categories from religion that cannot be adequately captured by philosophy. A purely conceptual account, he argues, can never satisfy the believer's drive towards, for example, love, redemption, reconciliation and eternal life.<sup>27</sup> Thus, Tryde emphasizes the emotional aspect of religion in order to distinguish it from philosophy.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 779f. / Heiberg's *On the Significance of Philosophy for the Present Age and Other Texts*, 203.  
<sup>26</sup> Anonymous [Eggert Christopher Tryde], "Svar fra Anmelderen af Professor Heibergs Skrivt, 'Om Philosophiens Betydning for den nuværende Tid,' paa Forfatterens Erklæring i *Litteraturtidenden* No. 46," *Dansk Litteratur-Tidende* for 1833, no. 49, 820-828. Heiberg's *On the Significance of Philosophy for the Present Age and Other Texts*, 207-213.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 828 / Heiberg's *On the Significance of Philosophy for the Present Age and Other Texts*, 212f.: "The reviewer answers to this that he has actually already experienced that the occupation with the speculative Idea creates for its devotee joy, excitement, enthusiasm; but what it has not created for him and what he nonetheless greatly needs and what he therefore seeks outside it is not *resignation* under the power which the Idea exercises in life and beyond the individual subject, but *childlike confidence and sacrifice in a heavenly Father's providence and governance*, by which he feels elevated above every fatalistic power; it is *redemption* not only from the evil, which seems to be *outside* him, but from that which is *inside* him, from the power of sin in him and over him, and which he cannot help but perceive as a disturbance in the absolute Idea living in him; it is an *atonement*, which is not only a dissolution of the difference in a unity, but a reconciliation of the fallen, sinful human individual with his eternal Father; it is an *eternal life*, in which he, the self-conscious individual which he now is, participates, not in such a way that his individuality is sublated or his self disappears, but such that it is preserved, and he, with all those who love God, grows forth more and more to the freedom of the magnificence of God's children, in the unity of love, which, precisely because it proceeds from *love*, indeed will always intimately connect the one with the other and everyone with God, but will never allow everyone to disappear and grow together in one, in such a way that it would destroy the self."

#### IV. Schleiermacher's View: The Distinction between Philosophy and Religion

Along with Tryde, another key positive influence on Kierkegaard in this context is clearly the German theologian Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher (1768-1834).<sup>28</sup> At this time Schleiermacher was a topic of much discussion. He had visited Copenhagen from September 22-29, 1833, where he was received with great ceremony.<sup>29</sup> Schleiermacher died a year later in Berlin, but his ideas continued to be discussed in Danish circles of philosophy and theology. In his autobiography, the theologian Hans Lassen Martensen (1808-84) reports on his discussion with Schleiermacher during the latter's stay. He recalls that Schleiermacher stated, with great energy, that "theology must be kept separate from philosophy."<sup>30</sup>

For Schleiermacher it was important to distinguish philosophy and religion due to the fact that they are based on distinct faculties: philosophy is ultimately a matter of thought and cognition, whereas religion is a matter of feeling. In the second speech in *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers* (1799), Schleiermacher distinguishes religion from both ethics and metaphysics, thereby contrasting his view of religion with that of Kant, who reduced it to its ethical function and, when regarded anachronistically, with that of Hegel, who reduced it to an inadequate form of knowing. With regard to the latter point, Schleiermacher describes the goal of metaphysics as follows:

What then does your science of being, your natural science, all your theoretical philosophy, in so far as it has to do with the actual world, have for its aim? To know things, I suppose, as they really are; to show the peculiar relations by which each is what it is; to determine for each its place in the whole, and to distinguish

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Richard E. Crouter's outstanding article, "Schleiermacher: Revisiting Kierkegaard's Relationship to Him," *Kierkegaard and His German Contemporaries*, Tome II, *Theology* (Kierkegaard Research: Sources, Reception and Resources, vol. 6), ed. Jon Stewart (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 197-231. See also Andreas Krichbaum, *Kierkegaard und Schleiermacher. Eine historisch-systematische Studie zum Religionsbegriff* (New York and Berlin: De Gruyter, 2008).

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Jon Stewart, "Schleiermacher's Visit to Copenhagen in 1833," *Journal for the History of Modern Theology*, vol. 11, issue 2 (2004), 279-302; Niels Munk Plum, *Schleiermacher i Danmark* (Copenhagen: Bianco Lunos, 1934); Skat Arildsen, "To Tyske Teologers Københavns-Besøg," *Kirken. Tidsskrift for Kirkelig Orientering*, vol. 6 (1934), 1-17.

<sup>30</sup> Hans Lassen Martensen, *Af mit Levnet*, vols. 1-3 (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1882-83), vol. 1, 71.

it rightly from everything else; to present the whole real world in its mutually conditioned necessity; and to exhibit the oneness of all phenomena with their eternal laws. This is truly beautiful and excellent, and I am not disposed to depreciate it.<sup>31</sup>

Here science is defined as, among other things, the attempt to know things and conditions of the world. This could well be Hegel's own description of the goal of his philosophical system. While no objection as such is raised against science, Schleiermacher does wish to distinguish the scholarly enterprise from that of religion:

however high you go; though you pass from the laws to the Universal Lawgiver, in whom is the unity of all things; though you allege that nature cannot be comprehended without God, I would still maintain that religion has nothing to do with this knowledge, and that, quite apart from it, its nature can be known. Quantity of knowledge is not quantity of piety.<sup>32</sup>

Here the key term is piety, which distinguishes religion from metaphysics. To have an outstanding understanding and grasp of technical dogmas is not at the same time to be a pious individual.

Years later in his dogmatics, *The Christian Faith*, Schleiermacher repeats this claim that the essence of Christianity is something different from knowledge. There he writes, "The piety which forms the basis of all ecclesiastical communions is, considered purely in itself, neither a knowing nor a doing, but a modification of feeling, or of immediate self-consciousness."<sup>33</sup> Thus, there can be no doubt that Schleiermacher remained consistent on this point throughout his life.

While it is uncertain whether or not Kierkegaard participated in the festive activities surrounding Schleiermacher's visit to Copenhagen in 1833, we do know that he read *The Christian Faith* the following year. As

<sup>31</sup> Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher, *Über die Religion. Reden an die Gebildeten unter ihren Verächtern*, 5th edition (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1843), 41. English translation: *On Religion. Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, trans. John Oman, abridged by E. Graham Waring (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co. 1955), 26f. Translation slightly modified.

<sup>32</sup> Schleiermacher, *Über die Religion. Reden an die Gebildeten unter ihren Verächtern*, 42. English translation: *On Religion. Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 27.

<sup>33</sup> Schleiermacher, *Der christliche Glaube nach den Grundsätzen der evangelischen Kirche*, vols. 1-2 (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1835-36), vol. 1, 6. English translation: *The Christian Faith*, ed. H. R. Mackintosh and J. S. Stewart (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), 5.

a young student Kierkegaard approached Martensen about giving him a tutorial in Summer Semester of 1834, and this was the text that they decided to read. Many years later, Martensen writes about this experience:

[Kierkegaard] had his own way of arranging his tutoring. He did not follow any set syllabus, but asked that I lecture to him and converse with him. I chose to lecture on the main points of Schleiermacher's dogmatics and then discuss them. I recognized immediately that his was not an ordinary intellect but that he also had an irresistible urge to sophistry, to hairsplitting games, which showed itself at every opportunity and was often tiresome. I recall in particular that it surfaced when we examined the doctrine of divine election, where there is, so to speak, an open door for sophists.<sup>34</sup>

Traces of this tutorial can be found in Kierkegaard's reading notes, which are printed with his loose papers.<sup>35</sup> Given that we know that Kierkegaard had made a study of Schleiermacher's *The Christian Faith* in 1834, it is natural to assume that some of the points in that text which treat the relation of philosophy to Christianity will surface again in Kierkegaard's journal entries from a year later.

## V. Sibbern's Reception of Schleiermacher

One of the most important Danish sources for the dissemination of Schleiermacher's ideas was the philosopher Frederik Christian Sibbern (1785-1872). He was one of the central figures to play host to Schleiermacher during the latter's visit to Copenhagen and possessed a thorough familiarity with the German theologian's thought.

Prior to Kierkegaard's journal entries in AA in 1835, Sibbern treated the issue of the relation of philosophy to Christianity three times: first in 1822 in an article in German for the *Theologische Zeitschrift*,<sup>36</sup> which

<sup>34</sup> Martensen, *Af mit Levnet*, vol. 1, 78. Cited from *Encounters with Kierkegaard. A Life as Seen by His Contemporaries*, trans. and ed. Bruce H. Kirmmse (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1996) 196. Translation slightly modified.

<sup>35</sup> Pap., I C 20-24, vol. XII, 126-131.

<sup>36</sup> Frederik Christian Sibbern, "Ueber das Verhältniss des christlichen Glaubens zum philosophischen Erkennen," *Theologische Zeitschrift*, ed. Friedrich Schleiermacher, Wilhelm Martin Leberecht de Wette, Gottfried Christian Friedrich Lücke, Hefte 3 (1822), 74-120.



was co-edited by Schleiermacher, and second, in 1829, in a response to a review of his book on psychology.<sup>37</sup> In the latter he defends himself against the claims of his reviewer that he has in a confused fashion brought philosophy into the sphere of theology and vice versa and thus allowed the former to usurp the latter. In this piece, Schleiermacher is mentioned only once,<sup>38</sup> but his general discussion about the relation of dogmatics to philosophy hovers in the background.

Sibbern's most significant essay for the present purposes is clearly his article, penned in 1829, with the title, "Contribution to an Answer to the Question: What is Dogmatics? Introduced with a Criticism of Schleiermacher's Conception of It."<sup>39</sup> In this piece, Sibbern discusses at length Schleiermacher's insistence on keeping dogmatics separate from philosophy. At the beginning of this essay, Sibbern approvingly quotes Schleiermacher's *The Christian Faith* (first edition) as follows:

As is well known, Schleiermacher wants to maintain the distinction [between dogmatics and philosophy]. Immediately in the beginning of his dogmatics (namely in remark b. to § 2), after having set forth the proposition that the thought belonging to philosophy according to its origin and its form ("seiner Entstehung und seiner Form nach") is a different thought than the thought of dogmatics, he adds: "daß Philosophisches und Dogmatisches nicht vermischt werden dürfte, ist der Grundgedanke der vorliegenden Bearbeitung."<sup>40</sup>

Sibbern states his fundamental agreement with Schleiermacher on this point.<sup>41</sup> Here he implicitly answers his previous critic, who reproached him for confusing philosophy with theology. Here Sibbern, by agreeing with Schleiermacher can show that he is not guilty of any such confusion.

<sup>37</sup> Sibbern, "Bidrag til Bestemmelsen af Philosophiens Forhold til Theologien. Et Gjensvar paa en imod mig nedlagt Protest," in his *Philosophiskt Archiv og Repertorium*, vols. 1-4 (Copenhagen 1829-30), vol. 1, 58-92.

<sup>38</sup> Sibbern, "Bidrag til Bestemmelsen af Philosophiens Forhold til Theologien. Et Gjensvar paa en imod mig nedlagt Protest," 81f.

<sup>39</sup> Sibbern, "Bidrag til Besvarelsen af det Spørgsmaal: Hvad er Dogmatik. Indledet ved en Kritik af Schleiermachers Begreb derom," in his *Philosophiskt Archiv og Repertorium*, vols. 1-4 (Copenhagen 1829-30), vol. 3, 266-304, vol. 4, 305-400.

<sup>40</sup> Sibbern, "Bidrag til Besvarelsen af det Spørgsmaal: Hvad er Dogmatik. Indledet ved en Kritik af Schleiermachers Begreb derom," vol. 3, 268.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 269, 271.

Later in his essay, Sibbern reaches a preliminary conclusion that is strikingly similar to Kierkegaard's famous formulation in the present journal entry in question. Sibbern writes, "pure philosophical propositions can never as such become theological ones, and genuine theological propositions can never become pure philosophical ones."<sup>42</sup>

Later, Sibbern returns to this issue in his book review of Heiberg's *Perseus*,<sup>43</sup> which was also published in an abbreviated form as an independent monograph in 1838 under the title, *Remarks and Investigations Primarily Concerning Hegel's Philosophy*.<sup>44</sup> There Sibbern makes the distinction between philosophy and religion as follows:

It is probably not superfluous to remark that here we are only talking about the foundation of a Christian *philosophy* (for by "faith" here one thinks the whole time of the Christian faith), not about the foundation of the Christian *faith* itself, or even Christian *living* itself. The point here is not that philosophy, to the extent it has been applied to what is Christian, or a Christian philosophy should replace Christian faith. That would be as strange and unnatural as letting one's philosophy of love take the place of love itself. The foundation of love can never be anything but love itself. If, by contrast, there is no talk of the love itself but only of its philosophy, then it should be clear that the foundation must be sought and found in the speculative Idea or the fundamental idea of philosophy, in its *ingress into*—and *penetration throughout*—the entire realm of love.<sup>45</sup>

While Sibbern grants that philosophy can fruitfully explore religion, he denies that this can in any way replace religious faith.

There is evidence in Kierkegaard's entry in the *Journal AA* of an awareness of Sibbern's views on this subject. Sibbern is known for his

<sup>42</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 277.

<sup>43</sup> Sibbern, "Perseus, Journal for den speculative Idee. Udgiven af Johan Ludvig Heiberg. Nr. 1, Juni 1837. Kjøbenhavn. Reitzels Forlag. XIV og 264 S. 8. Priis 1 Rbd. 84 Skill. — (Med stadigt Hensyn til Dr. Rothes: *Læren om Treenighed og Forsoning. Et speculativt Forsøg i Anledning af Reformationsfesten.*), *Maanedsskrift for Litteratur*, vol. 19 (1838), no. 4, Article I, 283-360; no. 5, Article II, 424-460; no. 6, Article III, 546-582; vol. 20 (1838), no. 1, Article IV, 20-60; no. 2, Article V, 103-136; no. 3, Article VI, 193-244; no. 4, Article VII, 293-308; no. 5, Article VIII, 405-449.

<sup>44</sup> Sibbern, *Bemærkninger og Undersøgelser fornemmelig betræffende Hegels Philosophie, betragtet i Forhold til vor Tid* (Copenhagen: C. A. Reitzel, 1838).

<sup>45</sup> Sibbern, *Bemærkninger og Undersøgelser*, 63.

idiosyncratic philosophical language that is utterly unique in Danish.<sup>46</sup> The odd formulations that Kierkegaard uses of “an accounting-within-itself” (*en Sig-Rede-Gjøren*)<sup>47</sup> and a “living oneself-into-it” (*en Sig-Leven-ind*)<sup>48</sup> are both neologisms from Sibbern. Given these clear signs of Sibbern’s language and the nature of his discussion on this issue that was so important to Kierkegaard, we must conclude that Sibbern is another positive source of inspiration behind this early journal entry and the other related ones.

## VI. Kierkegaard’s View

These discussions constitute the background against which the journal entries on the relation of philosophy to religion were written. In the first entry, dated October 17, 1835, the main thesis is introduced: “*Philosophy and Christianity can never be united.*”<sup>49</sup> Here Kierkegaard makes his first attempt to distinguish the two spheres. His claim is best understood as a rejection of Heiberg’s Hegelian claims that philosophy and Christianity are ultimately one in the sense that Christianity constitutes a subordinate part of a single organic philosophical system.

After this famous thesis, the passage continues as follows: “for if I’m to hold fast to what is one of the most essential features of Christianity, redemption, then of course for it really to amount to anything it must extend to the whole man.”<sup>50</sup> The concept of redemption is key for this passage. Kierkegaard’s general view on the issue of the relation of philosophy to Christianity seems to be that philosophy is concerned with knowledge, while Christianity is concerned with “the whole man,” which involves a number of different human faculties. Thus, although philosophy can perhaps even be called “Christian knowledge” and claim to have a certain kind of knowledge about a certain sphere, nevertheless it will always fall short when it comes to Christianity. He writes,

<sup>46</sup> His language was so odd that one of his students even attempted to create a Sibbern dictionary. See Hans Dahl, *Frederik Christian Sibbern og Modersmålet. Et Stykke Dansk Ordbogsarbejde* (Copenhagen: G. E. C. Gad 1884).

<sup>47</sup> SKS, 17: 31, line 6, AA:13 / KJN, 1: 25.

<sup>48</sup> SKS, 17: 31, line 20, AA:13 / KJN, 1: 26.

<sup>49</sup> SKS, 17: 30, AA:13 / KJN, 1: 25.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

Certainly I can conceive of such a philosophy after Christianity, or after a person has become a Christian, but then it would be a Christian philosophy. The relation would not be one of philosophy to Christianity but of Christianity to Christian knowledge, or, if you absolutely must, to Christian philosophy—unless one is willing to have it that philosophy has to conclude beforehand, or prior to Christianity, that the riddle of life cannot be solved. For it would negate philosophy as an accounting-within-itself of the relation between God and the world were it to conclude that it was unable to explain that relation, and then philosophy would at the peak of its perfection be accomplice to its own total downfall, that is, as the evidence of its inability to live up to its own definition.<sup>51</sup>

Given this, philosophy would either have to modify its self-definition to being something more modest or suffer the consequences of being regarded as a total failure and as useless for the most important questions. In this passage one sees, as noted, a formulation that can be regarded as a Sibbernism: “an accounting-within-itself,” which is explained as the attempt to give a general account of “the relation between God and the world.” Kierkegaard’s point here is that such an account-giving, which is the very defining character of philosophy, aiming at understanding and explanation, is contrary to Christianity. Thus, understood in this way, Christianity “would negate philosophy” since it negates all forms of rational, discursive account-giving in this sphere. This seems to anticipate some of Kierkegaard’s later views about the ineffability of faith or the absolute paradox of the Incarnation—doctrines which all underscore the inability of discursive thinking to grasp or explain the divine. In this context, Johannes Climacus’ criticism of objective knowing’s attempt to explain Christianity also quickly comes to mind.

Kierkegaard returns to the concept of redemption and refers to the notion of a redemptive need. He writes, “Yes, philosophy from this point of view would not even serve as a transition to Christianity, for it would necessarily have to abide by this negative conclusion, and the whole idea of a need for redemption would have to enter man from quite another side; that is, it would first of all have to be felt and then known.”<sup>52</sup> The

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

notion of a redemptive need is one that comes from Schleiermacher.<sup>53</sup> It is discussed in *The Christian Faith* in § 11 and § 22. At the outset of this discussion, Schleiermacher raises the question of what is the essence of Christianity given the fact that there are so many differing forms of religious worship that appear in different times and places, all claiming to be Christian. Schleiermacher's conclusion is that the belief in "redemption accomplished by Jesus of Nazareth" is the defining feature.<sup>54</sup> When Kierkegaard attempts to distinguish philosophy from Christianity, it is natural for him to draw on this discussion in Schleiermacher. In order to make this distinction, Kierkegaard must first define his terms; specifically, he must first identify the defining characteristic of Christianity. Thus, when Schleiermacher defines this as redemption, Kierkegaard seizes on this and uses this concept to distinguish Christianity from philosophy, where no such concept is present.

Schleiermacher's argument is that redemption belongs to the very nature of the Christian religion since Christ is a redeemer: "Jesus is founder of a religious communion simply in the sense that its members become conscious of redemption through him."<sup>55</sup> In his reading notes (presumably in connection with his tutorial with Martensen), Kierkegaard quotes the following passage from Schleiermacher:

If, however, there are within the communion considerable differences in the free development of the God-consciousness, then some people, in whom it is most cramped, are more in need of redemption, and others, in whom it works more freely, are more capable of redemption; and thus through the influence of the latter there arises in the former an approximation to redemption; but only up to the point at which the difference between the two is more or less balanced, simply owing to the fact that there exists a communion or fellowship.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>53</sup> Cf. *SKS K*, 17, 73 / *KJN*, 1: 329.

<sup>54</sup> Schleiermacher, *Der christliche Glaube nach den Grundsätzen der evangelischen Kirche*, vol. 1, § 11, 67-77. English translation: *The Christian Faith*, § 11, 52-60.

<sup>55</sup> Schleiermacher, *Der christliche Glaube*, vol. 1, § 11.3, 72. English translation: *The Christian Faith*, 56. Kierkegaard quotes this passage in his reading notes; see *Pap.*, I C 21, vol. XII, 128.

<sup>56</sup> *Pap.*, I C 21, vol. XII, 128. This is a quotation from Schleiermacher, *Der christliche Glaube*, vol. 1, § 11.4, 73. English translation: *The Christian Faith*, 57.

The point here is that other religions might include a notion of redemption as some form of purification or penance, i.e., as something accidental, but only in Christianity is it a necessary or primary aspect. Given that Kierkegaard was attentive to precisely this discussion in his previous study of *The Christian Faith*, there can be no doubt that Schleiermacher stands in the background of the journal entry AA:13, specifically with the key concept of redemption.<sup>57</sup> While Schleiermacher's goal is primarily to use this concept to distinguish Christianity from other forms of religion, Kierkegaard co-opts his discussion to distinguish Christianity from philosophy.

In AA:13 Kierkegaard continues, "Now if philosophy's attention were drawn to a large number of people who maintain a lively conviction of their need for redemption, actual redemption, it might very well apply itself to this idea...and try to understand these people's conviction, yet for the same reason philosophy would still not recognize the necessity of redemption."<sup>58</sup> Kierkegaard's point here is that a rational, discursive account of redemption will always fall short and will never be able to capture the true nature of the concept. This passage seems to refer to the following account in Schleiermacher:

Perhaps in a universal philosophy of religion, to which, if it were properly recognized, apologetics could then appeal, the inner character of Christianity in itself could be exhibited in such a way that its particular place in the religious world would thereby be definitely fixed. This would also mean that all the principal moments of the religious consciousness would be systematized, and from their interconnection it would be seen which of them were fitted to have all the others related to them and to be themselves a constant concomitant of all the others. If, then, it should be seen that the element which we call "redemption" becomes such a moment as soon as a liberating fact enters a region where the God-

<sup>57</sup> Further, Kierkegaard writes (in reference to § 22.2): "If men are to be redeemed; they must want it and actually be able to receive it" (*Pap.*, I C 23, vol. XII, 129 / *JP*, 4: 3844). In the paragraph in question, Schleiermacher speaks of "the need for redemption in human nature." Schleiermacher, *Der christliche Glaube nach den Grundsätzen der evangelischen Kirche*, vol. 1, 125. English translation: *The Christian Faith*, 98. See also "Original sin, however, is at the same time so really the personal guilt of every individual who shares in it that it is best represented as the corporate act and the corporate guilt of the human race, and that the recognition of it as such is likewise recognition of the universal need of redemption." *Der christliche Glaube*, vol. 1, § 71, 381ff / *The Christian Faith*, 285.

<sup>58</sup> *SKS*, 17: 30, AA:13 / *KJN*, 1: 25f.

consciousness was in a state of constraint, Christianity would in that case be vindicated as a distinct form of faith and its nature in a sense construed. But even this could not properly be called a proof of Christianity, since even the philosophy of religion could not establish any necessity, either to recognize a particular fact as redemptive, or to give the central place actually in one's own consciousness to any particular moment, even though that moment should be capable of occupying such a place.<sup>59</sup>

Schleiermacher denies that an account of the concept of redemption in a larger philosophical system of concepts can be regarded as a compelling argument for the truth of Christianity in a way that it can be used in the service of apologetics. Thus, his point is somewhat different from that of Kierkegaard. In any case, they seem to agree that a philosophical account of redemption can never be adequate.

In the same passage Kierkegaard writes, "Christianity demands, before being examined, a living oneself-into-it, but then also a consciousness of redemption...."<sup>60</sup> With the use of yet another Stribernism, "living oneself-into-it," Kierkegaard underscores the existential nature of Christianity. It is a religion that one must live and experience in an intimate manner in contrast to an abstract system of concepts or dogmas. The notion of consciousness of redemption also appears in Schleiermacher's discussion.<sup>61</sup>

In short, Kierkegaard's main argument for distinguishing philosophy and religion is that redemption is a necessary feature of Christianity, which philosophy can never supply. He argues,

Ultimately it is *here* the yawning chasm lies: Christianity stipulates the defectiveness of human cognition due to sin, which is then rectified in Christianity. The philosopher tries *qua* man to account for matters of God and the world. The outcome can readily be acknowledged as limited inasmuch as man is a limited being, but also as the most man is capable *qua* man. Certainly, the philosopher can acquire the concept of man's sin, but it doesn't

follow that he knows that man is in need of redemption, least of all redemption which—corresponding to the ordinary creature's sinfulness—must be passed on to God, rather than a relative redemption (i.e., one that redeems itself).<sup>62</sup>

For Kierkegaard the task of the philosopher is to know and to give an account of the world with one's knowledge. However, given that human beings are flawed due to sin, this account must also always be flawed. Christianity offers the possibility of redemption through faith. But philosophy, as a rational account of the world, cannot accept anything on faith but must rather give a discursive demonstration. Thus, philosophy cannot receive redemption since it ultimately rules out faith, which is necessary for it. Philosophy cannot accept the finitude and flawed nature of human knowledge. It seeks rather its own redemption through its own tools, i.e., reason and discursive argumentation.

In a footnote to this entry, Kierkegaard says laconically, "The philosopher must either embrace optimism—or despair."<sup>63</sup> By this he indicates that the philosopher has two choices. The positive philosopher believes unwaveringly in the strength of human reason and in its ability to discover the ultimate truths of the world. This kind of philosopher embraces optimism and has no need for Christianity since he finds his redemption in human reason. The skeptical philosopher calls into doubt the strength of human reason to explain the world. But yet, *qua* philosopher, he cannot accept anything on mere faith. Thus, he must reject Christianity and end in despair since he can find redemption neither in philosophy, which does not have the tools to provide it, nor in religion, which requires one to accept it on faith.

Later in the journal, Kierkegaard tries to address the objection of the rationalist theologians, like Hegel, who would argue that there is no conflict between Christianity and a rationalist philosophy. There is, of course, a long tradition of Christian thinkers who have tried to reconcile Christianity with reason or with the latest scientific knowledge. Here, Kierkegaard's objection is that such attempts misunderstand the nature of Christianity. He argues:

<sup>59</sup> Schleiermacher, *Der christliche Glaube*, vol. 1, § 11.5, 76. In English translation: *The Christian Faith*, 59.

<sup>60</sup> SKS, 17: 30, AA:13 / KJN, 1: 26.

<sup>61</sup> Schleiermacher, *Der christliche Glaube*, vol. 1, § 11.3, 72. In English translation: *The Christian Faith*, 56.

<sup>62</sup> SKS, 17: 31, AA:13 / KJN, 1: 26.

<sup>63</sup> SKS, 17: 31n, AA:13 / KJN, 1: 26n.

The consequences of such a union (of Christianity and philosophy) are seen from a rationalism, a conception one kind of consequence of which is linguistic confusion, and just as it has been noted that many words appear in different languages, so in spite of tearing each other down the rationalists have at least these words in common: philosophical, reasonable Christianity (Christianity and the whole appearance of Christ are—an accommodation).<sup>64</sup>

This argument is easy to understand in light of the theories that Kierkegaard works out later in order to demonstrate the incommensurability of philosophy and Christianity. If at the heart of Christianity is the paradox of the Incarnation, i.e., God becoming man, which is utterly incomprehensible to human reason, then no rationalist philosophy can grasp it. This essential feature of Christianity alone demarcates it from philosophy. Thus, any attempt to try to understand it in terms of philosophical discourse or argumentation is essentially a misunderstanding and a confusion of language.

These entries are important for understanding Kierkegaard's later published works. Much of his criticism of then contemporary philosophy is aimed at what he perceives as the attempt of philosophy to usurp an absolute position vis-à-vis Christianity. He treats this in many places in the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, including the Chapter, "Subjective Truth, Inwardness: Truth is Subjectivity."<sup>65</sup> The discussion in the *Postscript* is intended specifically to delimit the legitimate sphere of philosophy. In other words, he in a sense follows a Kantian project of sketching the limits of human reason in order to avoid the errors that come with any attempt to go beyond those limits.

Thus, with the statement that philosophy and Christianity can never be united, Kierkegaard declares his affiliation with Schleiermacher against the Hegelians, such as Heiberg. He makes use of Schleiermacher's attempt to define the essence of Christianity by means of redemption in order to distinguish Christianity from any philosophical account-giving.

## VII. The Later Development of the Discussion

While Kierkegaard's journal entry AA:13 gives an interesting insight into his early considerations of the issue of the relation of philosophy to

<sup>64</sup> SKS, 17: 34, AA:17 / KJN, 1: 29.

<sup>65</sup> SKS, 7: 182-211 / CUP1, 199-231.

Christianity, his mature polemical stance on this issue was worked out also in response to later contributions to this wider discussion. For example, Kierkegaard's rival Martensen addresses this issue in his dissertation, *On the Autonomy of Human Self-Consciousness*, which appeared in 1837.<sup>66</sup> At the very beginning of this treatise Martensen addresses the issue, writing: "Thus theology becomes philosophy. It is precisely this complete harmony and agreement between form and content which constitutes the concept of every science, for which reason it is limited only by what follows from the nature of the object itself. It is therefore arbitrary to permit philosophy an absolute knowledge of the truth but allow theology to remain at a lower stage and be discredited by a relative knowledge."<sup>67</sup> He concludes: "And thus philosophy becomes theology. In whichever way, then, the matter is resolved, whether the investigation of God's essence ought to have faith or also pure rational necessity as its principle, it always lies in the objective character of method that the theological method cannot be different from the philosophical."<sup>68</sup> Here Martensen seems to follow Heiberg's Hegelian line, arguing for a unity of form of philosophy and religion.

This issue was taken up again in 1843 by the theologian Ludvig Helweg (1818-83), who penned an extensive article entitled "On Faith and Knowledge."<sup>69</sup> There Helweg analyzes in some detail Hegel's position on this topic and criticizes the attempt to see religion as a part of a philosophical system. This piece was reviewed by the Hegelian Johan Frederik Hagen (1817-59), who argued for Hegel's position in the face of Helweg's criticisms.<sup>70</sup> He claims that Helweg misrepresents Hegel's view as something that effectively eliminates religion; on the contrary, he

<sup>66</sup> [Hans L. Martensen], *De autonomia conscientiae sui humanae, in theologiam dogmaticam nostri temporis introducta* (Copenhagen, 1837). Danish translation: *Den menneskelige Selvbevidstheds Autonomie*, trans. L. V. Petersen (Copenhagen, 1841). English translation: *The Autonomy of Human Self-Consciousness in Modern Dogmatic Theology in Between Hegel and Kierkegaard: Hans L. Martensen's Philosophy of Religion*, trans. Curtis L. Thompson and David J. Kangas (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 73-147.

<sup>67</sup> Martensen, *De autonomia*, § 1, 3f / *Den menneskelige Selvbevidstheds Autonomie*, § 1, 3 / *The Autonomy of Human Self-Consciousness*, 77.

<sup>68</sup> Martensen, *De autonomia*, § 1, 3f / *Den menneskelige Selvbevidstheds Autonomie*, § 1, 3 / *The Autonomy of Human Self-Consciousness*, 77.

<sup>69</sup> Ludvig Helweg, "Om Tro og Viden. Et Forsøg til en Charakteristik af Nutidens Theologie," *For Literatur og Kritik* 1 (1843), 20-67, 123-160.

<sup>70</sup> Johan Frederik Hagen [anonymous], "Om Tro og Viden. Et Forsøg til en Charakteristik af Nutidens Theologie, af L. Helweg, Cand. theol. Første Artikel. (I *Tidsskrift for Literatur og Kritik*, udgivet af det fyenske litteraire Selskab, redigeret af Dr. og Overlærer C. Paludam-Müller. Første Aargangs første Hefte. Odense 1843)," *Theologisk Tidsskrift, Ny Række* 7 (1843), 350-356.

claims, the point of Hegel's philosophy is to defend the truth of Christianity in a philosophical manner. Helweg continued this acrimonious exchange with a response to his critic in which he reaffirmed his view that Hegel's philosophy was essentially critical and dismissive towards religion.<sup>71</sup> Thus, this discussion continued to evoke controversy in Denmark throughout the 1830s and '40s.

On the basic issue of the relation of philosophy to Christianity, Kierkegaard seems never to have changed his mind. The basic thesis stated here, "*Philosophy and Christianity can never be united*," could well be used as a thesis for a part of the *Philosophical Fragments* or the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*. To be sure, he becomes clearer about the relation, and he develops new arguments to support his position, but the basic view itself remains unchanged. Indeed, much of the *Journal AA* can be regarded as a rough outline for some of the main parts of works like the *Postscript*. The journal shows us a snapshot of the young Kierkegaard who is already deeply engaged in the current debates about philosophy and theology that he will continue to follow and which will come to shape his authorship in a decisive manner.

<sup>71</sup> Ludvig Helweg, "Nogle Bemærkninger fremkaldte ved en i *Theologisk Tidsskrifts* 7de Bind 2det Hefte indrykket Recension af min Afhandling 'Om Tro og Viden,'" *For Literatur og Kritik* 1 (1843), 406-413.