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“Philosophy and Christianity can never be united”: The Role of Sibbern and Martensen in Kierkegaard’s Reception of Schleiermacher

Abstract: The present article explores the possible influence of Schleiermacher on Kierkegaard based primarily on a reading of the famous journal entry AA:13, in which the young Kierkegaard declares “Philosophy and Christianity can never be united.” It is argued that Kierkegaard’s reflections here and later constitute a part of an ongoing critical discussion with a number of Danish thinkers who were likewise interested in the issue of the relation of philosophy to Christianity or knowledge to faith. Schleiermacher’s thought can thus be seen to have passed through a Danish filter, which is the primary context for Kierkegaard’s engagement with it.

The German theologian, philosopher and philologist Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher (1768–1834) doubtless played an important role in Kierkegaard’s thought; however, the nature of that role is open to debate and is complicated by the fact that it changed over time. In *The Concept of Irony* Schleiermacher is mentioned several times, mostly in connection with his edition of Plato,¹ but, apart from these references, he appears explicitly only twice in the entire *corpus* of Kierkegaard’s published works.² Moreover, while these two direct references hint at a positive influence, they appear without any detailed discussion of

1 SKS 1, 113–116 / CI, 53–55; SKS 1, 119 / CI, 59; SKS 1, 122–123 / CI, 62–63; SKS 1, 138 / CI, 79–80; SKS 1, 163 / CI, 109; SKS 1, 164 / CI, 111; SKS 1, 170 / CI, 118; SKS 1, 172 / CI, 120; SKS 1, 174n / CI, 122n; SKS 1, 218 / CI, 170; SKS 1, 229 / CI, 182; SKS 1, 259 / CI, 214; SKS 1, 263 / CI, 219–220.

2 Richard Crouter counts 94 references and allusions to Schleiermacher in Kierkegaard’s published works and *Nachlass* together. See Richard Crouter, “Schleiermacher: Revisiting Kierkegaard’s Relation to Him,” in *Kierkegaard and his German Contemporaries*, Tome II, *Theology*, ed. by Jon Stewart, Aldershot: Ashgate 2007 (*Kierkegaard Research: Sources, Reception and Resources*, vol. 6), p. 203.

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Schleiermacher's thought and thus remain too general and vague to allow any precise determination of the nature of that influence. The absence of any actual analysis of Schleiermacher's works in Kierkegaard's published *corpus* has doubtless contributed to the fact that in the secondary literature there have been, until fairly recently, so few comparative explorations of the relation between these two giants in 19th-century religious thought.³ Indeed, when seen from the perspective of Kierkegaard's published works, the topic of their relation would, at first glance, not seem to be especially promising.

One key issue in Schleiermacher's thought that interested Kierkegaard is the question of the relation of philosophy or science to religion. This is most succinctly expressed in the famous early journal entry, which begins by declaring "*Philosophy and Christianity can never be united.*"⁴ Kierkegaard returns to this point in many different ways in his mature authorship, for example, in his well-known distinction between the subjective and objective approach to Christianity in the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*.⁵ His ongoing reflections on this issue in general can be seen as a reaction to a much larger discussion that was taking place in Danish cultural life. Participants in this discussion included important figures, such as Johan Ludvig Heiberg, Frederik Christian Sibbern and Hans Lassen Martensen, all of whom were well versed in Schleiermacher's thought.

3 See Hans Dierkes, "Friedrich Schlegels *Lucinde*, Schleiermacher und Kierkegaard," *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, vol. 57, 1983, pp. 431–449. Hermann Fischer, *Subjektivität und Sünde. Kierkegaards Begriff der Sünde mit ständiger Rücksicht auf Schleiermachers Lehre von der Sünde*, Itzehoe: Verlag "Die Spur" 1963. Henning Schröer, "Wie verstand Kierkegaard Schleiermacher?" in *Internationaler Schleiermacher-Kongress Berlin 1984*, ed. by Kurt-Victor Selge, Berlin and New York: de Gruyter 1985, pp. 1147–1155. Niels Thulstrup, "Kierkegaards Kenntnis der philosophischen und theologischen Tradition," *Theologische Zeitschrift*, vol. 35, 1979, pp. 351–362. Andreas Krichbaum, *Kierkegaard und Schleiermacher. Eine historisch-systematische Studie zum Religionsbegriff*, Berlin und New York: De Gruyter 2008 (*Kierkegaard Studies Monograph Series*, vol. 18). Niels Jørgen Cappelørn, Richard Crouter, Theodor Jørgensen, and Claus-Dieter Osthövener (eds.), *Schleiermacher und Kierkegaard. Subjektivität und Wahrheit. Akten des Schleiermacher-Kierkegaard-Kongresses in Kopenhagen, October 2003*, Berlin and New York: De Gruyter 2006 (*Kierkegaard Studies Monograph Series*, vol. 11).

4 *SKS* 17, 30, AA:13 / *KJN* 1, 25.

5 *SKS* 7, 182–211 / *CUP1*, 199–231.

I References to Schleiermacher in the Published Works

The first reference to Schleiermacher in the published works appears in the Introduction to *The Concept of Anxiety*. Here Kierkegaard's pseudonymous author Vigilius Haufniensis favorably compares Schleiermacher with Hegel:

That such is the case with dogmatics will readily be granted if once again time is taken to understand Schleiermacher's immortal service to this field. He was left behind long ago when men chose Hegel. Yet Schleiermacher was a thinker in the beautiful Greek sense, a thinker who spoke only of what he knew. Hegel, on the contrary, despite all his outstanding ability and stupendous learning, reminds us again and again by his performance that he was in the German sense a professor of philosophy on a large scale, because he *à tout prix* must explain all things.⁶

There is a clear note of regret here that Schleiermacher has fallen out of vogue, while Hegel still enjoys a significant following. Kierkegaard's author has outspoken praise for Schleiermacher's dogmatics, i.e., his work *The Christian Faith*. The passage seems to imply that Kierkegaard's author sides with Schleiermacher in his general attempt to understand the nature of religious faith as feeling in opposition to reason. However, the details of this agreement remain vague here. While Schleiermacher's dogmatics is praised, it is unclear what specifically is being referred to: which treatment of which dogma. The only thing that is certain is that Vigilius Haufniensis sides with Schleiermacher against Hegel on some general point concerning religion or Christian dogmatics. Importantly, Kierkegaard identifies Schleiermacher positively with a model of philosophy which he himself finds attractive.

The praise of Schleiermacher as a thinker "in the beautiful Greek sense" in contrast to Hegel can be seen as an echo of the motto to *The Concept of Anxiety*, where Kierkegaard quotes a passage from Johann Georg Hamann's *Socratic Memorabilia*: "For Socrates was great in 'that he distinguished between what he understood and what he did not understand.'"⁷ The close similarity between the

⁶ SKS 4, 327 / CA, 20.

⁷ SKS 4, 310 / CA, 3. Kierkegaard quotes from Hamann's *Socratic Memorabilia* presumably from his edition of *Hamann's Schriften*, vols. 1–7, ed. by Friedrich Roth, vols. 1–6, Berlin: G. Reimer 1821–24, vol. 7, Leipzig: G. Reimer 1825; vol. 8.1–2, ed. by Gustav Adolph Wiener, Berlin: G. Reimer 1842–43 (ACKL 536–544), vol. 2, p. 12. (For an English translation, see *Hamann's Socratic Memorabilia: A Translation and Commentary*, by James C. O'Flaherty, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins Press 1967, p. 143: "Socrates was, gentlemen, no mean critic. He distinguished

motto and the cited passage suggests a positive comparison between Schleiermacher and Socrates. Prior to this Kierkegaard had associated the two thinkers more or less explicitly in *The Concept of Irony*. The association once again concerns their humble relation to knowledge:

Naturally this theoretical ignorance [sc. of Socrates], for which the eternal nature of the divine remained a mystery, must have had its counterpart in a similar religious ignorance of the divine dispensations and direction in human life, a religious ignorance that seeks its edification and discloses its piety in a total ignorance, just as, for example, Schleiermacher sought the edifying in a feeling of absolute dependence.⁸

Here Kierkegaard interprets Schleiermacher's famous doctrine of faith as a feeling of absolute dependence as a form of Socratic ignorance.⁹ This is not far-fetched since the motivation for Schleiermacher's doctrine was clearly to find a way to ground religious belief that was not based on some truth claim that could be called into question by philosophy and modern science. By arguing that the basis of belief is a feeling, Schleiermacher radically shifted the discussion away from the framework in which it had been carried out since the Enlightenment. If religious belief is grounded in a feeling, then it is safely protected from the criticism of science since feeling cannot be called into question in the same way miracles, dogmas, or historical claims can be. Kierkegaard is clearly sympathetic to this approach, which sets Schleiermacher apart from so many of his contemporaries and seems to bring him into association with Socrates.

In addition to the quoted passage from *The Concept of Anxiety*, there is a second brief mention of Schleiermacher in the published works after *The Concept of Irony*. It appears in *Stages on Life's Way* and also concerns the relation of Christianity to knowledge. Here again the German theologian seems to be held up for praise: "Schleiermacher so enthusiastically declares that knowledge does not perturb religiousness, and that the religious person does not sit safeguarded by a lightning rod and scoff at God; yet with the help of stat-

in the writings of Heraclitus what he did not understand from what he understood, and drew a very proper and modest inference from the comprehensible to the incomprehensible.") (*ACKL* = *The Auction Catalogue to Kierkegaard's Library*, ed. by Katalin Nun, Gerhard Schreiber, and Jon Stewart, Aldershot: Ashgate 2015 (*Kierkegaard Research: Sources, Reception and Resources*, vol. 20).)

⁸ *SKS* 1, 223 / *CI*, 176.

⁹ Kierkegaard also discusses this doctrine in his reading notes to Schleiermacher's *The Christian Faith*. *SKS* 27, 48, Papir 13:7.

istical tables one laughs at all of life."¹⁰ Again this is rather vague, but the general point seems to have something to do with the fact that objective knowledge is ultimately irrelevant for religious belief and cannot be used to undermine it. Moreover, there is no certain belief in the way there is certain knowledge. All belief is riddled with doubt and uncertainty by its very nature. No amount of objective knowledge will ever change this. Again Kierkegaard or, if one prefers, his pseudonymous author seems to side with Schleiermacher on the general point. However, the details of this agreement remain extremely sketchy.

Despite their vagueness, both of these passages concern the relation of Christianity to secular knowing. In both cases Schleiermacher is praised for having the correct view of this relation in contrast to philosophers such as Hegel. Thus, these passages take up and develop the motif from the *Journal AA* mentioned above. This evidences that the issue of the relation of philosophy to Christianity was one that exercised Kierkegaard over a long period of time and one that he associated with Schleiermacher.

With the exception of this one issue, it would be difficult to say anything definitive about Kierkegaard's appreciation of Schleiermacher's theology based on these two passages alone. Seen through the perspective of the published works, the influence of Schleiermacher's theology on Kierkegaard would seem to be extremely limited. Indeed, it is astonishing to consider that such a major contemporary theological figure of the stature of Schleiermacher does not appear more often in Kierkegaard's authorship, which is of course so dominated by religious issues. This might lead one to the conclusion that Schleiermacher played at best only a minor role for Kierkegaard; indeed, judging from the published works alone, one might think that Kierkegaard was interested more or less exclusively in Schleiermacher's Plato edition but was wholly indifferent to his views on religion. However, the materials in Kierkegaard's *Nachlass* tell a different story. There we find unambiguous evidence of an engaged analysis of Schleiermacher's theological positions. There one gains a much clearer picture of the exact nature of Kierkegaard's agreement with Schleiermacher on the question of the relation of faith to knowledge. This then helps to shed light on some of the well-known discussions and analyses in Kierkegaard's published writings that are relevant for this issue.

While the question of Kierkegaard's relation to Schleiermacher has been made the object of some scholarly discussion, there is an enormous degree of variation in the assessments of Schleiermacher's influence on and importance

10 SKS 6, 441 / SLW, 479.

for Kierkegaard. While some authors claim that Kierkegaard was the only true student of Schleiermacher,¹¹ others argue that he had an exclusively critical view of Schleiermacher and received nothing positive from him.¹² Thus, there is no general consensus about even the most basic contours of the relation. In this article I wish to argue that there was a positive influence, but one that was filtered through the Danish reception of Schleiermacher's thought. Instead of exploring systematically all of the references to Schleiermacher in Kierkegaard's *Nachlass*,¹³ I will focus specifically on the question of the relation of philosophy to Christianity, which I take to be an absolutely central topic in the Schleiermacher-Kierkegaard relation.

II Sibbern's Reception of Schleiermacher

While Schleiermacher's celebrity in Germany and Prussia in the 19th century is well known to scholars today, it should also be noted that he enjoyed an extensive reception in Denmark.¹⁴ This reception already began during his lifetime, and its most famous episode is clearly his visit to Copenhagen in

11 See Emanuel Hirsch, *Kierkegaard-Studien*, vols. 1–2, Gütersloh: Bertelsmann 1933, vol. 2, pp. 21–24. Emanuel Hirsch, *Geschichte der neuern evangelischen Theologie im Zusammenhang mit der Bewegungen des europäischen Denkens*, vols. 1–5, Gütersloh: Bertelsman 1949–54, vol. 5, pp. 453–454. Wilhelm Anz, “Schleiermacher und Kierkegaard. Übereinstimmung und Differenz,” *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*, vol. 82, no. 4, 1985, pp. 409–429. See also Richard Crouter's articles, which argue for a significant, positive influence: “Kierkegaard's Not so Hidden Debt to Schleiermacher,” *Zeitschrift für neuere Theologiegeschichte*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1994, pp. 205–225 and “Schleiermacher: Revisiting Kierkegaard's Relation to Him,” in *Kierkegaard and his German Contemporaries*, Tome II, *Theology*, pp. 197–231.

12 See Salvatore Spera, “Kierkegaard e Schleiermacher,” *Archivio di Filosofia*, vol. 52, nos. 1–3, 1984, pp. 435–463. Salvatore Spera, “Le Carte schleiermacheriane di Kierkegaard,” *Aquinas*, vol. 27, 1984, pp. 287–316. Cornelio Fabro, *Dall'essere all'esistente*, Brescia: Morcelliana 1965, pp. 327–330. Karl Barth claimed that Kierkegaard and Schleiermacher represented diametrically opposed positions. See his *Das Wort Gottes und die Theologie*, Munich: Christian Kaiser 1925, pp. 156–178, see especially pp. 164f.

13 For a systematic account of these references, see Crouter, “Schleiermacher: Revisiting Kierkegaard's Relation to Him,” in *Kierkegaard and his German Contemporaries*, Tome II, *Theology*, pp. 197–231.

14 For Schleiermacher's Danish reception, see Niels Munk Plum, *Schleiermacher i Danmark*, Copenhagen: Bianco Lunos 1934. Helge Hultberg, Karsten Friis Johansen, Theodor Jørgensen, and Friedrich Schmöe (eds.), *Schleiermacher—im besonderen Hinblick auf seine Wirkungsgeschichte in Dänemark*, Copenhagen, Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag 1986 (*Text & Kontext*, Sonderreihe, vol. 22). Crouter, “Kierkegaard's Not so Hidden Debt to Schleiermacher,” pp. 205–225.

1833.¹⁵ A number of leading Danish intellectuals knew the work of Schleiermacher and played a role in this event: the natural scientist, Hans Christian Ørsted, the philosopher, Frederik Christian Sibbern, the theologian Hans Lassen Martensen, the poet Adam Oehlenschläger, and the theologian Henrik Nikolai Clausen, among others. At the time of the visit Kierkegaard would have been a young student. There is no evidence that he attended the student activities staged in connection with Schleiermacher's visit or participated in any of the other events.¹⁶ It has, however, been argued that it is inconceivable that he could have been entirely absent from such a major happening.¹⁷

One of Schleiermacher's leading hosts during his visit was Frederik Christian Sibbern who was one of the main Danish thinkers to have been influenced significantly by him.¹⁸ Sibbern attended Schleiermacher's lectures in Berlin during Winter Semester 1811–12.¹⁹ In his letters from the period, Sibbern indicates his familiarity with Schleiermacher and Fichte, and states that it was for their sake that he went to the Prussian capital.²⁰ He seems to have had a very

15 See Jon Stewart, "Schleiermacher's Visit to Copenhagen in 1833," *Zeitschrift für Neuere Theologiegeschichte*, vol. 11, no. 2, 2004, pp. 279–302. Plum, *Schleiermacher i Danmark*. Skat Arildsen, "To Tyske Teologers Københavns-Besøg," in *Kirken. Tidsskrift for Kirkelig Orientering*, vol. 6, 1934, pp. 1–17. Crouter, "Kierkegaard's Not so Hidden Debt to Schleiermacher," pp. 205–208.

16 See Crouter, "Kierkegaard's Not so Hidden Debt to Schleiermacher," pp. 206f. Wilhelm Anz, "Schleiermacher und Kierkegaard. Übereinstimmung und Differenz," *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*, vol. 82, no. 4, 1985, p. 409.

17 For example, Henning Fenger writes, "it should be observed that Schleiermacher is another fine example for the employment of criteria of improbability in Kierkegaard scholarship. In 1833 Schleiermacher visited Copenhagen, where he was lionized on September 27 at Skydebanen and feted in the Student Association the next evening, and where he preached at the morning service in St. Peter's Church on Sunday the 29th. It was a reception with a grandeur seldom vouchsafed a foreign intellectual personality in Denmark before or since. It was the autumn's great event, and so it is inconceivable that Kierkegaard should not have partaken of it." (Henning Fenger, *Kierkegaard: The Myths and their Origins*, trans. by George C. Schoolfield, New Haven and London: Yale University Press 1980, p. 93.) From the context it is not entirely clear whether Fenger takes this seriously or understands it as a negative example for using "improbability" as a positive argument for Kierkegaard doing or thinking something specific.

18 For Sibbern's relation to Schleiermacher, see Plum, *Schleiermacher i Danmark*, pp. 45–53.

19 This is confirmed by a letter from G. Sverdrup to Sibbern, dated April 30, 1812, where Sverdrup alludes to the fact that Sibbern has attended Schleiermacher's lectures. "Letter from Sverdrup to Sibbern," Copenhagen, April 30, 1812 in *Breve til og fra F.C. Sibbern*, vols. 1–2, ed. by C.L.N. Mynster, Copenhagen: Gyldendalske Boghandel 1866, vol. 1, p. 19. See also Jens Himmelstrup, *Sibbern*, Copenhagen: J.H. Schultz Forlag 1934, p. 39.

20 "Letter from Sibbern to Sophie Ørsted," Berlin, January 14, 1812 in *Breve til og fra F.C. Sibbern*, vol. 2, pp. 56–57.

positive impression of Schleiermacher, while he is quite guarded with respect to Fichte.²¹ He further indicates that, somewhat surprisingly Schleiermacher was able to read some Danish as a result of his early studies in the Moravian school.²² Sibbern's early encounter with Schleiermacher seems to have had a lasting influence on his thought, and the connection between Sibbern's philosophy and Schleiermacher's theology has been noted before.²³

It has been claimed that Sibbern's popular novel from 1826 *Gabrielis' Posthumous Letters*,²⁴ "breathes a Schleiermachian religiosity,"²⁵ although it is not clear exactly what this means. In 1829–30 in his work *Philosophical Review and Collection*, Sibbern wrote an extended article with the title, "Contribution to an Answer to the Question: What is Dogmatics? Introduced with a Criticism of Schleiermacher's Conception of It."²⁶ In his attempt to answer the question posed in the title and define dogmatics, Sibbern takes up the issue of the relation of philosophy to religion and explicitly sides with Schleiermacher by insisting on their separation.²⁷

Sibbern returned to Schleiermacher in his extended review of Johan Ludvig Heiberg's *Perseus* from 1838. He republished a part of this review as a monograph, entitled *Remarks and Investigations Primarily Concerning Hegel's Philosophy*. There he develops his own philosophy of religion in many ways along the lines of Schleiermacher. The goal of his review was primarily to criticize Heiberg's Hegelianism, and thus Sibbern uses the occasion to examine critically Hegel's philosophy of religion. In *On the Significance of Philosophy for the Present Age*, which was published at the end of March 1833,²⁸ only months before Schleiermacher's visit, Heiberg himself had made provocative

21 Ibid., p. 60.

22 Ibid., p. 58.

23 See Helge Hultberg, "Schleiermacher und die dänische Romantik," in *Schleiermacher—im besonderen Hinblick auf seine Wirkungsgeschichte in Dänemark*, ed. by Helge Hultberg, Karsten Friis Johansen, Theodor Jørgensen, and Friedrich Schmøe, Copenhagen, Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag 1986 (*Text & Kontext*, Sonderreihe, vol. 22), pp. 132–133.

24 Frederik Christian Sibbern, *Efterladte Breve af Gabrielis*, Copenhagen: C. Græbe 1826.

25 Plum, *Schleiermacher i Danmark*, p. 47.

26 Frederik Christian Sibbern, "Bidrag til Besvarelsen af det Spørsmaal: Hvad er Dogmatik. Indledet ved en Kritik af Schleiermachers Begreb derom," in his *Philosophiskt Archiv og Repertorium*, vols. 1–4, Copenhagen: Fabritius de Tegnagel 1829–30, vol. 3, pp. 266–304, vol. 4, pp. 305–400.

27 Ibid., vol. 3, pp. 268–271.

28 In a letter to his father dated March 30, 1833 (in *Heibergske Familiebreve*, ed. by Morten Borup. Copenhagen: Gyldendal 1943, Letter no. 29, pp. 59–62), Heiberg indicates that the work had just appeared. There is also an announcement of the recent publication of the work in the section "Nyheds-Post," from *Kjøbenhavnsposten*, vol. 7, no. 62, March 28, 1833.

claims about the way in which religion can be understood as a part of the speculative Concept. He argues straightforwardly for the superiority of philosophy over religion.²⁹ Sibbern's statements in his review can be seen as a response to this.

Sibbern argues that Hegel's attempt to understand religion purely in terms of the Concept does not do justice to the true nature of religious life, which requires religious experience. Sibbern refers to Schleiermacher's motto in *The Christian Faith* in order to indicate his agreement on this point:

Just as one must acquire a solid training and familiarity with nature before one can regard it correctly with a philosophical eye or become aware of what it can offer the speculative gaze, thereby satisfying the speculative drive and desire, so also one must breathe in the characteristic atmosphere of Christianity and Christian faith, and move about in it in order to attain a true speculative explanation in the regions of Christianity. This is what Anselm alludes to in the famous words which Schleiermacher used as the motto for the first part of his dogmatics in which it is written: "*qui non crediderit, non experietur, et qui expertus non fuerit, non intelliget.*" Faith stands in the same relation to philosophy, as the issue itself stands to the philosophical consideration of it.³⁰

Sibbern quotes here the second half of the motto that appears on the title page of both volumes of *The Christian Faith*.³¹ The quoted second passage comes from

29 Johan Ludvig Heiberg, *Om Philosophiens Betydning for den nuværende Tid. Et Indbydelses-Skrift til en Række af filosofiske Forelæsninger*, Copenhagen: C.A. Reitzel 1833 (ACKL 568), p. 23. (Reprinted in Heiberg's *Prosaiske Skrifter*, vols. 1–11, Copenhagen: C.A. Reitzel 1861–62, vol. 1, p. 403. In English as *On the Significance of Philosophy for the Present Age* in *On the Significance of Philosophy for the Present Age*, in Heiberg's *On the Significance of Philosophy for the Present Age and Other Texts*, ed. and trans. by Jon Stewart, Copenhagen: C.A. Reitzel 2005 (*Texts from Golden Age Denmark*, vol. 1), pp. 99.) For a more detailed account of Heiberg's contribution to this discussion, see Jon Stewart, *The Cultural Crisis of the Danish Golden Age: Heiberg, Martensen and Kierkegaard*, Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press 2015 (*Danish Golden Age Studies*, vol. 9), pp. 149–154.

30 See Frederik Christian 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*, no. 19, 1838, Article I, p. 311; Sibbern, *Bemærkninger og Undersøgelser fornemmelig betræffende Hegels Philosophie, betragtet i Forhold til vor Tid*, Copenhagen: C.A. Reitzel 1838 (ACKL 778), pp. 28f. (In English as *Sibbern's Remarks and Investigations Primarily Concerning Hegel's Philosophy*, ed. and trans. by Jon Stewart, Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press 2017 (*Texts from Golden Age Denmark*, vol. 7), p. 85.)

31 The full motto reads as follows: "*Neque enim quaero intelligere ut credam, sed credo ut intelligam. —Nam qui non crediderit, non experietur, et qui expertus non fuerit, non intelliget.*" The first sentence, which Sibbern omits, comes from Anselm's *Proslogion*, Chapter 1. See the edition of

Chapter 2 of Anselm's *De fide trinitatis* and states, "He who does not believe, will not experience it, and he who does not experience it, will not understand it."³² Sibbern argues, with reference to Schleiermacher's use of Anselm, that the lived experience of Christianity is something prior to and irreducible to a philosophical understanding of it. The true relation to Christianity is one that the believer must live or "breathe in" (*respirere i*) and is thus not a purely cognitive matter. There is a precognitive experience which must take place before any deeper conceptual understanding. Sibbern takes this up as an occasion to criticize Hegel's philosophy on this point.

Sibbern understands the task of philosophy to be to examine a specific set of phenomena and to try to discern the rational structures in them. But he is careful to note that this philosophical understanding is fundamentally different from the immediate relation to the phenomena themselves. So one's immediate experience of a work of art is understandably quite different from the role of the work in philosophical reflections on aesthetics. In the field of philosophical psychology, it would be absurd to confuse one's philosophical understanding of the emotions with one's immediate emotional responses. The situation is no different in religion. The immediate religious experience of the believer is naturally quite different from an academic system of dogmatics or philosophy of religion. In all of these cases, it is the immediate experience that makes possible the philosophical reflection, but the one cannot be reduced to the other.³³ Here it clear that Sibbern appreciates Schleiermacher's emphasis on the subjective, irreducible side of religious faith.

Thus, an obvious point of contact with Schleiermacher can be found in the significance that Sibbern attributes to religious feeling.³⁴ Although his interpretation of it, in its details, is different from that of Schleiermacher, Sibbern nonetheless seems clearly to be on Schleiermacher's side against Hegel on this point. This is most obviously in evidence in Sibbern's section (from his review of Heiberg's *Perseus*) entitled, "On Occasion of the Exaggerated Significance

Anselm's text in J.P. Migne, *Patrologiae cursus completus* or *Patrologia Latina*, vols. 1–221, Paris: Imprimerie Catholique 1844–1905, vol. 158, column 227C.) ["For I do not seek to understand that I may believe, but I believe in order to understand."] (English translation quoted from *Proslogium*, in *Saint Anselm Basic Writings*, trans. by S.N. Deane with an Introduction by Charles Hartshorne, La Salle, Illinois: Open Court 1962, p. 7.)

³² See J.P. Migne, *Patrologiae cursus completus*, vol. 158, column 264C.

³³ See Sibbern, "Perseus, *Journal for den speculative Idee*. Udgiven af Johan Ludvig Heiberg," Article I, pp. 343 ff.; Sibbern, *Bemærkninger og Undersøgelser fornemmelig betræffende Hegels Philosophie*, pp. 61 ff. (*Sibbern's Remarks and Investigations Primarily Concerning Hegel's Philosophy*, pp. 115 ff.)

³⁴ See Himmelstrup, *Sibbern*, p. 258.

which Hegel gives *Thought* and the Insignificance to which He Ascribes *Emotion* and the Cognition Based upon It.”³⁵ Although he does not mention Schleiermacher directly in this section, Sibbern makes a case for the importance of religious feeling in his criticism of Hegel. He believes that Hegel has summarily dismissed the entire realm of feeling and that this is a serious shortcoming in his philosophical system.

III Martensen's Reception of Schleiermacher

One of the more significant figures in the Danish Schleiermacher reception is the theologian Hans Lassen Martensen.³⁶ Although Martensen ultimately remained more a Hegelian than a Schleiermacherian, he was nonetheless profoundly interested in Schleiermacher's theology and indeed made a careful study of it from an early period. He documents this in some detail in his memoirs.

There Martensen recounts that his intellectual interests in his youth were divided between the two great thinkers of the period. “There were two names which at that time shined in the scholarly world and represented the apex of the knowledge of the age: *Schleiermacher* and *Hegel*. I felt the drive to make a

³⁵ See Sibbern, “*Perseus, Journal for den speculative Idee*. Udgiven af Johan Ludvig Heiberg,” Article I, pp. 438–554; Sibbern, *Bemærkninger og Undersøgelser fornemmelig betræffende Hegels Philosophie*, pp. 93–124. (*Sibbern's Remarks and Investigations Primarily Concerning Hegel's Philosophy*, pp. 141–169.)

³⁶ See Peter Widmann, “Zur Rezeption von Schleiermachers Grundlegung der Dogmatik in der skandinavischen Theologie. H.L. Martensen—F.C. Krarup—A. Nygren,” in *Schleiermacher—im besonderen Hinblick auf seine Wirkungsgeschichte in Dänemark*, pp. 166–167. Skat Arildsen, *Biskop Hans Lassen Martensen. Hans Liv, Udvikling og Arbejde*, Copenhagen: G.E.C. Gads Forlag 1932, pp. 53f., p. 61, pp. 62f., p. 69. Josepha Martensen, *H.L. Martensen i sit Hjem og blandt sine Venner*, Copenhagen: J. Frimodts Forlag 1918, p. 214. Niels Thulstrup regards Schleiermacher's influence on Martensen as rather minimal: “On a single, important issue, Martensen seems to have been influenced by Schleiermacher, since, like the latter he insisted on the intimate connection between the basic principles of Protestantism (the formal principle, *sola scriptura*, the material principle, *sola fide*) and the concept of the Church.” Quoted from Niels Thulstrup, “Martensen's Dogmatics and its Reception,” in *Kierkegaard and His Contemporaries: The Culture of Golden Age Denmark*, ed. by Jon Stewart, Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter 2003 (*Kierkegaard Studies Monograph Series*, vol. 10), p. 186. Vilhelm Birkedal, *Personlige Oplevelser i et langt Liv*, vols. 1–3, Copenhagen: Karl Schonbergs Forlag 1890–91, vol. 1, pp. 193–198. *Biskop Otto Laubs Levnet. En Livsskildring i Breve*, vols. 1–3, ed. by F.L. Mynster and G. Schepelern, Copenhagen: Karl Schønberg 1885–87, vol. 2, p. 380.

study of their works.”³⁷ He notes a number of elements in Schleiermacher’s thought which he finds sympathetic, but then he singles out explicitly for criticism Schleiermacher’s insistence on the separation of philosophy and theology:

Schleiermacher’s dogmatics was certainly very difficult to understand; however, it captivated me with its great basic thoughts about sin and redemption and its admirable architectonic, which had something attractive about it. I did not understand his strict separation of philosophy and theology, which, in his view, were not supposed to have anything to do with each other; for it struck me that there was a deep speculation in the whole thing.³⁸

Martensen is critical of the claim to understand the key concepts of dogmatics without an appeal to conceptual understanding: “In his dogmatics Schleiermacher wanted only to give what in his view has significance for the pious disposition. According to his theory, the believer had God in his feelings and did not need speculative concepts.”³⁹ Martensen goes on to explain Hegel’s criticisms of Schleiermacher on the key point of the relation of philosophy to religion or reason to emotion. While Martensen generally agrees with Hegel’s criticisms, he is nonetheless clearly dissatisfied with Hegel’s ultimate solution to the problem.

Shortly after this discussion, Martensen recounts the events of Schleiermacher’s visit to Copenhagen, which he participated in as a young man of only twenty-five years.⁴⁰ Martensen tells how he, despite his youth, nonetheless had enough self-confidence to seek out and speak with Schleiermacher personally. On the recommendation of Hans Christian Ørsted and Sibbern, he visited Schleiermacher in his hotel and accompanied him around Copenhagen, asking him questions about religion and philosophy. Many years later he recalls Schleiermacher’s visit as being one of “the most beautiful moments of [his] youth.”⁴¹

Martensen took the opportunity to ask Schleiermacher directly about his views on the relation of philosophy to theology. He recounts,

37 Hans Lassen Martensen, *Af mit Levnet. Meddelelser*, vols. 1–3, Copenhagen: Gyldendal 1882–83, vol. 1, p. 65.

38 *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 65.

39 *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 65.

40 *Ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 67–76.

41 Letter from Martensen to Dorner, dated August 26, 1858, in *Briefwechsel zwischen H.L. Martensen und J.A. Dorner 1839–1881*, vols. 1–2, Berlin: H. Reuther’s Verlagsbuchhandlung 1888, vol. 1, p. 306.

The conversations touched on various points in his dogmatics, and above all I sought more information about what he thought about philosophy. Once I asked wholly naively whether he assumed that it was possible to have a philosophical knowledge of God's being in itself, of the inner, eternal process of life in God, with which I, without naming them, was thinking of Hegel or Schelling, Baader, J. Böhme and related thinkers. He answered with complete calm, without naming anyone—he did not like to speak about Hegel—: “*Ich halte es für eine Täuschung*”....⁴²

Martensen goes on to explain in more detail Schleiermacher's position:

The view was that we could only think in opposites, but, according to Schleiermacher, God as the absolute or as the being of all beings is beyond all oppositions. If we think of him therefore in oppositions, then we think of him finitely, anthropomorphically or ktisio-morphically. Whether we think of God as personhood or with Spinoza as *natura naturans*, we think of him in opposites. But it is according to Schleiermacher “*eine Täuschung*,” an illusion, a disappointment, a self-deception and a mere appearance to believe that in such determinations we have thought the absolute. For him God is a purely mystical unity raised above all differences in his infinite richness. God is the eternal presupposition for our thinking. We must presuppose him; but He cannot be the object of our thinking, our conceiving.⁴³

The idea that thinking concepts involves opposites clearly comes from Hegel. According to his view, God as a concept represents the development of the universal to the particular in the Father and the Son. This constitutes the determinate content of the divine in Christianity. Again, as before Martensen comes to the conclusion that he is in agreement with Hegel, in opposition to Schleiermacher:

For my own part, it, however, became clear that I here could not agree with him, but on that point I had to agree with Hegel and J. Böhme in saying that God *must* be thought in oppositions, and that inner oppositions belong to the essence of God. Without inner differences and oppositions, God could not be the living God revealing Himself for Himself; He could not be the God of the Trinity. I could not let go of the Trinitarian God. Schleiermacher maintained a one-sided monism (Sabellianism).⁴⁴

Here Martensen accuses Schleiermacher of being a follower of the 3rd century theologian, Sabellius, who denied the doctrine of the Trinity, by claiming that God is singular and monadic, and the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are simply aspects of the divine that the believer perceives. The Trinity is, of course, an ab-

⁴² Martensen, *Af mit Levnet. Meddelelser*, vol. 1, p. 69.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 69 f.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 70.

solutely key doctrine for Hegel, who takes it to mean that the conception of God develops dialectically, and this development is key for the very determination of the divine in Christianity. Martensen thus believes that Schleiermacher's abstract, transcendent conception of God is unchristian.

Martensen recalls a dramatic moment in his discussions on the street with Schleiermacher. He reports, "I now do not recall how it came up in the conversation, but suddenly [Schleiermacher] stood still for a moment and said with great energy: 'Theology must be kept separate from philosophy, and the church must be kept separate from the state; otherwise we will return to scholasticism.' This was a weighty unforgettable statement for me."⁴⁵ This claim clearly exercised Martensen for many years. Yet ultimately he returns to his Hegelian intuitions: "But however often I have pondered it to myself during the experiences of life, I nonetheless have not been able to agree with him here. Also here my sympathy had to lead me much more to Hegel."⁴⁶

While Kierkegaard, of course, was not present at these discussions and died long before Martensen published his account of them, there can be no doubt that he was highly interested in exactly this issue about the relation of philosophy to Christianity or knowledge to faith. It is certainly very possible that he discussed this issue with Martensen directly or with others, such as Sibbern. But it is most likely that he was familiar with Martensen's views from the latter's teaching at the University of Copenhagen.

Schleiermacher's visit must have served as one of the inspirations for the private tutorials on Schleiermacher's *The Christian Faith* that Kierkegaard took with the young instructor Martensen in Summer Semester 1834. In his autobiography, Martensen recalls this as follows:

[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 hair-splitting 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.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Ibid., vol. 1, p. 71.

⁴⁶ Ibid., vol. 1, p. 71.

⁴⁷ Martensen, *Af mit Levnet. Meddelelser*, vol. 1, p. 78. Cited from *Encounters with Kierkegaard: A Life as Seen by His Contemporaries*, trans. and ed. by Bruce H. Kirmmse, Princeton: Princeton University Press 1996, p. 196. Translation slightly modified.

Martensen indicates here that the choice of Schleiermacher as the theme of the tutorial was his own and not Kierkegaard's. This is understandable given the important role that Schleiermacher played in Martensen's thought and his personal encounter the previous year. Reading notes to Schleiermacher's *The Christian Faith* stemming apparently from this time survive among Kierkegaard's loose papers.⁴⁸ It is certainly conceivable that in this context Kierkegaard and Martensen discussed the key issue of the relation of philosophy to Christianity, which is the subject of Kierkegaard's aforementioned journal entry a year later.⁴⁹

Martensen also treats Schleiermacher in some detail in his dissertation *On the Autonomy of Human Self-Consciousness* from 1837. That work contains an extended section dedicated to Schleiermacher's "Theology of Feeling."⁵⁰ The relation of philosophy and theology is also an important motif: indeed, Martensen dedicates an entire chapter to it under the heading: "On the Inner Connection between Theology and Philosophy." Now only a few years after Schleiermacher's visit, Martensen can declare his view with great self-confidence: "The absolute truth or God is the object of philosophy; but theology has no other object, and religion has no other content than God's revelation to humanity: thus theology and philosophy have the same object, and have emerged from the same inner necessity."⁵¹ Martensen argues that this conception of the unity of philosophy and theology has a long tradition, dating back to the Middle Ages. Following Hegel, he thinks that the unfortunate split between the two is characteristic of modern thinking. Here it seems that Martensen assumes an unambiguous Hegelian approach to the issue in opposition to Schleiermacher.

But while the criticism of Schleiermacher is clear, he in fact also wants to criticize Hegel, but for other reasons. Hegel claims that religion can be understood conceptually and to this extent it overlaps with philosophy, but he acknowledges another element of religion, picture thinking (*Vorstellung*), which

48 SKS 27, 40–53, *Papir* 9–14.

49 SKS 17, 30, AA:13 / *KJN* 1, 25.

50 Hans Lassen Martensen, *De autonomia conscientiae sui humanae in theologiam dogmaticam nostri temporis introducta*, Copenhagen: I.D. Quist 1837 (ACKL 648), pp. 86–129. Danish translation: *Den menneskelige Selvbevidstheds Autonomie*, trans. by Lauritz Vilhelm Petersen, Copenhagen: C.A. Reitzel 1841 (ACKL 651), pp. 71–105. (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. by Curtis L. Thompson and David J. Kangas, Atlanta: Scholars Press 1997, pp. 73–144.)

51 Martensen, *De autonomia conscientiae sui humanae*, § 1, p. 2; *Den menneskelige Selvbevidstheds Autonomie*, p. 2; *The Autonomy of Human Self-Consciousness in Modern Dogmatic Theology*, p. 76.

is non-conceptual. So, for Hegel, philosophy is the highest form of human thought, behind which come religion and art, the three together constituting what he calls “absolute spirit.” But, for Martensen, Hegel has this the wrong way around. The notion of autonomous thinking is the central idea of Martensen’s dissertation, and he believes that Hegel’s idea that unaided human reason can attain the truth is mistaken and a sign of modern autonomic thinking. Instead, human beings can only attain the truth by means of faith. Thus, faith is a condition for philosophical thought. So, for Martensen, speculative theology is *higher* than philosophy and not the other way around, as Hegel would have it. He writes, “But all sciences are moments in the one general science, philosophy, whose culmination point is speculative theology.”⁵²

IV Kierkegaard’s Reading of Schleiermacher

Kierkegaard was familiar with the discussions of Schleiermacher’s thought that were taking place in Denmark. He owned the main works of the Danish authors who were treating different aspects of his theology and specifically the issue of the relation of philosophy to religion, such as Heiberg’s *On the Significance of Philosophy for the Present Age*,⁵³ Sibbern’s *Remarks and Investigations Primarily Concerning Hegel’s Philosophy*,⁵⁴ and Martensen’s *The Autonomy of Human Self-Consciousness in Modern Dogmatic Theology*.⁵⁵

He, of course, also had a number of books in his collection from German theologians who discussed the thought of Schleiermacher. Ferdinand Christian Baur’s *Die christliche Gnosis* and *Die christliche Lehre von der Versöhnung in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung von der ältesten Zeit bis auf die neueste*, for example, both contain detailed analyses of Schleiermacher’s work.⁵⁶ The philosopher Karl Ludwig Michelet includes a long chapter on Schleiermacher in his *Ge-*

⁵² Martensen, *De autonomia conscientiae sui humanae*, § 1, p. 5; *Den menneskelige Selvbevidstheds Autonomie*, p. 4; *The Autonomy of Human Self-Consciousness in Modern Dogmatic Theology*, p. 78.

⁵³ ACKL 568.

⁵⁴ ACKL 778.

⁵⁵ ACKL 648 and ACKL 651.

⁵⁶ Ferdinand Christian Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis: oder, die christliche Religions-philosophie in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung*, Tübingen: C.F. Osiander 1835, pp. 626–668 (ACKL 421). *Die christliche Lehre von der Versöhnung in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung von der ältesten Zeit bis auf die neueste*, Tübingen: Osiander 1838, pp. 614–648 (ACKL 423). See also Baur’s *Das Christliche des Platonismus oder Sokrates und Christus. Eine religionsphilosophische Untersuchung*, Tübingen: Ludwig Friedrich Fues 1837 (ACKL 422).

schichte der letzten Systeme der Philosophie in Deutschland von Kant bis Hegel.⁵⁷ The theologian Julius Müller makes Schleiermacher a regular discussion partner in his *Die christliche Lehre von der Sünde*.⁵⁸ Schleiermacher is frequently mentioned in the memoirs of Henrich Steffens, *Was ich erlebte*.⁵⁹ Schleiermacher's works were also often discussed in the pages of the *Zeitschrift für Philosophie und spekulative Theologie*, to which Kierkegaard subscribed.⁶⁰

In addition, he, of course, owned a number of Schleiermacher's primary texts. In Kierkegaard's library one finds, for example, two selections of posthumous sermons, one in German⁶¹ and one in Danish.⁶² He owned a third edition of *The Christian Faith* published in 1835–36, which, due to the date of publication, could not have been the text he used in Martensen's tutorials.⁶³ He also possessed a copy of the fifth printing of Schleiermacher's popular, *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*.⁶⁴ The auction catalogue further registers a copy of Schleiermacher's *Dialectics*, which was edited and published posthumously by Ludwig Jonas.⁶⁵ Not surprisingly, Kierkegaard also

57 Karl Ludwig Michelet, *Geschichte der letzten Systeme der Philosophie in Deutschland von Kant bis Hegel*, vols. 1–2, Berlin: Duncker und Humblot 1837–38, vol. 2, pp. 46–114 (ACKL 678–679).

58 Julius Müller, *Die christliche Lehre von der Sünde*, vols. 1–2, 3rd revised and enlarged ed., Breslau: Josef Max und Komp. 1849, vol. 1, pp. 55–65; pp. 477–494; vol. 2, pp. 1–5; pp. 152–155; pp. 245–251; pp. 432–435 (ACKL 689–690).

59 Henrich Steffens, *Was ich erlebte. Aus der Erinnerung niedergeschrieben*, vols. 1–10, Breslau: Josef Max und Comp. 1840–1844, vol. 1, p. 198; vol. 4, p. 91; p. 155; p. 254; p. 277; p. 310; vol. 5, p. 81; pp. 141–149; p. 152; p. 161; p. 164; p. 172; pp. 191–200; pp. 205–208; p. 212; pp. 216–224; p. 227; vol. 6, p. 3; p. 138; p. 140; p. 142; p. 146; pp. 150–152; p. 172; p. 175; p. 283; p. 313; vol. 7, p. 3, p. 13; p. 264; vol. 9, p. 35; vol. 10, p. 51; pp. 59–61; pp. 107–108 (ACKL 1834–1843).

60 *Zeitschrift für Philosophie und spekulative Theologie*, vols. 1–16, ed. by Immanuel Hermann Fichte and Christian Hermann Weiße, Bonn et al.: Eduard Weber et al. 1837–46 (ACKL 877–911).

61 *Predigten von Friedrich Schleiermacher*, vols. 1–4, new edition, Berlin: G. Reimer 1834–35 (ACKL 238–241).

62 *Dr. Friedrich Schleiermachers Prædikener om det christelige Huusliv*, trans. by Christian Winther, Copenhagen: P.G. Philipsen 1839 (ACKL 242).

63 Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher, *Der christliche Glaube nach den Grundsätzen der evangelischen Kirche im Zusammenhange dargestellt*, vols. 1–2, 3rd unchanged edition, Berlin: G. Reimer 1835–36 (1st edition, 1821–22; 2nd edition, 1830–31) (ACKL 258).

64 Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher, *Ueber die Religion. Reden an die Gebildeten unter ihren Verächtern*, 5th edition, Berlin: G. Reimer 1843 (1799) (ACKL 271).

65 *Dialektik. Aus Schleiermachers handschriftlichem Nachlasse*, ed. by Ludwig Jonas, Berlin: G. Reimer 1839 (ACKL 769).

owned Schleiermacher's Plato edition, which he used so extensively in *The Concept of Irony*.⁶⁶

It is not known with any certainty if the works that appear in the two appendices of the auction catalogue were in fact from Kierkegaard's own library,⁶⁷ but there do appear two titles from Schleiermacher in Appendix I. The first is a third edition of *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*.⁶⁸ The second is a joint work by Schleiermacher and others entitled, *Magazin von Fest-, Gelegenheits- und andern Predigten und kleineren Amtsreden*.⁶⁹ This periodical contains a number of speeches and sermons by Schleiermacher.

Most striking in its absence is Schleiermacher's *Confidential Letters Concerning Schlegel's Lucinde*,⁷⁰ which can be said with certainty to have been of interest to Kierkegaard given his treatment of it in his master's thesis. There is no doubt that he was familiar with this work since reading notes to it are found in the *Nachlass*.⁷¹ It is odd that he did not himself own a copy of it or at least that no such copy is registered in the auction catalogue. Despite the absence of this text, there can be no doubt that Kierkegaard was in possession of a wealth of information about Schleiermacher's thought and the critical discussions going on about it.

66 *Platons Werke*, Parts 1–3 in 6 vols., trans. by Friedrich Schleiermacher, Parts 1.1–2 and Part 2.1, 2nd revised edition, Berlin: Realschulbuchhandlung 1817–18, Parts 2.2–3, 2nd revised edition, Berlin: G. Reimer 1824–26, Part 3.1, Berlin: G. Reimer 1828 (ACKL 1158–1163).

67 See Niels Jørgen Cappelørn, "Kierkegaard som bogkøber og bogsamler," in *Tekstspejle. Om Søren Kierkegaard som bogtilrettelægger, boggiver og bogsamler*, by Niels Jørgen Cappelørn, Gert Posselt, Bente Rohde, Esbjerg: Rosendahls Forlag 2002, pp. 115 f.

68 Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher, *Ueber die Religion. Reden an die Gebildeten unter ihren Verächtern*, 3rd enlarged edition, Berlin: G. Reimer 1821 (1799) (ACKL Appendix I, 40).

69 *Magazin von Fest-, Gelegenheits-, und anderen Predigten und kleineren Amtsreden. Neue Folge*, vols. 1–6, ed. by Johann Friedrich Röhr, Friedrich Schleiermacher, and Johann Georg Jonathan Schuderoff, Magdeburg: Wilhelm Heinrichshofen 1823–29 (ACKL Appendix I, 77–82).

70 Schleiermacher [anonymous], *Vertraute Briefe über F. Schlegels Lucinde*, Lübeck and Berlin: Friedrich Bohn 1800.

71 SKS 19, 99, Not3:2 / KJN 3, 95 f. In his notes Kierkegaard refers to the second edition of this work: *Schleiermachers Vertraute Briefe über die Lucinde. Mit einer Vorrede von Karl Gutzkow*, Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe 1835.

V The Relation of Philosophy to Religion in the Journal AA

Given the importance of Schleiermacher's theology for theologians and philosophers in Golden Age Denmark, it would be remarkable if it were entirely overlooked by Kierkegaard. This is, however, more or less the impression one receives if one looks solely at the published works that Kierkegaard designated as his authorship. The true picture of Kierkegaard's relation to Schleiermacher's theology only emerges after an investigation of the *Nachlass*, which evidences an engaged study of Schleiermacher's theological position.

References to Schleiermacher begin in Kierkegaard's very first journal, i. e., AA. In this journal there are a handful of entries from the year 1835 (AA:13–18), which treat the issue of the relation of philosophy to Christianity.⁷² As noted, these are introduced with the thesis: "*Philosophy and Christianity can never be united.*"⁷³ Here we find the important early allusions to Schleiermacher's thought which were very possibly motivated by his tutorial with Martensen a year earlier.

In an outstanding article, Hermann Deuser has been shown that some of Kierkegaard's early interest in this topic stemmed from contemporary discussions in German theology, especially those of Schleiermacher.⁷⁴ However, as has been seen above, this discussion about the proper province of philosophy and theology was also a quite central one in Denmark at the time. Specifically, these entries in the *Journal AA* can be read as a reaction to the discussion that was taking place among Heiberg and his critics, and perhaps Kierkegaard's own discussions with Martensen in the context of their tutorial. Kierkegaard's thesis that "*Philosophy and Christianity can never be united*" is best understood as a rejection of the Hegelian claims that philosophy and Christianity are ultimately one in the sense that religion or Christianity constitutes a subordinate part of a single organic philosophical system. Thus, Schleiermacher plays an important positive role for Kierkegaard on this issue, but in part through the filter of the Danish reception of his thought.

⁷² SKS 17, 30–32, AA:13 / *KJN* 1, 25 f.; SKS 17, 34, AA:17 / *KJN* 1, 29; SKS 17, 34–36, AA:18 / *KJN* 1, 29–31.

⁷³ SKS 17, 30, AA:13 / *KJN* 1, 25.

⁷⁴ Hermann Deuser, " 'Philosophie und Christentum lassen sich doch niemals vereinen'—Kierkegaards theologische Ambivalenzen im *Journal AA/BB* (1835–37)," *Kierkegaard Studies Yearbook*, 2003, pp. 1–19.

Kierkegaard attempts to explain the impossibility of the unity of philosophy and Christianity by demonstrating that they are different in kind. He explains,

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.⁷⁵

Here he follows precisely Sibbern's line of reasoning as outlined above. A philosophy of art cannot be the same as the experience of art any more than a philosophy of emotions can be the same as an immediate experience of emotion. So also a philosophy of Christianity cannot be the same thing as the lived experience of a Christian life. Sibbern argues for this as follows:

It is probably not superfluous to remark that here we are talking only about the foundation of a Christian *philosophy*...and not about the foundation of the Christian *faith* itself or even Christian *living* itself. The point 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.⁷⁶

Although this text from Sibbern appeared in 1838, while Kierkegaard's journal entry was written in 1835, the similarities are striking. It is quite possible that Kierkegaard was familiar with Sibbern's views on the topic from the latter's lectures at the University of Copenhagen. Kierkegaard even uses Sibbern's idiosyncratic language in connection with this point: "Christianity demands, before being examined, a living oneself-into it."⁷⁷

Kierkegaard offers another argument for why philosophy cannot be Christianity but must operate in a different sphere. He follows Sibbern's understanding of philosophy as an account giving of the world. Philosophy looks at different spheres and tries to discern the patterns of reason in them. But this undertaking

75 SKS 17, 30, AA:13 / KJN 1, 25.

76 Sibbern, "Perseus, *Journal for den speculative Idee*. Udgiven af Johan Ludvig Heiberg," Article I, p. 345; Sibbern, *Bemærkninger og Undersøgelser fornemmelig betræffende Hegels Philosophie*, p. 63. (Sibbern's *Remarks and Investigations Primarily Concerning Hegel's Philosophy*, p. 116.)

77 SKS 17, 31, AA:13 / KJN 1, 26.

would collapse if there were certain phenomena or spheres that did not lend themselves to this kind of rational analysis, where perhaps there was no *logos* to be found. Kierkegaard argues for this as follows again with a language reminiscent of Sibbern:

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.⁷⁸

If God's relation to the individual or the world is something mysterious and ineffable that transcends human understanding, then it cannot be made the object of philosophical investigation, which assumes that some sense can be made of it. Philosophy cannot accept that there might be something that it cannot capture by rational explanation. Kierkegaard's suggestion is that clearly certain elements of Christianity fall under rubrics such as mystery, infidelity and transcendence. For this reason, it defies philosophical explanation. This demonstrates that Christianity and philosophy cannot be united: they are fundamentally different in kind. He explains, "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."⁷⁹ Here is clear that Kierkegaard refers not just to philosophy as such but rather to any form of secular knowing which attempts to give an account of things and understand the world on its own power without divine assistance or revelation. Such an approach might work in the sphere of the sciences but is completely misguided with respect to religion.

Kierkegaard believes that any attempt to combine philosophy with Christianity simply leads to a distortion of the latter. He gives as an example the theological trend of rationalism, which was widespread in his day. This is, of course, the view that key doctrines of Christianity can be understood by science and reason. For example, attempts are thus made to explain the miraculous stories of the Bible in terms of natural phenomena. Kierkegaard complains that this distorts Christianity by making it "reasonable," and this form of Christianity is in the end "an accommodation."⁸⁰ This makes sense when one thinks of his conception of the key doctrines of Christianity as contradictions and absurdities to human reason. This conception leads to a subjective, inward relation to Christianity.

⁷⁸ SKS 17, 30, AA:13 / KJN 1, 25.

⁷⁹ SKS 17, 31, AA:13 / KJN 1, 26.

⁸⁰ SKS 17, 34, AA:17 / KJN 1, 29.

But any attempt to approach it with the secular tools of rationality and science distorts this beyond recognition.

In the end the question of the relation of philosophy to Christianity is only a single topic in the Kierkegaard-Schleiermacher relation. But it is a very significant one that is potentially related to many others in Kierkegaard's authorship. It is closely linked, for example, to Kierkegaard's many attempts to understand Christianity as something subjective. One thinks immediately of his accounts of how Christianity appears as a contradiction or an absurdity to objective thinking. These are, of course, major themes for Kierkegaard throughout his life. When the issue is seen from this perspective, then the importance of Schleiermacher for Kierkegaard on this topic grows considerably. Schleiermacher helped the young Kierkegaard to begin to think about key ideas that he would develop in his mature works. Many connections can thus be traced back to the important entries in the *Journal AA* discussed above.

As was the case with Goethe and Hegel, Kierkegaard's relation to Schleiermacher was mediated by a local Danish reception that was key to shaping his understanding and opinions. The ongoing Danish discussions captured and held his interest for a long time. These discussions were so important that the development of his own philosophical and religious thinking is inseparable from them.