

## KIERKEGAARD ON FAITH AND HISTORY

LOUIS P. POJMAN

*University of Texas-Dallas*

For Kierkegaard history constitutes both a necessary aspect and an embarrassing distraction to Christian faith. On the one hand, he recognizes the necessity of the incarnation as the basis for Christian faith: God entered history as a human being. On the other hand, he regards any preoccupation with historical inquiry as both useless and positively harmful for faith. That is, while Christianity needs a minimum of historical data, any inquiry into the credibility of that data will necessarily fail to establish anything one way or another and may even result in turning the believer aside from obedient discipleship. In this paper I will discuss these two theses. In section I I will analyze the claim that a historical point of departure is necessary for faith. In section II I will discuss Kierkegaard's claim that historical investigation is unnecessary and even harmful for faith. In section III I will offer a brief evaluation of this area of Kierkegaard's thought. On these issues I believe there is no substantive difference between Kierkegaard's own beliefs and those set forth by Climacus, but nothing hangs on this point. If readers disagree, let them take this paper as a critique of Climacus's ideas since nearly all the material comes from the *Philosophical Fragments* and the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*.

### I. The Necessity of History for Eternal Happiness

Johannes Climacus (John the Climber) begins the *Philosophical Fragments* with a series of questions concerning the relationship between faith and history.

Is an historical point of departure possible for an eternal consciousness; how can such a point of departure have any other than merely historical interest; is it possible to base an eternal happiness on historical knowledge? (from the title page of the *Fragments*)

In other words, what is the relationship between faith (the eternal consciousness) and history, between eternal truth and contingent historical information?

Climacus sets up a thought experiment, juxtaposing two opposite ways of

answering this question. One way represents the Socratic-Platonic theory of knowledge. The other is merely called 'B' but is a version of orthodox Christianity. Schematically, these two opposing epistemologies can be classified in the following manner:

*The Socratic Way*

1. Truth is within man and man is open to that Truth.
2. The Teacher is incidental to the process of discovering the Truth.
3. The Moment of discovery of the Truth is accidental. The opportunity is always available. You must merely use your innate ability to recover it.

*The Christian Way*

- The Truth is not within man, but rather man is in Error, closed to the Truth.
- The Teacher is necessary to the process of discovering the Truth. He must bring it from without and create the condition for receiving it within man.
- The Moment is decisive for discovering the Truth. The Eternal must break into time at a definite point (the Fullness of Time) and the believer must receive the condition in the Moment of contemporaneity with the Teacher.

The essential Truth is already within man in the Socratic view of reality, so that history is only of accidental importance. It is only an occasion for making explicit what is already implicit. Through introspection one recovers knowledge. In the Christian view, however, history is of decisive importance, for God becomes man in history and reveals the Truth to the disciple in a Moment of history. The questions posed on the first page are answered, for the most part, negatively for Socrates and positively for the Christian.

1. Is an historical point of departure possible for an eternal consciousness?

Socrates: Only accidentally as an occasion for recalling the truth.

Christian: Yes, in the Moment of personal revelation the Truth that God entered history is received.

2. How can such a point of departure have any other than a merely historical interest?

Socrates: It cannot have any other interest.

Christian: By being accepted through an act of will (You have the option of receiving or rejecting the revelation).

3. Is it possible to base an eternal happiness on historical knowledge?

Socrates: No, eternal happiness resides precisely outside of history. Time and Eternity are absolutely separate.

Christian: Yes, receiving the Truth of the incarnation is the only way to attain eternal happiness. In the incarnation Eternity breaks into time and in conversion

(the Moment) Eternity joins the individual in time with the Eternal.

According to Climacus man is so devoid of Truth that only God's power is sufficient to bring the Truth to man. However, the Teacher must be man in order to put man in possession of the Truth. The Truth is something so absurd that natural man could never self-consciously believe it: that God became man. That proposition is sufficient for faith to base its eternal happiness on. Not much else is necessary. It need not be Jesus of Nazareth that one believes in. All that is needed to get faith off the ground is for some group of people to assert that they have believed that one of their contemporaries is God and to leave a testimony for others to believe. Climacus gives an example:

If the contemporary generation had left nothing behind them but these words: "We have believed that in such and such a year the God appeared among us in the humble figure of a servant, that he lived and taught in our community, and finally died," it would be more than enough. The contemporary generation would have done all that was necessary; for this little advertisement, this *nota bene* on a page of universal history, would be sufficient to afford an occasion for a successor, and the most voluminous account can in all eternity do nothing more. (*Fragments*, p. 130)

This simple statement that God has become man and has been seen to serve humbly would be *more* than enough to get faith going. Never has Occam's razor been more ruthlessly applied to the *depositum fidei*!

The first thing to notice about the *nota bene* is what is omitted. What does the name 'God' stand for here? Do the witnesses mean the same thing by 'God' as we do? Just what would an adequate definition be? Would it have to include omnibenevolence or could the deity just be mostly good? Would this God have to be a creator God? Would it (he or she?) have to be all powerful or would something like Plato's demiurge suffice? Presumably, what is important here is the idea of 'paradoxicality': that the deity, who is decidedly not man, becomes man without ceasing to be the deity. What Climacus seems to want is a high paradox (or maximal paradox) sufficient to cause the passion of faith to rise to its maximum. As Climacus says in the *Postscript*: "Subjectivity culminates in passion. Christianity is the paradox, paradox and passion are a mutual fit, and the paradox is altogether suited to one whose situation is to be in the extremity of existence."<sup>1</sup> Leaving aside the criticisms that this seems bad psychology (it is not necessary to have a paradox to raise the passions to their height, not even the passion of faith) and that the incarnation of God as man is not the only way to build a maximal paradox (God could have become an ape or a mouse), Climacus' *nota bene* seems inadequate for anything even approximating Christian faith.

But perhaps Climacus could defend himself by asking us to state exactly what is necessary for a faith to be salvific. Perhaps he could set forth criteria for separating nonsense paradoxes from justified paradoxes and show us that only the Christian message adequately fulfils those criteria. Suppose that to be the case. Then the

question arises, what role does historical investigation play in deciding whether So and So is really the God-man and whether the record left by the contemporaries is authentic and reliable. We turn to the general question of the relation of faith and history in order to answer this question.

## II. Historical Investigation Is Useless and Harmful for Faith

For Kierkegaard faith is a passionate matter and only the lovers and haters have any chance of comprehending what it is all about. Anyone who understands what Christianity is about cannot but be offended by it. It is a judgement of our ordinary understanding. The point is to get over the offense into a state of "happy passion," acceptance and trust.

It is with this radical and passional interpretation of Christianity before us that we can best consider Climacus' attack on historical inquiry. This attack receives its sharpest treatment in the opening pages of the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* and forms part of a general polemic against all forms of objective investigation into the credentials of Christianity.

Kierkegaard's thesis is: a Christian should have nothing to do with historical research into the materials which involve the articles of Christian faith. There are two basic reasons for this: 1) the results of such objective inquiry do not matter for faith in the least; 2) the process of inquiry involves a temptation, an infidelity to the Gospel. We turn now to an examination of the arguments Climacus uses to support these two claims.

- 1) The Uselessness of Investigation Thesis. Climacus' reasons for regarding historical research as useless turn on the thesis that historical evidence and faith are incommensurable. The argument goes like this:
  - (1) All historical inquiry gives at best only approximate results.
  - (2) Approximate results are inadequate for religious faith (for faith demands certainty).
  - (3) Therefore, all historical inquiry is inadequate for religious faith.

When Christianity is viewed from the standpoint of its historical documentation, it becomes necessary to secure an entirely trustworthy account of what the Christian doctrine is. If the inquirer were infinitely interested in behalf of his relationship to the doctrine he would at once despair; for nothing is more readily evident than that the greatest attainable certainty with respect to anything historical is merely an *approximation*. And an approximation, when viewed as a basis for an eternal happiness, is wholly inadequate, since the incommensurability makes a result impossible. (*Postscript*, p. 25)

The first premise of the argument seems unarguable. Historical research never provides absolute knowledge or absolute certainty. There is always some, however slight, chance of error. The chance of error may seem ridiculously small, but it is

nevertheless present.

The second premise, that approximation is wholly inadequate for faith, is more debatable. For Kierkegaard religious faith is absolute in that it is the kind of inward certainty which excludes all doubt. "The conclusion of belief is not so much a conclusion as a resolution, and it is for this reason that belief (*Tro*) excludes all doubt."<sup>2</sup> Approximate knowledge, however likely, cannot give the absolute conviction that is necessary for faith.

Take any historical example, for instance that Nixon was the President of the USA during the Watergate scandal. One might object to Climacus immediately that that proposition is virtually certain. The chance of error of this statement is so small as to be beyond reasonable doubt.<sup>3</sup> However, it would not be too small a matter if our eternal happiness depended upon it, if we had the sort of infinite passionate interest Kierkegaard requires in the truth about Nixon and Watergate. If our interest is infinite, then any chance of error is enough to cause infinite concern. "In relation to an eternal happiness, and an infinite passionate interest in its behalf (in which latter alone the former can exist), an iota is of importance, of infinite importance..."<sup>4</sup>

It is not more historical evidence which will remove our doubt about Nixon being President during the Watergate affair. It is the resolution of faith which entails the decision to disregard all possibility of error. Kierkegaard seems to be right at this point.

There is something incommensurable between the absoluteness of the kind of faith Kierkegaard sees as adequate and the relativity of historical knowledge. Consider the case of the believer who is at the mercy of historical evidence (supposing it were possible). The believer bases his confidence in Christianity on certain sources which today seem more or less established. So he decides to believe the Gospel. But tomorrow the evidence takes on a new dimension, and he is forced to withdraw his confidence in that evidence and change his commitment, suspending his faith. Can one really subject faith and commitment to the changing shifts of evidence in this way? Climacus believes that faith safe-guards the believer from the uncertainties of scholarship, the ingenuity of the clever, and the luck of archeologists. The metaphysical assertions of Christianity must be beyond the threat of the empirical (and the speculative too for that matter).

Kierkegaard illustrates this thesis of the incommensurability between faith and scholarly inquiry by considering the doctrine that the Scriptures are inspired by God. He asks, "What can scholarship show with regard to this assertion?" The objective inquiry must make sure of the Scriptures historically and critically before it can conclude that they are or are not inspired. The scholar must consider the canonicity of the individual books, their authenticity, their integrity, and the trustworthiness of the individual authors before he can even begin to think about the possibility of their being divinely inspired. This is an enormous undertaking, and just when one feels one is beginning to see more daylight, a little dialectical doubt may set the whole project in doubt.<sup>5</sup>

But even if scholars could come to a consensus on all of these matters, inspira-

tion could not be inferred from the results. For the proposition that the Bible is inspired by God is not something that is arrived at by adding up the accumulated evidence. It is solely a matter of faith, a subjective matter. Anyone who believes the Bible to be inspired “must consistently consider every critical deliberation, whether for or against, as a misdirection.”<sup>6</sup>

On the other hand, anyone who begins the investigation without faith “cannot possibly intend to have inspiration emerge as a result.” Who then is really interested in this sort of inquiry? No one. If a person has faith, he has the inner certainty about inspiration. If a person does not have faith, he will never be led to it by scholarship and the approximations of scholarship. Therefore such scholarship is useless. Hence anyone who engages in such an enterprise is involved in a practical contradiction. He purports to be doing something which makes a difference to faith which cannot possibly have anything whatsoever to do with faith.

In order to see this point about the total incommensurability between faith and historical inquiry, Climacus invites us to consider the following thought experiment. First, imagine what it would be like if the investigation were maximally favorable to the theologians’ deepest hopes. After this, imagine what it would be like if the results of the inquiry were as negative as any enemy of Christianity could possibly desire. First we imagine the positive situation: the canonicity of the sixty-six books of the Bible has been established, the authors have been shown to be entirely trustworthy, the accounts they report authentic. All the apparent contradictions in the Bible have been satisfactorily resolved. What follows from this? Has anyone who previously did not have faith been brought a single step closer to its acquisition? “No,” says Climacus, not a single step, for “faith does not result simply from a scientific inquiry; it does not come directly at all. On the contrary, in this objective inquiry one tends to lose that infinite personal interestedness in passion which is the condition of faith...”<sup>7</sup>

Now imagine the opposite situation, that the opponents have succeeded in proving their case against the Scriptures. The sources are demonstrably unreliable and contradictory, the writers are not trustworthy, the accounts given shown to be false. Have the opponents abolished Christianity? No. Has the believer been harmed? No, says Climacus. Has the opponent acquired the right to be relieved of the responsibility of becoming a believer? The answer is again no.

Because these books are not written by these authors, are not authentic, are not in an integral condition, are not inspired (though this cannot be disproved, since it is an object of faith), it does not follow that Christ has not existed. In so far, the believer is equally free to assume it. (CUP, 31)

Even if it were established that the sources were unreliable, it could still be the case that what they reported happened to be true. Even if the Bible is not inspired by God, what the Bible affirms could nevertheless be the case. The faithful believer cannot conceive of the possibility of seeing things differently than from the Christian point of view. Faith is not corrigible, is not based on evidence,

but is a resolution of the will to accept what it believes to be a gift of God, a miracle. The argument is admittedly circular, faith is its own authentication. There is no way to attack it from without.

Let us pause at this point to consider Climacus's contention. While we may admit that he has put his finger on a certain phenomenological feature of faith, that it goes beyond the evidence and seems certain to the believer, we would question whether faith is absolute in the way he claims. It is one thing to admit that faith goes beyond the evidence. It is a different thing to claim that it is completely impervious to rational inquiry.

For example, Climacus says that even if it were proved that the Scriptures were unreliable documents, the proposition that Christ existed (viz., that God became man) is not falsified. It is, of course, notoriously difficult to falsify existential propositions. How would one go about proving that God never became man (assuming we could annul the logical difficulties)? If not Jesus of Nazareth, why not someone else? "In so far, the believer is equally free to assume it." But one might as well assume that God became a rattlesnake and build a system around that 'truth'.

Perhaps no single bit of evidence or the sum of all the evidence can enable us to infer a metaphysical proposition (e.g., that God raised Jesus from the dead, the Scriptures are divinely inspired, Jesus is perfect God and perfect man), but the opposite situation may not be ruled out. Evidence can disconfirm metaphysical propositions. The assertion that Jesus was raised by God from the dead is falsified by the proof that Jesus never lived or never rose from the dead. The assertion that Jesus was the Son of God is falsified just in case he never existed or just in case he went around doing evil. Even Climacus' *nota bene* could be seriously infirmed. According to his account all that is necessary for faith is the confession by some people that they believe one of their contemporaries to be God. This presumably is necessary for faith. But if it is, then faith can founder: for we could imagine that the note was proved a forgery. It was not written by a group of people but by a single man who believed he was God and wanted to gain support for his belief and so attributed it to others. Or it could have been a product of an accident. An historian was writing about one of his contemporaries, a man named Gade, but wrote illegibly the sentence, "We have believed that in such and such a year Gade came among us, served us and taught in our community." When someone else read over what he had written, the reader misread 'God' for 'Gade' and so mistranscribed the sentence as "We have believed that in such and such a year God came among us, served us and taught us." Later when the original writer showed the transcriber the original document again and explained what had happened, everyone had a hearty laugh. Would Climacus still want to maintain that no one's faith would be affected or should be affected by such a discovery?

2) The second reason Climacus gives for rejecting historical inquiry into the articles of faith is that such an inquiry constitutes a temptation, a distraction from discipleship. It can be harmful to the believer's deepest duty to be faithful no matter what.

Here is the crux of the matter, and I come back to the case of the learned theology. For whose sake is it that the proof is sought? Faith does not need it; aye, it must even *regard proof as its enemy*. But when faith begins to feel embarrassed and ashamed, like a young woman for whom her love is no longer sufficient, but who secretly feels ashamed of her lover and must therefore have it established that there is something remarkable about him — when faith thus begins to lose its passion, when faith begins to cease to be faith, then a proof becomes necessary so as to command respect from the side of unbelief. (CUP, p. 31, *italics mine*)

If we substitute ‘evidence’ for ‘proof’, we still retain the meaning of Climacus’ critique. The argument for this position presupposes that one cannot both be evaluating evidence (or constructing proofs) and being entirely (absolutely) committed to Christianity at the same time. One can only do one thing at a time. Either you are infinitely interested in Christianity in which case inquiry is meaningless or you are not infinitely interested in Christianity in which case you are not properly a Christian.

The inquiring, speculating, and knowing subject thus raises a question of truth. But he does not raise the question of subjective truth, the truth of appropriation and assimilation. The inquiring subject is indeed interested; but he is not infinitely and personally interested in his own eternal happiness.... The inquiring subject must be in one or the other of two situations. *Either* he is in faith assured of his own relationship to it; in which case he cannot be infinitely interested in all the rest, *since faith itself is the infinite interest in Christianity, and since every other interest may readily come to constitute a temptation*. Or the inquirer is, on the other hand, not in an attitude of faith, but objectively in an attitude of contemplation, and hence not infinitely interested in the determination of the question. (CUP, p. 23, *italics mine*)

The argument seems to be the following: All inquiry involves interest. There are two classes of interest: infinite and finite. Being infinitely interested in something involves placing an absolute value upon it. Being finitely interested in something involves placing a relative or non-absolute value upon it. One cannot place both a relative and an absolute value on something at one and the same time and in the same respect. Hence, one cannot both be absolutely and relatively interested in anything at the same time and in the same respect. All objective inquiry is finite or relative inquiry. All relative and finite inquiry is relative to some higher interest which is infinite. But the interest that Christianity demands is infinite interest, the absolute and total involvement of the subject in one’s eternal happiness via the Paradox. Hence, if one is infinitely interested in Christianity, one cannot be finitely interested in it. Therefore, one cannot be inquiring whether Christianity is true and at the same time be totally committed to Christianity. If one is totally committed, he has ruled out any further inquiry into its truth value. Its truth is assumed as basic for every other inference and action. If this is so, then any suggestion that one become interested in objective inquiry as to the truth of Christianity must be

regarded as a temptation, something to be rejected automatically.

I think this is an insightful and valid argument. If one believes that the proposition that God has become man in order to save man is the foundation of all other knowledge or at least that it is part of one's foundational set of beliefs, then the sort of attitude Kierkegaard advises seems appropriate. It is no use arguing that such an attitude disregards human fallibility, because the argument supposes that it is God who has revealed this truth to the believer. It is no use arguing that this is a circular argument, for the believer will admit as much and point out that all metaphysical argument either ends in an infinite regress or ends in something intuitively self-evident. It is no use pointing out that this sort of logic could lead to fanaticism, for the believer will acknowledge that possibility and insist that this is exactly the weakness of all reasoning. It is really, *pace* Hume, a slave of the passions. Other belief systems must be preached against, not argued against. Plantinga has advocated that the theist place the proposition that God exists in the foundation of his noetic structure, thus escaping most of the arguments against theism as well as the need to find arguments in support of theism.<sup>8</sup> In a similar way, I think, Kierkegaard is advocating putting the idea of the incarnation in the foundations of one's noetic structure, thus escaping the arguments for and against Christianity as well as the need to find arguments. In this sense Kierkegaard thinks philosophy of religion of little use besides showing that there are reasons why there are no reasons.

### III. General Evaluation

I think Kierkegaard has put his finger on an important feature of Christian belief as it has traditionally been manifest: the sense of its absoluteness. If Christian faith is as absolutely important as he says it is and in the way he says it is, then much of what he says about the unimportance and even sheer danger of apologetics seems plausible, if not convincing. This attitude could also be applied to the proofs for God's existence, *mutatis mutandis*. There are problems, however, which need to be considered. The first is the whole question of the relation between faith and reason. The second is one in terms of the ability of a human being to live up to Kierkegaard's volitional standard. The third is the problem of subjectivity and objectivity in general as set forth by Kierkegaard.

1) What sort of religion does Climacus' bare minimum leave us with? Is not the essence that results a mere abstraction? Does not salvation come down to the ability to perform an enormous mental exercise of believing that at some time and place God became man? But what does making that mental leap over reason have to do with eternal happiness? Does believing paradoxes gain some special virtue?

Kierkegaard's thought experiment seems to suggest its own deficiency. It may be juxtaposed not only with Socratic theory but also with historic Christianity of which it claims to be a genuine representation. Christianity purports to be about not just the incarnation but about a specific point in history where a particular person is said to be the Savior of the world. There are background conditions (the

history of Israel) and a set of supporting evidences (Jesus' teachings, miracles, resurrection, as well as the changed lives of the disciples) for the doctrine of the incarnation. There is a "cloud of witnesses" which claims to offer evidence. While all this may not solve the problem of the place of apologetics in religious faith, it seems to suggest that the pure abstraction found in Climacus' formulation of faith differs fundamentally from the religion he thought he was defending. Historical investigation seems of vital importance to the spirit of New Testament Christianity.

2) It might also be argued that Kierkegaard has a confused idea of faith as unduly volitional. "Belief is a resolution of the will." Somehow we can, according to Kierkegaard, choose to believe propositions, and can by grace decide whether to believe the apparent contradiction of the incarnation. I think an argument can be given to show that beliefs are events, not actions, and that as such we are not directly responsible for our beliefs or doubts. If this is so, it seems unreasonable to demand that absolute commitment means that the believer always overcomes doubt by a leap of believing. Beliefs and doubts are not things we have direct control over. It is true that if we are successful in avoiding certain evidence, we are more likely not to have doubts; but given the fact that we cannot easily shelter ourselves from untoward evidence, there is no way of assuring against doubt. If absolute commitment means the refusal to doubt, then Kierkegaard has laid an impossible burden on the believer.

3) In general I think Kierkegaard lacks sufficient distinctions with regard to possible attitudes towards truth. There are too many sweeping 'either-ors'; either objectivity or subjectivity. "Abstract thought is disinterested, but for an existing individual, existence is the highest interest."<sup>9</sup> Questions such as "Is there eternal life?", "Does God exist?", "How shall I live?", according to him, can only be answered subjectively. On the opposite side of subjectivity he sets forth the foes of this virtue: objectivity, disinterestedness, neutrality, and abstract thought. These are inappropriate attitudes towards existential and religious questions. I think there is a fundamental confusion here. Disinterestedness or impartiality is not necessarily opposed to subjectivity (qua passionate interestedness). What is the opposite of interestedness is the spirit of neutrality. Both impartiality and neutrality imply conflict situations (c.g. war, competitive sport, argument), but 'to be neutral' signifies not taking sides, doing nothing to influence the outcome, remaining passive in the struggle, refusing to make a decision towards one side or the other; whereas impartiality *involves* one in the conflict in that it calls for judgement in favor of the party which is in the right based on objective criteria. To the extent that one party is right or wrong measured by the appropriate standards neutrality and impartiality are actually incompatible concepts. To be neutral is to detach oneself from the fray; to be impartial (rational) means to commit oneself to a position — though not partially, i.e. unfairly or arbitrarily, but in accordance with an objective standard. The model of the neutral person is an atheist who is indifferent about football, watching a Notre Dame versus Southern Methodist football game. The model of the impartial person is the referee in the game, who, although knowing that his wife has just bet their life-savings on the underdog, Southern

Methodist, of course, still manages to call what any reasonable spectator would judge to be a fair game. He does not let his wants or self-interest enter into the judgements he makes. The model of the partial person is the coach in the game who always sees the referee's decisions against his team as entirely unfair and the decisions against the other team as entirely justified.

The atheist spectators are neutral and impartial. The coaches are interested and partial. The referee is interested and impartial. On Kierkegaard's analysis the referee's position is either impossible or classified with the spectator's as undesirable and entirely inappropriate for faith. He does not seem to notice that one can be passionate and impartial at the same time and that to be rational does not commit one to give up passionate concern. The rational believer, who seeks good grounds for his or her faith, is no less likely to be deeply committed to the object of faith than the partial and passionate believer. It is true that the rational or impartial believer seems to have a prior commitment to truth or justified belief rather than the object of faith, for he or she will modify beliefs in the light of new evidence; however, the commitment to the existential aspects of life seems equally serious. Both are passionately concerned to will the good and live within their lights. Only the impartial person believes that reason can and ought to play an important role in guiding us in these matters. Regarding religious belief the impartial believer seeks to have his beliefs based on the best evidence available and where that evidence is not available, he or she modifies the belief or the strength of the belief though (note well!) not necessarily the strength of the interest in the question itself.

To be sure this attitude towards religious belief is radically different from both Kierkegaard and a great part of the Christian tradition. It recognizes a place for rational judgement which Kierkegaard and many religious thinkers do not recognize. For them an adequate religious faith does not recognize the legitimacy of doubt. Rather it treats doubt as a sort of disloyalty in what should be a condition of absolute belief as well as absolute trust. It is an act of disobedience. As far as I can see, no good reason has been given as to why this sort of doxastic absolutism should be embraced. If there is a God and if he is the God of truth, then one would expect truth seekers and God seekers to meet.

In conclusion, it seems that Kierkegaard fails to take sufficiently into account the possibility that one can be both objective (impartial) and subjective (passionately interested) at the same time. Herein, I believe, lies his greatest weakness, a weakness that mars an otherwise insightful understanding of religious existence.

#### NOTES

1. *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, henceforth CUP, p. 206.
2. *Philosophical Fragments*, p. 104.
3. I owe this point to Robert Adam's paper, "Kierkegaard's Arguments Against Objective Reasoning" in the *Monist*, Spring 1977.
4. CUP, p. 28.

5. CUP, p. 26.
6. Ibid.
7. CUP, p. 30.
8. Alvin Plantinga, "Is Belief in God Rational", in *Rationality and Religious Belief*, ed. C. F. Delaney.
9. CUP, p. 278. My teacher, Dr. Gregor Malantschuk, used to insist that in many places Kierkegaard recognizes this weakness and affirmed that there is no objectivity without some subjectivity and vice versa, but the affirmation is usually offset by Kierkegaard's actual treatment. Cf. *Kierkegaard's Thought*, pp. 140–142.

## THE SOUTHERN JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY

Volume XX

Spring, 1982

Number 1

### ARTICLES

- Projective Inferences and Practical Reasoning* ..... D. S. Clarke, Jr.  
*The Transcendental Argument Against Determinism:  
 A Challenge Yet Unmet* ..... Darrel D. Colson  
*A Modified Flew Attack on the Free Will Defense* ..... Frank B. Dilley  
*The Principle of Singular Difference* ..... R. Lance Factor  
*Artifactuality Broadly and Narrowly Speaking* ..... James J. Fletcher  
*The Survival of My Counterpart* ..... Peter A. French  
*On the Finite and Infinite in Spinoza* ..... Frank Lucash  
*Does Hegel Have a 'Dialectical Method'?* ..... William Maker  
*Sartre's Nihilations* ..... Peter K. McNerney  
*Morality and the Grammar of Non-Action* ..... A. T. Nuyen  
*Restraint of Desire in the Gorgias* ..... Michael A. Principe  
*Ferré and the Problem of Temporal Location* ..... Villard Alan White

*The Southern Journal of Philosophy* is published quarterly by the Department of Philosophy, Memphis State University. The journal is intended as a forum for the expression of philosophical ideas, and the editors welcome papers written from all philosophical perspectives. The annual subscription rate is \$5.00 to students, \$10.00 to individuals and \$14.00 to libraries and other institutions. All correspondence should be sent to *The Southern Journal of Philosophy, Memphis State University, Memphis, Tennessee 38152*. The editors subscribe to the Guidelines for Handling Manuscripts as adopted by the Association of Editors of Philosophy Journals. Manuscripts to be considered for publication should be submitted to *The Editor* in duplicate together with a brief *vita* of the sort which regularly accompanies articles printed in the journal. Return postage must accompany all manuscripts.