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SØREN KIERKEGAARD'S
CONCEPT OF SANCTIFICATION

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PREFACE

The importance of Søren Kierkegaard is well recognized. His psychological insight and philosophic genius have been explored by many writers of international repute. Perhaps he is least known in the area of religion, yet he felt the supreme task of his life to be the exploration of Christian truth. He called himself a Christian writer from the first, and deplored the possibility of the decents distorting the major emphasis of his calling.

It is assumed that any Christian writer of note will have a doctrine of holiness. Kierkegaard, with his dialectical approach to Christianity, is no exception. It is, therefore, the purpose of this thesis to explore and examine Kierkegaard's concept of sanctification, in order that his life and work may be understood more adequately.

As a basis for the study of Kierkegaard's sanctification, examples of the history of the doctrine are presented in an introductory chapter. The examples presented are not intended to be exhaustive, but merely to indicate the main trends of thought regarding the doctrine. The Idea of Perfection, by H. Newton Flew, is the source of much of the material. Perfectionism, by Benjamin Warfield, and The Pure in Heart, by W. E. Sangster, are also invaluable sources. Wherever possible

the original sources have been checked, but no attempt has been made to study all the works of the historical figures considered.

Since the life of Kierkegaard is interwoven into his writings, some knowledge of Kierkegaard's biography is essential to an understanding of his thought. Chapter two, therefore, presents a brief sketch of the life of Kierkegaard. Following this, Kierkegaard's approach to Christianity is developed before concentrating on his concept of sanctification.

The chapter titles and sub-headings which deal with Kierkegaard's sanctification are culled from the Systematics of Hodge, Berkhof, Strong, as well as others. An attempt is made to deal with the most important facets of the doctrine and to consider Kierkegaard's interpretation of these points. Finally, a chapter on some distortions of the doctrine which Kierkegaard opposed is presented. The basis for the study is the English translations of Kierkegaard's works, with emphasis upon the specially designated religious writings.

Where necessary, permission has been obtained to quote material used in this thesis.

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CHAPTER I

PROLEGOMENOM

I. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to acquaint the reader with the concept of sanctification. The doctrine of sanctification has been somewhat neglected in the history of the Church, at least as far as any formal presentation is concerned. Yet sanctification is a requisite part of Christianity. R. Newton Flew writes:

> The doctrine of Christian perfection - understood not as an assertion that a final attainment of the goal of the Christian life is possible in this world, but as a declaration that a supernatural destiny, a relative attainment of the goal which does not exclude growth, is the will of God for us in this world and is attainable - lies not merely upon the by-paths of Christian theology, but upon the high road. To this declaration some of the greatest theologians have set their seal.[1]

A complicating factor to the understanding of sanctification is the use of multiple terms to describe it. C. W. Beckwith, in a brief article of perfectionism, for example, uses the terms "entire holiness," "sanctification," and "perfection" interchangeably.[2] Orton Wiley has attempted to distinguish between various terms commonly used in connection with the doc-

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1. R. Newton Flew, The Idea of Perfection in Christian Theology, p. 397.
2. New Schaff-Herzog Religious Encyclopedia, vol. 8, p. 457; cf. John L. Peters, Christian Perfection and American Methodism, pp. 63-64, for Wesley's multiple usage.

trine. The distinction between sanctification and holiness is slight. Holiness, according to Wiley, refers to man's religious state; sanctification to the act whereby he is made holy. Christian perfection, in the critical sense of the term, represents "the more positive aspect of one experience, known theologically . . . as entire sanctification. . . ."[1] Such fine lines of division appear specious. Each word may, depending upon the particular view of sanctification under consideration, take upon itself the meaning of one of the others. Precise distinctions, therefore, in nomenclature, become meaningless.

At times figures of speech have been used by particular individuals or coteries of holiness seekers to convey more clearly the truth of the doctrine. They may borrow directly from the language of the New Testament; in other cases analogies of the experience have been used to suggest, in epithet form, some kind of description of it.[2] In any case, the emphasis is upon a condition of holiness in the life of the believer.

II. Definition of Sanctification

Because of its elusive nature, sanctification is difficult to define. The root of sanctification is , which, as J. V. Bartlet points out, connotes state.[3] Foundational to this state is the holiness of God. The holiness of God, however, must somehow become an attribute of man. To become holy

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1. Orton Wiley, Christian Theology, Vol. 2, p. 496.
2. Ibid., p. 449.
3. J. V. Bartlet, "Sanctification," A Dictionary of the Bible, ed. by James Hastings, Vol. 4, p. 391.

involves the process of sanctification. Sanctify means to make *sanctus* or holy. Sanctification, therefore, involves both state and process, and an approach to sanctification must consider both facets. In different historical periods there have been varying emphases; sometimes status has predominated, sometimes process. Yet the goal of sanctification has always been the same, union of God with man.

The witness of Scripture seems to make it clear that holiness properly belongs to God.[1] God, in the Old Testament, is holy. His Name is holy, and may not be profaned.[2] If someone or something is to become holy it can only become so by virtue of "nearness" to God. J. K. S. Reid comments:

> This direct dependence upon God for holiness and for the power to confer holiness is of the greatest importance in determining the meaning of the terms. First, since God is the author of holiness, there is a personal conception of holiness implicit at the source, a germ capable of development into full moral significance. It is not by cult, ritual, observance or ceremonial that holiness is imparted; on the contrary, all holiness derives from the personal God who is himself holy.[3]

In view of this, holiness has an objective character. It is not a condition which man works up; it is rather sent down, conferred because of a relationship with God. From this point of view, holiness is less of an activity than a status.

In the New Testament, according to Reid, the personal

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1. J. K. S. Reid, "Sanctity," *A Theological Word Book of the Bible*, ed. by Alan Richardson, pp. 216-217.
2. *Loc. cit.*; cf. Ps. 99:3, 9; 111:9.
3. Reid, *op. cit.*, pp. 216-217.

aspect and implications of holiness receive almost exclusive treatment.[1] This does not, however, omit the objective character of sanctification. Christians are adjured to "present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."[2] The demand is for a personal offering of the Christian to the will and disposal of God. Sanctification, in the New Testament, seems not to be something that remains to be achieved. The word is used in two senses. In one sense sanctification is complete; in another it still has to be accomplished, or, if begun, to be completed.[3] It is, therefore, a position in which the believer remains secure; yet it carries with it a goal, to which the believer must continually apply himself.

In the New Testament the grounds of sanctification, in its positional or status sense, are clearly placed with Jesus Christ and His work.[4] "In this sense," Reid suggests, "Christ's work guarantees, achieves and even applies to us a sanctification which is already to become ours."[5] On the other hand, if sanctification is thought of as a goal, Christians are exhorted to an activity which will bring about its accomplishment.

The foregoing material yields certain facts pertinent to an understanding of the term. The proper subject of sanctifi-

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1. Ibid., p. 217.
2. Romans 12:1.
3. Cf. Eph. 5:26f.; I Cor. 6:11; II Cor. 7:1; I Tim. 2:21.
4. Eph. 5:25f.; I Cor. 1:2; 6:11.
5. Reid, op. cit., p. 218.

cation is not man but God. It is God that sanctifies; in this aspect, the Old Testament emphasis is evident. Turning to the New Testament, sanctification is effected through Christ, for it is from Him that sanctification comes. Sanctification is, therefore, something that is conferred upon the believer, though it has qualities of process. Thus, although it may be considered less of an activity than a status, it can properly be described as a practice or exercise.[1] If the idea of progress is attached to sanctification it must be conceived of as progress in sanctification, not progress toward sanctification.

> As one restored from death to life might be expected to be capable of progress from sickness into health within the life to which he has returned, so with sanctification. The decisive transition has been made: the Christian is sanctified; but he has still to live this status out. The final term in progress of this kind is identical with love; and here God's work begun finds completion in a "bond of perfectness" that ties the Christian equally with his neighbour and his God.[2]

Reid summarizes:

> It appears, then, that sanctification stands nearer to Justification than is often supposed. If, as must be the case, it be rescued from immersion in bare moralism, it will occupy a position nearer to the initiation of the Christian life, and <u>ipso facto</u> to JUSTIFICATION (q.v.). . . . The definition of terms . . . is eased if Justification be given a declaratory, imputed or forensic . . . character. The way is then open to regarding sanctification as the real status thereby conferred, which in its turn awaits exemplification, practice or exercise, just as from the newly accoladed nobleman one expects noble deeds. It is in such practice that the status is maintained. There is a certain inevitable looseness of definition in the case of a conception in which God in Jesus

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1. <u>Loc. cit.</u>
2. <u>Loc. cit.</u>

> Christ must be held to do all, and yet men must nonetheless be exhorted to "improve" (as the Westminster Confession of Faith says of our Baptism) that in them which he has already accomplished.[1]

There are, however, varying views as to the application of sanctification. Orton Wiley defines four general views of the doctrine. (1) Holiness (sanctification) is concomitant with regeneration and completed at that time. This view owes its origin to Zinzendorf. (2) Holiness is a growth process extending from the time of regeneration until the death of the body. (3) Man is made holy (sanctified) only at death. (4) Holiness begins with regeneration, but is completed as an instantaneous work of the Holy Spirit subsequent to regeneration. The latter view is particularly associated with the name of Wesley.[2]

Other theologians differentiate rather strongly between sanctification and justification.[3] At times there is emphasis upon the sacraments as an aid to sanctification.[4] In the final analysis, however, the core ideas of the holiness of God and the exercise of man emerge as the dominating precepts of the doctrine.

III. Historical Examples of the Doctrine of Sanctification

Various aspects of the doctrine of sanctification have

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1. Ibid., pp. 218-219; cf. Bartlet, op. cit., p. 394; Hastings Rashdall, The Idea of Atonement in Christian Theology, p. 113. For concise statement of justification see Marvin Halverson, ed., A Handbook of Christian Theology, p. 130.
2. Wiley, op. cit., p. 441.
3. Cf. Charles Hodge, Systematic Theology, Vol. 3, p. 213; Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology, Vol. 2, pp. 179-180.
4. C. W. Moss, The Christian Faith: an Introduction to Dogmatic Theology, p. 199.

been emphasized at different periods of the history of the Church. The seed idea has generally been the holiness of God united to man, in which man exerts some degree of exercise. At different times various facets have been stressed; sometimes the theoretical (status) side has received attention, at other times practical (process) outworkings have all but excluded a consideration of the positional state of the believer.

A. Pre-Reformation Sanctification

Pre-Reformation sanctification included emphases on both the holiness of God and man's efforts in regard to holiness. The holiness of God, the basis of Christian sanctity, had a prominent place in patristic writings. At times God, in His otherness, seemed beyond the reach of man. Justin Martyr, an early church apologist, for example, identified the goal of the Christian life with the original state of mankind[1] and perfection was relegated to the afterlife. He wrote:

> We have also been instructed that God, in the beginning, created in His goodness everything out of shapeless matter for the sake of men. And if men by their actions prove themselves worthy of His plan they shall, we are told, be found worthy to make their abode with Him and to reign with Him, free from all corruption and pain.[2]

God was holy, but far away.

Irenaus, another apologist, however, was able to blend his doctrine of the Kingdom of God with an earthly perfection of the sort that included a strong conviction of present communion

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1. Cf. Justin Martyr, Writings of Saint Justin Martyr, Apol. 1:8, pp. 40-41.
2. Ibid., Apol. 1:10, p. 42.

of the soul with God.[1] Irenaeus' concept of present communion of the soul with God was dependent upon "gazing on the face of Christ."[2] In his emphasis upon Christ in sanctification, Irenaeus recognized an important aspect of the doctrine, and one which tended to be neglected by the apologists.

The Christian Platonists, in general, taught that Christianity demanded absence of sin. Sinlessness seemed, however, to be effected primarily by severe moral discipline. Two of the foremost representatives of Christian Platonism of their time were Clement of Alexandria and Origen, neither of whom was awarded canonization by the Church. Clement, asserting his preoccupation with the difficulties of sanctification, wrote that the ideal was to be as perfect as the Father wished one to be.[3] The importance of the God-relationship, for Clement, imparted to prayer a highly regarded position. Clement delineated final stages in the soul's attainment of sanctification, which though treated with a certain delicacy by him, may properly be termed the beatific vision of God. There was a calm uninterrupted communion of spirit with God, that, despite its lofty calling, was not a static condition, but ever mounted to "higher and yet higher regions."[4] Clement's language was guarded as to the actual degree of sinlessness attained by the sanctified

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1. Irenaeus, "Against Heresies," iv.38.1,2; cf. iv.38.3 (in The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 1, p. 521.)
2. Ibid., v.35.1, p. 565.
3. Clement of Alexandria, "The Stromata," vii.14, (in Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 2, pp. 547-549.)
4. Ibid., iv.10,13, pp. 436-437, 538-540, 546-547.

believer. In the Stromateis repentance appeared to be regarded as the complete abandonment of sin.

Origen, who lived from 185 to 254 A.D., extended the semi-aesthetic views of Clement. In his thought the perfect Christian was one, who, at his spiritual zenith, turned his back on the visible world as well as on his own emotions. The faint but inexorable tread of monasticism had begun to make itself heard. The seeker of sanctification was admonished to "know himself."[1] In knowing himself it was expected that he would quickly come to the realization that the body was the fetter of the soul. According to Origen, the body allied itself with the kingdom of sin and the devil. Hence the Christian was enmeshed in a ceaseless struggle which could only be won with the weapons of asceticism. One of the most appealing sides of Origen's spirituality was his vision of the crucified Saviour. "The Cross in all its wonder, its bounty, its power, is always before the eyes of Origen."[2]

The Alexandrine doctrine of sanctification seems incomplete, but despite certain defects, its contribution has been invaluable in the quest for holiness.

> They [the Alexandrines] endeavoured to show that Christianity is not a doctrine but a life, not a law but a spirit. The Christian must be holy yet free, obedient yet intelligent, able to judge and act for himself, a true son of God, needing no earthly director because guided by his Father's eye.

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1. Gregory Thaumaturgus, Oration and Panegyric Addressed to Origen, argument xi, (in Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 6, pp. 32-33).
2. Charles Bigg, The Christian Platonists of Alexandria, p. 210.

> This they achieved. They showed that, though Habit is good, Knowledge and Love are better. They taught how Freedom is to be harmonized with Reverence and Order; the spontaneity of individualism with unity through the trained and sanctified intelligence. They struck the golden mean between Anarchy and Despotism, a lesson which after times discarded, which even at this day is not sufficiently apprehended.[1]

It was but a short step from the rigors of Origen's asceticism to the formal Christianity of the cloister. The actual beginnings of monasticism are obscure. According to St. Athanasius, St. Anthony, called the Father of Monasticism,[2] heard the word of Jesus to the rich Young Ruler, "If thou wouldst be perfect," almost by chance during a church service. The implications of the message were clear and unavoidable to him. Forthwith he sold all, and by this price obtained his freedom "from the chains of the world." Other champions of early monasticism followed, of whom Pachomius, St. Basil, and St. Benedict are notable examples. Each had his own particular emphasis, but all had one thing in common, an earnest and unrelenting search for holiness, and an abandonment of the world. Self-renunciation had begun to be a full-time calling.

Monasticism had certain characteristics. One of the most important motives was communion with God. In this connection "it can be fairly said that the monks made a great positive contribution to Christianity by allotting to prayer the primacy among Christian activities."[3] However, pre-Reformation

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1. Ibid., p. 283.
2. Flew, op. cit., p. 158.
3. Kenneth E. Kirk, The Vision of God, (abridged edition), p. 92.

monasticism tended to establish a "double standard" of Christian living. Kirk writes of this:

> So grew up the extraordinary perplexing phenomenon of a double moral standard in Catholicism, - a lower and a higher grade of Christian achievement - the distinction between counsels and precepts, the religious, and secular vocations, the contemplative and active lives.[1]

The principle of renunciation brought with it certain extravagances, of which the pillar-saints are an example. Such excesses, however, were not considered as being in the true spirit of renunciation and were condemned. Kirk suggests:

> The fourth, fifth and sixth centuries of our era witnessed a remarkable series of efforts to bring the monastic life into close kinship with the secular. It is difficult to exaggerate the courage and the conviction of a Church which just set out to use the weapons of discipline, not to repress open wickedness, but to prevent those who were universally regarded as most saintly from becoming righteous overmuch.[2]

St. Benedict listed two kinds of asceticism: (1) the purely internal, self-discipline of the soul, a discipline quite apart from anything external, and, (2) the great renunciations - poverty, obedience, and chastity. At its best monasticism was conceived of as a means to an end. Sometimes, however, the means and the end became confused.[3]

Another example of pre-Reformation holiness is to be found in Augustine, the colossus of the fourth and fifth centuries. Augustine's definition of the final blessedness, the Summum Bonum, was God. "Thou hast made us for thyself and restless

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1. Ibid., p. 103.
2. Kirk, op. cit., p. 112.
3. Flew, op. cit., p. 171.

is our heart until it comes to rest in thee,"[1] was his famous dictum. The God of Augustine was an active force, living and working in the world He made.[2] The activity of God was particularly demonstrated in the illumination of the human mind and conscience, but miracles were also used to draw the minds of men to God.[3] The essential element in the Summum Bonum was love, which removed the barrier to "participation in the Word." Augustine thus united the possession of God with the supreme virtue of love. "This love inspired by the Holy Spirit leads to the Son, that is to the wisdom of God by which the Father Himself is known. . . . It is love that asks, love that seeks, love that knocks, love that reveals, love, too that gives continuance in that which is revealed."[4]

The beatific vision of God, the fruitio Dei, was in the central stream of Augustine's thought, since it was through this experience that the Summum Bonum was realized. Two sides of his thought were evident; intellectual preparation for the vision of God, and the transcendence of the soul, where the faculties of the mind are silenced. The soul had first of all to be purified that the true light of God might be perceived. Love was the final goal of this purification, and Christ was

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1. Augustine, Confessions I.1, p. 31.
2. Ibid., p. 86; Augustine, The City of God, XII.25, pp. 517-518.
3. Augustine, On the Trinity, III.6 (in Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, series I, Vol. III, p. 60).
4. Augustine, Of the Morals of the Catholic Church, 17.31 (in Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, series 1, Vol. III, p. 50).

the first Way to God and love. The Christian was sealed by the Holy Spirit and thus enabled to rest. Paralleling the mystical process of soul purification was the exercise of the highest powers of the human mind. Only when the soul reached a point of severe intellectual tension did true contemplation, the final stage in the quest for God, become a reality. Augustine used the terms "Recollection" and "Inversion" to indicate the two processes.[1]

The supreme act of contemplation, according to Augustine, was not, however, ecstasy or trance; the thorough intellectual process which preceded the experience differs completely from a trance-prelude. It was, nevertheless, Neoplatonic. Augustine's tendency to forget the humanity of Christ made his doctrine of sanctification somewhat otherworldly.

Two examples of medieval mystics are Dionysius, the Areopagite, and St. Bernard of Clairvaux. In the system of Dionysius, God was utterly transcendent, hence literally beyond all qualities. Dionysius taught that man "must be transported wholly out of himself." Human perfection was to soar upwards and "plunge into the darkness which is above the intellect."[2] St. Bernard of Clairvaux re-introduced the Person of Jesus into devotion. The contemplation of the passion of the Lord gave rest. Bernard's conception of the Christian life was found in the doctrine of the imitation of Christ, particularly of His

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1. Flew, op. cit., pp. 210-212.
2. Ibid., p. 219.

humility.[1] The rarer levels of Christian attainment were associated, however, with a denial of the humanity of Christ, and this led to Augustinian contemplation.[2]

An important figure in pre-Reformation sanctity was St. Thomas Aquinas, whose writings contain the theme of sanctification. St. Thomas saw, in the very nature of man, the embryonic promise of the attainment of perfection. Kirk comments:

> Aquinas emphasised the fact that man is intermediate between non-intelligent matter on the one hand, and the angels, who are pure incorporeal intelligence, on the other. "His perfection therefore, must by the root principle of analogy, lie in an operation akin to, yet wholly distinct from, the characteristic operations either of brutes or angels. He must not content himself with the life of a brute, but neither must he attempt to be an angel.[3]

A necessary corollary to the realization of perfection was revelation. Adopting the Aristotelian idea of the "unmoved source of motion," Aquinas constructed the Christian idea of God. In the final analysis God, who is form without matter, pure actuality, absolute perfection, is nonetheless concerned with the smallest details of life. As to man, he is directed by God to attain to his end, and his end is his "good."[4] Aquinas substantiated his concept of perfection by the use of two tenets: (1) the Christian idea that God is love, from which the ultimate perfection of mankind is deduced, and (2) his

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1. Cf. Etienne Gilson, The Mystical Theology of St. Bernard, pp. 79-84.
2. Cf. ibid., pp. 208-211.
3. Kirk, op. cit., pp. 156-157.
4. Thomas Aquinas, Of God and His Creatures, an annotated trans. ...of the Summa Contra Gentiles by Joseph Rickaby, pp. 185-6.

description of the age of innocence from which Adam fell. Likening the state of ultimate perfection to that first condition before the fall of Adam, when he had perfect natural knowledge and lived in a state of innocence, Aquinas envisioned the accoutrements of sanctification as (1) the restoration of harmony to human faculties and desires, and (2) perfect intellection in the world to come. It appears that the most characteristic feature of his theology is the action of the intellect. To him, the only basis of fellowship between man and God was the mind. Complete perfection, therefore, could only be attained in the future life, since it was not till death had occurred that the mind was made complete.

Aquinas' exposition of the Christian ideal included four themes. The first was that the contemplative life is superior to the active life. St. Thomas did not disparage the active life, but realizing the preeminance given prayer by the ancient divines, as well as the transientness of the present world, he enjoined the true seeker of perfection not to neglect the contemplative life.[1] Certain activities were extolled, however, especially those of teaching and preaching, which Aquinas placed even above contemplation in order of merit.[2] As the ideal life was lived on earth there was oscillation between contemplation and activity. Through this, the fruit of

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1. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, II.2,q.181. & q.182, pp. 1939-1946.
2. Ibid., q.188, art. 6, pp. 1998-1999.

contemplation, the knowledge of God, was communicated to others. The second theme was that Christian perfection consisted in love. Love was the bond of perfection,[1] for it was able to bind together in perfect unity the warring virtues of will and intellect. This love was the gift of God, operable due to the infusion of the Holy Spirit.[2] The third theme was that God must be loved for His own sake, the motivation being perfect love. Imperfect love was selfish love. By its exercise one really hoped to secure some personal benefit, and this reduced it to the category of self-love.[3] "Charity attains God Himself that it may abide in Him, and not that something may accrue to us from Him."[4] The effect of such love was divine indwelling. "God may be loved immediately, and other things may be loved through God."[5] God was to be loved wholly, according to the powers of finite creatures, though no creature can love God infinitely, because all power of creatures is finite.[6] The final theme was that full perfection is found only in the life beyond the grave. Aquinas affirmed the reality of the saint's body in heaven, stating that the union of the body with the soul adds a certain perfection to the soul.[7] By the addition of this thought to his system St. Thomas avoided the ethereal, non-

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1. Colossians 3:14.
2. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, II.2q.23, art. 1 & q.24, art. 2, pp. 1269-1276.
3. Ibid., q.26, art. 4, p. 1297; art. 3, pp. 1306-1307.
4. Ibid., q.23, art. 6, p. 1273.
5. Ibid., q.27, art. 4, p. 1308.
6. Ibid., q.27, art. 5, p. 1308.
7. Ibid., III, q.93, art. 1, pp. 2969-2970.

substantive, purely contemplative concept of the ideal life.

The pre-Reformation period emphasized the holiness of God in the matter of sanctification. At times this emphasis created a barrier between God and man which was aggravated by a tendency to neglect the Person of Christ. There were, however, exceptions to this. In relation to the activity of man, pre-Reformation sanctity placed more emphasis on the process of holiness rather than the status of holiness. The descriptive term "holiness improving," therefore, may be used to designate this period. Sanctification was seen to be a process of improvement, a process that was assisted by asceticism.

B. Reformation Sanctification

The Reformation was a revolt against "the established order, moral, intellectual, and social as well as religious."[1] As such it had a decisive effect upon the doctrine of sanctification. The monastic tradition became, in particular, a target of Luther's vituperation. Upon first sight it would appear that the doctrine of sanctification is all but neglected in this period. Luther, however, indicated a confrontation of the problem though his treatment of holiness was scattered throughout his works. "Perfectionis status est, Esses animosa fide contemptorem mortis, vitae, gloriae et totius munde, et feruente charitate omnium servum."[2] (The state of perfection is to have

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1. C.P.S. Clarke, Short History of the Christian Church, p. 267.
2. Martin Luther, "De Votis Monasticis," Luther's Werke, Vol. 2, pp. 201-202.

a lively faith, to be a despiser of death, life, glory and all the world, and to live in glowing love as the servant of all men.) Luther pointed out that sanctification was not a matter of works, but was in the heart, dependent upon a man believing more and loving more. Thus his outward form or occupation had nothing whatever to do with perfection, whether man or woman, prince or peasant, monk or layman. The Augsburg Confession considered perfection under the scholarly hand of Melanchthon, who, appealing to Luther, quoted:

> Christian perfection is this, to fear God sincerely and again to conceive great faith, and to trust that for Christ's sake God is pacified toward us; to ask and with certainty to look for help from God in all our affairs, according to our calling; and meantime outwardly to do good works diligently and to attend to our calling. In these things doth consist true perfection and the true worship of God; it doth not consist in celibacy, or mendicancy, or in vile apparel.[1]

Melanchthon pursued an original train of thought on perfection, stating that justification enabled a man to fulfil the first Table of the Decalogue, which lies beyond the powers of natural man.[2] Luther's exposition agreed with that of Melanchthon,[3] but the latter in his Apologia went farther than Luther. Melanchthon saw that the law requires perfection, and that in Christ there is power for this.

Ritschl has delineated two primary features of the Lutheran doctrine of sanctification. First, the immoral side of sin was

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1. Article 27, (in Schaff, Creeds of Christendom, Vol. 3, p. 57).
2. Flew, op. cit., p. 246.
3. Albrecht Ritschl, The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation, p. 170.

subordinated to the irreligious.[1] Second, the perfect life of a Christian consisted in a freedom and kingship which could be enjoyed over all outward circumstances.[2] The first point, which Ritschl called epoch-making,[3] is a curious presage of Kierkegaard's categories of the ethical and the religious which the Danish thinker made foundational to his system of thought. Although Luther's doctrine of sanctification was not complete, it included certain positive elements fundamental to the doctrine. One of these was his re-discovery of the humanity of Jesus. Luther found God in the human figure of Christ:

> When I thus imagine Christ, then do I picture Him truly and properly, I grasp and have the true Christ as He pictures Himself; and then I let go utterly all thoughts and speculations concerning the Divine Majesty and glory, and hang and cling to the humanity of Christ; and then there is no fear there, but only friendliness and joy, and I learn thus through Him to know the Father. Thus arises such a light and knowledge within me that I know certainly what God is, and what is in His mind.[4]

Combined with his understanding of the humanity of Christ, Luther had a certain sympathy for the mystics. Hence his doctrine was reinforced by moral purification. According to Luther, faith made one holy. The promises of God fulfilled the law's demands, so that, in the final analysis, all became of God. Instead of immediate deliverance from sin, Luther described a doctrine of progress, a progress which was primarily progress in

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1. Ibid., p. 171.
2. Ibid., pp. 646-647.
3. Ibid., p. 171.
4. Wilhelm Hermann, Communion of the Christian with God, p. 143.

faith.[1] One of the most decisive elements in the Reformation conception of sanctity was that the full Christian life could be lived in any of the ordinary callings. The sacredness of everyday affairs now became emphasized.

> What you do in your house is worth as much as if you did it up in heaven for our Lord God. For what we do in our calling here on earth in accordance with His work and command He counts as if it were done in heaven for Him.[2]

This was a revolutionary idea, with new implications for holiness. Luther tended, particularly towards his latter days, to see virtue, not in the actual work that men did, but in the obedience with which it was done. In reviewing the Lutheran doctrine of holiness Harnack suggests: "Though having the resolute wish to go back to religion and to it alone, [Lutheranism] neglected far too much the moral problem, the 'Be ye holy, for I am holy.'"[3]

The Reformation opened the door to individuality in the pursuit of holiness. An example of this is the Quietistic movement which arose during the seventeenth century. The Quietistic movement, as its name indicates, centered upon the prospect of inner silence. In Quietism the activities of sense and intellect were left far behind, and the silence of love was exalted as the highest ideal. There were three degrees of silence, silence of words, of desires, and of thought. These

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1. Cf. Hermann, op. cit., chap. 3.
2. Luther, Werke, Erlangen ed., V, p. 102, quoted by Flew, op. cit., p. 251.
3. Adolf Harnack, History of Dogma, Vol. 7, p. 267.

became progressively more perfect till the "perfect mystical silence" was reached, wherein God spoke to the soul and communicated Himself to it. The final goal of perfection was one unbroken act of communion with God. The initial act of faith had, therefore, to be a continuous act of contemplation.[1] The peculiar characteristic of Quietism was the belief that perfection diminished the number of the soul's acts. Fenelon, for example, maintained that a state of continuous contemplation was impossible in this life, and he expounded a theory of a passive state of prayer.

Mysticism[2] may roughly be divided into two branches: one branch sees the expulsion of nature a prerequisite to the work of grace; the other realizes that grace purifies and stimulates and completes nature. Quietism belongs to the first branch; other mystics followed a more active form of sanctification.

A further example of the growth of small groups seeking to understand sanctification during the Reformation period is the Pietistic movement of Holland and Germany. The predominating characteristic of Pietism was its quest for holiness.[3] It arose as a reaction to the sterility of a religion which did not emphasize high attainment in the present life. Leaders for the movement were P. J. Spener, A. H. Franke, and Zinzendorf.

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1. Flew, op. cit., p. 262.
2. For a brief historical sketch of mysticism from the beginning of the Christian era to the death of Blake, see Evelyn Underhill, Mysticism, pp. 453ff.
3. I. A. Dorner, History of Protestant Theology, Vol. 2, pp. 210, 214-219.

Spener's chief contribution to the cause of sanctity was his organization of seekers into collegia pietatis. Devotion received attention rather than doctrine. Good works were considered evidence of a true knowledge of Christianity, of more value than theological skill. Although holding similar views to those catechized in the Augsburg Confession, Spener went farther, insisting that it was possible for a Christian to fulfil all the divine commands. Sincere faith made good works; when these were performed in self-denial they were perfect.[1] A later Pietist, A. H. Franke, who wrote The Perfection of a Christian in 1690, taught that there were three stages to the sanctified life. These corresponded to the natural growth stages, childhood, youth, and manhood. The decisive ability to distinguish between good and evil was the mark of maturity, rather than sinlessness.

Zinzendorf appeared to be relatively free of Quietism, though among the Moravians the Quietistic error of abstaining from religious observances is to be found in the strange doctrine of "stillness." It was this doctrine that caused the break between the Moravians and the early Methodists. Zinzendorf advocated a doctrine of union with God through the exercise of the will. In this emphasis the heart emptied itself to receive God, and was filled with love to the Creator, so that nothing was loved so much as God and the fulfilment of His will.

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1. Flew, op. cit., p. 276.

Perfection was thus imputed, not inherent. The Christian was considered perfect in Christ, though never in himself.

Quakerism, the English counterpart of the Quietistic and Pietistic movements on the continent, is another example of Reformation sanctity. It was partly the logical outcome of the Lutheran conception of faith, but, on the other hand, George Fox, the founder of the movement, went farther than the Reformers, particularly in the area of sanctification. The distinctive characteristic of Quakerism was that the holiness taught was not imputed, but real.[1] Fox soon perceived that his doctrine of the "Inner Light" meant emancipation from sin. It is significant that his early journal contains no confession of personal sin, though he evidenced deep concern over temptations that confronted him. Fox's freedom from introspective concern about evil enabled him to reject the Puritan preoccupation with sin. For him the discovery of sin was inseparable from the release Christ gave from it, and the release received the point of stress. Fox regarded his experience with Christ as bringing about a change in the substance of his soul, whereby he was renewed to a pre-Fall condition, and kept, by the power of Christ, in a state of perfection. In Quakerism, however, the possibility of falling into sin was recognized, a fact which saved the movement from outright fanaticism. Quakerism taught that the divine seed in every Christian would lead to the sanctified life, and

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1. Cf. Friedrich von Hugel, Essays and Addresses, Vol. 2, p. 73.

that without the imposition of any external authority. The chief distinction of the Quaker doctrine was that its center was the cross of Christ. Fox so expressed this in his journal:

> Now that ye know that power of God and are come to it - which is the Cross of Christ, that crucifies you to the state that Adam and Eve were in, in the Fall, and so to the world, by this power of God ye come to see the state they were in before they fell, which power of God is the Cross, in which stands the everlasting glory; which brings up into the righteousness, holiness, and image of God, and crucifies to the unrighteousness, unholiness, and image of Satan.[1]

An outstanding example of Reformation sanctity is William Law, described as "one of the most eminent English writers on practical divinity in the eighteenth century."[2] Law's special task was to recall the Anglican Church to the pursuit of the ideal, and his most influential weapon was A Serious Call, written in 1726, when he was still a young man. Law's main emphasis was upon the necessity of practical Christian living, and to substantiate this he used the ethical teachings of Jesus and the principle of self-denial.[3] Echoing a note sounded by the Quakers, Law set Christian sanctity on the common ways of life. Devotion was a "State and Temper of the Heart," at which point no compromise could be tolerated. Law was impressed with the fact that absolute devotion was for every Christian, not a vocation of the few. Perfection became a reality when divine

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1. George Fox, Journal, Vol. 1, p. 395.
2. New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, Vol. 6, p. 431.
3. Cf. William Law, Treatise on Christian Perfection, in his Works, Vol. 3.

love was rekindled in the soul of man through his act of disinterestedly embracing Christ as his suffering Lord and pattern. Divine love was perfect peace and joy; it was freedom from all disquiet, made everything rejoice, restored a lost perfection. Law wrote:

> Suppose, . . . I had given you a form of prayer in these words, O Lamb of God that takest away the sins of the world, help me to a living faith in Thee, would not this be a prayer of faith in Christ? Just so when I tell you to give yourself up to patience and meekness, I am turning you directly to the Lamb of God. The Lamb of God means the perfection of Patience, Meekness, Humility and Resignation to God. Consequently every sincere wish after these virtues, and every inclination of your heart, that presses after these virtues, and longs to be governed by them, is an immediate direct application to Christ, is worshipping and falling down before Him, is giving up yourself unto Him, and the very perfection of faith in Him. For Christ is nowhere but in these virtues, and where they are, there is He in His own kingdom.[1]

"In these words," writes Flew, "Law has achieved a statement of the ideal which unifies the moral and spiritual elements of Christian perfection and which is possible at any moment for ordinary man and woman."[2]

The upheaval caused by the Reformation left its mark upon sanctification. The holiness of God received the focus of attention but there was greater emphasis upon the Person of Christ in connection with this. In regards to the activity of man in sanctification, the freedom gained by "salvation through faith

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1. William Law, Works, Vol. 8, pp. 124-125, quoted by Flew, op. cit., p. 310.
2. Flew, loc. cit.

alone" gave rise to a bewildering array of interpretations of the holy life. Generally the "status" side of holiness was emphasized, resulting in an "imputed" doctrine of sanctification. However, there were those who turned their attention to the "process" of sanctification, such as the Quietists, the Pietists and the Quakers, in addition to others. Vagaries in the practice of holiness had not been unknown prior to the Reformation, but the Reformation brought them into the open, assisted by the fact that holiness was now the prerogative of the masses. The universal possibility of holiness is one of the most important contributions of the Reformation to the doctrine of sanctification. Holiness was, at last, for one and for all.

C. Methodism and Later Developments

The doctrines of sanctification espoused by Pietism, Quietism, and Quakerism came to fruition in Methodism. In an unusually short space of time, Methodism, described by George Cell as a "necessary synthesis of the Protestant ethic of grace with the Catholic ethic of holiness,"[1] had become a practical force in the religious world. Wesley felt that the secret of that power lay in the preaching of "Perfect Love to those who already know something of the rule of Christ in their own lives."[2] There were two influences which helped shape the form of Methodism. The first was the mystical tradition of the

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1. George Cell, The Rediscovery of John Wesley, p. 361.
2. Flew, op. cit., p. 313.

Church. Wesley was a student of many of the early writers and saints of Christendom. The second influence was the experiences of the early Methodists.[1] The doctrine of the Wesleys was not fashioned out of the religious experience of John Wesley alone. Wesley's journals indicate a careful interest in the lives and experiences of those who had entered into the new life.

Wesley's doctrine of entire sanctification, or perfect love, was part of a systematizing of religious life paralleling the various degrees of perfection of mystical doctrine. For Wesley the experience of conversion preceded the experience of the "Great Salvation." The experience of "Great Salvation" must be understood in a continuing, existential milieu, not as an isolated, lofty moment in the soul's past. It connoted a consciousness of God which was to be tested and enjoyed in the experience of daily life. Methodism attached a large measure of significance to revelation, and recognized three stages in its process. First, there was the perfect revelation of God, the historical figure of Jesus in His life and death. Second, there was the continuation of Jesus' work consummated in the revelation of the Holy Spirit. Third, there was the individual revelation, as it was appropriated by the human recipient of God's love, the Christian. The last revelation was the practical verification of the first two, the appeal to personal

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1. Cf. John L. Peters, op. cit., p. 24.

experience. At no point, however, was the revelation independent of the life and death of Jesus Christ. It was as if a new and wonderful intimacy with Someone were suddenly inaugurated, but all the while the mind was vitally concerned and active. The experience was followed, according to records, by visible, ethical results. Granting the experience of conversion, Wesley pressed on toward the goal of sanctification, which was, for him, distinct from conversion. "We do not know," he writes, "a single instance, in any place, of a person's receiving, in one and the same moment, remission of sins, the abiding witness of the Spirit, and a new, clean heart."[1] Sanctification, as Wesley expounded it, was love,[2] and love included the keeping of all the commandments. The perfected Christian was, therefore, free from sin, though not from ignorance or mistake. Wesley did not like the term sinless perfection, yet he spoke of those who were perfect in love as being without sin.[3] It appears that Wesley made a fine distinction between ceasing to sin and being unable to sin. O. A. Curtis remarks: "I have found no way of harmonizing all of Wesley's statements at this point; and I am inclined to think that he never entirely cleared up his own thinking concerning the nature and scope of sin."[4]

Wesley felt that entire sanctification was an instantaneous

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1. The Works of John Wesley, Vol. 11, p. 380.
2. Ibid., pp. 368ff.
3. Ibid., Vol. 12, p. 257.
4. O. A. Curtis, The Christian Faith, p. 378.

experience,[1] and that it was not usually given till shortly before death.[2] However, he believed in a gradual work "both preceding and following the instant."[3] There is some question as to whether Wesley taught that entire sanctification, or the "Great Salvation" was ever experienced in life. He apparently believed it possible, but it is significant that he nowhere claimed the experience he so often described. Despite, however, the tenuous application of its loftiest concepts, Methodism was no esoteric message for the few. The doctrine of sanctification preached by Wesley was an attainment possible in the everyday struggle for existence, to be applied by common men and women in the daily construction of their lives. The Wesleyan definition of sanctification was connected more directly to the believer's experience of Christ crucified than many other expositions of the doctrine.[4] It was also distinctive in that the ideal was not merely individualistic. Conversion meant immediate entrance into a fellowship of saints, without which the experience was felt to be altogether incomplete.

The sanctity of Schleiermacher is an example of the kind of holiness that began to flourish as the first flush of Methodism subsided. Schleiermacher was converted in his fourteenth year, under the Moravians. He could name the place and the

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1. The Works of John Wesley, Vol. 6, pp. 490-491, cf. Peters, op. cit., pp. 32ff.
2. The Works of John Wesley, Vol. 11, p. 446.
3. Loc. cit.
4. Cf. Sampson Staniforth, The Lives of Early Methodist Preachers, Vol. 4, p. 122.

time of his conversion. Like Zinzendorf, he placed emphasis upon place, receptivity, dependence, and on the immediate touch of God on the human heart. Schleiermacher's doctrine of perfection was dominated by two thoughts. The first was the stress on the original perfection of the world and the original perfection of man. He concluded that as perfect human awareness of God could co-exist with awareness of the natural world, the natural world must be regarded as originally perfect.[1] A corollary was that God was conceived as acting directly on the human soul through the outward visible world.[2] Thus, though man's organizing ability was able to master the world, this mastery was but a perpetual reminder of God, since it was based upon divine omnipotence. The second tenet of Schleiermacher's sanctification was the doctrine of redemption as a communication of the sinless perfection of Christ. Schleiermacher viewed religion as having teleological emphasis, and the telos was holiness. "Christianity is a monotheistic faith, belonging to the teleological type of religion, and is essentially distinguished from other such faiths by the fact that in it everything is related to the redemption accomplished by Jesus of Nazareth."[3]

Schleiermacher defined conversion as repentance, which consisted in a combination of regret and change of heart. This was mixed with faith which appropriated the perfection and

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1. Friedrich Schleiermacher, The Christian Faith, tr. by H. R. Mackintosh and J. S. Stewart, p. 21.
2. Ibid., p. 238.
3. Ibid., p. 52.

blessedness of Christ.[1] Faith must be a persistent faith, and the perfection initially appropriated in conversion became the sanctification of the believer.

> In living fellowship with Christ, the natural powers of the regenerate are put at His disposal, whereby there is produced a life akin to His perfection and blessedness; and this is the state of Sanctification.[2]

From this it appears that the sinless perfection of Christ was to be appropriated at every stage of the Christian life. "Redemption is effected by Him through the communication of His sinless perfection."[3]

Another example of German sanctity is to be found in the person of Albrecht Ritschl. The central theme of Ritschl's system was that the Kingdom of God is the Summum Bonum. In general, Ritschl followed Luther, though the idea of perfection was more in the forefront of Ritschl's thought than in Luther's.[4] The chief mark of perfection for Ritschl was that the Christian "exercises dominion over the world."[5] His ideal was towards a wholeness or completeness of life. Faith and moral conduct were blended into an indissoluble unity, though man's spiritual life was more highly esteemed since it was the foundation of any adequate moral life. The actual formula for sanctification was faith in God's providence, based upon reconciliation with God.[6]

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1. Ibid., pp. 480-481.
2. Ibid., p. 505.
3. Ibid., p. 361.
4. Cf. Stephen Neill, Christian Holiness, p. 39.
5. Flew, op. cit., p. 379.
6. A. Ritschl, op. cit., pp. 617, 625.

Two primary virtues, patience and humility, were produced as a result of this faith, to which Ritschl added the virtues of prayer and fidelity to one's vocation. Christian sanctity resulted from the proper expression of these virtues.

The sum total of Ritschl's perfection was that it was qualitative rather than quantitative. Sinlessness or infallibility of judgment were not contained in its scope. The believer was thought to be intended by God to be "a whole in his spiritual kind, to be conscious of his own worth as a child of God; to serve the present age, and to fulfil his calling."[1] Other examples of German rationalists who dealt with sanctification would include the names of Wernle, Clemen, Pfleider, and Windish. Their efforts were apparently directed to an attempt to show that St. Paul thought of Christians as sinless.[2]

More recent examples of holiness emphases are to be found in the so-called "Fellowship Movement" and "Sanctification Movement" (Heiligungsbewegung) in Germany. The "Fellowships" placed strong emphasis on the doctrine of sanctification, and enlisted the cooperation of the laity in "Fellowship-work" and evangelism. The Heiligungsbewegung, which was an extension of the "Fellowship Movement," largely took its color from the teachings of Theodor Jellinghaus. Jellinghaus succeeded

> so perfectly in proving that sanctification and justification are inseparable . . . as to leave no room for the

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1. Flew, op. cit., p. 387.
2. Benjamin Warfield, Perfectionism, p. v.

> acquisition of sanctification by a second act of faith specifically directed to that end; and thus reduces himself to the necessity of distinguishing, not between justification and sanctification as separate benefits received by separate acts of faith, but between a first sanctification coming with justification and a second and complete sanctification obtained subsequently by a detached act of faith of its own - with a further effect of making complete sanctification not an "all at once" acquisition on simple faith, but a progressive attainment received in stages.[1]

In Britain and America there are numerous modern examples of small groups which came into existence because of an interest in sanctification. These may be called "Deeper Life Movements," and include such groups as the Higher Life Movement, the Keswick Movement, the Victorious Life Movement, and other kindred forms of perfectionist teaching. Each wave of holiness has expressed itself somewhat distinctively, yet all of the "Deeper Life Movements" have a common basis of understanding. Warfield summarizes:

> . . . A common fundamental character has informed them all, and this common fundamental character has been communicated to them by the Wesleyan doctrine. The essential elements of that doctrine repeat themselves in all these movements, and form their characteristic features. In all of them alike justification and sanctification are divided from one another as two separate gifts of God. In all of them alike sanctification is represented as obtained, just like justification, by an act of simple faith, but not by the same act of faith by which justification is obtained, but by a new and separate act of faith, exercised for this specific purpose. In all of them alike the sanctification which comes on this act of faith, comes immediately on believing, and all at once, and in all of them alike this sanctification, thus received, is complete sanctification. In all of them alike, however, it is added, that this complete sanctification does not bring freedom from all sin;
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1. Ibid., p. 410.

> but only, say, freedom from sinning; or only freedom from conscious sinning; or from the commission of "known sins." And in all of them alike this sanctification is not a stable condition into which we enter once for all by faith, but a momentary attainment, which must be maintained moment by moment, and which may readily be lost and often is lost, but may also be repeatedly instantaneously recovered.[1]

Since Wesley, the emphasis of sanctification seems to be placed on a decisive experience subsequent to justification. The holiness of God is not forgotten, but it is felt that an appropriation of this holiness can only be obtained through an experience that goes "deeper" than justification. From the point of view of man, both the status of sanctification and the process of sanctification are stressed. Holiness, therefore, has an "imparted" flavor, since it is the gift of God, yet must continually be appropriated by faith. The impartation of sanctification is from God, but sanctity can only remain in its imparted context by constant exercise on the part of the believer.

IV. Summary

Sanctification is concerned with the holiness of God. It is God that sanctifies, yet there is a part played by man. The two aspects of man's part are: (1) sanctification as status, and, (2) sanctification as process. In the first instance man receives from God. In the second there is an exercise in which he is involved. The two aspects are not mutually exclusive, though one or another of them has been emphasized from time

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1. Ibid., p. 351.

to time.

The historical examples of various points of view regarding sanctification illustrate the varying emphases that have occurred. Three terms may be employed to classify, in a general sense, the various concepts of sanctification. The first is the term "improving."[1] The proponents of this thought see the long and steady work of grace in the surrendered soul as divine improvement. This is particularly applicable to the line of Catholic divines who appeared before the Reformation. To them, "Christian perfection is not attained in a moment. It is a matter of progress."[2] There were, broadly, three steps in the improvement concept; purgative methods, which included unceasing warfare against evil; the illuminative way, consisting of the imitation of Christ; and the unitive state, which culminated in habitual union with God. The adherents of the improvement concept recoil at any stress on "second" works of grace. "There are times of spiritual crisis in the minds of all aspiring pilgrims, but the fallow periods are important, too."[3] They see it as a steady advance in holiness, in which the disciplines of contemplation and self-denial are deemed invaluable. "Swifter at one time than at others, the work steadily advances."[4]

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1. W. E. Sangster, The Pure in Heart, p. 188.
2. Kirk, op. cit., p. 189.
3. Sangster, op. cit., p. 189.
4. Ibid., p. 189.

The second descriptive term is "imputed,"[1] and it indicates the mainstream opinion of Protestant theology regarding sanctification. The emphasis is upon sin; man is always a sinner, and the idea that he can be holy is a dangerous illusion. However, God, in His mercy, "flings around sinners the robe of Christ's righteousness, imputing to them a righteousness they do not and cannot possess themselves and sees them now only in the spotless garments of His Son."[2] In its most extravagant forms it tended to do away with discipline in the holy life, and thus led to disparities of practice. The term "imputed" is particularly relevant to the Reformation period of sanctity.

The third term is "imparted," and owes its inception to the teachings of Wesley.[3] The "imparted" doctrine teaches that perfection is wrought in the soul in an instant by an act of God in response to an act of faith.

> Many variations have appeared through two centuries in this teaching on holiness. . . . Some groups have put the stress on the work of the Holy Spirit and their thought has centred in Pentecost. Controversies have been provoked as to whether sin in the soul of those who enjoy this heavenly experience is suppressed or eradicated. Separate sects have come into being by their insistence on the utter necessity of this second work of grace, and the flavours of difference on some minor points are so subtle that only a connoisseur can savour them.[4]

The doctrines of Wesley, so important to this viewpoint, as well as the whole gamut of "higher" or "deeper" life sanctifi-

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1. Ibid., p. 184.
2. Ibid., p. 185.
3. Ibid., p. 186.
4. Ibid., p. 189.

cation can well be included under this head. Amongst the examples given under Methodism and Later Developments, Schleiermacher and the German Rationalists are the exception. Their approach to sanctity was on a more naturalistic plane.

The three terms, improving, imputed, and imparted, while useful for analysis, must not be considered inviolable. There are many mutations and cross-breeds. However, the terms roughly parallel the central emphasis of each of the three historic periods for which examples of sanctity were given. Even so, suggestions of each emphasis have made their appearance in all three eras.

CHAPTER II

THE LIFE OF SØREN KIERKEGAARD

I. Introduction

In this chapter a sketch of Kierkegaard's life, with indications of external influences upon it, is given.

The years from 1815 to 1830 were difficult years for Denmark. Having lost her fleet to the British in 1807, and suffering the capitulation of Copenhagen to the same country, she was deprived of Norway in 1814 by the Treaty of Kiel. Added to this was the terror of bankruptcy which overtook the country in 1813.

> Political life revived towards the end of the '30's, and throughout the whole reign of Christian VIII, 1839-48, there was growing agitation by the Liberals for a free constitution, despite a variety of repressive measures. After violent commotions in 1848 - that year of revolutions - this agitation culminated in the assent of Frederick VII in 1849 to a new constitution, which established a national assembly with upper and lower houses, the former nominated by the king, the latter elected by the people.[1]

It was in the midst of the changing economic and political climate of the tiny country of Denmark that Søren Kierkegaard made his solitary journey through life.

II. Family Background and Influence

Søren Aabye Kierkegaard was born on May 5, 1813, "the

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1. Denzil G.M. Patrick, Pascal and Kierkegaard, Vol.II, pp. 3-4.

unfortunate financial year," according to his father, "when so many other false notes were put into circulation."[1] Søren was the youngest of a family of seven. His mother was forty-five when he was born, but beyond a few statistical facts little is known of her. Kierkegaard himself, rarely, if ever, makes reference to her.[2] She was evidently a "nice little woman with an even and cheerful disposition," whose moral influence upon Søren was slight.[3]

Kierkegaard's father, Michael Pedersen Kierkegaard, however, exercised a deep and continuing influence upon him. Michael Pedersen was a remarkable and very strange man, "whose imagination, dialectical power and melancholy all left a profound mark upon his sensitive and impressionable son."[4] Kierkegaard never enjoyed robust health, and was unable, for this or some other reason, to lead the outdoor life of a normal growing boy. At this point his father's prodigious imagination was utilized to supply the experiences Søren lacked. The relationship was most unusual, and there is something rather pathetic about the lonely little boy, whose father was a stern and uncompromising man, with little patience for the vagaries of youth.

> . . . but under this rough coat he concealed a glowing imagination which even old age could not quench. When
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> . . . . .

1. Patrick, op. cit., p. 4.
2. Walter Lowrie, Kierkegaard, p. 60.
3. Loc. cit.; cf. Patrick, op. cit., p. 44.
4. Patrick, op. cit., p. 41.

> Johannes occasionally asked of him permission to go out, he generally refused to give it, though once in a while he proposed instead that Johannes should take his hand and walk back and forth in the room. At first glance this would seem a poor substitute, and yet, as in the case of the rough coat, there was something totally different concealed under it. The proposition was accepted, and it was left entirely to Johannes to determine where they should go. So they went out of doors to a near-by castle in Spain, or out to the seashore, or about the streets, wherever Johannes wished to go, for the father was equal to anything. While they went back and forth in the room the father described all that they saw; they greeted passers-by, carriages rattled past them and drowned the father's voice; the cake-woman's goodies were more enticing than ever. He described so accurately, so vividly, so explicitly even to the least details, everything that was known to Johannes and so fully and perspicuously what was unknown to him, that after half an hour of such a walk with his father he was as much overwhelmed and fatigued as if he had been a whole day out of doors.[1]

In addition to a lively imagination Michael Pedersen possessed remarkable dialectic powers. His early retirement from business affairs afforded him ample opportunity for the study of German philosophy and for discussion of philosophical and religious problems with his friends. Søren was often allowed to listen to these conversations, and was deeply impressed by his father's skill in rebuttal. He writes of this:

> The father always allowed the opponent to state his whole case, and then as a precaution asked him if he had nothing more to say before he began his reply. Johannes had followed the opponent's speech with strained attention, and in his way shared an interest in the outcome. A pause intervened. The father's rejoinder followed, and behold! in a trice the tables were turned. How that came about was a riddle to Johannes, but his soul delighted in the show.[2]

Underneath the brilliant wit of the old man there existed,

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1. Lowrie, op. cit., p. 31-32.
2. Ibid., p. 33.

however, a deep-seated melancholy "which began to make its mark on Søren's soul even before he was old enough to analyse its nature or guess at its meaning."[1] There were two definite causes of this melancholy, though Michael Pedersen was, in all likelihood, predisposed to it by nature. The first of these has been described by Søren in his journals:

> The frightful thing about the man who once, as a small boy, when he was wandering on the Jutland moor and keeping sheep and having a bad time and being hungry and neglected, climbed up on to a hill and cursed God - and that man was not able to forget it when he was 82 years old![2]

The second event is connected with Michael Pedersen's wedded life, and involves premarital relations with his servant-maid, Ane Sorensdatter Lund, who later became his wife. These two events haunted him throughout his life, and the first, especially, caused him considerable pain in his latter years.[3]

The elder Kierkegaard was a deeply religious man and raised his youngest son according to the strictest precepts of Moravian piety.[4] The emphasis was upon a deeply repentant relationship with God, and Søren, even in his earliest years, had an intense realization of the majesty of God and the humiliation of Christ. "It was related to me," he writes, "when I was only a small child, and with the utmost emphasis, that they spat upon Christ, who yet was the truth, that the crowd ('they

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1. Patrick, op. cit., p. 42.
2. Loc. cit.
3. Loc. cit.
4. Ibid., p. 43.

that passed by') spat upon Him and said, 'Hold Thy peace.' This I have treasured deep in my heart (for there have been moments, yea, hours, when that has been for me as if forgotten, yet I constantly returned to this my first thought), and so, the better to treasure this under the most opposite outward appearance, I have hidden it in the deepest recesses of my soul; for I was fearful lest it might early escape me, lest it might trick me and become like a blank cartridge."[1]

Patrick summarizes the effect of Michael Pedersen's teaching on Søren:

> These . . . reveal to us the essential Kierkegaard, with his profound suspicion of the crowd, his deep sense that it is through fellowship with Christ in His sufferings that a true relationship to the Exalted God is to be won, his rejection of all merely aesthetic contemplation of Christ's sufferings, his call for costly discipleship, his passionate longing to express in his own life the spirit which had brought Christ into deadly conflict with the dominant forces in the world.[2]

III. Estrangement and Reconciliation

As he grew older, Søren did not always share his father's spiritual longings. An exceptional child, who was forced to wear unusual clothes, he never hesitated to make use of his pungent wit at the expense of other boys, though he was often physically far more delicate than they. He was difficult to understand, and seemed to be able, at a very early age, to conceal his real feelings and thoughts from others.[3] In 1830 he

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1. Lowrie, op. cit., p. 42.
2. Patrick, op. cit., p. 44.
3. Ibid., p. 45.

entered the University of Copenhagen as a student of theology, in accordance with his father's wishes, but he found the study of philosophy more palatable to his dialectic temperament. To his father's sorrow, therefore, he exhibited a lack of seriousness and purpose in his studies, and became somewhat of a dilitante. The growing disaffection of spirit between father and son was culminated, apparently, by Michael Pedersen's confession to Søren of the cause of his melancholy, his defiance of God as a boy, and his moral incontinence. Shocked and bewildered, Søren's bitter reaction was to plunge himself into a life of dissipation and rebellion against his father. "The great earthquake" is the term he chose to designate the incident.[1]

The period following "the great earthquake" was one of spiritual and psychological suffering, though outwardly Kierkegaard was very much the "man about town."[2] He no longer made any pretence of studying for the theological examination, but frequented the coffee-houses and ran up considerable debts.

Gradually, however, Kierkegaard struggled toward the light. Sensing that the inner tension which errupted at "the great earthquake" was related to an imagined curse upon his whole family Kierkegaard fled from reality into intellectualism.[3] Patrick summarizes:

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1. Patrick, op. cit., p. 49; cf. Lowrie, op. cit., p. 70.
2. Patrick, op. cit., p. 52.
3. Ibid., p. 53.

> The Journals of this period only occasionally reveal Kierkegaard's deepest distress. They do, however, show his predominantly intellectual interests; and it is possible to discern in them three main characteristics of the period: Kierkegaard's reaction against Christianity, his dallying with the aesthetic way of life, and his moral disintegration. All three are only temporary, and all three vary in intensity; indeed, after the first desparate plunge, there are definite signs of a change of heart as early as June, 1836 . . . although his first decisive conversion does not occur till May, 1838.[1]

On December 8, 1837 Kierkegaard wrote: "I think that if ever I become seriously Christian I shall be most ashamed of not having done so before, of having wished to try everything else first."[2] Eventually philosophy was rejected for its mishandling of Christianity.

> To such concepts as faith, incarnation, tradition, inspiration, which in Christianity must be referred to a particular historical fact, it has seemed good to philosophers to give an entirely different general meaning whereby faith becomes immediate certainty, which at bottom is neither more nor less than the vital fluid of the life of the mind, its atmosphere; tradition has become the summary of a certain world experience, whilst inspiration has become nothing but the result of God having breathed the spirit of life into man, and incarnation nothing else than the existence of one or other ideas in one or more individuals, . . .[3]

The light finally broke in May of 1838, and Kierkegaard exclaims:

> There is an indescribable joy which enkindles us as inexplicably as the apostle's outburst comes gratuitously: 'Rejoice I say unto you, and again I say unto you rejoice.' - Not a joy over this or that but the soul's mighty song 'with tongue and mouth, from the bottom of the heart': 'I rejoice through my joy, in, at, with, over, by, and with my joy' - a heavenly refrain, as it were, suddenly breaks off our other song; a joy which cools and refreshes us like a

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1. Patrick, op. cit., p. 53.
2. The Journals of Søren Kierkegaard, edited and translated by Alexander Dru, p. 54.
3. Ibid., p. 35.

> breath of wind, a wave of air, from the trade wind which blows from the plains of Mamre to the everlasting habitations.[1]

Kierkegaard's spiritual experience was paralleled by a reconciliation with his father. "How I thank you, Father in Heaven," he wrote, "that you have preserved my earthly father here upon earth for a time such as this when I so greatly need him, a father who, as I hope, will with your help have greater joy in being my father the second time than he had the first time in being so."[2] Shortly after the reconciliation his father died, and in an entry headed by a cross Kierkegaard expressed his feeling for his father. The entry is dated August 11, 1838.

> My father died on Wednesday (the 9th) at 2 a.m. I had so very much wished that he might live a few years longer, and I look upon his death as the last sacrifice which he made to his love for me; for he did not die from me but died for me in order that if possible I might still turn into something. Of all that I have inherited from him, the recollection of him, his transfigured portrait, not transfigured by the poetry of my imagination (for it did not require that) but explained by many an individual trait which I can now take account of - is dearest to me, and I will be careful to preserve it safely hidden from the world; . . . . He was a 'faithful friend.'[3]

Kierkegaard hid his feelings from the world; his niece, Henriette Lund, reports that he treated the whole thing as if it were a bagatelle.[4] His friends were convinced that he would never finish his theological training now that his father was not alive to prod him. In death, however, his father proved

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1. Ibid., p. 59.
2. Loc. cit.
3. Ibid., p. 62.
4. John A. Gates, The Life and Thought of Kierkegaard for Everyman, p. 36.

to be more powerful than in life. "When father died, Sibbern said to me," he wrote, "'Now you will never take your theological examination,' and it was precisely then that I took it; if father had lived I should never have taken it."[1] Lowrie summarizes Søren's relationship with his father:

> . . . Søren's union with his father became as close as it could possibly be - and it was realized more feelingly after the old man's death than before it. He was united to him not only by gratitude and admiration, but by the consciousness of a common guilt - which is the deepest, as well as the most universal, bond between man and man, the 'touch (tache) of nature' which 'makes the whole world kin' - so deeply united that 'he repents his father's fault.'[2]

IV. Regina Olsen

In his biography of Kierkegaard, Lowrie states "that there were only three external events in S.K.'s life which deeply moved him; his father's death, his engagement to Regina with its rupture, and the attack of the Corsair."[3] The second of these events is one of the most unusual love stories of history. Kierkegaard met Regina Olsen for the first time in May, 1837, and almost immediately fell in love with her. She was only fourteen years of age at the time, a fact that necessitated a protracted waiting period before he could declare himself. During this period his mind was filled with thoughts of Regina, but his journal entries indicate a certain insecurity about the matter. "Thou blind god of love!" he wrote, "Am I to face what

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1. Journals, p. 137.
2. Lowrie, op. cit., p. 184.
3. Ibid., p. 150.

I seek here in this world, am I to experience the conclusion of all the eccentric premises of my life, am I to enclose thee in my arms - or: . . . ."[1] Three years after their first meeting, however, he "declared war" on Regina[2] and she accepted him.

> . . . and I loved her dearly, she was as light as a bird, as daring as a thought; I let her rise higher and higher, I stretched out my hand and she settled on it and beat her wings and called down to me: it is wonderful here; she forgot, she did not know that it was I who made her light, I who gave her daring in thought; faith in me which made her walk upon the waters, and I swore allegiance to her and she accepted my homage. - At other times she cast herself upon her knees before me and wished only to look up to me and forget all else.[3]

Kierkegaard realized he had made a blunder, and "suffered indescribably"[4] as he alternated between hope and doubt. At times he felt a marriage relationship was possible, but the inexorable conviction became firmly entrenched in his soul that he was an exception to the general practice of married life. On November 16, 1840 he wrote:

> I have courage to doubt, I believe everything; I have the courage to fight - I believe against everything; but I have not the courage to know something, not the courage to possess, to own something. . . . I only have the pale, bloodless, hard-lived, midnight shapes to fight against, to which I myself give life and existence.[5]

Regina soon detected her fiance's ambivalence, and suspecting that it was rooted in his deep melancholy, set herself to

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1. Patrick, op. cit., pp. 69-70
2. Lowrie, op. cit., p. 206.
3. Journals, p. 90.
4. Lowrie, op. cit., p. 207.
5. Journals, p. 87.

overcome it. But everything she did increased his suffering.

> To hold this charming child in the hand, to be able to enchant her life, to see her indescribable bliss, which for a melancholy man is the highest happiness - and then to hear within one the voice passing judgment: "Thou shalt let her go," that is thy punishment, and it is to be made more acute by seeing all her sufferings, made more acute by her pleas and entreaties and tears - she, who does not dream that that is a punishment.[1]

When she saw the ineffectiveness of what she was doing, Regina began to resort to other methods of holding her fiance, methods that resulted in hurt feelings for both. She finally declared that she would thank him all her life if he would only let her stay beside him, even if they had to live in a cupboard. The situation was intolerable, and in August, 1841, Kierkegaard returned his engagement ring to her and accompanied it with a letter.

> Not to put often to the test a thing which must be done, and which when once it is done will supply the strength that is needed - so let it be done. Above all, forget him who writes this; forgive a man who, though he may be capable of something, is not capable of making a girl happy.[2]

Regina refused to accept the finality of Kierkegaard's gesture, and implored him by the memory of his dead father and for Jesus Christ's sake not to leave her. This was conveyed to him in a note which pained him deeply.

Kierkegaard felt obliged to return to Regina, but this time not in the role of a backward lover,[3] but as a despicable

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1. Patrick, op. cit., p. 72, quoting Geismar, Søren Kierkegaard, seine Lebensentwicklung und seine Wirksamkeit als Schriftsteller, p. 92.
2. Lowrie, op. cit., p. 218.
3. Patrick, op. cit., p. 73.

scoundrel who was not above toying with the affections of a young girl. Cruel as this seemed, it was really for Regina's sake that it was done, for by it he hoped to wean her from him, and thus set her free to live her own life apart from his influence. "Will you never marry?" she asked. "Yes," he replied, "in ten years, when I have had a proper wild time, then I must have a very young girl to rejuvenate me."[1] The final break came in October, 1841. It was to be the end, with only a few tentative nods to each other at chance meetings in church or in the street to remind each of a love that had not died. Inwardly Kierkegaard remained faithful to her till his dying day,[2] though he realized that to be outwardly so would have been fatal to her.

Not only Regina and her family, but the whole of Copenhagen was outraged at his action. After remaining there for two weeks he journeyed to Berlin where he wrote his first important work, Either-Or, which, in part, was an answer to Regina for his curious conduct toward her. After two years Regina became the wife of Fritz Schlegel, but Kierkegaard was not pleased, and reacted with bitterness and contempt for the fickleness of woman. The conclusion of Repetition contains the invective of this period. Patrick comments:

> The wound in Søren's soul, however, was one which could never heal; and it broke open again as he read Schopenhauer's crude misogynism in his later days, and led him

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1. Patrick, op. cit., p. 74, quoting Geismar, op. cit., p. 108.
2. Patrick, op. cit., p. 74.

to make some of his most outrageous attacks upon womankind in his final polemic against the Established Church.[1]

After the breach with Regina, Kierkegaard devoted himself to writing and publishing. The next five years was a period of enormous literary productivity in his life. Either-Or, Repetition, Fear and Trembling, Philosophical Scraps, Stages on Life's Way, The Concluding Unscientific Postscript, as well as eighteen Discourses belong to this period. The reception of the public was varied. Kierkegaard was disappointed that Martensen, who was to succeed Mynster as Bishop, took no notice of his work, and he became conscious of a fundamental difference between Bishop Mynster and himself which arose as a result of Kierkegaard's literary activity. The one thing that seriously disturbed him, however, was some laudatory references to Either-Or in the Corsair.

V. The Corsair Affair

The Corsair was a comic paper of Copenhagen noted for its libellous assaults upon personalities of the city. It was edited by a young Jew named Goldschmidt. He and his collaborator, P. L. Møller, named straw-men as editors to avoid prosecution for the scandalous articles appearing in the paper. Though condemned by men of character the paper was widely read, and exerted a powerful influence. To have such a publication praise Either-Or, as it did in March, 1843, and November, 1845, troubled and irritated Kierkegaard.

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1. Ibid., p. 81.

When P. L. Moller wrote an erudite article in the "Aesthetic Annual," Gaea, for 1846, Kierkegaard decided to act. The article was designed to prepare the way for its author to succeed to the Chair of Aesthetics at Copenhagen University, and it contained some highly derogatory remarks about Stages on Life's Road. Kierkegaard replied in an article published in The Fatherland, to which he signed the name Frater Taciturnus, the pseudonymous author of the Stages. In the article he expressed his satisfaction at the rare opportunity of replying to a signed article by one responsible for so many anonymous scurrilities in the Corsair.

> Oh, if I could only get into the Corsair soon! It is indeed hard for a poor author to be made prominent in Danish literature by being the only one (assuming that we pseudonyms are one man) who is not abused there. My superior, Hilarius Bookbinder, has even been flattered in the Corsair, if I am not mistaken. Victor Eremita has even had to experience the injury of being immortalized in the Corsair! And yet I have been there already, for ubi spiritus, ibi ecclesia: ubi P. L. Møller, ibi the Corsair.[1]

P. L. Møller was finished. As a result of this attack he lost all prospects of any kind of public position in Denmark. He left the country and died in despair in Paris.[2] The Corsair answered Kierkegaard's challenge by an open attack against him that continued for six months. He was caricatured in an unkind fashion as a spindle-shanked figure with one trouser-leg longer than the other. He was derided for remaining quiet when the Corsair praised him, but answering its criticism of him. The

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1. Patrick, op. cit., p. 90.
2. Lowrie, op. cit., p. 350 ff.

attack of the Corsair had considerable influence upon Kierkegaard's destiny.[1] The public mockery he was forced to endure as a result of the attack was extremely hard on his sensitive soul, and it caused his estrangement from Goldschmidt, for whom he had considerable esteem. Patrick concludes:

> The whole experience left another deep wound in Kierkegaard's heart. With all his mighty efforts to regard the whole thing sub specie aeterni, Kierkegaard could not wholly succeed in preventing bitterness against his contemporaries from entering into his soul. This explains some of the violence in his later contemptuous attacks upon the Press, upon anonymous and irresponsible journalism generally, and especially upon the public, the mob.[2]

The Corsair affair reinforced the lesson learned through his ill-fated engagement to Regina Olsen, that he was an exception to whom ordinary human pursuits were closed.[3] The country parish, a long cherished dream, had now become an impossibility. It would be regarded by the public as a retreat or escape.

> He came also to a clear understanding of his own capacity to venture out, to take a stand in action as well as in the realm of ideas; he was confirmed in his conviction that he who speaks the truth will have to suffer for the truth. What he later came to formulate so incisively under the Christian category of suffering, what had been first introduced to him in his early religious training in terms of the picture of a suffering and humiliated Christ, he now experienced personally with a sharpness unknown to him before.[4]

VI. Other Influences

Kierkegaard, the "individual," was evidently little influenced by personalities and events other than those already

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1. Patrick, op. cit., p. 90.
2. Ibid., p. 93.
3. Perry LeFevre, The Prayers of Kierkegaard, p. 145.
4. Loc. cit.

cited. Apparently he had only one life-long friend, Emil Boesen, and the relationship does not seem to have been close.[1] He admired Professor Paul Møller, his favorite teacher,[2] and six years after Møller's death dedicated to him The Concept of Dread. The dedication is significant because it is the single exception to the rule that his works were dedicated to either his father or Regina. Lowrie states that Paul Møller "was prepared to understand young Kierkegaard at . . . [the] period of his full revolt against the world, because he himself had passed through just such a phase and only recently had found repose in Christian faith."[3]

Two church prelates figured in Kierkegaard's life, Professor Hans Larssen Martensen and Bishop Jacob Peter Mynster. Martensen was not highly regarded by Kierkegaard, who referred to him as "the professor," a term never intended as a compliment.[4] He wrote:

> "The Professor" is a later Christian invention. A later Christian invention indeed, for it was made about the time when Christianity began to go backward, and the culminating point of the "Professor's" ascent coincides exactly with our age when Christianity is entirely abolished.[5]

Bishop Mynster exerted a slightly stronger influence upon Kierkegaard. Mynster had been a friend of his father, and Kierkegaard states that he was brought up on Mynster's sermons,

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1. Lowrie, op. cit., p. 181.
2. Ibid., p. 78.
3. Ibid., p. 143.
4. Ibid., p. 506.
5. Ibid., pp. 508-509.

continuing to read and appreciate them as long as the Bishop lived. There were differences of opinion between the two men, but Kierkegaard never spoke of Mynster except in terms of the profoundest reverence until the old man was dead. It appears from the Journals that Kierkegaard was quite frank in his conversations with the Bishop, but he always attempted to maintain an amicable relationship despite their differing viewpoints.[1] Kierkegaard felt that Mynster's sermons were conceived only for Sundays, "But, alas, there are six days in the week." He declared, "I am Bishop Mynster's sermons on Monday."[2] In 1850 he wrote: "If on the contrary Bishop Mynster maintains that the preaching of Christianity as he represents it is genuine Christianity according to the New Testament, I shall immediately begin the attack."[3] During the Bishop's life, however, the attack was never carried out into the open, though the journal of this period abounds in militant entries. When Bishop Mynster died, Kierkegaard waited several months in order not to prejudice the choice of Martensen as the Bishop's successor, then began the open attack that was to occupy the remainder of his life. A Journal entry reads:

> March 1, 1854. So now he is dead.
> If only it had been possible to persuade him to end his life with the admission that what he represented was not really Christianity, but a mitigation of it: that would

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1. Ibid., p. 510.
2. Ibid., p. 513.
3. Ibid., p. 517.

> have been most desirable, for he carried a whole age along with him.[1]

This was the signal for the final volley, that, once discharged, marked the demise of the aggressor. His work over, Søren Kierkegaard triumphantly gave up his life on November 11, 1855, after a brief illness.[2]

The sparseness of influential personalities in the life of Kierkegaard is paralleled by the small number of authors that he gave attention to. One of the few revered was Socrates, to whom the Postscript refers constantly, and from whom the Scraps takes its point of departure. Kierkegaard's original dissertation on irony had been "with constant reference to Socrates," and "the figure of this great and good man had engrossed him more and more since the days when he wrote his dissertation."[3] Another writer of influence for Kierkegaard was Hamann, a German philosopher who preceded Kierkegaard by nearly one hundred years. It has been stated that it is possible to detect in the writings of Hamann, at least in embryonic form, nearly all the major concerns of Kierkegaard.[4] Ronald G. Smith writes:

> That God in incomprehensible reconciling grace lowers himself (has entered into human life, Dasein, as Kierkegaard says) is central alike for Kierkegaard and for Hamann. For Hamann it is also, and precisely, the world which God enters, but for Kierkegaard the place of this event is solely the individual, who in the decision of

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1. Journals, p. 493.
2. Cf. Lowrie, op. cit., pp. 583ff.
3. Ibid., p. 306.
4. Ronald G. Smith, J. G. Hamann 1730-1788, A Study in Christian Existence, p. 18. Cf. Lowrie, op. cit., p. 164.

> his faith, effected by grace, rises above the world, with which the "humorist" [in this case Hamann] continues to identify the "idea of God."[1]

Kierkegaard, however, found Hamann too much bound to the world and not enough to God,[2] though his influence upon the Danish thinker cannot be ignored.

VII. Kierkegaard's Purpose

The varying external influences upon Kierkegaard, as well as his own inner drives and inclinations, served to develop within him a sense of personal vocation. Early in his life he records in his journal:

> The thing is to understand myself, to see what God really wishes me to do; the thing is to find a truth which is true for me, to find the idea for which I can live and die . . . - what good would it do me to be able to explain the meaning of Christianity if it had no deeper significance for me and for my life; - what good would it do me if truth stood before me, cold and naked, not caring whether I recognized her or not, and producing in me a shudder of fear rather than a trusting devotion? I certainly do not deny that I still recognize an imperative of understanding and that through it one can work upon men, but it must be taken up into my life, and that is what I now recognize as the most important thing.[3]

"In a sense," says LeFevre, "Kierkegaard's whole life and thought can be understood as his attempt to come to terms with the questions he poses in the preceding entry."[4] It was to the task of "becoming a Christian" that he applied himself. LeFevre continues, "This movement, this God-relationship, can only be described as the process of 'becoming a Christian,' using the

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1. Smith, op. cit., p. 19.
2. Ibid., p. 20.
3. Journals, p. 15.
4. LeFevre, op. cit., p. 130.

categories which Kierkegaard himself employed, for in his work as an author he was indeed charting and reflecting upon the course of his own life."[1]

The exploration of Christianity to which Kierkegaard devoted his life took the form of a curious system of pseudonymous writing which was interspersed with various Discourses that he acknowledged at the time of publication. The pseudonymous writings must not be considered irreligious. Kierkegaard asserts that he was a religious writer from the beginning.[2] These writings contain the confession of Kierkegaard's struggle toward God, though often in an extremely veiled fashion. Kierkegaard enhanced the biographical aspect of the pseudonyms by his unique choice of names.

> Thus Victor Eremita has conquered the dilemma of Either-Or by becoming a hermit; Constantine Constantius remains faithful and steadfast, hoping for a repetition of a lost relationship; Johannes de Silentio cannot directly express the deepest motives for his action in Fear and Trembling; and all three reflect stages in Kierkegaard's own relationship to his broken engagement. The succeeding pseudonyms are more definitely related to Kierkegaard's task as a spy in a higher service than to his personal relations with Regine, thus reflecting the deep change in him which followed her betrothal to Schlegel.[3]

> Johannes Climacus represents the climax of all Kierkegaard's strategic plan in this period; and Kierkegaard identifies himself with him more than with the others, by appearing on the title-page of both the Philosophical Crumbs and the Concluding Unscientific Postscript as his editor (while at the end of the latter he acknowledges that he, Søren Kierkegaard, is the real writer of all the pseudonymous works).

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1. Ibid., p. 138.
2. Søren Kierkegaard, The Point of View, p. 77.
3. Patrick, op. cit., pp. 86-87.

> Climacus's attack on Hegelian speculation and philosophical system-building in the name of the Christian faith and life clearly lies close to Kierkegaard's own heart; though Kierkegaard does not feel able to speak out directly as a champion of the Christian faith and life because of his sense of unworthiness to do so.[1]

The Edifying Discourses which he wrote at this time also suggest, by title, certain limitations. They were not labeled as Christian, though they are certainly religious in character, and they are not presented as sermons, since Kierkegaard felt unable, writing as a layman, to garb his discursives with any suggestion of authority.[2]

VIII. Summary

In the survey of Kierkegaard's life, influences and episodes which colored his intellectual and religious growth are apparent. These environmental and developmental factors are reflected in his writings, which will be the basis of the following chapters.

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1. Ibid., pp. 87-88.
2. Ibid., p. 88.

CHAPTER III

KIERKEGAARD'S APPROACH TO CHRISTIANITY

I. Introduction

This chapter considers Kierkegaard's general approach to Christianity in its relationship to sanctification. The purpose of Kierkegaard's writings, various thematic categories that recur in his literature, and his general view of sanctification receive attention.

II. Kierkegaard on His Purpose

Under the pseudonym Johannes Climacus, Kierkegaard, in the Postscript, tells how he happened to become an author. He was sitting in Frederiksberg Park, quietly smoking a cigar, musing about the future and reminiscing of the past. As he sat his thoughts took the following expression:

> You are gradually . . . getting on in years without being anything or seriously attempting to do anything. On the other hand, wherever you look, in literature and in life, you see the admired names and figures, the precious people who enjoy acclaim, come into prominence and get themselves talked about, the benefactors of the age who know how to make themselves useful to mankind by making life easier and easier for people. . . . And what are you doing?[1]

There was a hiatus in the soliloquy occasioned by the lighting of a fresh cigar, and then the train of thought continued.

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1. Søren Kierkegaard, Concluding Unscientific Postscript, pp. 165ff.

> You must do something; but since it will be impossible for you with your limited capacities to make anything easier than it has been made you must undertake, with the same humanitarian enthusiasm that inspires others, to make something harder.[1]

The notion pleased Johannes immensely, and the resolve to "make things more difficult" was verified by an incident in the "Garden of the Dead," where Johannes, contrary to his usual custom, had gone for a walk. There he saw, through a shroud of leaves and mist, a very old man, snow-haired and dressed in mourning. With him was a boy of about ten years, evidently his grandson, also in mourning. The occasion was the lament of the old man for his son, the boy's father, who had recently died, but before he died he had been deceived by "speculation," and had repudiated "the faith." "Promise me," Johannes reports the old man as saying to the small boy,

> Promise me by the sight of my old age and my gray hair, promise me by the solemnity of this hallowed place, by the God whose name you have learnt to call upon, by the name of Jesus Christ in which alone there is salvation - promise me that you will hold fast this faith in life and in death, that you will not suffer yourself to be deceived by any vain illusion, however the fashion of this world may change - . . .[2]
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> Overwhelmed by the impression, the little one threw himself down upon his knees, but the old man lifted him up and pressed him to his heart.[3]

Johannes continues:

> I must in deference to the truth admit that this was the most moving scene I had ever witnessed. What may perhaps

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1. Loc. cit.
2. Ibid., p. 213.
3. Loc. cit.

> for a moment dispose one or another reader to assume that the whole story is fictitious, namely, that an old man should talk thus to a child, was precisely what moved me most of all: the unhappy old man who had been left alone in the world with a child; who had but one to save, the child, not able to presuppose sufficient maturity on the child's part to understand him, and yet not daring to wait for the coming of maturity because he himself is an old man.
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> And so I, too, went home. Fundamentally I had understood the old gentleman at once, for my studies had in many ways led me to take note of a dubious relationship between a modern Christian speculation and Christianity, but the matter had not in any decisive manner enlisted my interest. Now it was invested with its own proper significance.[1]

Whatever the actual relationship of the foregoing incidents to the life of Kierkegaard, it is certain that he was resolved to present Christianity in a non-speculative fashion. He would show what real Christianity entailed, even if he never personally attained the goal of becoming a Christian. He was resolved that all his time and diligence would be employed in making clear "at least what Christianity is and where the confusions in Christendom lie,"[2] and to this end he dedicated himself.

Kierkegaard quickly saw, however, that Christianity could only be presented in its true form by making it more "difficult" than the religious dons were apt to do. The dons were inclined to make things easy, so easy that the substance of Christianity became so watered-down as scarcely to resemble the original. Kierkegaard decided, therefore, to make it "difficult to become a Christian."[3] He had no desire to make things more difficult

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1. Ibid., pp. 213ff.
2. Søren Kierkegaard, The Point of View, p. 97, note.
3. Postscript, p. 495.

than they actually were, nor to make it hard for some and easy for others. Christianity was to be made "qualitatively difficult," difficult for every man equally.[1] He would be a "gadfly" after the order of Socrates.[2] His was the role of the agitator who would bedevil men into an understanding of their own lack of understanding. It was clear and equally deplorable that such a factor was absent in Christendom, and Kierkegaard, finding no one else willing to accept the task, determined to attempt it himself.[3]

A. Handicaps to His Purpose

There were, however, certain obstacles in the path of this purpose. Kierkegaard, in the first place, was physically deformed, and this "disproportion in . . . build"[4] continued to cause him distress. "For what love to God," he wrote, "it requires to be willing to let oneself be healed when from the beginning one has been thus bungled without one's fault, from the beginning has been an abortive specimen of humanity."[5] Entries in his journals indicate considerable yearning for a body commensurate with his excellent mind.

As if to compensate for his poor body, Kierkegaard was endowed with a powerful intellect. Curiously enough, this, too, was an obstacle. His vast mental ability provided him with a

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1. Loc. cit.
2. Cf. David Swenson, Something About Kierkegaard, pp. 40ff.
3. Postscript, p. 431.
4. Søren Kierkegaard, Either-Or, Vol. 1, p. 37.
5. Søren Kierkegaard, Fear and Trembling, p. 113; cf. Theodor Haecker, Kierkegaard the Cripple.

surfiet of thoughts that threatened to enclose him within the "poet-existence" sphere, to the detriment of his religious existence. "And lo! it presents itself," he writes,

> thoughts as enchanting as the fruits in the garden of a fairy-tale, so rich and warm and heartfelt, expressions so soothing to the urge of gratitude within me, so cooling to my longing - it seems to me as if, had I a winged pen, yes, ten of them, I still could not follow fast enough to keep pace with the wealth which presents itself.[1]

Kierkegaard recognized the danger of such wealth. From the Christian point of view every poet-existence is sin, for it substitutes poetizing for being. It is being related to religion through the medium of imagination in place of existentially striving to be religious.[2] Kierkegaard's task was the intensification of inwardness[3] and he had always to strive against the ascendancy of the intellect, since its bent was evasion of reality.[4]

There was still another threat to the realization of his purpose, the deep sense of melancholy that had early settled upon his life. Its origins are uncertain, though it is noteworthy that his father was afflicted with the same malady.[5] Nonetheless, it was exceedingly real to him. Kierkegaard speaks of "the tragedy of his childhood,"[6] adding, "So far back as I can remember, my one joy was that nobody could discover how

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1. Point of View, p. 67.
2. Lowrie, Kierkegaard, p. 415.
3. Søren Kierkegaard, Journals, p. 447.
4. Loc. cit.
5. Cf. Journals, p. 150, ante, p. 41.
6. Journals, p. 125.

unhappy I felt."[1] The melancholy of childhood continued to be with him in later years. "I say of my sorrow what the Englishman says of his house," he wrote in the Diapsalmata, "my sorrow is my castle."[2] He seemed to consider it a sort of "thorn in his flesh," and describes it as "the high price at which Almighty God sold me an intellectual power which has found no equal among its contemporaries."[3]

Kierkegaard's physical disproportion, his great intellectual powers, and his deep-seated melancholy acted together to frustrate his purpose, yet, in another way, to stimulate it. He was made to consider life, and that in the milieu of cruciality. Life was a riddle for him, and to elucidate and solve that riddle became his one desire.[4]

Finally resolution was effected through a relationship with God, which, for Kierkegaard, is the only solution to life. The obstacles were removed by the "happy love" of the God-relationship.[5] His physical disproportion seemed unimportant, the melancholy that had made his life troubled and unhappy became mitigated by the joy of knowing God. Even his prodigious intellect assumed a lesser place. "Many and many a time," he wrote, "I have had more joy in the relation of obedience to God than in the thoughts that I produced."[6]

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1. Point of View, p. 76.
2. Either-Or, Vol. 1, p. 21.
3. Journals, p. 171.
4. Ibid., p. 7.
5. The Point of View, p. 64.
6. Ibid., p. 68.

Kierkegaard indicates that the "God-relationship" was an extremely powerful force in his life. Indeed, he suggests that it has actually controlled him. He has been under arrest every instant, from the very beginning. Another than himself was master.[1] A journal entry indicates the direction of this higher compulsion:

> . . .I have something on my conscience as a writer. Let me indicate quite clearly how I feel about it. There is something quite definite I have to say, and I have it so much upon my conscience that (as I feel) I dare not die without having said it. For the moment I die and thus leave this world (as I understand it) I shall in the very same second (at such speed does it go!), in the very same second I shall be infinitely far away, in a different place where still within the same second (frightful speed!) the question will be put to me: Have you uttered the definite message quite definitely. And if I have not done so, what then! . . .[2]

It was to the clear expression of this "quite definite" message that he applied himself, with all the genius of his unusual gifts.

B. The Contemporary Situation

Spurred by a purpose whose resolution involved a God-relationship, Kierkegaard began to survey the spiritual condition of his peers. What he saw did not satisfy him. "'Man is' has again become 'the measure of all things,'" he wrote, "and entirely in the sense of the immediate."[3]

> Alas, the age of thinkers seems to be past! the quiet patience, the humble and obedient longing, the exalted

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1. Ibid., p. 69.
2. Journals, pp. 492-493.
3. Søren Kierkegaard, Works of Love, p. 296.

> relinquishment of immediate results, the remoteness of infinity from the immediate, his thought and his God-devoted love, which are needed in order to think one thought alone: these seem to have disappeared, they have become almost a laughing stock to men.[1]

The world seemed to have no conception, "except at most a very remote conception of a great solemn festival," that there was such a thing as the God-relationship, "to say nothing of its daily determining a man's life - . . ."[2] If a life were to be found in which the "invisible law" operated, the world had no understanding of it, and at best explained it as an "oddity."[3] "Christianity is taken in vain," the Point of View suggests, "when . . . the infinite requirement is reduced to finite terms, or maybe entirely ignored, and 'grace' is introduced as a matter of course, which simply means that it is taken in vain."[4]

Kierkegaard found the philosophers of little help. The systems of the dons were likened to "enormous castles" while their originators lived in "shacks close by."[5] All of modern philosophy was adjudged infected with a paralysing lack of reality "because it has done away with obedience on the one hand, and authority on the other and then, in spite of everything, wishes to be orthodox."[6] He deplored the manipulation Christianity had suffered at its hands, expressing himself as follows:

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1. Loc. cit.
2. Ibid., p. 164.
3. Loc. cit.
4. Point of View, p. 160.
5. Journals, p. 156.
6. Søren Kierkegaard, The Present Age, p. 158.

> To such concepts as faith, incarnation, tradition, inspiration, which in Christianity must be referred to a particular historical fact, it has seemed good to philosophers to give an entirely different general meaning whereby faith becomes immediate certainty, which at bottom is neither more nor less than the vital fluid of the life of the mind, its atmosphere; tradition has become the summary of a certain world experience, whilst inspiration has become nothing but the result of God having breathed the spirit of life into man, and incarnation nothing else than the existence of one or other ideas in one or more individuals - and still I have not mentioned the idea which has not only been reduced to nothing but even profaned, the idea of salvation, an idea which journalism in particular has taken up with a certain prejudice in its favour, and applied to everyone, utterly regardless whether the man is the greatest hero of liberty or a baker or butcher who save their district by selling their wares a shilling cheaper than the others.[1]

The theologians fared equally poorly. "To me," Kierkegaard wrote,

> the theological world is like the road along the coast on a Sunday afternoon during the races - they storm past one another, shouting and yelling, laugh and make fools of each other, drive their horses to death, upset each other, are run over, and when at last they arrive, covered with dust and out of breath - they look at each other and go home.[2]

This was merely playing church, and Kierkegaard's Attack Upon Christendom is filled with trenchant observations on the paucity of seriousness on the part of the established church. Lowrie observes:

> S. K. carried on this controversy with the New Testament in his hand and for that reason the "priests" found it so difficult to reply. Even the stinging charge that the priests are perjurers could not easily be rebutted. One should recognize that this whole attack was essentially

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1. Journals, p. 35.
2. Ibid., p. 9.

directed against the beginnings of what we know as Modern Liberal Theology.[1]

What was the difficulty with Christianity according to Kierkegaard's analysis? Essentially it was the unwillingness of Christians to be "disciples," the tendency to particularize the teachings of the New Testament to the Apostles,[2] a "cowardly shrewness" that reduced the "either-or" of Christianity to "a certain degree."[3] ". . . If this is your ultimate and highest ambition," he wrote, "to get life made easy and sociable, then never have anything to do with Christianity; flee from it, for it wishes exactly the opposite, wishes to make life difficult for you, and to do it just by making you solitary before God.[4]

> Christianity has been made too much into a consolation, people have forgotten that it is a demand. Alas, the vapid speakers, the result is that it falls all the harder on those who have to proclaim Christianity again.[5]

There was a reluctance to make Christianity "present and actual."[6] "Hence it is," he concluded, "that people are so eager to keep Christianity at some little distance."[7] All this "evil," this "mediocrity," was "dressed up as 'sincerity,'" and therefore

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1. Søren Kierkegaard, Attack Upon Christendom, p. xv, (introduction by the translator).
2. Journals, p. 486.
3. Attack Upon Christendom, p. 82.
4. Works of Love, p. 101.
5. Journals, p. 247.
6. Søren Kierkegaard, Christian Discourses and The Lilies of the Field and the Birds of the Air and Three Discourses at the Communion on Fridays, p. 236.
7. Ibid., p. 237.

became an ultimate danger.[1] Sub-level Christianity was the norm, and Christendom was afflicted with the "terrible disease to refuse to understand what healer it is that the sick man needs."[2]

III. The Method of Attack

For Kierkegaard the situation demanded a frank, honest appraisal. "Quite simply," he wrote in the Attack, "I want honesty. I am not, as well intentioned people represent . . . a Christian severity as opposed to a Christian leniency. By no means. I am neither leniency nor severity. I am . . . a human honesty."[3] He marked out the one sin which made "grace impossible, that is insincerity."[4] He wrote of nothing so objectionable to God as hypocrisy,[5] adding wryly: "There is nothing the world so much admires as the finer and finest forms of hypocrisy."[6] Honesty was the one thing that "God demands unconditionally at every moment:"[7]

> honesty, not to reverse the position and prove his relationship with God, or the truth of his concern, from good fortune, success etc. but contrariwise to admit that this is so because of his weakness, one of God's adjustments, something which perhaps at a later date he must dispense with - in order to go further.[8]

This kind of honesty Kierkegaard conceived to be only possible

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1. Journals, p. 363.
2. Søren Kierkegaard, Thoughts on Crucial Situations in Human Life, p. 96.
3. Attack Upon Christendom, p. 37.
4. Christian Discourses, p. 195.
5. Attack Upon Christendom, p. 251.
6. Loc. cit.
7. Journals, p. 456.
8. Loc. cit.

before God.[1] It was because God had been ignored that the situation had become so deplorable.

Honest as he was,[2] Kierkegaard never maintained that he "was a Christian in any exceptional degree."[3] He preferred to be considered a "promptor" rather than an "actor."[4] "In the fact that education is pressed upon me, and in the measure that it is pressed," he wrote, "I press in turn upon this age, but I am not a teacher, only a fellow student."[5] He desired readers who would read, not for his sake, not for the world's sake, but for his own sake; "then he will read in such a way as to avoid my acquaintance rather than seek it - and then he is my reader."[6]

A. The Dialectical Approach

The task was prodigious but it was clear. Christendom had become polluted and watered down so that it hardly resembled New Testament Christianity. Kierkegaard, scarcely daring to call himself a Christian, felt compelled to point the way to true Christianity. But how was this to be done? It seemed apparent to him that merely setting forth a philosophical or theological system would not have the desired effect. The whole matter was intimately related to existence, and "an existential system cannot be formulated."[7] A "system" would, even if

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1. Ibid., p. 380.
2. Cf., Lowrie, op. cit., p. 120.
3. Journals, p. 334.
4. Søren Kierkegaard, Purity of Heart Is to Will One Thing, p. 180.
5. Point of View, p. 75.
6. Journals, p. 178.
7. Postscript, p. 106.

devised, be unable to impinge upon real existence, and would, therefore, be useless. Kierkegaard solved the dilemma by attacking in a round-about fashion. He would attempt to prod from behind[1] to induce response by the use of dialectic questioning. "There cannot really be the least doubt that what Christianity needs is another Socrates," he wrote in his Journal, "someone who could existentially express ignorance with the same dialectical simplicity."[2] He acknowledged that there had been "true teachers of Christianity," but these had never been "dialecticians in any eminent sense."[3] No doubt Kierkegaard felt himself to be the man. A journal entry reads:

> There have . . .been many more gifted and penetrating authors than I, but I should like to see the one who has reduplicated his thought more acutely than I have in dialectics.[4]

It was Kierkegaard's purpose to state the alternatives concretely in such a way that his reader would be moved to self-activity and personal decision.[5] Thus both sides were presented, either-or. The choice was left to the reader, who was free to choose himself, which for Kierkegaard appears tantamount to choosing God,[6] or remaining outside of his true self in illusion.[7] "In my presentation," he wrote, "severity is a dialec-

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1. Journals, p. 232.
2. Loc. cit.
3. Loc. cit.
4. Ibid., p. 200.
5. Perry LeFevre, The Prayers of Kierkegaard, p. 150.
6. Ibid., p. 149. Cf: Søren Kierkegaard, Training in Christianity, p. 159; Soren Kierkegaard, Edifying Discourses, (Augsburg), Vol. 3, p. 127; Søren Kierkegaard, On Authority and Revelation, p. 157.
7. Point of View, p. 22ff.

tical factor in Christianity, but leniency is just as strongly represented. The first is represented poetically by the pseudonyms; the second, personally by myself. So must this matter be presented to this age which has taken Christianity in vain."[1] The employment of this method, he believed, was the only way to bring truth to one who is in illusion.

> Whoever rejects this opinion betrays the fact that he is not over-well versed in dialectics, and that is precisely what is especially needed when operating in this field. For there is an immense difference, a dialectical difference, between these two cases: the case of a man who is ignorant and is to have a piece of knowledge imparted to him, so that he is like an empty vessel which is to be filled or a blank sheet of paper upon which something is to be written; and the case of a man who is under an illusion and must first be delivered from that. . . . Assuming then that a person is the victim of an illusion, and that in order to communicate the truth to him the first task, rightly understood, is to remove the illusion - if I do not begin by deceiving him, I must begin with direct communication. But direct communication presupposes that the receiver's ability to receive is undisturbed. But here such is not the case; an illusion stands in the way. That is to say, one must first of all use the caustic fluid. But this caustic means is negativity, and negativity understood in relation to the communication of the truth is precisely the same as deception.[2]

Since Christianity, therefore, was considered to be floundering in a state of illusion, the indirect approach was used by Kierkegaard. He proposed to guide the individual away from the illusion that held him captive through the use of indirect communication, a method he believed God-given.[3] At times and especially during his later phase Kierkegaard abandoned indirect

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1. Journals, p. 381.
2. Point of View, p. 40.
3. Cf., Postscript, p. 218ff.

communication for direct communication, but only when the illusion had been dispelled. Kierkegaard writes on this point:

> The communication of Christianity must ultimately end in "bearing witness," the maieutic form can never be final. For truth, from the Christian point of view, does not lie in the subject (as Socrates understood it) but in a revelation which must be proclaimed.
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> In Christendom the maieutic form can certainly be used, simply because the majority in fact live under the impression that they are Christians. But since Christianity is Christianity the maieuticer must become the witness.[1]

Whichever method was applied, it was to the end that self-activity and decision would lead the individual into the deepest levels of self-existence.[2]

B. Thematic Categories

In his attempt to "wound from behind" Kierkegaard made use of various thematic categories to clarify his position and dispel the illusion that beclouded Christendom. These categories are somewhat philosophic, but they were introduced in order to present the human condition in its impotence and terror, and thus to prepare for the God-relationship, the existence in truth.

1. The Individual

One of the fundamental categories of existence upon which Kierkegaard based his thesis was that of the individual. The solitary individual in his state of separation was the starting point for all thought. "As an individual," he wrote, "quite

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1. Journals, pp. 259-260.
2. LeFevre, op. cit., p. 150.

literally as an individual, to relate oneself to God personally is the formula for being a Christian."[1] The importance of the individual in his relationship to God can hardly be overstated. Writing of an awareness of this Kierkegaard declares:

> If once this occurs, then it is an event incomparably more important than a European war and a war which involves all the corners of the earth, it is a catastrophic event which moves the universe to its profoundest depths.[2]

Kierkegaard described the "individual" as the "decisive Christian category," decisive also for the future of Christianity.[3] The category of the individual was decisive on at least two counts. First, the "individual" stands alone in the world because he cannot be understood by others. Kierkegaard writes of this:

> In immediate feeling one man never understands another. As soon as something happens to himself, all things seem different to him. When he himself suffers he does not understand the suffering of another and neither is his own happiness the key to understand the happiness of another.[4]

The individual could not go to another man, since "one cannot confide oneself to the intimacy of misunderstanding."[5] Second, any relationship with God can only be consummated in terms of the "individual." Thus Kierkegaard writes:

> But the all-knowing one, who in spite of anyone is able to observe it all, does not desire the crowd. He desires the individual; He will deal only with the individual quite

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1. Attack Upon Christendom, p. 274.
2. Loc. cit.
3. Point of View, p. 135.
4. Purity of Heart, p. 113.
5. Søren Kierkegaard, Stages on Life's Way, p. 323.

> unconcerned as to whether the individual be of high or low station, whether he be distinguished or wretched.[1]

The conclusion is apparent:

> As a single individual he is alone, alone in the whole world, alone before God - and with that there is no question about obedience! All doubt (which, be it observed parenthetically, is just simply disobedience to God when it is ethically considered and not made a fuss about with an air of scientific superiority) - all doubt has ultimately its stronghold in the illusion of temporal existence, that we are a lot of us, pretty much the whole of humanity, which in the end can jolly well overawe God and be itself the Christ.[2]

The category of the individual was related, in Kierkegaard's thinking, to the concept of subjectivity. Kierkegaard advanced the thesis that truth is subjectivity against Hegel's emphasis upon objectivity.[3] Subjectivity lies at the very heart of his thought, and was an integral part of his concept of existence. The subjective thinker is aware that truth must be independent of his own particularity in order to be true,[4] but he also realizes that truth must be integrated with his own being in order to exist.[5] Thus he writes:

> Here is where the way swings off, and the change is marked by the fact that while objective knowledge rambles comfortably on by way of the long road of approximation without being impelled by the urge of passion, subjective knowledge counts every delay a deadly peril, and the decision so infinitely important and so instantly pressing that it is as if the opportunity had already passed.[6]

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1. Purity of Heart, p. 185.
2. The Point of View, p. 137.
3. J. H. Thomas, "Kierkegaard and Existentialism," Scottish Journal of Theology, Vol. 6, p. 381.
4. Postscript, p. 381 (note).
5. F. Mackey, "Kierkegaard and the Problem of Existential Philosophy," Review of Metaphysics, Vol. 9, p. 571.
6. Postscript, p. 179.

Kierkegaard believed that the task of becoming subjective was the highest task given to the individual, and that the reward of eternal happiness exists only for those who achieve subjectivity.[1] He quarrelled with modern philosophy, which, he felt, "has tried anything and everything in an effort to help the individual to transcend himself objectively, which is a wholly impossible feat."[2] Kierkegaard's objection to Hegel, for example, was that he "explained" existence in terms of pure thought - the dialectic of mediation and reconciliation.[3] Kierkegaard felt that the real problem lay elsewhere.[4]

The individual, therefore, plunged into authentic existence by the aid of subjectivity. "All religiousness," he wrote, "consists in inwardness, in enthusiasm, in strong emotion, in the qualitative tension by the springs of subjectivity."[5] It was a lonely occupation, a solitary calling.

> Ordinary communication, like objective thinking in general, has no secrets, only a doubly reflected subjective thinking has them. That is to say, the entire essential content of subjective thought is essentially secret, because it cannot be directly communicated. This is the meaning of secrecy.[6]

Kierkegaard's concept of passion was a corollary to his idea of subjectivity. Truth must be made subjectively appropriated in profound pathos.[7] Human passion constituted

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1. Ibid., p. 146.
2. Ibid., p. 176.
3. Mackey, op. cit., p. 407.
4. Cf., Postscript, p. 172.
5. On Authority and Revelation, p. 155.
6. Postscript, p. 73.
7. Thomas, op. cit., p. 381.

subjectivity, and a controlling passion and enthusiasm were considered definitive of each man's character.[1] The degree of interestedness tended to mark the level of existence. "Christianity is spirit, spirit is inwardness, inwardness is subjectivity, subjectivity is essentially passion, and in its maximum an infinite, personal, passionate interest in one's eternal happiness."[2]

Thus the category of the "individual," who was able to experience a desired level of existence in passion, was the foundation of Kierkegaard's system of thought. "What good would it do me," he asks,

> to be able to explain the meaning of Christianity if it had no deeper significance for me and for my life; - what good would it do me if truth stood before me, cold and naked, not caring whether I recognised her or not, and producing in me a shudder of fear rather than a trusting devotion? I certainly do not deny that I still recognise an imperative of understanding and that through it one can work upon men, but it must be taken up into my life, and that is what I now recognise as the most important thing.[3]

2. The Eternal and the Temporal

The eternal and the temporal categories were conceived by Kierkegaard as being utterly opposite to one another, not only quantitatively but qualitatively as well. Thus man, living under the confines of temporality, is unable to comprehend the eternal. Kierkegaard, using the qualitative difference between

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1. Paul L. Holmer, "Kierkegaard and Religious Propositions," Journal of Religion, Vol. 35, July, 1955, p. 141.
2. Postscript, p. 33.
3. Journals, p. 15.

time and eternity, described the nature of love. The eternal meant God's will, and the temporal suggested man's existence in so far as it was isolated from the will of God.[1] Kierkegaard also explained that the eternal and temporal are at odds with one another.

> Now there are divers things that can be striven after by men, but essentially there are only two goals: one goal which a man wishes, desires to attain; and another which he ought to attain. The one goal is that of temporal existence, the other is that of eternity; these are contrary the one to the other, but good fortune and misfortune must also be inverted in correspondence with them.[2]

The eternal was "always appropriate and always present, . . . always true."[3] It applied "to each human being, whatever his age. . . ."[4] Since, on the other hand, the temporal was changeable "any statement about it is subject to change."[5]

Since the eternal was the God-category, it involved the concept of the absolute. "If I am to have to do with God," Kierkegaard wrote, "I must put up with it that the requirement is the absolute; if the requirement is not the absolute, then I have nothing to do with God, . . ."[6] In order to realize the absolute, it was necessary to be "contemporary" with the absolute, for otherwise it has no existence.[7] "And as Christ is

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1. Valder Lindstrom, "A Contribution to the Interpretation of Kierkegaard's Book, The Works of Love," Studia Theologica, Vol. 6, p. 22.
2. Christian Discourses, p. 156.
3. Purity of Heart, p. 33
4. Loc. cit.
5. Loc. cit.
6. Søren Kierkegaard, For Self-Examination, p. 177.
7. Training in Christianity, p. 45.

the absolute, it is easy to see that with respect to Him there is only one situation: that of contemporaneousness."[1]

It was, of course, "at bottom sheer madness, a ludicrous exaggeration," to require men to perform the absolute, and it produced an effect exactly opposite to that which was intended.[2] The situation was redeemed by means of the concept of the "moment." The significance of the moment was that it connected the essential elements of liberation to a humanity that was bound by finitude.[3] The moment embraced the eternal, but in the mood of the future. It "is not an atom of time, but an atom of eternity."[4] The moment was eternity tangential to time, time and eternity for an instant united - not separate.[5] The individual was able to realize the eternal by means of the moment, and thus the absolute was made contemporary. The individual became "contemporaneous with Christ."[6] Two passages from Works of Love add further clarification:

> The eternal "is," but when the eternal touches on the temporal, or is in the temporal, they do not meet each other in the "present," for then the present would itself be the eternal. The present, the moment, is so swiftly past that it does not really exist except as a dividing line, and it is consequently past while the past is what had been the present. Hence when the eternal is in the temporal, then it is in the future (for the present cannot lay hold on it, and the past is past) or in the

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1. Loc. cit.
2. For Self-Examination, p. 166.
3. Ernest M. Manasse, "Conversion and Liberation," Review of Religion, Vol. 7, p. 375.
4. Christian Discourses, p. 326 (note).
5. Loc. cit.
6. Training in Christianity, p. 66.

> possibility. The past is the actual, the future the possible; the eternal is everlastingly the eternal; in time the eternal is the possible, the future. We therefore call the day tomorrow the future, but we also call the eternal life the future. The possible, as such, is always a duality and the eternal is equally proportional in the possibility to its duality.[1]
>
> The temporal has three times, and therefore it never really absolutely exists, or absolutely in any one of them. The eternal is. A temporal object can have many different attributes, and in a certain sense can be said to have them all at one time, insofar as it is what it is in these definite attributes. But duplication in itself never has a temporal object; as the temporal disappears in time, so too it exists only in its attributes. On the contrary, when the eternal is present in a man, then this eternal so reduplicates itself in him, that every moment it is present in him, it is present in a twofold manner: in an outward direction, and in an inward direction back into itself, but in such a way that this is one and the same thing; for otherwise it is not duplication. The eternal is not merely in its own attributes, but is in itself in its attributes; it not only has attributes, but is in itself when it has attributes.[2]

3. Paradox

One of the most persistent themes in Kierkegaardian literature is that of the paradox. In a general sense Kierkegaard considered the paradox to be a necessary imperfection of the human situation.

> It belongs to the imperfection of everything human that man can only attain his desire by passing through its opposite. I will not mention the various types which give the psychologist so much material (the melancholy man has the most sense of the comic; the most exhuberant, the most idyllic sense; the debauchee often most moral sense; the skeptic often most religious sense); but through sin one first sights blessedness. And consequently the imperfection lies not so much in the contradiction as in the fact that one cannot see the thing and its opposite simultaneously.[3]

Paradox is not contrary to reason; Kierkegaard is not guilty

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1. Works of Love, p. 201.
2. Ibid., p. 227.
3. Journals, p. 90

of perpetrating a logical paradox.[1] Paradox is beyond reason; it is meant to suggest behavioral patterns, the paradox of existence.[2] Since it falls outside the categories of logic, the paradox of existence can never truly be expressed. It is precisely for this reason that Kierkegaard was suspicious of verbalized doctrinal structures, since the danger is that they lead to the belief that once divine incomprehensibility has been acknowledged in words it has somehow been made more understandable.[3] Kierkegaard suggests:

> The paradoxical religiousness breaks with immanence and makes the fact of existing the absolute contradiction, not within immanence, but against immanence. There is no longer any immanent fundamental kinship between the temporal and the eternal, because the eternal itself has entered time and would constitute there the kinship.[4]

For Kierkegaard, the problem of existence was the ontological difference between ideality and reality. The solution of the problem was equivalent to the entering of the eternal (ideality) into the temporal (reality). These are in radical contradiction, yet find their factual synthesis in human existence.[5] It is this factual synthesis of so radically incompatible beings, the eternal, ideal, and necessary Infinite on the one hand, and the temporal, individual, and accidental finite on the other

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1. E. D. Klenke, "Logicality Versus Alogicality in the Christian Faith," Journal of Religion, Vol. 38, p. 109.
2. Loc. cit.
3. Winston L. King, "Negative as a Religious Category," Journal of Religion, Vol. 37, p. 109.
4. Postscript, p. 507.
5. Maximillian Beck, "Existentialism, Rationalism, and Christian Faith," Journal of Religion, Vol. 26, p. 287.

hand, which constitutes the pivot of Christianity: its paradox.[1] Kierkegaard reminds his readers:

> The reader will remember: A revelation is signalized by mystery, happiness by suffering, the certainty of faith by uncertainty, the ease of the paradoxical-religious life by its difficulty, the truth by absurdity.[2]

The ultimate paradox is Jesus Christ, who bridges the gap between the dichotomy of time and eternity. He is the paradox par excellence.[3] Christ is apprehended "'when the reason and the paradox encounter one another happily in the instant;' when the reason steps aside and lets the paradox take possession."[4] For, as Kierkegaard explains:

> . . . It is the duty of the human understanding to understand that there are things which it cannot understand, and what those things are. Human understanding has vulgarly occupied itself with nothing but understanding, but if it would only take the trouble to understand itself at the same time it would simply have to posit the paradox. The paradox is not a concession, but a category, an ontological definition which expresses the relation between an existing cognitive spirit and eternal truth.[5]

4. Levels of Existence

In his effort to clarify the human situation Kierkegaard delineated three broad levels of existence, the aesthetical, the ethical, and the religious. One who lives on the aesthetic level lives in immediacy; he is not an integral self, but is determined by externals.[6] "Aesthetically," Kierkegaard writes,

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1. Loc. cit.
2. Postscript, p. 387.
3. T. H. Croxall, "Facets of Kierkegaard's Christology," Theology Today, Vol. 8, p. 329.
4. Loc. cit.
5. Journals, p. 194.
6. Either-Or, Vol. 2, p. 151.

"it is quite in order to wish for wealth, good fortune, . . . But at the same time to wish for an eternal happiness is doubly nonsense."[1] Time, for the aesthete, is not really taken seriously, since he lives but for the moment.[2] The individual tends to dissolve in the mood created by the environment.[3] It is a "direct relationship, and indicates that he is not . . . related to God, but to his own ideas of fortune and misfortune."[4]

The second, or intermediate level is the ethical, which indicates, on the part of its adherents, an attempt to realize the universal. The ethical level acknowledges that man is a temporal being whose spiritual center impels towards eternity as the goal of temporal freedom.[5] It is a transitional sphere characterized by choice.[6] "When an individual abandons himself to lay hold of something great outside him, his enthusiasm is aesthetic; when he forsakes everything to save himself, his enthusiasm is ethical."[7]

The movement from the aesthetical to the ethical is produced by a quality that Kierkegaard calls despair. Despair affects the whole person; it is to the total being what doubt is to the intellect.[8] Despair is the beginning of a decision

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1. Postscript, p. 351.
2. Ibid., p. 265.
3. Either-Or, Vol. 2, p. 141.
4. Postscript, p. 399.
5. Jas. Collins, "Faith and Reflection in Kierkegaard," Journal of Religion, Vol. 37, p. 13.
6. Stages on Life's Way, p. 430.
7. Postscript, p. 350.
8. LeFevre, op. cit., p. 163.

which marks the break with the aesthetical and the leap into the ethical.

> That which really makes a man despair is not misfortune, but it is the fact that he lacks the eternal; despair is to lack the eternal; despair consists in not having undergone the change of eternity by duty's "shalt." Consequently despair is not the loss of the beloved, that is misfortune, pain, suffering, but despair is the lack of the eternal.[1]

The highest level is the religious, and it is at this level that self-realization or individuality receives an even more concrete expression.[2] In Kierkegaard's words:

> The aesthetic sphere is that of immediacy, the ethical is that of requirement (and this requirement is so infinite that the individual always goes bankrupt), the religious sphere is that of fulfilment, but note, not such a fulfilment as when one fills a cone or a bag with gold, for repentance has made infinite room, and hence the religious contradiction: at the same time to lie upon seventy thousand fathoms of water and yet be joyful.[3]

The religious level has two divisions, Religion A and Religion B. Religion A is the religion of immanence; the infinite-relationship is constituted in the individual,[4] and as such the object of religion is of less importance. Kierkegaard's famous dictum, "Subjectivity is truth," becomes the appropriate expression here.[5] Religion A is simply a "heartfelt expression of a sense of God, or of the numinous, or of an expectation of an eternal blessedness, which is not constituted by a particular

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1. Works of Love, p. 34.
2. LeFevre, op. cit., p. 163.
3. Stages on Life's Way, p. 430.
4. LeFevre, op. cit., p. 164.
5. Loc. cit.

something, but is merely heartfelt feeling itself. . . ."[1]

> The edifying element in the sphere of religiousness A is essentially that of immanence, it is the annihilation by which the individual puts himself out of the way in order to find God, since precisely the individual himself is the hindrance.[2]

The leap from the ethical to Religiousness A is achieved by an awareness of infinite resignation, which, in turn, brings about suffering and guilt. The ethical universal has been displaced by an

> absolute relation to the absolute telos, striving to reach the maximum of maintaining simultaneously a relation to the absolute telos and to relative ends, not by mediating them, but by making the relation to the absolute telos absolute and the relation to the relative ends relative.[3]

The ideal is the abnegation of all relative ends, leaving only the absolute relationship, but this is an impossibility, since existence stands in the way.[4] The attempt, however, to renounce the relative produces suffering.

> Suffering does not come from the break with the immediate, but from the abyss within, which that attempted break discloses to us. Suffering signifies relation to one's self; it is a sign of inwardness, the distinctive mark of the religious sphere - of religious action.[5]

The contradiction between the desire to achieve an absolute relation and man's inability to do so creates guilt. The guilt, moreover, is total guilt, not mere guilt over this or that.[6]

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1. Lowrie, op. cit., p. 323.
2. Postscript, p. 497.
3. Ibid., p. 364.
4. Ibid., p. 387.
5. LeFevre, op. cit., p. 179.
6. Ibid., p. 180.

The immanence of Religiousness A, therefore, constitutes a depth of God-awareness, but purely within the individual (subjectivity) and, unable to find release in any concept of God outside of itself, becomes immersed in guilt. Kierkegaard adds:

> Religiousness A makes the thing of existing as strenuous as possible (outside the paradox-religious sphere), but it does not base the relation to an eternal happiness upon one's existence, but lets the relation to an eternal happiness serve as a basis for the transformation of existence.[1]

Religiousness B, the highest level of existence, is characterized by being specifically Christian, whereas Religiousness A is possible for a religiously-oriented individual regardless of his faith. Religiousness B can only be Christian because it is dependent upon the revelation of Jesus Christ, a revelation which must be known and believed.[2] Religiousness B brings ultimate self-realization, and the journey toward this point must begin by a consciousness of sin.[3] This consciousness goes beyond a mere recognition of particular sins, but is a consciousness of being "in sin."[4] Sin cannot be explained; it must be accepted as fact, but it carries with it a certain psychological climate which Kierkegaard terms "dread."

> The nature of original sin has often been examined, and yet the principal category has been missing - it is dread, that is what really determines it; for dread is a desire for what one fears, a sympathetic antipathy; dread is an

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1. Postscript, p. 509.
2. Lowrie, op. cit., p. 323.
3. Training in Christianity, p. 155.
4. LeFevre, op. cit., p. 182.

> alien power which takes hold of the individual, and yet one cannot extricate oneself from it, does not wish to, because one is afraid, but what one fears attracts one. Dread renders the individual powerless, and the first sin always happens in a moment of weakness; it therefore lacks any apparent accountableness, but that want is the real snare.[1]

Out of the ambivalence of man's desire, the attraction and repulsion before his freedom, sin emerges. Anxiety, the immediate condition between possibility and actuality is compounded by the entrance of sin. "Sin enters by dread, but sin in turn brought dread with it."[2] What is the answer to the dilemma? Faith. Faith in the revelation of the ultimate Paradox, Jesus Christ. Faith makes anxiety a saving experience, for faith gives the "courage to believe that the state of sin is itself a new sin, and the ability to renounce dread without any dread."[3] When man confronts the Paradox, he becomes conscious of the depth of his sin, and he is drawn into faith as his "ultimate risk and ultimate hope as he sees himself for what he really is as he is alone before God."[4]

It should be noted that the levels are not rigidly defined. Certain attributes of lower levels may linger with the individual in his flight from the lower strata of existence. The higher levels do not exclude the lower, but neither are they bound by them.

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1. Journals, p. 105.
2. Søren Kierkegaard, The Concept of Dread, p. 38.
3. Ibid., p. 104.
4. LeFevre, op. cit., p. 187.

IV. General View of Sanctification

It is not surprising that holiness occupied an important place in the Christian emphasis of Kierkegaard. In commenting on a particular area of experience that was closely associated with Christianity in his mind, he wrote:

> The word "shalt" in this case does not so much express a commandment (for what is the use of a commandment to one who enthusiastically desires what the commandment commands?) as the need for sanctification, purification, that in this zeal there might be no precipitancy, no conceited exaggeration, no defiling thought of anything meritorious.[1]

There are several thoughts which lurk in the above quotation, but one point is made, the need for sanctification. It may be stated that, since a vital experience of Christianity was uppermost in the mind of Kierkegaard, the necessity of sanctification occupied a scarcely less important place.

A. Terminology

Kierkegaard seldom used recognized, orthodox terminology in his discussions of holiness. He rarely, for example, used the term sanctification, preferring, in attempting to "wound from behind," to substitute more original phraseology which he hoped would create interest and awaken thought. Walter Lowrie mentions Kierkegaard's usage of various terms in connection with Christianity: "renunciation," "dying unto the world," "sacrifice," even "martyrdom."[2] These are all expressions of Kierkegaard's concept of sanctification. They may not express

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1. Training in Christianity, p. 174.
2. Lowrie, op. cit., p. 538.

the concept in complete form, but suggest, at least, a partial aspect of holiness.

Other terms are used by Kierkegaard in this connection. One of these is the term "inwardness." Kierkegaard clearly identifies "inwardness" with subjectivity and spirituality.[1] This is contrasted with extroversion, objectivity, the bourgeois,[2] and philistine[3] way of life which opposes a life of risk and faith. "Inwardness" is a quality of spiritual life upon which Kierkegaard places high value. "There is something," he writes, "in the fact that we are all Christians."[4]

> It means that the doctrine of Christianity cannot be so foreign to us as the pagans. But the misfortune is that to the majority the doctrine has become a triviality, accepted by the majority as a triviality. The thing is therefore to make the doctrine more inward.[5]

The concept of "inwardness" was connected, in the thought of Kierkegaard, with the idea of "imitation," which meant the following of Christ, even unto death.[6] He captioned this becoming "contemporaneous with Christ," and it was the final note of religious faith.[7] "Contemporaneousness with Christ" is, therefore, Kierkegaard's highest expression of sanctification.

Reduplication or self-reduplication is another term recurring in the writings of Kierkegaard which relates to the

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1. Postscript, pp. 187, 217; cf. Beck, op. cit., p. 291.
2. Journals, p. 31.
3. Søren Kierkegaard, The Sickness Unto Death, p. 174.
4. Journals, p. 231.
5. Loc. cit.
6. Lowrie, op. cit., p. 511.
7. Collins, op. cit., p. 18.

concept of sanctification. Briefly, reduplication is to show in one's life what his lips express, to reproduce and reflect one's teachings in existence.[1]

> This again, I say, is the dialectical movement, or is essentially dialectics, namely, in one's action to counteract oneself at the same time, which is what I call reduplication, and it is an example of the heterogeneity which distinguishes every true godly effort from worldly effort.[2]

The following excerpt indicates an equation of this concept with holiness.

> Real self-reduplication without a third factor which is outside and compels one, is an impossibility and makes any such existence into an illusion or an experiment.[3]

The third factor is not an individual,[4] but is God, who makes possible real self-reduplication.[5]

A word of caution is necessary. Kierkegaard does not use terms in any inflexible or absolute sense. An expression of the same concept may appear at various levels of existence. It is apparent that the condition of sanctification is resident at the level of Religiousness B, since it is only at this level that contact with God is made through the leap of faith. Yet terms employed by Kierkegaard relating to sanctification at the level of Religiousness B may be utilized at lower levels to designate the process of becoming a Christian. Passion, for example, is frequently referred to at the aesthetic level.[6]

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1. Croxall, op. cit., p. 335 (note).
2. The Point of View, p. 151.
3. Journals, p. 364.
4. Ibid., p. 365.
5. Postscript, p. 434.
6. Either-Or, Vol. 1, p. 27.

but Kierkegaard also speaks of the task of "purifying passion."[1] In a reference to faith in the Postscript, he states that faith "is not an assurance once for all, but a daily acquisition of the sure spirit through infinite personal passionate interest."[2] The last reference clearly relates to sanctification, but "passion" or "passionate interest" is not restricted to holiness.

B. General Nature of Sanctification

Kierkegaard's conception of Christianity was that it was "an existence communication, which makes existence paradoxical and remains paradoxical as long as one exists, and only eternity possesses the explanation."[3] He deplored the "pushing back of Christianity" into the aesthetic sphere, where "the incomprehensible is the relatively incomprehensible,"[4] for, in his opinion, such a view is a distortion of Christianity. Since sanctification is a facet of Christianity, it too comes under the heading of a "paradoxical existence communication," and is, therefor, beyond rational understanding. There are, however, certain broad characteristics of Kierkegaard's concept of the doctrine which give indication of its importance and scope for him.

For Kierkegaard, satisfaction in life could be achieved in no other way than through a relationship with God. "Nothing finite, not the whole world," he wrote, "can satisfy the soul

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1. Journals, p. 163.
2. Postscript, p. 53.
3. Ibid., p. 499.
4. Loc. cit.

of man. . . ."[1] Significantly, this appears in an early pseudonymous work, which ostensibly limited itself to the aesthetic realm. If sanctification is the highest expression of the God-relationship, only in holiness would life have meaning.

> If an arab in the desert were suddenly to discover a spring in his tent, and so would always be able to have water in abundance, how fortunate he would consider himself - so too when a man who qua physical being is always turned towards the outside, thinking that his happiness lies outside him, finally turns inward and discovers that the source is within him; not to mention his discovering that the source is his relation to God.[2]

Kierkegaard suggested that there was a progression of satisfaction in the sanctified life, which, like the miracle at the marriage feast in Cana, gave astonishment to all.[3] This was contrasted with the fact that the "world serves first of all the good and afterwards the bad."[4] It does not mean, however, that the holy life is easy. "The moment," he writes, "I begin to express existentially what I say, and consequently to bring Christianity into reality; it is just as though I had exploded existence - the scandal is there at once."[5] He adds: "The view of life which holds that man's need of God constitutes his highest perfection does indeed make life more difficult."[6] The difficulties, however, are for a purpose, for "man learns to know God"[7] and as a result glimpses "human

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1. Either-Or, Vol. 2, p. 207.
2. Journals, p. 346.
3. Ibid., p. 68.
4. Loc. cit.
5. Journals, p. 343.
6. Søren Kierkegaard, Edifying Discourses, (Harper), p. 170.
7. Loc. cit.

life according to its perfection."[1] In this manner sanctification produces character, for "Christianity is really not a collection of teachings but is - the development of character."[2]

A noteworthy fact is that Kierkegaard's concept of sanctification was not developed with an eye to the result. To him the result was secondary. The treatment of the dilemma of Abraham in Fear and Trembling suggests the importance of the means in contradistinction to the end in any treatment of holiness. This principle is enunciated in the Postscript.

> The most cleverly calculated and daring plan for transforming the world is subject to the principle that it becomes great or not great by virtue of the result. But the simple and loyal resolution of an obscure human being embodies the principle that the plan itself is higher than any result, that its greatness is not dependent upon the result. And this is surely a more blessed privilege than being the greatest man in the world and a slave of the result, whether the result be success or failure.[3]

Kierkegaard saw the "end" as being the endowment upon "each self . . . an eternal happiness,"[4] but this is secondary to the establishment of a proper relationship, an existence that touches existence.[5]

Sanctification, for Kierkegaard, was not an esoteric privilege of the few; it was for everyone who would meet the conditions. "I cannot abandon the thought that every man," he wrote, "absolutely every man, however simple he is, however

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1. Loc. cit.
2. Journals, p. 492.
3. Postscript, p. 357.
4. Ibid., p. 19.
5. Journals, p. 532.

much he may suffer, can nevertheless grasp the highest. . . ."[1]

No man was denied the right of being holy.

> However, every man acquires the eternal happiness of heaven only through God's mercy and grace, and this is equally near every man, so near, that it is a matter between God and himself.[2]

V. Summary

This chapter has considered Kierkegaard's purpose in writing, to present Christianity in its true form. His method of presentation was the "indirect method" which was used to arouse interest and concern, after which more direct communication was utilized. Kierkegaard's use of terminology in relation to his concept of sanctification was considered as well as his general view of the doctrine. Sanctification, in his view, was the sole source of satisfaction; it included difficulties which were an aid in character-building; it was a way of life rather than a means to an end, and was available to everyone who desired it.

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1. Ibid., p. 361.
2. Edifying Discourses, (Harper), p. 133.

CHAPTER IV

THE NATURE OF SANCTIFICATION

I. Introduction

Following a general consideration of Kierkegaard's view of sanctification, attention is given to a more precise indication of the basis of his holiness concept. This chapter deals with the nature of God according to Kierkegaard, God's part in sanctification, as well as man's relation to sanctification.

II. Sanctification Is a Work of God

In his more intimately Christian writings Kierkegaard is never far from the thought that man is nothing without God. "What is man without Thee!" he writes in Purity of Heart, ". . .What is all his striving, could it even encompass a world, but a half-finished work if he does not know Thee: Thee the One, who art one thing and who art all!"[1] God is supreme, and the "temptation which comprises many temptations" is to do away with Him,

> to cease to be a man; instead of being purer than the innocent bird, to be godforsaken, worse than bestially defiled, to sink lower than the beast; poorer than the poorest slave of the heathen, to serve in the most miserable and senseless thraldom, in abundance to slave for meat and drink, in wealth to slave for money, a curse to oneself, to nature an abhorance, to the race a defilement.[2]

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1. Søren Kierkegaard, Purity of Heart, p. 31.
2. Søren Kierkegaard, Christian Discourses, p. 38.

It is evident that for Kierkegaard, man without God is less than man. The first question, therefore, is, do "you also have an understanding with God?"[1] "We men," Kierkegaard bitterly observes, "have dared to get Christianity almost egoistically into our power, we do not realize (what Anselm and the ancients realized) that Christianity is God's invention. . . ."[2] Such an attitude is an abortion of Christianity in his view, and he set himself to counteract it.

It is imperative, therefore, that God be known in a personal way, for "the knowledge of God is the condition for the sanctification of each human being in accordance with his specific end."[3] Kierkegaard believes that the process of knowing God is a creative condition. "Whenever God exists in the truth there He is always creative. It is not His will that man should bask in the contemplation of His glory in spiritual sloth; but He wishes, through coming to be known of man, to create in him a new man."[4] In order to understand more fully the creative process of sanctification the nature of God is forthwith considered.

A. The Nature of God

"It is so impossible," Kierkegaard writes, "for the world to exist without God that if God could forget it it would in-

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1. Søren Kierkegaard, Edifying Discourses, (Harper) p. 256.
2. Søren Kierkegaard, Journals, p. 433.
3. Edifying Discourses, (Harper), p. 175.
4. Loc. cit.

stantly cease to be."[1] He describes God as "pure subjectivity, sheer, pure subjectivity,"[2] utterly divorced from anything that suggests objective being.[3] There is a "wholly otherness" to God that places Him beyond the boundaries of human finiteness. Kierkegaard terms God "infinte egoity"[4] though he takes care to differentiate between egoity and egoism. In his view it is impossible for God to be other than this, and it is this quality of being that makes possible the existence of the world and everything in it.

1. The Spirithood of God

Kierkegaard recognizes that God is spirit. "God is pure spirit,"[5] he writes, and as such he is unique, invisible, possessing glory, yet with no image of His own.

> But God is spirit, is invisible, and the image of the invisible is in turn invisible, which is a spiritual determination, and God's image is precisely the invisible glory. If God were visible, aye, then there would be no one who could resemble Him or be His image; for no image of the visible exists, and among all visible things there is nothing, not even a blade of grass, which resembles another, or is its image; if such were the case, then the object itself would be the image. But since God is invisible no one can visibly resemble Him.[6]

For this reason God uses miracles to show Himself to man. Therefore, to see God is to see (or experience) a miracle.[7] The

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1. Journals, p. 46.
2. Lowrie, Kierkegaard, p. 548.
3. Loc. cit.
4. Journals, p. 433.
5. Ibid., p. 427.
6. Edifying Discourses, (Harper), p. 242.
7. Journals, p. 134.

miracle, however, takes place by "virtue of the absurd, for reason must stand aside."[1] The spirithood of God places Him beyond reason, for the realm of the spirit is outside the categories of reason. Thus it becomes impossible to prove God's existence. "'The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God;'" Kierkegaard ironically observes, "but he who says in his heart or to other men, Just wait a minute and I will prove it - O, what a rare wise man is he!"[2] Kierkegaard elucidates: "Immanently (in the fantastic medium of abstraction) God does not exist, he only is - God only exists for an existing man, ie. he can only exist in faith."[3]

Although pure spirit, God nevertheless has various characteristics. He is omnipotent, a quality which Kierkegaard explains as possessing the ability to give itself out, yet withdraw itself in such a manner as to leave the recipient free.[4] This is peculiar to God, for finite giving makes the recipient dependent. Omnipotence gives itself out, yet the result is independence. The omnipotence of God is His goodness, both giving Himself in goodness to man, and at the same time enabling man to maintain his independence. "For goodness means to give out completely, but in such a wise that by withdrawing it makes the recipient free."[5]

In the second place God is omniscient, all-knowing.[6]

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1. Loc. cit.
2. Lowrie, op. cit., p. 311.
3. Journals, p. 173.
4. Søren Kierkegaard, Christian Discourses, p. 187.
5. Loc. cit.
6. Søren Kierkegaard, Purity of Heart, p. 50.

> He knows and remembers all that this man has ever confided to Him, or that this man has ever withdrawn from His confidence. He is an omniscient One that again at the final moment of this man's life will remember this hour, will remember what this man confided to Him and what this man withdrew from His confidence.[1]

For Kierkegaard there is no knowledge beyond the pale of God. He finds no dark corners that He has not hitherto been aware of.

Kierkegaard writes that God has "absolutely nothing obvious about Him," and in His invisibility He is omnipresent.[2] His omnipresence is "not simply that he is present everywhere and at all times, but also that he is wholly present in his presence, absolutely present in every individual, wholly present in each and yet in all."[3] He is not to be conceived of as broken up in some fashion or as partially present in each individual who knows Him. This is pantheism according to Kierkegaard.[4]

> He is wholly present in everyone in particular and yet in all things; that is theism, personality, individuality, but once one has grasped that, then organic development acquires a very real value, just as an army would not be smaller because every soldier was a general in spirit.[5]

The crux of the matter is the spirithood of God, for the omnipresence of God, and especially Kierkegaard's conception of God as wholly present becomes untenable if any finite, materialistic view of God is assumed. Kierkegaard opposes any such notion of God as an attempt to make Him more knowable. He argues that this is impos-

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1. Loc. cit.
2. Søren Kierkegaard, Postscript, p. 219.
3. Journals, p. 83.
4. Loc. cit.
5. Loc. cit.

sible, since God can only be known by faith. He is not an object; on the contrary, He is "pure subjectivity, sheer pure subjectivity."[1] By this reasoning the spirithood of God becomes His essential characteristic, an attribute that must be recognized in any attempt to enter into a sanctifying relationship with Him.

2. The Holiness of God

The writing of Kierkegaard exhibits a profound respect for the majesty and holiness of God. "It is precisely Thy greatness which makes Thee invisible," he writes; "For Thou art too far removed from the thoughts of men in Thy wisdom that they should see Thee; and Thou art too near men in Thy omnipresence to permit them to see Thee."[2] God is holy because He is good, and His absolute goodness is, in Kierkegaard's opinion, His own exclusive property.

> Because the whole world is evil, is God therefore not good? Would you be better off if He were only as good as the whole world is? Is not this the one thing needful, and the only blessed thing both in time and eternity, in necessity and in joy - that God is the one good, that no one is good except God?[3]

The contradiction between the holiness of God and the condition of man receives some emphasis in Kierkegaard's thought. "When you recognize that God is always in the right," he writes, "you stand aloof from God, and so, too, when you recognise as a consequence of this that you are always in the wrong."[4] The distinction is clearly made; God is absolute good, man has nothing good

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1. Lowrie, op. cit., p. 548.
2. Edifying Discourses, (Harper), p. 154.
3. Søren Kierkegaard, Edifying Discourses, (Augsburg), Vol. 2, p. 36.
4. Søren Kierkegaard, Either-Or, Vol. 2, p. 352.

in him. Thus the majesty and holiness of God is emphasized and the contradistinction between God and man demands a godly fear toward God.[1] The dichotomy necessitates that "really and truly a man should fear God."[2]

God, holy and majestic, is utterly unchangeable. "I rest," Kierkegaard writes, "in the unchangeableness of God. This is a rest that no one can disturb for you except yourself. . . ."[3] The unchangeableness of God, however, is not to be construed as disinterest in the affairs of men. Kierkegaard is careful to balance God's holiness against His concern.

> This immutability is not that icy indifference, that destructive elevation, that ambiguous aloofness, which the hardened understanding eulogized; on the contrary, this immutability is heartfelt and warm and omnipresent, an immutability that concerns itself about man's welfare. . . .[4]

Even in the smallest things of life God's holiness does not make Him indifferent. His concern goes much deeper than man's, as much as to the lowly sparrow's fall. "God is gentle," Kierkegaard writes; "I have never felt the least scruple at quite simply praying God to help me to enjoy myself when once in a while I felt so inclined."[5]

3. God's Desire for Fellowship

Despite the spirithood of God and the awesome majesty of His

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1. Loc. cit.
2. Purity of Heart, p. 196.
3. Edifying Discourses, (Harper), p. 263.
4. Edifying Discourses, (Augsburg), Vol. 4, p. 133.
5. Journals, p. 350.

holiness, He is a very intimate Being, who, according to Kierkegaard, earnestly desires fellowship with man. Kierkegaard speaks of God's having sought man,[1] and makes reference to the fact that God is "certainly personal."[2] He states that "the one thing that is pleasing to God is that you should really need him."[3] God, Kierkegaard writes, "has only one joy: to communicate."[4] He concludes that the "most welcome is the one who needs him most."[5] Kierkegaard comments further:

> The relationship, however, is a particular one. What is true of the relation between two men is not true of the relation of man to God: that the longer they live together and the better they get to know each other the closer too they come to one another. The opposite is true in relation to God; the longer one lives with him the more infinite he becomes, - and the smaller one becomes oneself. . . .[6]

Thus, as the relationship grows in fellowship, so the sense of the holiness of God expands and casts its shadow over every exigency of human existence. It would appear that the relationship would eventually be stifled, but it is precisely the ambivalence inherent in it that fosters it, since the fear of God is balanced by an ever-increasing faith, when the relationship is established upon proper grounds.

Kierkegaard warns against presuming upon the relationship by wanting God's help in an ungodly way, or by wanting to dispense

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1. Søren Kierkegaard, Thoughts on Crucial Situations in Human Life, p. 20.
2. Journals, p. 539.
3. Ibid., p. 412.
4. Loc. cit.
5. Loc. cit.
6. Ibid., p. 336.

with God's help.[1] Either way is wrong because it encroaches upon "the everlasting and essential difference of eternity."[2] This is merely to say that the relationship is God's prerogative, and the moment man usurps the authoritative position belonging to God the relationship degenerates to something less than it should be. A relationship is nonetheless possible; "The moment you honestly desire it God is your father."[3] Kierkegaard adds, "Perhaps the most wonderful thing about God is that he can forget man's sins."[4]

B. The Part of God in Sanctification

Essentially, the process of sanctification is, for Kierkegaard, the formation of the God-relationship. In this relationship God Himself plays the dominant role. It is not, therefore, man's appropriation of God, but rather God who enters man's life and uses him to the end of His eternal glory.

> God cannot be the object for man because God is the subject, and for that very reason the reverse is absolutely true: when a man denies God he does not harm God but destroys himself; when a man scoffs at God he scoffs at himself.[5]

Since God is the subject of the relationship "a man can do nothing of himself."[6] It is God who is the force behind the union; man becomes merely the object, unable "to do the least

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1. Christian Discourses, p. 66.
2. Loc. cit.
3. Journals, p. 427.
4. Ibid., p. 89.
5. Ibid., p. 186.
6. Postscript, p. 434.

thing without God."[1] When once this condition obtains, the individual is "nearer to perfection."[2] It becomes a matter of "God . . . holding on to us."[3] This involves a totality of being, for, as the seducer explains:

> Mine, what does this word signify? Not what belongs to me, but what I belong to, what contains my whole being, which is mine in so far as I belong to it. My God is not the God who belongs to me, but the God to whom I belong.[4]

God, therefore, enters every phase of life in sanctifying power, and if, no matter what the reason, He is not present in a particular undertaking, it is "in vain."[5]

The need of God in the existence of the individual is, therefore, self-evident. "One needs God," Kierkegaard writes, "and this is the basis for man's love for God."[6] Once this fact is realized a new dimension is added to life. The Christian does not seek the "satisfaction of his appetite," but rather craves the heavenly Father.[7] It may be possible, at times, to effect a change of life without God, but the change can never be for the better in any absolute sense, since it is founded upon an inconsistency with the absolute. "It is necessary," Kierkegaard writes, "for mankind to accept the assistance of a God in order to change, not because it cannot change without

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1. Edifying Discourses, (Harper), p. 165.
2. Loc. cit.
3. Christian Discourses, p. 293.
4. Either-Or, Vol. 1, p. 401.
5. Christian Discourses, p. 306.
6. Ibid., p. 197.
7. Ibid., p. 19.

being humbled in its idea of itself; but then the other wrong path is equally near, being proud of it."[1] When the true basis of sanctification is understood to be God's work in the individual there is "joy" in the fact that "the weaker thou dost become, the stronger does God become in thee."[2] Kierkegaard adds:

> So then, when He who conquers is God - to congratulate God upon His victory, to comfort oneself that it is "He" who has conquered, oh, essentially that is to congratulate oneself upon victory! For in relation to God a man can truly conquer only in that God conquers.[3]

Kierkegaard would not have us imagine that God compels, however. "Compel thee - no, that the God of love will not do at any price, He would by that attain something altogether different from what He desires. How could it occur to love to wish to use compulsion to be loved?"[4] The relationship must be entirely voluntary, but volitional subject to certain limitations. The onus is upon God, who stands ready to conquer, but can only conquer when man wills it so. However, if sanctification is to enter human existence it can only be as God effects it.

C. The Two Parts of Sanctification

The condition of sanctification involves a relationship between God and man. Kierkegaard has made clear his emphasis upon the primacy of God in the matter, but it is necessary that

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1. Journals, p. 27.
2. Christian Discourses, p. 131.
3. Loc. cit.; cf. Edifying Discourses, (Augsburg), Vol. 4, p. 113.
4. Søren Kierkegaard, Attack Upon Christendom, p. 245.

certain conditions obtain in man for God to assert His sanctifying power. In order for this to take place the finite nature of man must be subordinated. This theme is expressed in a quotation from Hamann which prefaces Quidam's Diary, "I had perished had I not perished,"[1] a theme to which Kierkegaard gave considerable attention.

1. Mortification

The motif of self-denial, expressed in a variety of terms, has a prominent place in Kierkegaardian literature.[2] Humility is the thing, writes Kierkegaard, that is requisite to the Christian life,[3] hence, he ironically observes, many covet the talent to philosophize.[4] Kierkegaard conceives of this life as a period of probation in which self-denial is the true expression of Christianity.[5] There is very clear emphasis upon its Christian necessity. It is true that "all is grace:"

> But this does not mean that one should hide from self-denial, no, no. But only that it is not legally binding on all, which is what makes self-denial hard and makes the mind rebel; and that on the contrary, it is moving when Christ says: all is given to thee in Grace - look upon me and my suffering, does that not move you to wish to mortify yourself?[6]

It is not entirely clear what Kierkegaard meant by self-denial, but it appears to be a state of being in which there

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1. Søren Kierkegaard, Stages on Life's Way, p. 187.
2. Valter Lindstrom, "A Contribution to the Interpretation of Kierkegaard's Book, The Works of Love." Studia Theologica, Vol. 6, p. 17.
3. Either-Or, Vol. 2, p. 232.
4. Loc. cit.
5. Søren Kierkegaard, Training in Christianity, pp. 216 ff.
6. Journals, p. 482.

is little, if any, selfishness.

> So death comes first, you must first die to every earthly hope, every merely human reliance, you must die to your selfishness, or to the world; for it is only through your selfishness that the world has power over you; if you have died to your selfishness, you have died also to the world.[1]

Kierkegaard continues the theme of self-denial: "It is in this sense that man is great; and he arrives at the highest pitch of perfection when he becomes suited to God through becoming absolutely nothing in himself."[2] If, therefore, the condition of sanctification is to obtain, the concept of self-denial or mortification, odious though it may be to the natural man, cannot be ignored. It is an imperative prerequisite to the holy life.

There are difficulties in the practice of self-denial which Kierkegaard readily recognizes. To collaborate with the Almighty in self-denial seems hazardous. ". . . The difficulty is just that I must collaborate . . . through constantly understanding that I can do nothing at all, which is not something which can be understood once for all."[3] The problem lies in being and maintaining oneself in self-denial. It is perhaps easy enough "to understand . . . that the whole world must appear to a man as Christianity says it is, must appear thus . . . when he is dead, dead in self-denial. But to become dead to the world! This thing of when one is dead to the world!"[4]

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1. Lowrie, op. cit., p. 475.
2. Edifying Discourses, (Harper), p. 155.
3. Søren Kierkegaard, Works of Love, p. 292.
4. Christian Discourses, p. 151.

Life in this vein "is so entirely foreign to man that to him it is quite literally worse than death."[1] Because of this there is an awful fear that holds a man back from "sacrificing" himself in daily self-denial.[2]

The "sacrifice," however, must be made if sanctification is to become a reality. Kierkegaard explains why: "God is spirit - only one who is dead can speak that language at all. If you do not desire to die then neither can you love God, you talk of quite different things from him."[3] Self-denial, or renunciation as it is often termed by him, is not therefore, a duty, ordered by law, but is actually an expression of love for God.[4] It is "the delight of renunciation, . . . a lover's understanding with God," . . . "really a love relationship."[5] It is, consequently, not a negative characteristic of the Christian, but a positive quality of divine-human relationship.[6] It is the soul's expression of the supreme value of God, resulting in a feeling of emptiness at the thought, the occupations, pleasures, pursuits, and diversions of the world.[7]

2. Quickening

The distinctly positive flavor of Kierkegaard's concept of sanctification has its most complete expression in the idea of quickening. Quickening is the process by which the individual,

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1. Journals, p. 548.
2. Purity of Heart, p. 103.
3. Journals, p. 470.
4. Loc. cit.
5. Ibid., p. 478.
6. Cf. Christian Discourses, p. 179.
7. Loc. cit.

emptied through self-denial, receives the power of God in his life. "Let me feel my nothingness," Kierkegaard prays, "not in order to despair over it, but in order to feel the more powerfully the greatness of thy goodness."[1] In self-denial the existence of God is discovered; man becomes a collaborator with God, and "everything" becomes possible.[2] Through self-denial the way is opened whereby man becomes an "instrument of God," the universal category of existence for the sanctified believer.[3] "Dare," Kierkegaard admonishes, ". . . to become nothing before God, and He will give you the spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."[4] In making this "absolute venture" man becomes another individual.[5] A new dimension has been added - that of the divine, with concomitant powers and abilities. This is the quickening process, the positive extension of self-denial. Through its power sanctification becomes a reality, the energizing force behind the Christian life.

Self-denial and quickening is an existential process. Kierkegaard warns that it is a continuous matter, a daily condition of existence.

> But whoever knows in himself that he can do nothing, has each day and each moment the desired and undubitable occasion to experience the living God. And if he does not have this experience often enough, he knows well the

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1. Journals, p. 73.
2. Works of Love, p. 292.
3. Ibid., p. 293.
4. Edifying Discourses, (Augsburg), p. 103.
5. Postscript, p. 379.

> reason. The reason is that he has become involved in a misunderstanding, and thinks that he can do something of himself.[1]

Thus the lesson of self-denial is never learned once for all, but must be apprehended momentarily in a condition of compliance with and dependence upon God, the source of sanctifying power.

III. Sanctification Is an Attribute of Man

Sanctification, as has been indicated, is primarily a work of God, wherein He is subject and man is object. Consideration is now given to the manner in which sanctification is reflected in the object - man. Kierkegaard points out that holiness is a state of totality involving the whole man, and with, therefore, ramifications in every department of human existence. "For commitment to the Good is a whole-souled decision," he writes, "and a man cannot by the craft and the flattery of his tongue lay hold of God while his heart is far away."[2]

A. Human Faculties and Sanctification

The place of the intellect, emotions, and will receive fairly specific treatment in Kierkegaard's concept of the doctrine of sanctification.

1. Intellect

Kierkegaard is insistent in his statements that Christianity cannot be understood intellectually. Therefore, the intellect is of no direct use in the process of sanctification. He

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1. Edifying Discourses, (Harper), p. 171.
2. Purity of Heart, p. 176.

writes:

> The problem is not to understand Christianity, but to understand that it cannot be understood. That is the holiness of faith, and reflection is sanctified by its use.[1]

(Reflection is here used "as the distinctive mark of the infinite reflection in which alone the subjectivity of the individual can have the appropriate concern for an eternal happiness,"[2] and, as such is opposed to objective intellectual thought.) Indeed, in connection with Christianity it becomes laughable to attempt a rational treatment.

> So then a human shrewdness, perhaps with good intentions, began the most deplorable of all undertakings: to betray Christianity by defending it. And then the devil laughed within himself and said, "Behold, now I can be quite tranquil, now the game is won."[3]

Kierkegaard explains that the reason the intellect is foreign to Christianity, hence to sanctification, is simply that the "'in-and-for-itself' and reason are related to one another inversely; where the one is the other is not."[4] The "in-and-for-itself" is equated with the teachings of the New Testament, and reason and New Testament Christianity are, therefore, at odds with each other.[5] Kierkegaard adds that disparities of ability among men would make the acquisition of sanctification easier for some than for others if reason were

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1. Journals, p. 261.
2. Postscript, p. 35, (note).
3. Training in Christianity, p. 225.
4. Journals, p. 466.
5. Loc. cit.

the criterion.[1] This, he feels, would be unjust.

The "crucifixion of the understanding," Kierkegaard states, "is not a martyrdom of the instant but precisely the martyrdom of endurance."[2] By this he means that there is a continuing quality to this martyrdom, since the rational approach constantly refuses to be ignored. It must always be guarded against, but this is not an easy state in which to live.

> . . .It is the most difficult thing of all, day in and day out, to relate oneself to something upon which one bases one's eternal happiness, holding to the passion with which one understands that one cannot understand, especially as it is so easy to let this go in the illusion that now one has understood it.[3]

Yet the task of understanding that one cannot understand must be accepted. Holiness cannot be discovered by any other route.

2. Emotions

Since Kierkegaard's quarrel was with the rational speculation of his day he has less to say about human emotions than human intellect. He does, however, seem to give a place to the emotions in Christian experience. In this connection he writes:

> There is only one proof of the truth of Christianity, and that, quite rightly, is from the emotions, when the dread of sin and a heavy conscience torture a man into crossing the narrow line between despair bordering upon madness - and Christendom. There lies Christianity.[4]

The emotions, therefore, are a proof of Christianity, but they are nothing more. And as a proof they are valid only to the

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1. Postscript, p. 337.
2. Ibid., p. 496.
3. Loc. cit.
4. Journals, p. 314.

individual who experiences them and hence are not to be considered a universal proof. Since they are subjective and personal in nature and give credence to the experience of sanctification they are secondary to other aspects of the process of sanctification. Kierkegaard's scarcity of treatment of the emotions further substantiates their subordinate role.

3. Will

In relation to sanctification Kierkegaard regards the will with considerable respect. "Resolve," he writes, "is that which links a man with the eternal, brings the eternal to him in time, shakes him free from the lethargy of uniformity, annuls the sorcery of habit, interrupts the long quarrel of laborious thoughts, and pronounces a benediction over even the weakest beginning, if it really is a beginning."[1]

The will must operate on a continuing, existential level, lest the "hereditary enemy of resolve," cowardice, interfere with "resolution's good understanding with the eternal."[2] The will must act "as the constant renewal of a decisive resolve," and it may then be the means of sanctification.[3] Kierkegaard thinks that this process is physically most exhausting, and requires "very considerable strength of character in order to remain on the same peak of discrimination."[4] Action of the will,

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1. Edifying Discourses, (Augsburg), Vol. 4, p. 75.
2. Ibid., p. 81.
3. Loc. cit.
4. Journals, p. 388.

however exhausting it may be, is a necessary corollary of holiness. It is, in fact, the only requisite. "In the sphere of religion," he writes, ". . . one should not talk of genius as a special gift, for here the gift is simply to will, . . ."[1]

In relation to the intellect, the will is by far the more superior in sanctification, though indirectly the understanding has a place.

> The spiritual man is able to endure a duplication in himself; by his understanding he is able to hold fast to the fact that something is contrary to the understanding, and then will it nevertheless; he is able to hold fast with the understanding to the fact that something is an offense, and yet to will it nevertheless; that humanly speaking, something makes him unhappy, and yet to will it, etc. But the New Testament is composed precisely in view of this.[2]

The will actually becomes the distinguishing mark of Christianity,[3] for it leads one along paths that the understanding would shun. For Kierkegaard the outstanding example of a life motivated by the will as opposed to the understanding is that of Christ, who willingly followed a course of action that to the understanding was fatal.[4]

Kierkegaard links the will of man with faith, thus making it decisive to holiness. "Faith," he writes, "surely implies an act of the will, and moreover not in the same sense as when I say, for instance, that all apprehension implies an act of the will: . . ."[5] Kierkegaard appears to relate a lower concept

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1. Søren Kierkegaard, The Concept of Dread, p. 102.
2. Søren Kierkegaard, Attack Upon Christendom, p. 162.
3. Søren Kierkegaard, For Self-Examination, p. 87.
4. Loc. cit.
5. Journals, p. 3.

of the will with desire, which has its counterpart in the imagination.[1] The counterpart of the will proper is faith.[2] The individual may exist on the desire-imagination level by refusing to exercise the will in the direction of faith, but the result is imperfection and disappointment. True sanctification is an act of the will which releases the faith-force, thus implementing the God-man relationship.

Kierkegaard's pronounced tendency to voluntarism[3] gives rise to a discussion of his concept of freedom. Kierkegaard affirms that man is created in the image of God, and this implies freedom, which is rooted in sheer possibility. Man, therefore, has a choice, to will one thing, or to remain at the level of the desires. This condition of intermediate possibility gives rise to anxiety, a condition man tries to avoid by attempting to return to a position of irresponsible animal bliss.[4] But this proves impossible, and guilt, followed by sin, the true contrast of freedom, is the result.[5] The "need" that is inherent in freedom[6] can only be met by willing God in the life, which, in turn, involves relinquishment of desires. "The Christian gives up his own will," (desires) Kierkegaard states.[7] It is at this point that the action is exclusively

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1. Training in Christianity, pp. 187 ff.
2. Ibid., p. 185.
3. Lowrie, op. cit., p. 316.
4. D. Roberts, "Faith and Freedom in Existentialism," Theology Today, Vol. 8, p. 474.
5. E. Manasse, "Conversion & Liberation; a Comparison of Augustine & Kierkegaard." Review of Religion, Vol. 7, p. 371.
6. Works of Love, p. 32; cf. p. 120.
7. Christian Discourses, p. 92.

the prerogative of man. "There is one thing God cannot take away from a man, namely, the voluntary, - and it is precisely this which Christianity requires of man."[1]

Since, therefore, the will controls the movement, sanctification is directly related to it. It is noteworthy that this point of view is opposed to the concept of predestination, which, according to Kierkegaard, arose "in order to relate freedom and God's omnipotence," but "solves the riddle by denying one of the concepts and consequently explains nothing."[2]

4. Human Faculties Versus Spirit

Summarily, in Kierkegaard's view, human faculties, with the exception of the will, are of limited value in acquiring holiness. Because this is so, everyone is virtually on an equal footing regardless of physical or mental capacity.

> Thou plain man! The Christianity of the New Testament is infinitely high; but observe that it is not high in such a sense that it has to do with the difference between man and man with respect to intellectual capacity, etc. No it is for all. Everyone, absolutely everyone, if he absolutely wills it, if he will absolutely hate himself, will absolutely put up with everything, suffer everything (and this every man can if he will) - then is this infinite height attainable to him.[3]

God is simply not accessible through the medium of human talent or human effort. Kierkegaard adds:

> But turn around, turn toward God, use ten tenth parts of your strength, torture if possible every last makeshift

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1. Ibid., p. 186.
2. Journals, p. 1.
3. Attack Upon Christendom, p. 287.

> into your service - and you will still be as nothing, at an infinite distance from having gained anything in an infinite debt to God![1]

Again and again Kierkegaard emphasizes that the sanctified relationship is a relationship of the spirit and cannot be instituted under any other category.[2] This is not to say that Kierkegaard neglected or disparaged human faculties. He admired men of intellectual capacity, but realized that such ability offers but scant assistance in attaining any degree of holiness.[3] He is aware, as well, of the physical necessities of life. "There are certain innocent human expedients (distraction, physical recreation)", he writes, "which a man may not overlook without asking too much of God."[4] All such areas, however, are of secondary importance to him, and not to be confused with the task of becoming a Christian.

B. The Part of Man in Sanctification

Man's part in sanctification is limited, and, for Kierkegaard, the part he can play appears to be connected with his will. Man finds himself in a quagmire of possibilities with no hope of resolution outside of Divine assistance. Kierkegaard writes of this:

> I cannot go to any man, for I am a prisoner, and misunderstanding, and misunderstanding, and misunderstanding again, are the iron bars before my window; and I do not elect to

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1. Works of Love, p. 84.
2. Journals, p. 383.
3. Postscript, p. 342.
4. Journals, p. 312.

> go to God, for I am compelled. . . . For to whom am I to talk?[1]

So the believer presents himself to God, presents himself as if he were a cipher, "for everything which God is to use he first reduces to nothing."[2] There is no other way by which holiness may be achieved. Man cannot come to God in an attitude of defiance, nor can he "cowardly and effeminately whine his way in."[3] Access may be gained through "the sacrifice of obedience."[4] The kind of obedience necessary, moreover, must be of an unconditional quality. "For this properly is the hymn of praise," Kierkegaard writes, "the paean, the song of songs: by joyful and unconditional obedience to praise God when one cannot understand him."[5] Obedience of such unconditional nature suggests a position of subservience to God, a theme of importance in Kierkegaard's thought.

> In ancient times it was not as now when the astronomer erects upon an eminence the building from which he would observe the stars, in ancient times he dug down in the earth to find a place from whence to observe the stars - in relation to God no change has taken place; to be exalted to God is possible only by descending.[6]

Kierkegaard suggests the reason for God's insistence upon obedience; He is infinite majesty. Because of His majesty "the only thing that interests him is obedience." "It is so

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1. Søren Kierkegaard, Stages on Life's Way, p. 323.
2. Journals, p. 522.
3. Works of Love, p. 305.
4. Søren Kierkegaard, On Authority and Revelation, p. xxiv.
5. Christian Discourses, p. 88.
6. Ibid., p. 376.

easy to see," he adds, "that one to whom everything is equally important and equally insignificant can only be interested in one thing: obedience."[1]

Having opened the door to sanctification through willing himself to God in unconditional obedience, the individual becomes "capable of being used as an instrument in the hands of Providence."[2] This, for Kierkegaard, is the height of bliss. It involves humiliation, for, he "is scarcely able to make a resolution for the morrow without adding, 'If God will,' since he can do nothing of himself. But inwardly what bliss!"[3]

The pinnacle of spiritual satisfaction in sanctification is fortified by love. Kierkegaard writes of this:

> The Christian serves only one Master; and he not merely serves Him but loves Him, he loves the Lord his God with all his heart and with all his strength. Just for this reason he serves Him wholly; for only love unites wholly, unites the most diverse parties in love, and in this instance unites man to God who is love.[4]

The relationship with God in the bond of love is so complete in itself that human inter-personal relationships are secondary, if not actually unnecessary. It becomes absurd, therefore, to compare oneself with others, since it is "the relation to God [which] is absolute happiness."[5] Kierkegaard cites the parable of the Laborers as evidence that, in the sight of

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1. Journals, p. 494.
2. Works of Love, p. 71.
3. Christian Discourses, p. 137.
4. Ibid., p. 86.
5. Journals, p. 196.

God, comparisons are odious.[1] In all of this the motive is nothing else than God, neither desire for a reward,[2] nor fear of future punishment.[3] This thought is beautifully expressed in a prayer:

> Father in Heaven! What is man without Thee! What is all he knows, vast accumulation though it be, but a chipped fragment if he does not know Thee! What is all his striving, could it even encompass a world, but a half-finished work if he does not know Thee: Thee the One, who art one thing and who art all![4]

C. Sanctification and Self-Consciousness

Kierkegaard's concept of sanctification does not ignore the selfhood of the individual. "According to the teaching of Christianity," he writes, "man is not to be merged into God by way of a sort of pantheistic disappearance, or by the obliteration of all his individual traits in the divine ocean but through a heightened consciousness."[5] The selfhood of the individual is ignored at great cost, ". . . for no one can have a real conception of God without having a corresponding one about life and himself, nor can he have a real conception of himself without a similar one about God, and no real conception about life without a similar one about himself."[6] However, self-knowledge is a "terrifying occupation,"[7] for it breeds anxiety. The

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1. Loc. cit.
2. Purity of Heart, p. 69.
3. Ibid., p. 88.
4. Ibid., p. 31.
5. Journals, p. 63.
6. Edifying Discourses, (Harper), p. 202.
7. Ibid., p. 160.

anxiety arises because of man's inability to transcend himself, for, "instead of the entire world he gets merely himself; instead of being master of his fate he becomes a needy petitioner; instead of being able to do everything he can do nothing at all."[1] Kierkegaard explains that, at bottom, this is anxiety for the future.[2]

> Earthly and worldly anxiety is rendered possible by the fact that man, compounded of the temporal and the eternal, became a self; but in becoming a self the next day became existent for him. And here it is fundamentally that the battle is fought.[3]

True selfhood is lacking in such a state, and can only be achieved through "giving up the temporal to grasp the eternal."[4] The individual who "turns away from the temporal to the eternal"[5] has become "reconciled with himself,"[6] since "the eternal is always in harmony with itself."[7] The undertaking, however, is successful only when it is comprehended "that one absolutely is in need of God every instant."[8] Sin is a refusal to admit this fact. It is the "selfishness"[9] which prevents the individual from becoming a true self. It is "before God in despair not to will to be one's self, or in despair to will to be one's self."[10] Either way misses the mark because God is

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1. Loc. cit.
2. Christian Discourses, p. 74.
3. Loc. cit.
4. Ibid., p. 160.
5. Ibid., p. 127.
6. Loc. cit.
7. Loc. cit.
8. On Authority and Revelation, p. 157.
9. Christian Discourses, p. 134.
10. Søren Kierkegaard, The Sickness Unto Death, p. 123.

left out of the picture.

Therefore, the individual must be a sanctified believer in the hands of God in order to be a true self. This, in the highest sense, is being contemporary with himself.[1] The true self becomes such through a relationship with God, who first makes the individual "truly its own self, so as then to draw it to Himself."[2] In commenting upon a Scripture reference relating to this idea Kierkegaard defines the self:[3]

> If it is . . . a self, then the phrase "to draw truly to oneself," cannot mean merely to draw away from being its own self, to draw it in such a way that it loses its own existence by being drawn into that which draws it unto itself. No, in the case of that which is truly a self, to be drawn in such a way is again to be deceived. . . . No, when that which is to be drawn is in itself a self, the real meaning of truly drawing to oneself is, first to help it to become truly its own self, so as then to draw it to oneself, or it means to help it to become its own self with and by the drawing of it to oneself. - So here the meaning of truly drawing to oneself is duplex: first to make that which is to be drawn its own self, and then to draw it to oneself.[4]

To be a self is a duplication. A duplication is freedom, freedom which involves choice, since freedom always involves choice. Thus drawing to oneself means to present a choice in such a way that the individual will choose to be drawn by the truth, and the truth is Christ. In this fashion becoming a self is a composite act.

Hence Christ would first and foremost help every man to

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1. Christian Discourses, p. 77.
2. Training in Christianity, p. 159.
3. John 12:32.
4. Training in Christianity, p. 159.

> become himself, would require of him first and foremost that by entering into himself he should become himself, so as then to draw him unto Himself. He would draw man unto Himself, and in order to draw him truly to Himself, He would draw him only as a free being, and so through a choice.[1]

Thus the self is less than a self until the choice is made by which he becomes a true self through obedient submission to God. In this way true selfhood is realized.

IV. Summary

Kierkegaard's view of God is intimately connected to his concept of sanctification. God is the Summum Bonum of life; He is the proper goal of man. The nature of God is such that He is altogether other-worldly, beyond the boundaries of human finitude. God is a spirit, with the characteristics of omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence. He is utterly holy and majestic, yet He desires to have fellowship with man. It is God, however, who enters man's life; the prerogative is His, though His overtures are never forced. Sanctification, therefore, is a dual relationship involving both God and man. Though the relationship is initiated by God, man has his part. Kierkegaard, reminiscent of the early Catholic divines, stresses the theme of man's self-denial as a prerequisite to sanctification. Self-denial, or renunciation, for him, is actually an expression of love for God, and this expression makes possible the quickening power of God in the life. Kierkegaard gives little place to human faculties in the process, with the exception of

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1. Ibid., p. 160.

the will, to which considerable significance is attached. Sanctification is not, therefore, a relationship which destroys personality; on the contrary, man becomes truly a self when and only when the God-relationship is established.

CHAPTER V

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF SANCTIFICATION

I. Introduction

The soul of Kierkegaard continually longs for God; an unrequited yearning for the Eternal is as characteristic of him as his much touted melancholy. The discourse, "A Hearty Longing," expresses this desire:

> I will away from this evil world where sin exercises dominion, and I will long for fellowship with Him! Away from it? That, however, is not so easy. Yet I can wish myself away from the vanity and corruption of the world, and even if the wish does not avail, the hearty longing for the eternal avails to carry me away; for in the longing itself the eternal is, just as God is in the sorrow which is sorrow unto God.[1]

This chapter explores the characteristics of this longing, attention being given to the time process of sanctification, the degree of perfection attainable, and the relation of sanctification to other stages of Ordo Salutis.

II. Sanctification Is a Process

Kierkegaard conceives of sanctification as a process, not a decisive event in a moment of time, which, once experienced, obviates any further sanctifying activity. The latter view, in his thinking, is an impossibility. "The grace of God," he

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1. Søren Kierkegaard, Christian Discourses, p. 267.

writes, "can never be seized by force."[1] It is acquired little by little. Kierkegaard explains that although it is true that through Christ's death sin was forgiven;

> on the other hand man is not lifted from his former state, the "law of sin" as St. Paul says (Rom. 8:25), as though by magic. He has to return along the road he went whilst the consciousness that his sins are forgiven buoys him up and gives him the courage to defy despair. . . .[2]

The process of "returning" is a continuous experience of self-denial before God, a process that is not without its exhausting aspects.

> For an all-powerful one cannot be your collaborator, the collaborator of a man without this signifying that you can do nothing at all. And, on the other hand, if He is your assistant, then you can do everything. The exhaustive thing is that there is at once a contradiction, so that you do not experience the one today, the other tomorrow; and it is exhausting that this contradiction is not something you can be conscious of at every moment.[3]

The contradiction is resolved by God, who "everyday openeth His bountiful hand and filleth . . . with blessing,"[4] but the process is neither quick nor easy. "This transformation," Kierkegaard writes, "is a process of dying away from the immediate. This is slowly brought about."[5] Patience is necessary; ". . . one cannot reap immediately where one has sown. I shall bear in mind," he adds, "the method of the philosopher who bade his disciples keep silence for three years after which time

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1. Søren Kierkegaard, Edifying Discourses, (Harper), p. 145.
2. Søren Kierkegaard, Journals, p. 43.
3. Søren Kierkegaard, Works of Love, p. 292.
4. Christian Discourses, p. 9.
5. Søren Kierkegaard, Postscript, p. 432.

everything would come right."[1]

The negative process of "dying away" has a positive counterpart; the constant acquiring of the "grace of God."[2] "It can only be had through being constantly acquired, and can only be acquired through being constantly developed."[3] It would seem that the more one has of the grace of God the more it is desired. ". . .The human heart becomes in a very beautiful sense more and more discontented, more and more burning with desire, more and more filled with longing."[4] Yet despite this discontent "the more a man needs God the more perfect he is."[5]

Paradox is clearly in evidence. A man can do "everything" only when he realizes he can do "nothing;"[6] the more discontent the more perfection. In addition there is the perpetual dichotomy between the relative and the absolute, which tends to create, within sanctification, a static quality which, for Kierkegaard, destroys the relationship.

> But to live for one's absolute telos once in a while is to have a relative relationship to it, and to be relatively related to the absolute telos is to be related to a relative telos, for it is the relationship that is decisive.7

The difficulty is: "To have one's daily life in the decisive dialectic of the infinite, and yet continue to live: this is

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1. Journals, p. 19.
2. Edifying Discourses, (Harper), p. 145.
3. Ibid., p. 10.
4. Ibid., p. 145.
5. Loc. cit.
6. Works of Love, p. 292.
7. Postscript, p. 365.

both the art of life and its difficulty."[1] The relative relationship belongs to the world, the absolute to the single individual. ". . .It is not an easy thing to maintain an absolute relationship to the absolute telos and at the same time participate like other men in this and that."[2] Lowrie notes that there are various solutions. One is to pursue the absolute ends only one day a week.[3] This is quite unsatisfactory.[4] Another is the complete renunciation of relative ends, but this is impossible in terms of existence.[5] Lowrie concludes:

> It cannot be accomplished in an instant and once for all. We must wean ourselves little by little from the relative ends, and this implies suffering.[6]

III. Entire or Imperfect Sanctification

In Kierkegaard's thinking, sanctification is no shibboleth that automatically ensures success. This kind of confidence is false because it is opposed to the existence concept which is foundational to holiness. In finite existence the "possibles" are never excluded. "No, when one lets go of probability in order to venture in reliance upon God, one has to acknowledge to oneself what is implied in this letting go of probability, namely, that when one thus ventures, it is just exactly as possible that one will be victorious as that one will be

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1. Ibid., p. 79.
2. Ibid., p. 365.
3. Lowrie, Kierkegaard, p. 331.
4. Postscript, p. 365.
5. Lowrie, op. cit., p. 331.
6. Loc. cit.

defeated."[1] Any other interpretation excludes real commitment to God[2] since probability must be surrendered in the process of holiness.[3] (By probability Kierkegaard means finite probability.)

Related to the issue of entire or imperfect sanctification is the example of the qualitative difference between earthly goods and spiritual goods. This example illustrates the imperative quality of the holy life, though it is less than perfect and though no finite certainty is guaranteed. The possessor of spiritual goods cannot but live in the fact of possession,[4] though the possession may be incomplete. The possessor of earthly goods, regardless of their value, on the other hand, can live as though they were not possessed.[5] In the latter case the possessor has a choice, either to acknowledge his possessions or not; not so with the former. The possessor of spiritual goods is compelled to live in the light of his riches. Nevertheless, the possession of spiritual goods does not imply any external security,[6] hence the possibility of external defeat.

In Kierkegaard's view, however, sanctification does not admit to any earthly finality. There is no goal, at least in the finite sense of the term; the believer strives infinitely,

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1. Søren Kierkegaard, For Self-Examination, p. 117.
2. Ibid., p. 116.
3. Loc. cit.
4. Works of Love, p. 22.
5. Loc. cit.
6. Ibid., p. 306.

"is constantly in the process of becoming."[1] He continues to aspire to the eternal, and "never becomes so sated but that he continues to hunger."[2] "We are therefore told that we should work for our salvation in fear and trembling, for it is never completed or perfect, but a relapse [is] possible."[3]

There are philosophic reasons for the lack of completion. The fundamental disparity between eternal happiness and existence prevents a complete union of the two in time.[4] Thus the penetration of the absolute into existence is an approximation. Kierkegaard warns that ". . . this must not be understood comparatively, in relation to the more or less of others, for then the individual will have lost his ideality."[5] This would preclude a fusion of God with man. The reason for the approximation is rather "because the eternal aims from above at the existing individual who by existing is in process of movement, and thus at the moment when the eternal strikes, he is already a little moment away."[6]

Despite the evidence to suggest the imperfection of sanctification, Kierkegaard gives indications that a degree of perfection may be achieved in life. He disparages, for example, the notion that the believer must sin because he is imperfect. "No," he writes, "that attitude is still a sort of despair. He

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1. Postscript, p. 84.
2. Søren Kierkegaard, Edifying Discourses, (Augsburg), Vol. 3, p. 29.
3. Journals, p. 28.
4. Postcript, p. 355.
5. Ibid., p. 436.
6. Loc. cit.

shall and must master those evil thoughts through faith in Christ."[1] A passage in the Postscript is more daring. "This is slowly brought about, [dying away from the immediate] but finally he will feel himself confined within the absolute conception of God; . . ."[2]

The weight of the evidence, however, seems to rest upon the side of imperfection. There is always the possibility of guilt[3] and this fact precludes the possibility of absolute and entire sanctification. One is never entirely rid of the necessity of repentance, that "silent daily anxiety" given birth by guilt.[4] Kierkegaard himself, is candid about his own imperfection.

> I call the whole literary activity my own upbringing and development - not, however, implying that I am now perfect or completely finished so as to need no more upbringing and development.[5]

His contention is that he merely knows what Christianity is, which is not to say that he is an example of his doctrine.[6]

IV. Relation of Sanctification to Other Stages of Ordo Salutis

Although sanctification is an imperfect process in Kierkegaard's view, he nevertheless suggests high standards in its application. "Let the individual merely take note of his own mode of existence," he writes, "and he will know it. If the

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1. Journals, p. 265.
2. Postscript, p. 436.
3. Ibid., p. 489.
4. Søren Kierkegaard, Purity of Heart, p. 45.
5. Point of View, p. 155.
6. Ibid., p. 159.

idea of an eternal happiness does not transform his existence absolutely, he does not stand related to it; if there is anything he is not willing to give up for its sake, the relationship is not there."[1] There is nothing that is not included under the heading "expendable" for the sake of a relationship with God. Kierkegaard suggests a test by which the level of relationship may be measured:

> The individual can therefore readily determine for himself how he stands toward an eternal happiness, or whether he has any such relationship. He need only submit his entire immediacy with all its yearnings and desires to the inspection of resignation. If he finds a single hard spot, a point of resistance, it means that he does not have a relationship to an eternal happiness.[2]

A. Relation to Regeneration

In Kierkegaard's thought the concept of regeneration[3] is closely linked with the idea of sin. Sin is a result of the action of the devil upon the individual; it cannot originate in man alone.[4] Only an awareness of sin can give rise to the "possibility of conversion."[5] Sin is an inexplicable part of existence. "Original sin," he writes, "is guilt,[6] and its ability to be inherited is, therefore, a paradox, since guilt is a spiritual category, while inheritance is a natural category.[7] (Here Kierkegaard recognizes the element of paradox in

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1. Postscript, p. 352.
2. Ibid., p. 135.
3. Cf. Alan Richardson, A Theological Word Book of the Bible, p. 30, for definition of regeneration.
4. Journals, p. 1.
5. Loc. cit.
6. Ibid., p. 376.
7. Loc. cit.

sin, which preceding theologians had attempted to explain rationally.) As a result sin can only be accepted, as, in truth, it exists for God. The only possible answer to the dilemma is faith, but faith cannot exist without a prior awareness of sin. Kierkegaard explains:

> But though the means He employs are so many, all ways come together at one point, the consciousness of sin - through that passes "the way" by which He draws a man, the repentant sinner, to Himself.[1]

Thus, a "consciousness of sin"[2] is necessary if one is to become a Christian. Through a hazy impression of the "ideal" which preceded the sinful state[3] the consciousness of sin is made more real. The discord in a "world of harmony" caused by man's sinful disobedience of God[4] gives rise to guilt, for the eternal has been lost.[5]

At this point faith comes to the rescue; faith in the person of Christ, who covers the sin of the individual. Kierkegaard writes:

> He hides them quite literally. When a man places himself in front of another and covers him entirely with his body so that no one at all can get a sight of him who is hidden behind - so it is that Jesus Christ covers with his holy body thy sin.[6]

Kierkegaard emphasizes that regeneration comes about subsequently to natural birth,[7] and this is through faith, which

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1. Søren Kierkegaard, Training in Christianity, p. 155.
2. Ibid., p. 71
3. Journals, p. 541.
4. Christian Discourses, p. 346.
5. Ibid., p. 148.
6. For Self-Examination, p. 22.
7. Søren Kierkegaard, Philosophic Fragments, p. 80.

becomes the second nature in man.[1] All of this must precede any understanding of sanctification. He writes on this theme:

> "What It Means to Seek God,"
> more closely defining it by considering that no man can see God without purity, and that no man can know God without becoming a sinner.[2]

There is some evidence to suggest that Kierkegaard connects regeneration with removal of guilt, but not with complete forgiveness of sins. A somewhat enigmatic journal entry suggests:

> The forgiveness of sins cannot be such that with one blow God wipes out all guilt, obliterates all its consequences. Such a desire is only a worldly longing which does not rightly know what guilt is. It is only the guilt which is forgiven, the forgiveness of sins is not more. It does not mean to become a new man under happier circumstances, but to become a new man in the consoling assurance that guilt is forgiven even though the consequences of sin remain. The forgiveness of sin must not be a scheme whereby a man who has tried his hand at many things ends by wishing to be a new man, and hopes to stumble through with the help of the forgiveness of sins. No, the man who has understood that guilt is something absolutely different and far more terrible than the consequences of sin (looked upon as misfortune, suffering), he alone repents, but neither will he tell such fabulous tales.[3]

The above passage appears to indicate that though the great barrier, guilt, has been removed by regeneration, not all has been cleared away. The use of the plural "sins" in the phrase "forgiveness of sins" suggests that regeneration is of a local character. Thus it may not initiate sanctification, though it certainly precedes it. Kierkegaard's personal experience

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1. Loc. cit.
2. Søren Kierkegaard, Crucial Situations, p. 9.
3. Journals, pp. 173-174.

appears to substantiate this. His initial conversion came in 1838, and was recorded in a Journal entry of May 19, at 10:30 a.m.[1] However, it was not until ten years later that he realized the release of full forgiveness of sin. This came with the awareness that God forgets as well as forgives.[2] Through the Easter experience of 1848 Kierkegaard gained a fresh insight into Christianity, an insight that may be related to an understanding of sanctification and which launched him into a more decisive Christianity than he had hitherto known.[3]

B. Relation to Justification

Justification,[4] for Kierkegaard, appears to include a more triumphant, positive note than regeneration. Comparing the birth of Christ to justification, he writes:

> The birth of Christ is not only an event on earth but also in heaven, but our justification is also not merely an event on earth but also in heaven.[5]

Justification appears to be related to God's attitude of forgetting the sin of the believer, and it involves a new dimension of existence. Lowrie, quoting Kierkegaard, writes:

> When one has thus verily experienced and experiences what it is to believe in the forgiveness of sins, he has surely become another man; all is forgotten - yet with him it is not as with a child which when it is forgiven becomes the same child again. No, he has become an eternity older,

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1. Ibid., p. 591.
2. Lowrie, op. cit., p. 394.
3. Ibid., p. 406ff.
4. Cf. Richardson, op. cit., p. 118, for definition of justification; ante, p. 6, (note).
5. Journals, p. 41.

> for he has now become spirit, the whole of immediacy with its selfish clinging to the world and to itself is lost. Humanly speaking, he is old, prodigiously old, but eternally he is young.[1]

The transaction may be tumultous, convulsed with birth-pangs,[2] but it will yield the "peace of love."[3] There is a unique quality of rest that accompanies justification, which occurs when the thought of God "does not remind him of his sin but that it is forgiven, and the past is no longer the memory of how much wrong but of how much he was forgiven."[4] "Father in heaven!" he writes,

> hold not our sins up against us but hold us up against our sins, so that the thought of thee when it wakens in our soul, and each time it wakens, should not remind us of what we have committed but of what thou didst forgive, not of how we went astray but of how thou didst save us![5]

Again the answer is found in Christ, who "hides a multitude of sins."[6] So effective is the remedy that "what was red as blood becomes whiter than snow, so hidden that sin is transformed to purity and thou canst dare to believe thyself justified and pure."[7] Christ is the Atoner "who entirely puts himself in thy place."[8] He is a covering for sin, but more than that, He is the giver of life,[9] by which justification becomes

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1. Lowrie, op. cit., p. 403.
2. Philosophical Fragments, p. 27.
3. Loc. cit.
4. Journals, p. 216.
5. Ibid., p. 217.
6. For Self-Examination, p. 21.
7. Loc. cit.
8. Christian Discourses, p. 368.
9. For Self-Examination, p. 24.

effective in the life of the believer.[1] Having been justified the believer is prepared for the process of sanctification. Kierkegaard writes:

> But he who is born by the word of truth [justification] is born to the word of truth [sanctification]. The condition is a gift of God [Jesus Christ] and a perfection [faith] which makes it possible to receive the good and perfect gift.[2]

It would, therefore, appear that regeneration, which Kierkegaard seems to associate with repentance, is a necessary prerequisite to sanctification, but, nevertheless, does not initiate the process. The latter function is reserved for justification, which Kierkegaard associates with God's no longer remembering sin, and with a positive transformation of the believer through the gift of Christ. The evidence is not entirely conclusive, though this interpretation seems borne out by Kierkegaard's personal experience. If so, there was a ten-year hiatus between Kierkegaard's regeneration and the realization of full justification. To assert that there were no elements of sanctification evident in his life during the interim would be questionable. Yet the full-blown force of the concept appears to be unknown to him until 1848, and even at that time and after, vagaries of expression are evident. It is significant, however, that it was in 1848 that he began to lose his morbid reserve and to be concerned with direct communication.[3] In

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1. Cf. Ibid., p. 23.
2. Edifying Discourses, (Augsburg), Vol. 2, p. 41.
3. Lowrie, op. cit., p. 407.

spite of the ten-year lapse, however, there is never any suggestion from Kierkegaard that a time-lag between regeneration and justification is necessary. Presumably they could occur concurrently or simultaneously.

V. Summary

Kierkegaard conceives of sanctification as a process which must be experienced in an existential fashion. This involves "dying away from the immediate," and, as a consequence, constantly acquiring the "grace of God." The matter is complicated by the necessity of living in the realm of the absolute at the same time as in relative spheres of activity. Since complete freedom from the relative is unknown outside of immortality, entire sanctification is never an actuality. Nonetheless, Kierkegaard expounds a high level of perfection in this life. Sanctification, it appears, is related to regeneration in its consciousness of sin. Regeneration means the removal of guilt, but not necessarily the vibrant forgiveness of justification. Sanctification appears to commence at the point of justification. The evidence is somewhat inconclusive, but this interpretation seems to be substantiated by Kierkegaard's personal experience.

CHAPTER VI

THE MEANS OF SANCTIFICATION

I. Introduction

The nature and characteristics of Kierkegaard's view of sanctification having been considered, the actual means through which the doctrine becomes operative receive attention. This chapter, therefore, considers the place of Christ and the Holy Spirit in the process, as well as the place of the Word of God, the sacraments, love, and faith.

II. Jesus Christ and Sanctification

Kierkegaard does not fail to remind his readers that the "means" are as important as the "end." This principle is operative in every facet of his thought, and may rightly be said to be a principal tenet of his existential thinking. The so-called "means" may not always have popular appeal. At times they may be in collision with normative ethical practice, as in the case of Abraham when the teleological suspension of the ethical was demanded in connection with the sacrifice of Isaac. The means are, nonetheless, of supreme importance. The reason for this is that the means and the end, in the mind of Kierkegaard, are one and the same thing. He writes of this:

> What means do you use in order to carry out your occupation? Are the means as important to you as the end, wholly as important? Otherwise it is impossible for you to will

> only one thing. . . . Eternally speaking, there is only one means and there is only one end: the means and the end are one and the same thing. There is only one end: the genuine Good; and only one means: this, to be willing only to use those means which are genuinely good - but the genuine Good is precisely the end.[1]

In view of this it is little wonder that the means of sanctification receive considerable attention from Kierkegaard. In a very real sense the means of sanctification are the end of sanctification. For Kierkegaard, one of the most important means of sanctification is to be found in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. The acquisition of Him, therefore, is of deep significance.

A. Christ, the Means of Sanctification

Kierkegaard seldom uses the term "incarnation" in reference to Christ, since he is wary of certain misunderstandings that may arise by the use of that term. He fears that "Christianity would become a phase - perhaps the highest phase - of what is essentially speculative thought."[2] Kierkegaard more often refers to Christ as the God-man. Christ, the God-man, was exactly what the term implies. He was God, yet he was just as truly man. "People so often declaim against anthropomorphism," he writes, "and forget that Christ's birth is the greatest and most significant."[3] Because of this unique synthesis Christ Himself is more important than the consequences of His

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1. Søren Kierkegaard, Purity of Heart, pp. 201-202.
2. Søren Kierkegaard, Postscript, p. 340.
3. Søren Kierkegaard, Journals, p. 50.

life.[1] The historical situation in which Christ was involved is, therefore, of importance to Kierkegaard, since "the God-man is the unity of God and an individual man in an actual historical situation."[2] If there are those who neglect this fact they "have simply done away with Christ, cast Him out and taken possession of His teaching, also regarding Him at last as one does an anonymous author - the doctrine is the principle thing, is the whole thing."[3]

It is the incarnate life of Christ which has a deep and abiding significance, therefore, and any tendency to subordinate the Person to the Person's teaching is regarded by Kierkegaard as gross error. Christ is the fulfilling of the law - and more also.[4] No human being has ever succeeded in keeping the law, and this disparity between Christ and man creates a "yawning gulf between the God-man and every other man, who cannot even understand, but who can only believe what the divine law must admit, that He was the fulfillment of the law."[5] However, through Christ, God's love is manifest to sinners. "God is certainly love," Kierkegaard writes, "but not love to sinners. He only becomes that in Christ, i.e. Atonement."[6] This is the uniqueness of Christianity. "All other religions are oblique,

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1. Søren Kierkegaard, Training in Christianity, p. 34.
2. Ibid., p. 123.
3. Loc. cit.
4. T. H. Croxall, "Facets of Kierkegaard's Christology," Theology Today, Vol. 8, p. 328 (note).
5. Søren Kierkegaard, Works of Love, p. 83.
6. Journals, p. 120.

the founder stands aside and introduces another speaker, they themselves therefore come under religion - Christianity alone is direct speech (I am the truth)."[1]

For God to become a man He must assume an almost impenetrable disguise. Kierkegaard describes it as the profoundest incognito possible, "for the contradiction between being God and being individual man is the greatest possible, the infinitely qualitative contradiction."[2] For this reason God (in Christ) cannot communicate Himself directly. It is precisely the error of paganism that it presents gods which make direct communication with men.[3] "The true God cannot become directly recognizable. Direct recognizableness is what the merely human, what the men to whom He came, would pray and implore of him as an indescribable relief."[4] However, if Christ is to be efficacious for future generations who have no opportunity of seeing Him in the flesh, a direct communication is impossible. Therefore, because of the infinite qualitative contradiction, as well as for the sake of future generations, He can be appropriated by faith, and by faith alone. He must come as the Absolute Paradox. Here is a concept that undeniably presents intellectual difficulties.

> The coming of Christ is and remains a paradox. To his contemporaries the paradox lay in the fact that he, this

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1. Ibid., p. 52.
2. Training in Christianity, p. 131.
3. Croxall, op. cit., p. 332.
4. Training in Christianity, p. 137.

> particular individual man who looked like other men, spoke like them, followed their habits and customs, was the Son of God. To later generations the paradox is different; for as they do not see him with their physical eye it is easier to imagine him as the son of God, and then that which gives offence and scandal is that he adopted the habit of mind of a particular age.[1]

Thus His coming creates an offense, for He can only be known through the channel of faith which is beyond the scope of rational thought. "The God-man exists only for faith;" Kierkegaard writes, "but the possibility of offense is just the repellant force by which faith comes into existence - if one does not choose instead to be offended."[2] The possibility of offense is the dialectical factor in everything Christian.[3] It becomes particularly significant, therefore, since the individual's response to the possibility of offense determines his relationship to Christianity.[4]

B. The Individual's Relationship to Christ

The importance of the Person of Christ can never be overlooked in Kierkegaard's concept of sanctification. He is interested particularly in Christ as a person. Commenting on Christ as teacher, Kierkegaard writes: "They have nonsensically forgotten that here the Teacher is more important than the teaching." He complains that the tendency has been to "cast

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1. Journals, p. 111.
2. Training in Christianity, p. 122.
3. Søren Kierkegaard, Sickness Unto Death, p. 206.
4. Ibid., p. 133; cf. section "Christ as the Sign," (in Training in Christianity).
5. Training in Christianity, p. 123.

Him out and taken (sic) possession of His teaching, almost regarding Him as one does an anonymous author."[1] This, for Kierkegaard, will not do. Christ "is inseparable from and more essential than the teaching."[2] He adds:

> But in our time they make everything abstract and do away with everything personal - they take Christ's teaching and do away with Christ. This means to do away with Christianity, for Christ is a person, and He is the Teacher who is more important than His teaching.[3]

The emphasis upon the Person of Christ is fundamental to Kierkegaard's concept of sanctification, for the whole matter is empty and sterile without a relationship to a Person - the Lord Jesus Christ.

Kierkegaard frequently refers to Christ under the designation of the "Pattern." There are two aspects to the "Patternship" of Christ. In one sense the Pattern is located behind men, to drive them on. In another sense He stands before them, beckoning to them. In one case the relationship is of loftiness, in the other of lowliness.[4] The individual must be like the Pattern or Model; in likeness to Christ's life he must strive to construct his own life.[5] In order for this to take place there must be constant reminders of Christ's life.[6] Preaching that stresses "how much Christ has done for me,"[7]

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1. Loc. cit.
2. Loc. cit.
3. Loc. cit.
4. Ibid., p. 232.
5. Ibid., p. 109.
6. Loc. cit.
7. Journals, p. 413.

will, if the individual truly and profoundly grasps the force of it, precipitate imitation of Christ. Kierkegaard warns against the "confusion of the Middle Ages," which was an excessive and distorted imitation of Christ, but concludes that the concept has been so neglected in modern times that it must be re-introduced. "'Imitation,' which answers to 'Christ as the Pattern,' must," he writes, "be brought to the fore, applied, recalled to remembrance."[1]

In the final analysis, however, the theme of Christ as pattern is emphasized to create some respect for Christianity, "to get it made a little bit evident what it is to be a Christian, to get Christianity transferred from learned discussion and doubt and twaddle (the objective) into the subjective sphere."[2] The Pattern is in the nature of a reminder, a guide to prod the individual to the holy life. Left by itself, however, the idea of the Pattern would only hopelessly discourage, since the resources of man are unequal to the task of expressing the Christian life: to be a man as Christ was.[3] But the example becomes the means. "We constantly recall to mind that Jesus Christ was not only a pattern, but also the Redeemer," Kierkegaard writes, "in order that the Pattern may not alarm us to desparation."[4] Christ, therefore, came into the world in

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1. Søren Kierkegaard, For Self-Examination, p. 200.
2. Ibid., p. 217.
3. Journals, p. 388.
4. For Self-Examination, p. 171.

order to change man,[1] and in order to do this He must be the "object of faith."[2] He must be believed,[3] which is not mere belief in a historical fact, but existential faith in the living presence of Christ. The Helper is the help.[4] Kierkegaard explains the help He gives in a significant passage in which he makes use of the metaphor of a physician.

> He who invites all and would help all has a way of treating the sick just as if it were intended for each several one, as if the patient he deals with were the only one. Commonly a physician must divide himself among his many patients, who, however many there are, are very far from being all. He prescribes the medicine, tells what is to be done, how it is to be used - and then he departs . . . to another patient. Or else, in case the patient has come to see him, he lets him depart. The physician cannot remain sitting all the day long beside one patient, still less can he have all his sick people in his own home and yet sit all the day beside one patient . . . without neglecting the others. Hence in this case the helper and the help are not one and the same thing. The patient retains beside him all the day long the help which the physician prescribes, so as to use it constantly; whereas the physician sees him only now and then, and only now and then does he see the physician. But when the Helper is the help, He must remain with the patient all the day long, or the patient with Him. Oh, wonderful! that it is this very Helper who invites all![5]

The help that the "Helper" gives is related, in Kierkegaard's thinking, to the atoning death of Christ. ". . .Nothing in the world," he writes, "has ever been so completely lost as was Christianity at the time Christ was crucified. . . . And yet in

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1. Journals, p. 251.
2. Training in Christianity, pp. 26, 137, 142.
3. Ibid., p. 28.
4. Ibid., p. 14.
5. Ibid., pp. 14-15.

the same instant, eternally understood, He had accomplished all."[1]

The entire concept of sanctification, therefore, is balanced upon the fulcrum of Christ and His atonement. Through the vehicle of faith the believer apprehends Christ in his own life. The process is a continuing one, but when faith is exercised Christ becomes personally present to each believer in his momentary existence. Christ is, therefore, the way to sanctification,[2] and, since it is His power (help) within the believer, "no essential change is conceivable as between the foregoer and the successor."[3] Kierkegaard calls this being "contemporaneous with Christ," a theme that persists in his authorship from the time of Training in Christianity.[4] To become contemporaneous with Christ is to be "transformed into likeness with God," and, as the "with" indicates, this can only be accomplished by the God-man as He is appropriated by faith.[5]

Contemporaneousness with Christ has little to do with the historical details of Christ's earthly existence, though it is founded upon the incarnation and the atonement. History is merely the occasion through which eternal truth is revealed. What is apprehended is the eternal Christ. In this way history and eternity coalesce in the present context. When Socrates or Spinoza teach truth, Socrates and Spinoza are of no consequence.

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1. Purity of Heart, p. 137.
2. Journals, p. 477.
3. Training in Christianity, p. 202.
4. Ibid., p. 9, (note).
5. Ibid., p. 68.

No so with Christ. He is the truth and the way.[1] He does not point away from Himself to some other truth, but to Himself as truth. He is not a "midwife" of truth like Socrates, but the begetter of truth. In order to beget, Christ must be God. But in order to give truth to the individual He must also be man. This is the Paradox which is appropriated in the Instant; it is being contemporaneous with Christ in a momentary, continuous context. Essentially, therefore, the work of sanctification is effected by the indwelling Christ apprehended by faith at every instant of existence.[2]

III. The Holy Spirit and Sanctification

Kierkegaard seems to indicate that the actual process of contemporaneity with Christ is effected by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is the agent of Christ, whose bestowal is a direct increment of a new relationship, resulting in "new life."[3] Life in the Spirit is the unique prerogative of the Christian. "This bestowing of life in the Spirit is not a direct increment of the natural life of man immediately continuous with this - oh, blasphemy, oh, horror, thus to take Christianity in vain! - it is a new life."[4] The Spirit, therefore, is the essence of sanctification. It is He who provides the actual increment of power which enables the believer to live a holy life. A prayer of Kierkegaard expresses this.

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1. Ibid., p. 202.
2. Cf. Croxall, op. cit., p. 329ff.
3. For Self-Examination, p. 96.
4. Ibid., p. 96.

> O Holy Spirit - we pray for ourselves and for all - oh, Holy Spirit, Thou who dost make alive; here it is not talents we stand in need of, nor culture, nor shrewdness, rather there is here too much of all that; but what we need is that Thou take away the power of mastery and give us life. True it is that a man experiences a shudder like that of death when Thou, to become the power in him, dost take the power from him - oh, but if even animal creatures understand at a subsequent moment how well it is for them that the royal coachman took the reins, which in the first instance prompted them to shudder, and against which their mind rebelled - should not then a man be able promptly to understand what a benefaction it is towards a man that Thou takest away the power and givest life?[1]

The theme of self-renunciation is strongly suggested here. Kierkegaard connects this theme particularly with the acquisition of the Spirit. "Nevertheless," he writes, "God wishes man to understand that he must break so definitely and so profoundly with earthly things that the spirit breaks through in all earnestness."[2] There is an explanation for this principle.

> In Christianity everything goes by pairs, or every determinant factor of Christianity is in the first instance its own opposite, whereas in the merely human or worldly sphere each is simply and directly what it is. Thus, in a merely human sense, a spirit which makes alive is a life-giving spirit, and nothing more; in Christian experience it is in the first instance the Spirit which killeth, which teaches how to "die from." Exaltation, in the merely human sense, is exaltation, nothing more; in the Christian sense it is in the first instance humiliation.[3]

The presence of the Spirit, therefore, is only realized through renunciation, not so much in the sense of abandoning the world as in an attitude that relegates the world to a subordinate position. "The difference," Kierkegaard writes, "between the

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1. Ibid., p. 106.
2. Journals, p. 349.
3. For Self-Examination, p. 115.

spirit being upon me or not, whether I am absolutely at one or not, I know at once, because in the second case I cannot stop thinking about the details, changing something, now here and now there. In the first case it never occurs to me, because my whole mind is so entirely and absolutely made up that the matter is put in the hands of God, and I have let go of it."[1] The Spirit gives life, but only through "death."[2] The negative aspect of the acquisition of the Spirit is, however, counterbalanced by the positive faith which makes Christ contemporary. When the two are in proper relation to each other the result is contemporaneousness with Christ, and this involves the gift of the Spirit. In this rather delicate balance lies man's perfection.

> For the fact of needing the Holy Spirit is a perfection in man, and his earthly need is so far from explaining it by its resemblance that it rather obscures it. The need itself is a good and perfect gift through God, and the communication of it is a good and perfect gift from above, which comes down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.[3]

Kierkegaard points out that human hope must come to a place of utter despair before the Spirit can come to make alive. It was only, he suggests, when the apostles were dead, "dead to every merely earthly hope, to every human confidence in their own power or in human assistance"[4] that the Spirit was given.

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1. Journals, p. 405.
2. For Self-Examination, p. 96.
3. Søren Kierkegaard, Edifying Discourses, (Augsburg), Vol. 2, p. 44.
4. For Self-Examination, p. 97.

In this fashion the gift of the Spirit comes to every believer. It is actually a most vigorous application of self-renunciation that Kierkegaard promotes, but it is nonetheless something quite different from asceticism.

In the relationship between the Holy Spirit and Christ, it is Christ who is dominant, just as the Father is dominant in the relationship between the Father and the Son. Kierkegaard writes:

> And consequently it is not the Spirit who leads one to the Son, and the Son who leads one to the Father, but the Father who points to the Son, the Son to the Spirit; and only then does the Spirit lead to the Son and the Son lead to the Father.[1]

Thus the Holy Spirit is never the end of sanctification, but directs the gaze of the believer to Christ, the Mediator,[2] who in turn, leads to the Father. Kierkegaard does not emphasize the Holy Spirit unduly. Little attention is given to the Spirit outside of For Self-Examination, a fact which suggests that he did not wish to exaggerate His place at the expense of the position of Christ. The impression left is that the Spirit is the actual presence of the Son, giving a new life of power to the believer.

IV. The Word of God and Sacraments in Sanctification

Kierkegaard places strong emphasis upon the work of Christ and the Holy Spirit in sanctification, but there are other

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1. Journals, p. 481.
2. Ibid., p. 480.

factors relating to it as well. Two of the more tangible factors in sanctification are the Word of God, and the sacraments.

A. The Word of God

Kierkegaard is not a literalist in regard to the Scriptures. A certain modicum of historical fact is necessary to Christianity, but he realizes that much historical detail is hidden. More important than this, Christ is of such nature that He defies historical presentation.[1] "When the Scriptures are viewed as a court of last resort for determining what is and is not Christian doctrine, it becomes necessary to make sure of the Scriptures historically and critically,"[2] he writes. For Kierkegaard this is quite beside the point, for it is a "subterranean way to Christianity."[3] It attempts to construct objectively and scientifically a problem which must remain subjective.[4] Kierkegaard is willing to concede canonicity, historical accuracy, possibly even verbal inspiration of the Scriptures,[5] but all along he maintains that "faith does not come directly at all."[6] Supposing the accuracy of the Scriptures were disproved, it would make no difference to him, since "it does not follow that these authors never existed; and above all, it does not follow that Christ has not existed."[7] Christianity is a

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1. Training in Christianity, p. 28ff.
2. Postscript, p. 26.
3. Ibid., p. 27.
4. Loc. cit.
5. Ibid., p. 29.
6. Ibid., p. 30.
7. Ibid., p. 31.

faith matter, and only "when faith begins to cease to be faith, then a proof becomes necessary so as to command respect from the side of unbelief."[1]

In light of this it is not strange that Kierkegaard should indicate in what way the Scriptures should be used. God's Word is a mirror, to show man his true condition. The danger lies in observing the mirror instead of seeing oneself.[2] The Scriptures are, therefore, to be treated with utmost seriousness. "When thou readest God's Word, then in everything that thou readest, constantly . . . say to thyself, 'It is I that am addressed, to me this is spoken,' precisely that is seriousness,"[3] he adjures. Erudition is not the answer,[4] but a quality of being alone with God's Word,[5] for God's Word is God's voice.[6] There is, therefore, a power in the Scriptures which takes deep effect in the soul of man, if considered in this spirit.

> . . . Just as, according to the report of superstition, one can conjure up spirits by reading formulae of incantation, so shalt thou, if only thou wilt, continue for some time to read God's Word thus (and this is the first requisite), thou shalt read fear and trembling into thy soul, so that by God's help thou shalt succeed in becoming a man, a personality, saved from being this dreadful absurdity into which we men - created in God's image! - have become changed by evil enchantment, into an impersonal, an objective something.[7]

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1. Loc. cit.
2. For Self-Examination, p. 50.
3. Ibid., p. 61.
4. Ibid., p. 53.
5. Ibid., p. 55.
6. Ibid., p. 64.
7. Ibid., p. 67.

The Scriptures are, therefore, a means to sanctification if they are apprehended subjectively, so that God's message to the individual may be heard in a personal, intimate manner. (Interestingly enough, Kierkegaard strongly advises against the use of commentaries or other helps, considering them a distraction.[1])

In addition to the place of the Scriptures Kierkegaard also attaches unusual authority to an "apostle," who, he believes, has been specially appointed by God. "The qualification 'an apostle' belongs in the sphere of transcendence," he writes, "which, quite consistently, has a qualitatively different expression for the relation of other men to an apostle; they relate themselves to him believingly, whereas all thinking is and remains and breathes in immanence."[2] The apostle is a man called and appointed by God[3] in relation to a particular mission.[4]

Kierkegaard makes a very clear distinction between a genius and an apostle. The difference is divine authority, which only the apostle possesses.[5] Thus the apostle becomes endued with an absolute paradoxical teleology, and must be apprehended in the same subjective atmosphere that Kierkegaard demanded for the Scriptures. This apostolic quality gives the New Testament

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1. Journals, p. 384.
2. Søren Kierkegaard, On Authority and Revelation, p. 112.
3. Søren Kierkegaard, The Present Age, p. 143.
4. Ibid., p. 151.
5. Ibid., p. 144.

its special authority, since the New Testament is a compilation of the apostles' writings. The Scriptures, therefore, especially the New Testament, have a special authority, not in a historical, immanent sense, but in an absolute transcendent sense, and therefore they must be regarded with great respect. The believer who seeks holiness will find in them the personal categorical imperative of the sanctifying process.

B. The Sacraments

Kierkegaard rarely mentions the sacraments, and when he does they are treated objectively. ". . .We feel," he writes, "a . . . profound desire for something objective. And this is offered in the sacraments."[1] Grace, however, is always apart from sacramental consideration. Grace may come before communion, or there may be "grace in the second place, grace from behind," in relation to what is past.[2] The sacrament "promises and strengthens me in grace, but I must have grace in order to dare to use the sacrament."[3] The sacraments appear to be an earnest of what the believer already has, an objective reminder of the necessity of the subjective relationship.

Kierkegaard never altered his view of the sacraments. When asked, shortly before his death, if he would like to take communion, he answered, "Yes, but not from a clergyman; from a layman."[4] His friend Boesen protested that that would be

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1. Journals, p. 488.
2. Loc. cit.
3. Loc. cit.
4. D.G.M. Patrick, Pascal and Kierkegaard, Vol. 2, p. 155.

impossible, but he merely answered, "Then I will die without it." His opposition was leveled at the organized clergy rather than the sacraments, but it is significant that he felt quite prepared to die without sacramental benefit.[1]

V. Sanctification and Love

Kierkegaard's concept of sanctification cannot be considered apart from his emphasis upon love. Love is the catalizing agent which binds God almighty with sanctified man. "If God were only the Almighty," he writes, "there would be no reciprocal relationship, inasmuch as for the Almighty the creation is nothing. But for love it is something. Incomprehensible omnipotence of love!"[2] In another place love is spoken of as the "primus motor in the Christian life."[3] Kierkegaard states that love is most definitely of divine origin, and he substantiates this declaration by pointing out that love is the quality of life man most desires to enter, but the impossibility of doing so reduces him to despair.[4] "Love," he writes, "is a matter of conscience, and hence is not a matter of impulse and inclination; nor is it a matter of emotion, nor a matter for intellectual calculation."[5] It is, therefore, connected with the will. When the love of God disappears a retrogression to the Kantian stand takes place; "We ought to better ourselves because our reason

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1. Loc. cit.
2. Søren Kierkegaard, Christian Discourses, p. 132.
3. Journals, p. 71.
4. Works of Love, p. 35.
5. Ibid., p. 116.

tells us to do so."[1] If this occurs the will becomes subordinate to the reason, and in the end God plays a very minor role.[2]

Kierkegaard suggests a direct ratio between the quantity of love and sanctity.

> But if there is less of love in him, there is also less of the eternal; but if there is less of the eternal in him there is also less possibility, less sense of the possibility (for the possibility arises from the fact that the eternal touches in time the eternal in man; if there is nothing eternal in this man the contact with the eternal is in vain, and there is no possibility); but if there is less possibility there is also less hope, just because and as there is less love, which might lovingly hope the possibility of the good.[3]

The above is connected with the thought that love duplicates itself. The greater the degree of sanctification the more love the believer has, and this love duplicates itself in a larger giving out of love.[4] Love, therefore, becomes the measure of sanctity, but Kierkegaard carefully defines what he means by love.

Love, in its true form, is exclusively God's domain. "Thou shalt love God with all thy heart" is not at all negative or abstract; on the contrary "it is in the highest degree positive and in the highest degree concrete."[5] Regardless of its immediate relations, it is never removed from God. Kierkegaard writes on this point:

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1. Journals, p. 3.
2. Loc. cit.
3. Works of Love, p. 208.
4. Ibid., p. 228.
5. Søren Kierkegaard, Either-Or, Vol. 2, p. 260.

> Worldly wisdom believes that love is a relationship between man and man; Christianity teaches that love is a relationship between man - God - man, that is, that God is the middle term. However beautiful a love-relationship has been between two or among many, however absolutely this love has been to them the source of all their happiness and all their blessedness in mutual sacrifice and renunciation, whether all men have praised this relationship - if God and the God-relationship have been neglected, then from the Christian viewpoint it has not been love, but a mutually enchanting illusion of love.[1]

Love that lacks this "middle term" is not a matter of conscience, but belongs to a lower level of existence.[2] The "middle term" is always present if the relationship is true love. This is true even if the relationship is between the individual and God. In this case the middle term is one's neighbor.[3] By means of this device Kierkegaard solidly links sanctification with ethics. The primary love of God will manifest itself in love to one's neighbor, but love of one's neighbor can never be divorced from love for God. ". . . God would be loved," Kierkegaard writes, "therefore He wants Christians. To love God is to be a Christian."[4] Again, "God has only one passion: to love and be loved."[5]

True love is distinguished from pagan love:

> Does not paganism also show examples of love and friendship so perfect that the apprentice poet goes back to them? But no one in heathendom loved his neighbor. No one suspected that he existed. What heathendom then called love, as distinguished from selfishness, was partiality. But a passionate partiality is essentially another form of

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1. Works of Love, p. 87.
2. Ibid., p. 115.
3. Loc. cit.
4. Søren Kierkegaard, Attack Upon Christendom, p. 156.
5. Journals, p. 534.

> selfishness; so here again one sees the truth of the saying of the venerable Fathers "that the virtues of heathendom are shining vices."[1]

Thus all love that is not characterized by a "middle term," and consequently ignores God, is actually selfishness. Kierkegaard rejects all such forms of love. God is to be loved more than oneself and more than one's neighbor. It is wrong to love one's neighbor more than oneself, just as it is wrong to love God less then oneself. On the human plane love seeks to equalize, and here the tendency of equating self-love with neighbor-love seems apparent. "The higher a man is above another whom he loves, the more he will feel drawn (humanly speaking) to raise him to his own level; but the more he will (divinely speaking) feel moved to descend to him."[2] Kierkegaard calls this the dialectic of love and cites Christ as the supreme example, though the divine element in Christ adds a complicating factor.

The love of God, on the other hand, involves an infinite difference in contrast to the equalizing tendency of finite love. Though it is the only happy love, "something terrible" is included in it.[3] God can demand to be loved even though He has made the individual unhappy.[4] Kierkegaard writes of this:

> To love him who makes one happy is to a reflective mind an inadequate definition of what love is; to love him who

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1. Works of Love, p. 44.
2. Journals, p. 107.
3. Ibid., p. 200.
4. Ibid., p. 391.

> made one unhappy out of malice, is virtue; but to love him who out of love, though by a misunderstanding, yet out of love, made one unhappy - that is the formula never yet enunciated, so far as I know, but nevertheless the normal formula in reflection for what it is to love.[1]

The misunderstanding motif is related to the theme of renunciation. Love of God demands the death of self[2] since only through death can the misunderstanding be eliminated. This involves renunciation and repentance, for,

> . . . there is also a love by which I love God, and there is only one word in the language which expresses it, . . . it is repentance. When I do not love Him thus, I do not love Him absolutely, or do not love Him with my utmost being, and every other sort of love for the absolute is a misunderstanding, for . . . when thought clings to the absolute with all its love it is not the absolute I love, I do not love absolutely, for I love necessarily; as soon as I love freely and love God I repent.[3]

Only spiritual love has this kind of courage, "courage to be willing to have no 'mine' at all, courage absolutely to end the difference 'mine' and 'thine,' therefore it gains God - through losing its own soul."[4] Humanly speaking, this kind of love loves for nothing, having gained nothing but "a dash,"[5] for the results cannot be perceived. It is founded upon utter confidence in God, which imposes itself upon all of life's relationships.[6] It may be defined as the "most abstract form of faith, . . .faith <u>in abstracto</u>,"[7] but in time it achieves a concrete

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1. Søren Kierkegaard, <u>The Point of View</u>, p. 77.
2. <u>Journals</u>, p. 470.
3. <u>Either-Or</u>, Vol. 2, p. 220.
4. <u>Works of Love</u>, p. 217.
5. <u>Ibid</u>., p. 228.
6. <u>Journals</u>, p. 482.
7. <u>Ibid</u>., p. 378.

relation to God.[1]

It is important, in all of this, to realise that the Christian life, for Kierkegaard, is not the work of man but of God Himself. Kierkegaard has chosen to portray the works of love as the works of men, yet he by no means omits pointing out that God's own love constitutes their foundation and prerequisite. "How could anything rightly be said about love," asks Kierkegaard in the opening prayer of Works of Love, "if Thou wert forgotten, Thou God of Love, from whom all love comes in heaven and on earth. Thou who art love, so the lover is only what he is through being in Thee!"[2] The love which the Christian love commandment demands has not only its model, but also its source in the love that God supplies.[3]

VI. Sanctification and Faith

Christian love has its source in God. Therefore it can only be appropriated through the exercise of faith. Kierkegaard recognizes the same difficulty regarding faith as with other categories of existence. He writes:

> Faith constitutes a sphere all by itself, and every misunderstanding of Christianity may at once be recognized by its transforming it into a doctrine, transferring it to the sphere of the intellectual. The maximum of attainment within the sphere of the intellectual, namely, to realize an entire indifference as to the reality of the

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1. Loc. cit.
2. Works of Love, p. 4.
3. Valter Lindstrom, "A Contribution to the Interpretation of Kierkegaard's Book, The Works of Love," Studia Theologica, Vol. 6, p. 28.

> teacher is in the sphere of faith at the opposite end of the scale. The maximum of attainment within the sphere of faith is to become infinitely interested in the reality of the teacher.[1]

At the risk of transforming faith into a doctrine some discussion of the character of faith follows.

A. Definition of Faith

The experience of faith is confined to the category of the individual. "The paradox of faith is this," Kierkegaard writes, "that the individual is higher than the universal, that the individual (to recall a dogmatic distinction now rather seldom heard) determines his relation to the universal by his relation to the absolute, not his relation to the absolute by his relation to the universal."[2] The individual, therefore, stands in isolation before the absolute, and his relation to the absolute will determine his relation to the universal. But as he stands, alone and undecided, he faces various possibilities, possibilities of good and evil,[3] and for a moment, during the fragment of contact, the doubleness of the possible is equal.[4] A choice cannot be avoided, but this is not the end of choosing, for the entire situation repeats itself in the next instant, and the next. Possibles are always present, and choices must always, therefore, be made. There are two broad categories of choice: good, and evil. The "good" is connected with hope, "evil" with

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1. Postscript. p. 291.
2. Søren Kierkegaard, Fear and Trembling, p. 80.
3. Works of Love, p. 202.
4. Loc. cit.

fear.[1] Fear leads to despair, for when the individual comes into relation with God the dialectical contradiction so aroused brings his passion to the point of despair.[2] It is precisely despair which may drive him to embrace God, through the positive component of despair, faith.[3]

Dread, too, must be overcome by faith. "When the discoveries of possibility are honestly administered, possibility will then disclose all finitudes and idealize them in the form of infinity in the individual who is overwhelmed by dread, until in turn he is victorious by the anticipation of faith."[4] Dread, being of a lower experiential category than despair, has no positive connotations, as despair has. It, therefore, becomes annihilated by faith, since faith continually develops itself out of the death-throes of dread. "Only faith is capable of doing this, for only in faith is the synthesis eternally and every instant possible."[5]

The possibility of good appears, to the natural man,[6] untenable, since he is immersed in the false doubt of fear, which doubts everything but itself.[7] (Saving doubt, on the contrary, doubts only itself by the assistance of faith.[8]) From the point

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1. Loc. cit.
2. Postscript, p. 179, (note); cf. Hebrews 10:21.
3. Postscript, p. 179 (note).
4. Søren Kierkegaard, The Concept of Dread, p. 140.
5. Ibid., p. 104.
6. I Cor. 2:14.
7. Edifying Discourses, (Augsburg), Vol. 2, p. 42.
8. Loc. cit.

of view of the natural man, therefore, there is risk involved. For Kierkegaard faith without risk is impossible, since, by its very nature, faith demands risk.[1] Faith is, therefore, a contradiction. Man, bound by finitude to objective reality, has no eyes for the infinite. Practiced as he is in the art of rational thinking, the infinite appears absurd. For this reason faith begins "where thinking leaves off."[2] Kierkegaard alludes to this:

> Faith is against understanding, faith is on the side of death. And when thou didst die, or didst die to thyself, to the world, thou didst at the same time die to all immediacy in thyself, and also to thine understanding. . . . When every probability is excluded, when it is dark as in the dark night - it is in fact death that we are describing - then comes the life-giving Spirit and brings faith.[3]

It would appear from the foregoing statement that faith, carefully defined, is the gift of God. Yet an element of volition is certainly not absent. "Faith is the objective uncertainty due to the repulsion of the absurd held fast by the passion of inwardness," Kierkegaard writes, "which in this instance is intensified to the utmost degree."[4] It is preceded by reflection and is perpetuated by the immediacy of choice.[5] It becomes, therefore, a concern of the individual for himself; it is an "infinite self-made care as to whether one has faith

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1. Journals, p. 368.
2. Fear and Trembling, p. 64.
3. For Self-Examination, p. 100.
4. Postscript, p. 540; cf. p. 182.
5. Journals, p. 240.

- and that self-made care is faith."[1] In other words, "faith is: (1) an infinite passion to become what we are, and, at the same time, (2) willingness to become nothing before God; or, more moderately put, faith is, willingness simply to be ourselves before God."[2]

Through faith man is able to realize "the eternal power,"[3] for faith anticipates the eternal.[4] Faith is, indeed, the only way to establish relationship with God, for, "when an existing individual has not got faith God is not, neither does God exist, although understood from an eternal point of view God is eternally."[5] The object of faith is Christ. Kierkegaard elucidates:

> For as often as in faith's gladness at the glory of this Pattern he completely forgets his poverty, his lowliness, the contempt in which he is held, he sees the Pattern - and he himself approximately resembles it. For if in such a blissful moment, when he is lost to himself in the Pattern, another man beholds him, this other man sees before his eyes merely a lowly man - precisely so it was in the case of the Pattern one saw merely a lowly man.[6]

Faith in Christ establishes contact with God, effecting the process of sanctification in the individual as the Pattern more and more becomes the image of the individual.

Because the man of faith (knight of faith)[7] is not

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1. Ibid., p. 243.
2. P. Ramsay, "Existenz and the Existence of God," The Journal of Religion, Vol. 28, p. 168.
3. Søren Kierkegaard, Edifying Discourses, (Harper), p. 16.
4. Journals, p. 173.
5. Loc. cit.
6. Christian Discourses, p. 46.
7. Fear and Trembling, p. 88ff.

distinguished by particular outward manifestations there is constant danger that an inferior quality of life may be substituted for real faith. This must be guarded against at all costs lest "probabilities and guarantees" replace the "leap of faith, the qualitative transition from non-belief to belief."[1] There is, nonetheless, one criterion by which faith may be known. "No one can see faith," Kierkegaard writes, "it is invisible, so that no one can decide whether a man has faith. But faith shall be known by love."[2] He adds that, "to the Christian love is the works of love."[3] Thus faith lays hold upon the power of the eternal, employing it in sanctifying force upon the life of the believer. This produces what Kierkegaard calls the works of love.

B. Operation of Faith

It is perhaps impossible to differentiate between the definition and the operation of faith; further consideration of the matter is, however, necessary.

Kierkegaard considers faith an extremely alive, active force with nothing static or stultifying in connection with it. It is "not merely intellectual observation but something which can be directly carried out."[4] In faith the believer is assured of his eternal happiness,[5] not an assurance once for all, be it

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1. Postscript. p. 15.
2. Journals, p. 317.
3. Loc cit.
4. Ibid., p. 122.
5. Postscript, p. 53.

noted, "but a daily acquisition of the sure spirit of faith through the infinite personal passionate interest."[1] In the interests of the individual faith has two tasks, (1) "to take care in every moment to discover the improbable, the paradox;" (2) "then to hold it fast with the passion of inwardness."[2] This is a continuing process, not terminated until the end of life, though, according to Kierkegaard, such a view is contrary to the popular notion of the action of faith.[3] Kierkegaard warns against triumphing "before the time, that is to say, in time"[4] with respect to faith, for as long as there is struggle there is "always a possibility of defeat."[5] Using the example of the foolish virgins, he exhorts the believer to keep awake, for "what indeed is faith but an empty imagination, if it is not awake?"[6]

In spite of the possibility of defeat, faith that maintains itself in vitality and watchfulness is inevitably victorious. "In a Christian sense," Kierkegaard writes, "there is nothing to wait for, victory was long ago placed in one's hands by faith."[7] Faith, therefore, gives a positive, triumphant cast to the existence of the believer despite present suffering. Kierkegaard writes of this:

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1. Loc. cit.
2. Ibid., p. 209.
3. Loc. cit.
4. Søren Kierkegaard, Philosophic Fragments, p. 91.
5. Loc. cit.
6. Christian Discourses, p. 219.
7. On Authority and Revelation, p. xxvi.

> That God tries, even tempts a man (lead us not into temptation) is a thought by which one must not be frightened. Unbelief, melancholy, and so on, at once grow anxious and afraid and really impute that God does so in order that man shall succumb; . . . The believer, on the other hand, apprehends everything the other way round; he believes that God does so in order that he should stand the test . . . .faith is readily victorious.[1]

The object of faith is, in general, the eternal, and specifically Christ (contemporaneousness with Christ),[2] and the realization of the object is accompanied by self-renunciation, a familiar theme of Kierkegaard's.

> But then - in death, in death's decision a faith is won that does not disappoint, that is not repented of, that does not die, it seizes the Eternal and holds fast to it. By this faith, under the pain of the wish, the sufferer is committed to the Good. So it is with faith in which the sufferer draws the Eternal nearer to himself.[3]

In this manner faith triumphs and in its triumph proves the existence of the Eternal, for "there is only one proof that the Eternal exists: faith in it."[4] In "the pain of the wish" the primacy of the will is again emphasized. Faith, in its most distilled form, becomes a positive act of the will, by which the Eternal in the form of Jesus Christ is individually apprehended in personal existence. This is the triumph of sanctification. Kierkegaard testifies of this:

> But faith has conquered. I believe on Him. Will anyone say to me, "But if!", that is something I no longer understand. I understood it once in the instant of decision,

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1. Journals, p. 377; cf. p. 430.
2. J. Collins, "Faith and Reflection in Kierkegaard," Journal of Religion, Vol. 37, p. 18.
3. Purity of Heart, p. 150.
4. Ibid., p. 84.

now I understand it no more.[1]

When such a condition obtains, the process of sanctification has become a natural state in which the agonies of momentary decision have been replaced by a way of life. The way of life is not an inflexible condition that cannot be mitigated by evil, but it is built upon a foundation of personal relationship with Christ, which has transformed the existence of the individual.

VII. Other Means of Sanctification

A consideration of the means of sanctification should include discussion of another theme that frequently appears in Kierkegaard's literary productivity. This is the duo-theme of patience and simplicity. The theme becomes of some importance when it is recalled that, for Kierkegaard, "the eternal is not a thing which can be had regardless of the way in which it is acquired."[2] It seems evident, therefore, that the state of the soul seeking the sanctifying experience of the eternal is of significance. "Above all," writes Kierkegaard, "the one who in truth wills the Good must not be 'busy.' In quiet patience he must leave it to the Good itself, what reward he shall have, and what he shall accomplish."[3] For Kierkegaard the end results of sanctification are irrelevant except as they relate to a momentary existence with Christ. Any thought of accomplishment outside of the personal relationship tends to create a

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1. Christian Discourses, p. 244.
2. Attack Upon Christendom, p. 100.
3. Purity of Heart, p. 146.

condition of "busyness," the opposite of acquiring one's soul in patience.[1] "Let us never," he writes, "deceive youth by foolish talk about the matter of accomplishing. Let us never make them busy in the service of the moment, instead of in patience willing something eternal."[2] Earlier in the same work he suggests:

> The press of busyness into which one steadily enters further and further, and the noise in which the truth continually slips more and more into oblivion, and the mass of connections, stimuli, and hindrances, these make it ever more impossible for one to win any deeper knowledge of himself. It is true that a mirror has the quality of enabling a man to see his image in it, but for this he must stand still. If he rushes hastily by, then he sees nothing.[3]

A corollary to the theme of patience is the motif of simplicity. Kierkegaard describes this quality as, "one thing . . . which all Satan's cunning and all the snare of temptation cannot take by surprise."[4] He adds:

> Where the ambiguous is, there also, in one way or another, is disobedience down at the bottom; and . . . where there is no ambiguity, temptation is as powerless as a bird-catcher when there is no bird to be discovered - but with the merest glimpse of the ambiguous Satan is strong and temptation is enticing; . . . .[5]

The sanctified life, in Kierkegaard's thinking, assumes a simple cast; it is merely a relationship whereby Christ is made contemporaneous with the individual. This relationship,

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1. Edifying Discourses, (Augsburg), Vol. 2, pp. 79ff.
2. Purity of Heart, p. 139.
3. Ibid., p. 108; cf. Edifying Discourses, (Harper), p. 111.
4. Christian Discourses, p. 344.
5. Loc. cit.

expressed in the living moments of daily existence, is initiated by the will of the individual, and is made secure by constant faith. From such a point of view Kierkegaard writes:

> The discerning mind will at the same time recognize that this one thing is the religious, but the religious altogether and utterly transposed into reflection, yet in such a way that it is altogether and utterly withdrawn from reflection and restored to simplicity - that is to say, he will see that the road travelled has the aim of approaching, attaining simplicity.[1]

Seemingly the anguished choice which confronts the individual in the possibles has given way to a simple existence of faith, bolstered by patience and love. In Kierkegaard's thinking this appears to be the pinnacle of sanctification, a condition of rest and fellowship with Christ that makes earthly attractions seem dull and unimportant.

VIII. Summary

The concept of sanctification, in Kierkegaard's thinking, is impossible outside of the Person of Christ. Emphasis is placed upon His Person rather than the consequences of His life. Kierkegaard is careful to establish the historical reality of the God-man, deeming this the unique aspect of Christianity. Christ is the Absolute Paradox, the Infinite Qualitative Contradiction. As such He must be appropriated in the life of the believer by faith. Thus a relationship of personalities is established between Christ and the believer. Christ is referred to as the "Pattern" by Kierkegaard, but as pattern He is also

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1. Point of View, pp. 146-147.

the means of the believer's realizing Christ in personal imitation. The entire concept of sanctification is founded upon Christ, and becoming "contemporaneous with Christ" is the goal of holiness. The gift of the Holy Spirit is an increment of the new life, and the acquisition of the Spirit is accomplished by renunciation. The Holy Spirit, however, is always recognized in His relation to Christ.

The Word of God receives emphasis in Kierkegaard's concept of sanctification. Kierkegaard stresses that the Scriptures reflect man's true condition. They must, therefore, be apprehended subjectively for they contain the categorical imperative of personal holiness. The sacraments, on the other hand, have little to do with actual sanctification; they are more in the nature of a reminder than a means.

Scarcely less important than Christ in the process of sanctification is love. Love, pure love, is the domain of God. It is God's love which constitutes the love that the believer exhibits. This, once again, involves the renunciation of self, that the love of God may be expressed in the life of the believer.

Another important theme of sanctification is faith. The individual discovers himself to be isolated from the absolute because of sin. But God has made a "break-through" in the Person of His Son. Thus, in the context of the instant, there is possibility of choice, choice of the status quo, which is indissolubly linked with despair, or, choice of God in the

Person of Christ, through the opposite of despair, faith. Faith, therefore, enables the individual to make contact with God, and thus to become a real self. Faith must act existentially; it has a quality of continuance. So practiced, however, it is victorious over evil, though the possibility of defeat is never removed. The object of faith is Christ, and by an act of the will He is made contemporaneous with the individual. This is partly accomplished by a condition of patience and simplicity, which enables the believer to rest in the God-relationship. Contemporaneousness with Christ, with the conditions mentioned appertaining, seems, for Kierkegaard, to be the apogee of holiness.

CHAPTER VII

THE RESULTS OF SANCTIFICATION

I. Introduction

From the point of view of the Christian existentialist the activity of the moment has deeper significance than the end to which that activity is applied.[1] Kierkegaard, therefore, lays heavier stress on the means of sanctification than on the ends. The impression is given that the means are the end, and it is difficult, therefore, to differentiate between the two. Nonetheless, there are certain results of sanctification. These may not be considered exclusively end results, but are concomitant to the means. They are secondary to the process of sanctification, and may be considered to be the marks of sanctification. As such, their place in the journey of the holy life is not without significance.

II. Action and Sanctification

The fallacy of an impractical approach to Christianity is a charge that cannot be laid at the feet of Kierkegaard. Christianity is action. It has purpose. It is living in the power of Christ while engaged in the most mundane daily activities.

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1. Cf., ante, p. 137.

"We must get rid," he writes, "of all the bosh about this being said only to the Apostles, and this only to the disciples, and this only to the first Christians, 'c. Christ no more desires now than He did then to have admirers (not to say twaddlers), He only wants disciples."[1] "Twaddlers" are vocally glib, but short on action. Kierkegaard's admiration for Job is based on the fact that he acted in accordance with what he said.[2] Truth is not, according to Kierkegaard, "duplication of being in terms of thought."[3] Duplication in terms of thought has no real relation to reality. No, truth is reduplication in an individual, "in me, in thee, in him, so that my, that thy, that his life approximately, in the striving to attain it, expresses the truth, . . . as the truth was in Christ."[4] The trouble with Christianity is that it has been relegated to the attic:

> And it is in the living-room that the battle must be fought, lest the religious conflict degenerate into a parade of the guard once a week; in the living-room must the battle be fought, not fantastically in the church, so that the clergyman is fighting windmills and the spectators watch the show; in the living-room, the battle must be fought, for the victory consists precisely in the living-room becoming a sanctuary.[5]

The practical, day-by-day progress of sanctification, therefore, results in a life of action seven days a week. It is a life of vigor, not an "ivory-tower" life of seclusion.

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1. Søren Kierkegaard, For Self-Examination, p. 207.
2. Søren Kierkegaard, Edifying Discourses, (Harper), p. 67.
3. Søren Kierkegaard, Training in Christianity, p. 201.
4. Loc. cit.
5. Søren Kierkegaard, Postscript, p. 416.

Kierkegaard admits that this kind of existence is strenuous. Its strenuousness lies in the double movement which must be executed, movement towards the absolute relationship while existing in the sphere of the finite.[1] Nevertheless, one must venture out, "and not stand on the shore and watch others fighting and struggling."[2] Strenuous as it may be, it is nevertheless possible to produce the "trills of the God-relationship in connection with everything" one does.[3]

The kind of sanctified existence advocated by Kierkegaard will produce certain "good works." These are to be a result of the believer's love of God, and are a means of expressing thankfulness to Him. The mature Christian will not be satisfied to express his thanks to God in words. He will pray, "You must allow me, O God, a far stronger expression of my thankfulness: Works."[4] Kierkegaard is careful to avoid the labyrinth of works righteousness. "Good works in the sense of merit," he writes, "are naturally an abomination to God."[5] Yet good works are a part of the Christian life. In paradoxical fashion he explains that they "should be and yet not be."[6] In one sense they have scarcely any importance, and in that sense man should be "humbly ignorant of their existence."[7] Underlying this

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1. Ibid., p. 366.
2. Søren Kierkegaard, Journals, p. 91.
3. Postscript, p. 424.
4. Journals, p. 474.
5. Ibid., p. 195.
6. Loc. cit.
7. Loc. cit.

attitude is the reasoning that good works are a result of God's grace made possible by faith. Thus they actually originate with God, and any pretention by man is nonsensical.[1] Works of man must be considered in light of the atonement of Christ, which has made them possible.[2] Good works are, therefore, the result of the sanctifying atonement of Christ, and may not be considered either the means or the end of holiness.[3] Lowrie states Kierkegaard's position:

> With respect to the doctrine of "works" S.K. was clearly not in sympathy with the position characteristic of the Reformers, notwithstanding that he was emphatic in rejecting the notion that any merit can attach to man's works before God.[4]

III. Inner Spiritual Results

The visible activity of the sanctified believer is but an outward manifestation of an inward condition. As is the case with good works, the inward condition is the result of a relationship with God. This relationship produces a state of being within the Christian which is not affected by temporal surroundings, for it is built upon the foundation of faith. Kierkegaard contrasts the worldly man with the spiritual by alluding to the despair the worldly man experiences when he suffers a temporal loss. This is not so with the believer, who, given the same situation, "discovers at the same time the joy of it

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1. Ibid., p. 318.
2. Loc. cit.
3. Cf. Edifying Discourses, (Harper), p. 135.
4. Lowrie, Kierkegaard, p. 375.

that what one loses temporally one gains eternally."[1]

A. Worship

One of the inner spiritual results of sanctification is a sense of worship in the heart of the believer. Worship, to Kierkegaard, is a sign of humility. "It is . . . glorious to be nothing through the act of worship," he writes.[2] Although worship is an act of humility, it is "precisely that whereby the man resembles God."[3] In becoming humble, in true self-renunciation, the way is opened whereby the individual becomes indwelt by God. In this way, to worship God is to apprehend Him. This is seen to be the only adequate expression for the existence of God, since it recognizes Him existentially.[4]

True worship, Kierkegaard suggests, is free from "all bustle."[5] In the lack of self-activity suggested it is clearly related to the theme of self-renunciation. "To renounce everything," he writes, "as an act of worship offered to God, and so not because he needs to use you as an instrument; but to renounce everything yourself as the most insignificant superfluity and article of luxury - that means to worship."[6] An attitude of worship such as this truly recognizes the majesty of God,[7]

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1. Søren Kierkegaard, Christian Discourses, p. 146, cf. p. 78.
2. Edifying Discourses, (Harper), p. 243.
3. Loc. cit.
4. P. Ramsay, "Existenz and the Existence of God: a Study of Kierkegaard and Hegel," Journal of Religion, Vol. 28, p. 162.
5. Journals, p. 536; cf. Works of Love, p. 46.
6. Journals, p. 536.
7. Loc. cit.

and the majesty of God introduces an element of wonder into it. Kierkegaard writes that "Wonder is an ambiguous state of the soul containing both fear and bliss."[1] He continues:

> . . .Worship is therefore mingled fear and happiness. Even the most purified and rational worship of God is happiness in fear and trembling, confidence in deadly peril, frankness in the consciousness of sin.[2]

The element of fear inherent in worship necessitates the catharsis of self-renunciation, since, through the avenue of faith, it is the only way of approaching God in a true worship experience. Vestiges of dread, however, are never entirely eradicated. This is because there is always the possibility of the self becoming assertive, and thereupon destroying the worship experience.[3]

Worship, for Kierkegaard, as has been noted, is an attitude of the spirit, and therefore goes beyond any formal situation. The church system of his day did not make a favorable impression upon him, so he does not devote attention to its capacities in the area of worship. In any case, no matter how uplifting the service, worship is never to be restricted to a formal situation. He writes of this:

> Today is not a holy day, divine service is held on a workday - oh, but in a Christian's life every day is worship! It is not as though therewith everything were settled by going on rare occasions to the altar; no, the appointed task is, on leaving the altar still to remain at the altar.[4]

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1. Søren Kierkegaard, Crucial Situations, p. 13.
2. Loc. cit.
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 22.
4. Christian Discourses, p. 280.

Worship, therefore, is an inner attitude of fear and bliss which creates a sense of humility and self-renunciation within the heart of the believer, and which he carries with him as he goes about his daily affairs.

B. Joy

In stark contrast to the melancholy spirit usually associated with Kierkegaard, the latter period of his life was one of joyful praise to God.[1] Lowrie points out that the Journals reveal "the astounding fact" that from 1853 to his death he was no longer a melancholy man.[2] Joy, therefore, was not a foreign element in his life, and it is certainly a theme one encounters in his writings.

The joy of the Christian is not the same as the natural joy caused by felicitous circumstances. In this case, the joy is dissolved when the circumstances alter for the worse. Then human comfort does not pretend to make the sorrowing happy, "but merely undertakes to comfort them after a fashion, which they do badly enough."[3] "Eternity, on the contrary, when it comforts, makes a man joyful, its comfort is really joy, is the real joy."[4] Kierkegaard speaks of "an indescribable joy,"[5] which is not a joy over this or that, but which is an inexplicable paean of praise regardless of temporal conditions. This

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1. Lowrie, op. cit., p. 14.
2. Ibid., p. 491.
3. Christian Discourses, p. 162.
4. Loc. cit.
5. Journals, p. 59.

is the believer's heritage, his birthright. "The religious man," Kierkegaard writes, "is always joyful."[1] Nor is this condition of joy oblivious of surrounding dangers, or of the realities of care. These are duly recognized, but ". . . the thing is at the same instant to be joyful."[2] For this, religious courage is required,[3] courage to "cast all care away; . . .cast it absolutely upon God."[4] No portion of the care is to be retained. All is turned over to God, for unless this is done the care will return, often in a more bitter form than at first.[5]

Kierkegaard suggests that there is joy, not only in spite of difficulty, but also because of difficulty. The believer is joyful in affliction, "rejoicing in the thought that the affliction is the way."[6] The presence of affliction is actually a guarantee to the believer that his existence is as it ought to be, and this knowledge causes joy.[7] Even in the case of one's own wrongdoing, the sense of joy is not lost, for God, when He is approached in humble contrition, makes of the wrong a right. So Kierkegaard testifies:

> And so I am, nevertheless, in the midst of all my sufferings, so indescribably happy and joyful. . . .I do something wrong. At the very same moment I perceive it. What

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1. Søren Kierkegaard, Stages on Life's Way, p. 424.
2. Ibid., p. 425.
3. Journals, p. 87.
4. Christian Discourses, p. 353.
5. Loc. cit.
6. Edifying Discourses, (Harper), p. 222.
7. Ibid., p. 214. Cf. p. 228.

> is to be done? My melancholy imagination immediately suspects the possibility of that little mistake spoiling everything. But then, at the same moment, I say to God: bitte, bitte: now that is wrong, but even though I am a nuisance, an impertinant nuisance, O God make the wrong into a right. And so (God who at every moment disposes of millions of possibilities), so the various factors are combined slightly differently and sure enough, just what was wrong proves to have been right.[1]

This, perhaps, is one of the most unique aspects of Kierkegaard's concept of sanctification. There is no notion of defeat for the sanctified believer as He trusts in God. He rests, secure in the thought that his life is God-ordered. Even when circumstances are contrary, as they frequently are, there is no cause for anything but joy. God controls the lives of the holy, and that is quite enough for Kierkegaard. Therefore, the believer praises God even when he cannot understand Him.

> To praise Him upon the day when all goes against thee, when it becomes dark before thine eyes, when others perhaps could easily prove to thee that no God exists - then instead of assuming an air of importance by proving that there is a God, humbly to prove that thou dost believe that God exists, to prove it by joyful and unconditional obedience - that is the hymn of praise.[2]

The "hymn of praise" is often expressed in thanksgiving, and thanksgiving, too, becomes a mark of the sanctified believer. As the Christian is to be joyful despite his circumstances, so is he to be thankful regardless of whether the "gift" be good or evil.[3] There is no real question of whether things that come upon one are bad or good, for all, everything that

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1. Journals, p. 340.
2. Christian Discourses, p. 88.
3. Søren Kierkegaard, Either-Or, Vol. 2, p. 100.

occurs, is under the jurisdiction of the "grace of God."[1] The grace of God "does not express itself in our experience as a human being would like or finds it easy to understand, but speaks instead a more difficult language."[2] But when the expression is recognized as an emanation from God, the experience suffered will not cause pain. The sufferer "will then strive to rejoice in God's grace so as not merely to rest content with it; and he will give thanks for it so as not merely to find it barely sufficient."[3]

The attitude of joyful praise and thanksgiving resulting from sanctification, begets a sense of peace and tranquillity. The believer will not be immersed in a thousand "busy" activities. To do this is "to occupy one's self with the whole manifold,"[4] an impossibility unless a man's purpose becomes divided. A divided purpose is not a characteristic of sanctification. Even the mundane worries that plague daily existence are unable to banish the tranquil spirit of the believer. ". . . Accept tranquilly and gratefully the worry of today," Kierkegaard admonishes, adding piquantly, "thou dost get off easily with that . . . by becoming free from the next day's worry."[5]

No matter how strenuous it is to maintain the conflicting absolute and relative relationships, the sense of tranquillity

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1. Edifying Discourses, (Harper) p. 143.
2. Loc. cit.
3. Loc. cit.
4. Søren Kierkegaard, Works of Love, p. 81.
5. Christian Discourses, p. 75.

and peace are not lost.[1] Peace comes as a result of a relationship with the Absolute, which nothing can mar except the individual himself. As an accompaniment to the tranquillity and peace of sanctification there is a fearlessness which comes when anxiety and dread are dispelled. The possibles of choice apparently no longer create uncertainty. The choice is still there, but the believer knows in advance what he will choose, God. Choice, long made anxious by the possibles, has at last become a pattern of existence, the focus of which is Christ. The "lover," therefore, "has fearlessness."[2]

There is a quality of disingenuousness which accompanies all of this, and which gives the believer an aura almost akin to the spirit of childhood.[3] He will be reluctant to attribute evil intent to others. A man in whose heart dwells love, "comprehends slowly, and does not hear at all the hasty word and does not understand its repetition, because he ascribes to it a good intention and a good meaning."[4] He is a "child in malice."[5] The poison of materialism does not affect the sanctified. If he has earthly riches they occupy him little because his attention is upon heavenly riches.[6] If he is not materially affluent this does not concern him, for he is wealthy in

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1. Postscript, p. 377.
2. Works of Love, p. 227.
3. Either-Or, Vol. 2, p. 290.
4. Edifying Discourses, (Harper), p. 57.
5. Works of Love, p. 231.
6. Christian Discourses, p. 35.

relation to heaven.[1]

The spirit of joyful thanksgiving, the aura of peace and tranquillity, the quality of disingenuousness and concern for the affairs of heaven are results of a sanctified life. These qualities, as has been suggested, are not wholly foreign to Kierkegaard's own personal life. On this account he testifies:

> There is a melancholy in everything in my life, but then again an indescribable happiness. But in that way I became myself through God's indescribable grace and support, and, as I am almost tempted to say, by his special favour, if that did not mean less to me than the blessed thought, which I believe and which brings me such perfect peace: that he loves all men equally. I have, quite literally, lived with God as one lives with one's father.[2]

IV. The Concept of Suffering

In spite of his preoccupation with the satisfaction to be found in sanctification, Kierkegaard cannot be accused of creating ease in the Christian life. True to his initial intention of "making things difficult" he adds a sombre tone to his canvas which contrasts sharply with the joy and peace that sanctification elicits. "But it does not by any means follow," he writes, "that life becomes easy for a man who thus learns to know God. On the contrary, it may become very hard; . . ."[3] The difficult aspect of the Christian life he has chosen to call suffering. Suffering assumes many forms. In one bleak journal entry Kierkegaard refers to physical suffering. In

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1. Ibid., p. 20.
2. Journals, p. 246; cf. p. 464.
3. Edifying Discourses, (Harper), p. 174.

this entry he unequivocally states that it is altogether impossible to lead "a really spiritual life while physically and psychically healthy."[1] Perhaps this is a morbid extension of his own physical condition, of which he was acutely conscious. In any case, it seems to be an isolated notion, not really a part of his Christian thought.

Nonetheless, there will be suffering. "Christian existence," he writes, "is a constant history of suffering."[2] Kierkegaard agrees with Pascal, whom he quotes as saying: "Suffering is the natural state of the Christian, just as health is that of the 'natural' man."[3] The kind of suffering referred to, however, is not physical or psychic maladies. The suffering is spiritual, though it may bring about physical or psychic reactions.

Kierkegaard divides suffering into two classes - active suffering and true suffering.[4] The suffering of the active sufferer "has significance for the victory of the Good in the world."[5] It is, therefore, related to the external life of the believer. Its most extreme expression is martyrdom of the body. The "passion for martyrdom"[6] interested Kierkegaard immensely. At one point he seriously considered the question as to whether

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1. Journals, p. 326.
2. Stages on Life's Way, p. 416.
3. Loc. cit.
4. Søren Kierkegaard, Purity of Heart, p. 171.
5. Ibid., p. 148.
6. Journals, p. 518.

one had the right to allow oneself to be killed for the truth,[1] and he never quite got over his disappointment that Luther did not become a martyr.[2] An invective against Martensen's eulogy of Bishop Mynster after the latter's death contains a graphic description of Kierkegaard's conception of the suffering of martyrdom:

> A witness to the truth, one of the genuine witnesses to the truth, is a man who is scourged, maltreated, dragged from one prison to the other, and then at last - the last promotion, whereby he is admitted into the first class as defined by the Christian protocal, among the genuine witnesses to the truth - then at last - . . . crucified or beheaded or burnt, or roasted on a gridiron, his lifeless body thrown by the executioner in an out-of-the-way place (thus a witness to the truth is buried), or burnt to ashes and cast to the four winds, so that every trace of the "filth," (which the Apostle said he was) might be obliterated.[3]

A less dramatic form of active suffering is called offense. Offense arises when worldly interests clash with those of the Christian.[4] When this happens the Christian becomes an offense to those about him who do not have a relationship with God. The believer must guard against creating offense, which would only hinder the cause of Christ.[5] Nevertheless offense is always present; everyone who is truly Christian "suffers for the doctrine."[6] In this sense, at least, every Christian is an active

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1. J. Hohlenberg, Søren Kierkegaard, p. 203.
2. Journals, p. 497.
3. Søren Kierkegaard, Attack Upon Christendom, p. 7.
4. Works of Love, p. 118.
5. Ibid., p. 49.
6. Søren Kierkegaard, For Self-Examination, p. 213. Cf. p. 179.

sufferer. One must never desire suffering,[1] but when it comes the sanctified believer has resources with which to meet it.

Active suffering, therefore, is brought about by the world's reaction to the sanctified life of the believer. It is essentially a result of sanctification but expresses itself upon the external life. It is the expected lot of the Christian, and whilst the severity varies considerably, no true believer will be entirely free of it. Martyrdom is the highest form of active suffering, reserved for the "true witnesses to the truth."[2] Only a few in each generation are accorded the honor of being martyrs, but every Christian is given some form of active suffering to endure.

Suffering which is less obvious, but actually more potent, is called true suffering. True suffering is inward suffering.[3] The sufferer must be willing to suffer all in order that the Good may be victorious in him.[4] Suffering of this nature is most intense, so severe that it makes the sufferer dumb.[5] It does not become ameliorated with progress in godliness, but actually becomes more intense the more the sufferer has to do with God.[6] Kierkegaard gives personal expression of the intensity of inward suffering, and at one point, prayed to be allowed

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1. Journals, p. 472.
2. Attack Upon Christendom, p. 7.
3. Purity of Heart, p. 171.
4. Ibid., p. 148.
5. Training in Christianity, p. 21.
6. Attack Upon Christendom, p. 189.

to "slip a little farther from Thee"[1] that the suffering might be less.

True suffering seems to be the result of the believer's inability to give proper outward expression to the inner resignation of his heart, that he is related absolutely to the Absolute and only relatively to the relative.[2] It is the "constant concomitant of man's having passed beyond the other stages and now existing in the specifically Christian categories."[3] Suffering parallels dread, the accompaniment of man's freedom in existence, and which is essentially a non-Christian category. The sanctified life, for all its joyousness, is never free from suffering. It is the condition of being finite.

The suffering of inwardness is intimately related to the theme of self-renunciation. The sufferings of infinite resignation, of dying to the world, are resolved in truly Christian suffering, expressed by the phrase "dying to self."[4] The more "dying to self," the more suffering, since the gulf between the finite and infinite becomes progressively more pronounced as self-renunciation is practiced. The epitome of inward suffering is exemplified by Christ, who, in absolute obedience, expressed absolute self-renunciation. Therefore Christ suffered as no one else could.[5] The reason for this is that His

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1. Lowrie, op. cit., p. 498.
2. Martin Heinecken, "Kierkegaard as Christian," Journal of Religion, Vol. 37, p. 28.
3. Ibid., p. 27.
4. P. LeFevre, The Prayers of Kierkegaard, p. 219.
5. Either-Or, Vol. 1, p. 143; cf. Journals, p. 500.

suffering was accompanied by an incognito, an unrecognizableness, "from the moment of His public appearance up to the last.[1] It was precisely the fact that the absolute self-renunciation of Christ could not be expressed, that He lived incognito, which gave rise to the greatest degree of inward suffering the world has ever seen. This inward suffering is experienced by the sanctified believer, and, while it can never equal that of Christ, it will become more intense as the relationship with God is deepened.

Yet there is respite. "While it is true," Kierkegaard writes, "that the pain of the wish is the sign that the suffering in a way continues; yet the healing also continues, as long as the sufferer remains firm in the commitment."[2] The healing that becomes part of the suffering is the healing of the Eternal. This is operative in the life of the believer concurrently with the suffering he experiences in a relationship that can only be described as paradoxical.[3] It is, nonetheless, in Kierkegaard's estimation, completely effective.

Suffering actually comes to be the greatest joy of the Christian in that it is the guarantee of his God-relationship. It is the educating factor in sanctification, and Kierkegaard has learned to render thanks for it:

O, Thou my God, Thanks, O thanks; I see that I had forgot-

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1. Training in Christianity, p. 136.
2. Purity of Heart, p. 164.
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 169.

> ten that I had prayed that Tou wouldst educate me Thyself. Alas, as long as things were at their worst, I could not think or remember how it was to understand, O, but now I remember it again.[1]

V. Sanctification and Prayer

It may be argued with good reason that prayer is as much a means of sanctification as a result. Perry LeFevre suggests that prayer is the means of moving towards the goal of faith.[2] Yet there is a sense in which prayer is a heartfelt expression of one's relationship to God. In this sense it becomes more a result of sanctification than a means.

In any case there is a quality of abandonment to prayer, whether it be means or end. Kierkegaard expresses this in a journal entry:

> For the rights of understanding to be valid one must venture out into life, out on the sea and lift up one's voice, even though God hears it not, and not stand on the shore and watch others fighting and struggling - only then does understanding acquire its official sanction, for to stand on one leg and prove God's existence is a very different thing from going on one's knees and thanking him.[3]

Prayer is, therefore, "the daughter of faith,"[4] the Archimedean point outside the world.[5] Prayer has solitude for its mother in addition to faith.[6] Its task is to become transparent before God, frankly acknowledging all of man's weaknesses and his hopes. There must be no holding back in prayer, no refusal to

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1. LeFevre, op. cit., p. 219.
2. Ibid., p. 196.
3. Journals, p. 91.
4. LeFevre, op. cit., p. 206.
5. Journals, p. 249.
6. LeFevre, op. cit., p. 207.

yield even the most innocuous areas of life. Prayer is unconditional surrender, hence no striving is possible. Kierkegaard writes:

> For if a man wholly yields himself in prayer he does not strive, but if he does not yield himself at all, he does not pray, even if he bows his knees in prayer day and night.[1]

The will of the individual thus becomes progressively surrendered to the will of God, and to this end his prayers are formed.[2] Perfect happiness can only be found in the prayer: He must increase, but I must decrease.[3] Prayer, therefore, is a serious business; it puts one under infinite obligation.[4] A prayer for help, for example, carries with it the obligation to accept the help in whatever form it comes. One will, therefore, not enter into prayer in a moment of impetuousity, for prayer is measured by its persistence.[5] Yet prayer is not limited to important events. "The more insignificant," Kierkegaard writes, ". . . anything is, the more difficult it is to bring the God-idea into relation with it; and yet it is precisely here that we have the touchstone of the God-relationship."[6]

In Christ, or through Christ, prayer makes the relationship with God a transforming activity. This comes to pass when

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1. Søren Kierkegaard, Edifying Discourses, (Augsburg), Vol. 4, p. 120.
2. Christian Discourses, p. 67.
3. Journals, p. 481.
4. Christian Discourses, pp. 176-177.
5. Postscript, p. 435.
6. Loc. cit.

the one who prays has become "nothing." Then, and only then, is God able to shine through him so he resembles God.[1] It must be remembered, however, that this occurs through the mediatorship of Christ, who "steps into the place of the person praying."[2] As the state of resembling God is approached, the believer's attitude in prayer undergoes revision. He has ceased praying for deliverance from suffering. Instead he offers thanks to God for everything that comes his way. Kierkegaard queries:

> And when men did you wrong and offended you, have you thanked God? We do not say that the wrong done you by men thereby ceased to be a wrong, for, that would be an untrue and foolish speech! Whether it was wrong, you must yourself decide; but have you referred the wrong and the offense to God, and by your thanksgiving received it from Him as a good and perfect gift?[3]

The sanctified believer, therefore, following the Apostle's lead,[4] has learned to give thanks for everything. It is no longer necessary to make demands of God, since He knows what is best. The goal of prayer is actually to hear the voice of God. God's voice is heard when the believer listens instead of seeking to acquaint God with his plans. Attentiveness is the right relation to prayer.

> The true relation in prayer is not when God hears what is prayed for, but when the person praying continues to pray until he is the one who hears, who hears what God wills. The immediate person, therefore, uses many words and

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1. Edifying Discourses, (Augsburg), Vol. 4, p. 142.
2. Journals, p. 337.
3. Edifying Discourses, (Harper), pp. 42-43.
4. Ibid., p. 41.

> therefore makes demands in his prayer; the true man of prayer only attends.[1]

As one becomes more earnest, therefore, the less there is to say, and in the end the one who prays becomes quite silent.[2] Kierkegaard testifies: "For a long time my prayer has therefore been different, it is really a silent surrendering of everything to God, because it is not quite plain to me how I should pray."[3]

Prayer, for Kierkegaard, is an irreplaceable facet of the sanctified life. He testifies of answers to prayer, particularly in relation to his melancholy.[4] He finds "ultimate consolation" in the commandment to pray, "for God is so infinite that even when the desire is present one hardly dares pray."[5] Prayer makes the relationship to God easier, for "otherwise he quite overwhelms one."[6] Prayer is what a man does so that God can do something with him. It is the medium by which man gains self-knowledge and becomes "teachable."[7] It is a state of being in which the claims of God in sanctification are recognized and accepted.

VI. Eschatological Concepts

Since Kierkegaard's primary interest is in the problem of what it means to be a Christian here and now, he gives little

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1. Journals, p. 154.
2. Christian Discourses, p. 25.
3. Journals, p. 484.
4. Ibid., p. 239.
5. Ibid., p. 257.
6. Loc. cit.
7. LeFevre, op. cit., p. 215.

space to a consideration of the after-life in his writings. This, however, is not to say that he does not have a high regard for "eternal happiness." For him the expectation of an eternal happiness is a "refuge in time of need, a fortress life cannot take by storm, an order that need and sufferings cannot cancel."[1] The idea of eternal happiness has a nourishing effect upon the believer; by it he is strengthened in his pursuit of holiness. The expectation of an eternal happiness is a measuring stick by which the believer may understand himself in temporal existence.[2] It is the goal which steadies him.

> As success and prosperity, the favor of men, victory and gain, will not trick him out of his goal, and give him the false goal of vanity in its place, teaching him wrongly to rejoice as one who has no hope, so neither shall sorrow nor the false goal of suffering teach him to sorrow in despair as one who has no hope.[3]

Eternity, therefore, is the point of reference to which all earthly considerations must be applied. The goal of life is God, but eternity means God. Eschatalogical concepts, therefore, while not extensively discussed by Kierkegaard, are of great importance. "Do away with the terrors of eternity (either eternal happiness or eternal perdition)," he writes, "and the idea of an imitation of Christ is fantastic. Only the seriousness of eternity can compel and move a man to take such a daring decision and answer for his so doing."[4] Lowrie summarizes

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1. Edifying Discourses, (Harper), p. 123.
2. Ibid., p. 120.
3. Loc. cit.
4. Journals, p. 313.

Kierkegaard's eschatalogical position:

> It cannot be denied that S.K. had a vivid sense of "the hereafter" (hisset) as opposed to the "here," of the impending judgment of the last day, of the resurrection of the dead, "both of the just and of . . . the unjust," and that in this light (that is, in the light of other-worldliness) he understood the beatitudes of the Gospels and the requirements of discipleship.[1]

VII. Summary

Kierkegaard's existential analysis of sanctification suggests that the process carries with it certain marks of the holy life. These may be considered results of sanctification, but they are also concomitant to the process. Sanctification, for Kierkegaard, is a life of vitality, a life of action that imposes itself upon every aspect of man's existence. Certain "good works," which become a part of the believer's life, are a means of expressing thankfulness to God; they are the result of the sanctifying atonement of Christ, and are not to be construed as a "works righteousness." The outer manifestations of sanctity are a result of an inward condition, a condition that is not affected by temporal circumstances. The inner state of the soul is characterized by worship, an attitude of fear and bliss which creates a sense of humility and self-renunciation. Another characteristic of the believer is joy, not only in spite of difficulties, but because of difficulties. This joy is expressed in praise and thanksgiving, and begets a distinctive peace and tranquillity to the believer. In all of this, however,

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1. Lowrie, op. cit., p. 427.

there is a quality of suffering that is undeniably a part of Christian existence. Kierkegaard divides suffering into two classes, active and true suffering. Active suffering is related to the external life of the believer; true suffering is inward. Both kinds of suffering appear to increase in intensity as the God-relationship becomes more intimate. There is, however, a joy that over-rides the suffering of sanctification. Prayer has a place in sanctification. It becomes, apparently, an attitude of unconditional surrender, fortified by faith. The goal of prayer is to hear the voice of God, and Kierkegaard suggests that silence before God more and more becomes the order of sanctified prayer. Temporal sanctity is encouraged by the hope of eternity, a concept that, whilst not extensively developed by Kierkegaard, is nonetheless of significance.

CHAPTER VIII

DISTORTIONS OF SANCTIFICATION

I. Introduction

When one attempts to apply correctives, he will not only define what he considers the proper condition to be, but will usually point up short-comings in the present system as well. Kierkegaard was not an exception to this. The inconsistencies in the religious system of his day were clarified with unrelenting forthrightness. This chapter gives brief consideration to some of the flaws, which, in Kierkegaard's view, result in distortions of the true practice of sanctification.

II. Insubordination

True sanctity is an individual matter, but an individual may have a false conception of sanctification due to a wrong attitude toward God. This attitude makes God the object of the relationship rather than the subject. Christianity is, in such cases, merely pretence, and it is characterized by doublemindedness.[1] According to Kierkegaard, the doubleminded man has one characteristic expression, "if," "in case that!"[2] When there is resort to the device of "if," there is always an out from the absolute claims of Christianity. "Doublemindedness brings itself to a stop continually by its "in case that."[3] No such avenue of

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1. Søren Kierkegaard, Purity of Heart, p. 82.
2. Ibid., p. 83.
3. Loc. cit.

escape exists for the sanctified believer. "For when the will in a man gets command so that he keeps on willing the Good and in truth willing only that one thing, then there is no "in case that!"[1]

Kierkegaard suggests that the cause of this doublemindedness may be fear of punishment. Thus in "hypocrisy's loathesome doublemindedness" he has pretended to love God in order to avoid punishment. This is to "take the medicine" (punishment) in the wrong way by seeking to avoid it altogether. Such activity is pure sham, and will not make the individual pure of heart.[2] Appearances may be quite deceiving; such an individual sometimes displays a convincing facade of fervor. Kierkegaard, however, has no patience with his efforts. ". . . Their whole religion is simply a heightened circulation of the blood," he states. These people "talk in quite different categories from those that they live in, they talk in religious categories and live in the sensual categories of immediate wellbeing."[3]

The individual who is playing at Christianity, however, is very clever. He has two counsellors, one in the moment of danger when he is afraid, but when things are going well "they do not like to have anything to do with him, for the sight of him reminds them of how weak they were, and they like now to imagine that they had won with their own strength - not with God's."[4]

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1. Loc. cit.
2. Ibid., p. 82.
3. Søren Kierkegaard, Journals, p. 188.
4. Ibid., p. 221.

Or, he may plead doubt as the basis for his insipid Christianity. This, to Kierkegaard, is untenable. The real reason is insubordination, dislike of obedience, rebellion against all authority.[1] All such doublemindedness and insubordination is a distortion of the sanctified existence, no matter how excellent it may appear to the observer. It avoids the real issues, and presents a facade which, in the final analysis, is merely "kind-hearted twaddling."[2]

III. Universal Christianity

The individual who refuses to be an individual before God does not long remain an individual. The religious hoax by which he deludes himself does not offer him the security of a vital God-man relationship, and he is forced to turn elsewhere to combat the anxiety of loneliness. What he finds is the crowd, the masses. In Kierkegaard's thinking, the crowd is a status-seeking device which supplants true Christian holiness. He writes of this:

> Just as desert travellers combine into great caravans from fear of robbers and wild beasts, so the individuals of the contemporary generation are fearful of existence, because it is God-forsaken; only in great masses do they dare to live, and they cluster together en masse in order to feel that they amount to something.[3]

In the crowd there is the false security of anonymity. It provides a substitute relationship for the God-relationship.

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1. Ibid., p. 193.
2. Ibid., p. 525.
3. Søren Kierkegaard, Postscript, p. 318.

Kierkegaard never tires of venting his spleen at the crowd, the "public, which destroys everything that is relative, concrete and particular in life."[1] The crowd is composed of individuals, but it also prevents the individual from being an individual.[2] "The same persons," Kierkegaard writes, "who singly, as solitary individuals are able to will the Good, are immediately seduced as soon as they associate themselves and become a crowd."[3] The crowd is, therefore, the untruth, and "every man should be chary about having to do with 'the others' and essentially should talk only with God and with himself. . . ."[4]

It is quite possible that part of Kierkegaard's vituperation of the crowd stems from his disillusioning experiences in connection with the Corsair affair, as well as from his solitary upbringing.[5] However, with his usual perspicuity he sees a tendency within the masses to be Christian as a "matter of course."[6] He complains that any desire of a single one to put forth an "infinite passionate exertion" towards Christianity is considered pure folly.[7] The Church has triumphed in the world, but no, it is not the Church that triumphs, but the world has triumphed.[8] Everyone is automatically considered a Christian,

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1. Søren Kierkegaard, The Present Age, p. 40.
2. Journals, p. 179.
3. Purity of Heart, p. 144.
4. Søren Kierkegaard, The Point of View, p. 112.
5. Cf. D. G. M. Patrick, Pascal and Kierkegaard, Vol. 2, pp. 43, 93.
6. Postscript, p. 193.
7. Loc. cit.
8. Søren Kierkegaard, Training in Christianity, p. 218.

everyone is holy, and the offense of Christianity has quite disappeared.[1] To Kierkegaard this is nothing but sheer travesty. ". . . For again," he writes, "established Christendom, where all are Christians, . . . resembles the militant Church as little as the stillness of death resembles vociferous passion."[2] Christianity is applied tranquillizingly, whereas it is "in the deepest sense arousing, disquieting."[3] There was nothing to do but attack it, a task that occupied Kierkegaard until his death.[4]

One of the props that the masses have devised to simulate Christian holiness, as analysed by Kierkegaard, is the system of state religion with its cordons of state-paid priests. Kierkegaard has no sympathy with this venture. He insists that the "deification of the established order is the secularization of everything."[5] In the end the individual God-relationship is also secularized, becoming "not essentially different from one's station in life, . . ."[6] Again: "And this is the pattern according to which the whole of official Christianity is manufactured: to speak well of God, sweetly and trumpeting it forth - the more the merrier: only do not enter into relation with God."[7]

The latter works of Kierkegaard abound in invectives, garbed

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1. Søren Kierkegaard, Works of Love, p. 161.
2. Training in Christianity, p. 209.
3. Søren Kierkegaard, Attack Upon Christendom, p. 262.
4. Cf. Journals, p. 226.
5. Training in Christianity, p. 92.
6. Loc. cit.
7. Journals, p. 537.

in irony and sarcasm, that attack the "system." One such example will suffice:

> Just as if one of the composers who compose variations upon one or more movements of a funeral march were to take occasion to compose with free poetic license a dashing gallop - so has the official Christianity taken occasion from some sentences in the New Testament (this doctrine of a cross and anguish and horror and shuddering before eternity) to compose with free poetic license a lovely idyl, with procreating of children and walzes, where everything is "so joyful, so joyful, so joyful," where the priest (a kind of leader of the town band) is willing, for money, to let Christianity (the doctrine of dying unto the world) furnish the music for weddings and christenings, where everything is joy and mirth in this (according to the teaching of Christianity, a vale of tears and a penitentiary), this glorious world (yea, according to the New Testament it is a time of probation related to an accounting and judgment), a foretaste of the still more joyful eternity which the priest guarantees to those families which by their devotion to him have evinced a sense for the eternal.[1]

Religious activity of this sort is not worthy of the name Christian, much less holy living. Christianity, says Kierkegaard, does not need the "suffocating protection of the State." Rather it needs "persecution," and "God's protection."[2]

IV. Monasticism

A distortion of sanctification of a radically different nature than universal Christianity is the pattern of monasticism. Kierkegaard sees this as a misrepresentation of holiness, though he is by no means as vigorous in his repudiation of it as of state religion. Monasticism is analysed as follows:

> There was a time when the Gospel, the Gospel of grace, was transformed into a new law, more severe towards man than the old law. Everything had become in a way torturing,

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1. Attack Upon Christendom, p. 158.
2. Ibid., p. 140.

> laborious, and reluctant, almost as it . . . there was no joy either in heaven or on earth. By their narrow-minded self-torture, people had (in revenge!) made God just as narrow-minded. They went into monasteries and stayed there - oh, yes, it is true, this was voluntary, and yet it was bondage, for it was not truly voluntary, they were not content, not glad to be there, not free, and yet they had not frankheartedness enough to let the thing alone or to leave the monastery again and become free. Good works had become everything.[1]

Essentially this is a contradiction. The cloister attempts to express inwardness "by means of a specific outwardness which is supposed to be inwardness."[2] Kierkegaard observes that being a monk is just as truly something external as being an alderman.[3]

There is evidence, however, that the ascetic side of monasticism appealed to Kierkegaard. (Lowrie is of the opinion that monastic life itself had a strong fascination for him.[4]) He appears, at least, to endorse the spirit of monasticism.[5] Of this spirit he writes:

> There is nothing extravagant in the concept asceticism. Christ was an ascetic. Look at the New Testament and see how much he needed to live on. St. Paul too. The true concept of asceticism is to reduce the necessities of life to a minimum and for the rest naturally, not to ill-treat oneself with flagellation and so forth.[6]

Vestiges of Kierkegaard's latent asceticism appear in his disparagement of women and family life.[7] Towards the end of

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1. Søren Kierkegaard, For Self-Examination, pp. 39-40.
2. Postscript, p. 366.
3. Loc. cit.
4. Lowrie, Kierkegaard, p. 500.
5. Journals, p. 502.
6. Ibid., p. 344.
7. Lowrie gives as the reason for this a natural pessimism which he caught from Schopenhauer, whom he began to study with interest in 1854. Cf. Lowrie, op. cit., p. 488.

his life he wrote:

> Surely it was the least one could require of a man who was himself saved, and redeemed at so dear a price that it was accomplished by another man's agonizing life and death, it was after all the least one could require that he should not engage in begetting children, in producing more lost souls, for of them there are really enough.[1]

The evidence, nevertheless, is not altogether unmixed. In Works of Love Kierkegaard unequivocally states that the Christian may marry freely,[2] though the marriage relationship must always be understood as secondary to the God-relationship. Again, a journal entry reads: "I do not maintain, and have never maintained that I did not marry because it was supposed to be contrary to Christianity, as though my being unmarried were a form of Christian perfection."[3]

It may be concluded, therefore, that monasticism, in the thought of Kierkegaard, is a distortion of sanctification. Certain aspects of asceticism, he feels, are more in line with the holy life, but he cannot be regarded as a full-blown ascetic.

VI. Mysticism

Kierkegaard is decidedly more emphatic in his analysis of mysticism as a distortion of sanctification. He writes in this connection:

> We do not wish to be understood as saying that a knowledge of God which consists of an absorbtion in dreamy wonder and enthusiastic contemplation of Him is alone of the highest worth; for God cannot thus be taken in vain. Just

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1. Attack Upon Christendom, p. 214.
2. Works of Love, p. 117.
3. Journals, p. 334.

> as the self-knowledge which reveals one's own nothingness is the necessary condition for knowing God, so the knowledge of God is the condition for the sanctification of each human being in accordance with his specific end. Whenever God exists in truth there He is always creative. It is not His will that men should bask in the contemplation of His glory in spiritual sloth; but He wishes, through coming to be known of man, to create in him a new man.[1]

In this paragraph Kierkegaard repudiates the contemplative wonder of the mystic by emphasizing the creative aspect of sanctification. Without this quality sanctification really becomes an evasion, a wish to love only the invisible. "This evasion is so high-flying," he writes, "that it soars completely above reality."[2] Holiness of this nature is, therefore, a distortion of true sanctification.

A journal entry suggests that "mysticism has not the patience to wait for God's revelation."[3] The revelation of God is Christ, the God-man, and by this entry Kierkegaard seems to indicate a trend in mysticism to attempt direct access to God without the mediatorship of Christ. Kierkegaard never circumvents Christ in his pilgrimage to God. His emphasis, therefore, on the importance of Christ in sanctification gives further evidence of his dislike of the mystical approach. Mystical sympathies have been claimed for him,[4] but it may be questioned whether such claims align themselves with his writings.[5]

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1. Søren Kierkegaard, Edifying Discourses, (Harper), p. 175.
2. Works of Love, p. 130; cf. Søren Kierkegaard, Either-Or, Vol. 2, pp. 246-47.
3. Journals, p. 82.
4. Walter Lowrie, "How Kierkegaard Got Into English," in Søren Kierkegaard, Repetition, p. 211.
5. Cf. Either-Or, Vol. 2, p. 248.

VII. Summary

In his delineation of Christianity, Kierkegaard recognized certain distortions of practice. As a single individual, man must establish a relationship with God. Kierkegaard was sensitive to the danger of substituting the group for the individual. Thus his writings abound in invectives against the "crowd." His feeling against the crowd culminates in his opposition to the organized church with its state-paid priests. Although appreciative of certain facets of asceticism in monasticism, Kierkegaard was conscious of their flaws. Monasticism supports a concept of works righteousness, a practice never supported by Kierkegaard. Mysticism, too failed to receive endorsement. Its failure to acknowledge the centrality of Christ in sanctification precluded his acceptance of mystical practice.

CHAPTER IX

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

I. Major Emphases in Kierkegaard's Concept of Sanctification

Soren Kierkegaard has been called the central figure in existentialism.[1] His concept of existence has given rise to a new area of thinking, which, though not properly a formal philosophy, has made substantial contributions to philosophic thought.

It is extremely difficult to arrive at a definition of existentialism. In a sense existentialism evades precise definition, since it is, in a way, life, the substance out of which existence is fashioned. In its present form it has arisen as a reaction to the fragmentation of modern society, a fragmentation which is a symptom of the emotional, psychological, and spiritual disintegration occurring in the culture and in the individual.[2] Compartmentalization is a part of the developing industrialization and mechanization of modern life, and has included in its orbit both cause and effect relationships. The unquestioned success of the industrial system has had a parallel dehumanizing effect upon man in relation to himself and

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1. Roger Shinn, The Existentialist Posture, p. 48.
2. Rollo May, Existence, p. 20.

others. Man, too, has become a machine, and against the depersonalizing tendencies of the machine age the early existentialists reacted strongly. Feeling the very substance of life slipping from their grasp, they sought to discover a more secure rootage than the flimsy placidity of the Victorian age, whose carefully polished veneer supressed a volatile alienation.

Existentialists became aware of two postures, the posture of objectivity, which asks questions about life, and the posture of existence, which seeks to live in a passionate awareness of life. Existentialism has long been alert to the dichotomy between the two points of view, and shunning the objective pose, has declared itself the enemy of formalized philosophic system, which, it claims, is actually an evasion of the cruciality of life situations. Thus Kierkegaard satirically comments that he is nothing of a philosopher, but rather an amateur writer who neither writes the system, nor promises the system nor ascribes anything to it.[1] Existentialism is an attempt, therefore, to realize life in its true form, to experience living, and not stand as an observer in a gallery and make clever notations about it. Rollo May defines existentialism as "the endeavor to understand man by cutting below the cleavage between subject and object which has bedeviled Western thought and science since shortly after the Renaissance."[2]

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1. Ibid., p. 24.
2. Ibid., p. 11.

Kierkegaard's protest was against the reigning rationalism of his day, Hegel's "totalitarianism of reason,"[1] and especially against its product, the smug religious banality of universal Christendom. His writings are filled with trenchant observations on the paucity of real Christ-likeness. As has been apparent in this paper, his observations on true Christianity are presented in an existential milieu, a frame of reference that recommended itself to his thinking as the only legitimate way of offering Christian truth.

Kierkegaard's concept of sanctification, too , reflects his existentialism. To him, sanctification is meaningless unless it becomes a way of life. Life with its crucialities, its anxieties, its suffering and loneliness becomes the stage for the holy life. The sanctified individual is sanctified, not just at certain times, or under the pressures of particular occasions, but the "god-relationship" which has been established relates itself in sanctifying power to each moment of time. In Kierkegaard's thinking, to be a Christian means to be in a state of sanctification. He finds it impossible to conceive of true Christianity outside of a serious approach to holiness. The true Christian will seek perfection as naturally as a thirsty animal seeks water to quench its thirst. The Christian will, to continue the metaphor, never find his thirst for God completely satisfied, but will ever seek to relate the most

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1. Loc. cit.

inconsequential details of his experience to God.

Sanctification is an inward state, and though there are outward manifestations of the inner condition, the stress, in Kierkegaard's thought, is upon the inward relationship with God. Thus sanctification is a personal, individual matter. Kierkegaard's concept of sanctification can never be understood apart from his emphasis upon the individual. God is encountered by the individual as an individual. Group dynamics have no place here. Indeed, for Kierkegaard, the "crowd" is highly deterent to any existential understanding of holiness. It is precisely as an individual, in his solitary meaninglessness that man must allow himself to be confronted by God and enter into a sanctifying relationship with the Almighty.

Kierkegaard has a holy respect for God. God is a spirit, completely other than human finitude. He is infinite, eternal, with qualities of omniscience, omnipotence and omnipresence. He is the unconditioned Absolute, the awe-inspiring creator of the universe. Yet, incredibly enough, He desires fellowship with man; indeed He has taken steps to initiate it. God's invitation to man is expressed in revelation. The complete revelation of God is Jesus Christ, the historical fusion of Deity and humanity. The revelation of God in Jesus Christ is an inexplicable fact, which Kierkegaard calls the Absolute Paradox. That God should self-impose temporal and finite restrictions and appear in the Person of Christ, is, for Kierkegaard, the greatest fact of history, incontestable proof of His love for

man. Christ, therefore, is the focal point of Christianity. Individually appropriated by faith, Christ becomes the personal revelation of God to man, and this is what Kierkegaard means by the phrase "contemporaneity with Christ." The relationship is real, subjective. Christ becomes, through His atonement, the "helper and the help."

Kierkegaard makes a point of indicating that Christ is much more than a historical figure whose existence is limited to the past tense. Christ, however, is made contemporaneous through faith. The relationship is not based upon rational understanding; it lies within the sphere of the supra-rational, thus the necessity of a sphere of action beyond the intellect. The representative of Christ in the personal life of the believer is the Holy Spirit. Kierkegaard is careful to relate the Spirit to Christ, while assigning to the Spirit a decisive place in sanctification. Another means of the revelation of God is the Scriptures. In his handling of the Scriptures Kierkegaard was a forerunner of modern Biblical theology, emphasizing the message rather than documentary investigations of the message. The point is to receive the message and receive it personally as a direct communication from God.

Kierkegaard's understanding of God shaped his concept of the position of man in relation to sanctification. Man is endowed with freedom, freedom to choose. Man's very freedom, however, creates anxiety, for choice carries with it differing possibilities. Since man is offered choices, he must, if the

choice is to have any meaning, have the equipment with which to choose. Man's equipment is his will, a concept that receives considerable attention from Kierkegaard. The will appears to be the vital force in man that enables him to enter into sanctification. The understanding, beyond a basic rudimentary stage, is considered useless in the acquisition of holiness; the emotions are little more than a verification of it. The will, however, is central to sanctification. The individual must, by the exercise of his will, apprehend the revelation of God. In order to become contemporaneous with Christ the self must be repudiated. The theme of self-renunciation, which Kierkegaard sometimes calls dying to self, recurs repeatedly in Kierkegaardian literature. It is the negative component of the act of the will in sanctification, and, as such, is an imperative condition of holiness. The more positive action of the will is related to faith. Faith involves risk, but it is the only path to authentic selfhood. The existential properties of faith must not be over-looked. Faith is not a "once-for-all" proposition, but must be a part of every moment of existence. Faith is based upon the inability of reason to establish contact with the eternal. It is a "leap," a contact with infinitude that embraces categories of existence that are beyond the finite. Thus faith is a paradox, an offense to reason.

The path to perfection would be an impassable morass, however, without the love of God. Love, in the pure sense of the

term, emanates from God, and from God alone. Love seems to parallel faith in that it is the counterpart of God, just as faith is the counterpart of the believer. Thus faith makes the love of God available to the sanctified believer. Love, for Kierkegaard, involves a "middle term," and thus always relates itself to others. It is the quality of the love of God which creates, within the existence of the believer, good works, or works of love. The love, therefore, that the sanctified believer knows, is a selfless love, that manifests itself in works. The author of these works, however, is not man, but God, since it is God's love which initiates and completes them. The love of God manifests itself in various characteristics that are part of the sanctified believer's life. There is a quality of worship, which becomes not so much an act as an inward condition. A sense of joy pervades the existence of the sanctified believer, and that despite adversity. The life of holiness is a life of peace and tranquillity undergirded by a quality of thankfulness and disingenuity that is not initiated by finite considerations. Kierkegaard, however, does not suggest that all is smooth in the life of the believer. The motif of suffering appears continually. For Kierkegaard the Christian life is inseparable from suffering. Suffering takes two forms - active suffering and true suffering. The first is external and occurs in varying degrees of intensity. The second is inward suffering and appears to be the result of the dichotomy of the infinite and the finite which struggle within the believer. In the

final analysis, however, suffering, paradoxically enough, is overcome by the joy of sanctification. This expresses itself in a continual attitude of thankful prayer, which more and more assumes a cast of joyful silence in the continuing presence of God.

Three emphases in Kierkegaard's concept of sanctification suggest themselves. The first of these is the existential framework in which it appears. For Kierkegaard, sanctification is the movement of God in the individual's life in a momentary context. It is, therefore, a personal matter, an individually-oriented process, which has its inception with justification, and continues progressively to advance as long as life continues. The popular universal Christianity of his time aroused Kierkegaard's ire because it failed to take account of the individuality of holiness, and his latter works are a polemic against its inadequacy.

In the second place, sanctification is the work of God. Sanctification is essentially a relation to the infinite, therefore it lies beyond the help of human resources. The grace of God in sanctification is implemented in the life of the believer through the exercise of his will, but the choice made, sanctification is properly effected by God. The thoroughgoing other-worldliness of Kierkegaard's concept of sanctification is in contrast to the current rationalism of his day. The infinite component of sanctification overwhelms Kierkegaard. God actually becomes the whole life of the believer.

Thirdly, Kierkegaard's concept of sanctification is of a positive, victorious nature. In contrast to the melancholy aura with which he has been surrounded, his delineation of holiness includes a vibrant, positive note that gives joy in the midst of suffering. This emphasis has been all too neglected; Kierkegaard has been associated with gloom, which, though it undeniably appears in his works, is not his final answer to the riddle of life. It is in his conception of sanctification that Kierkegaard as victor most clearly appears. Here is the work of God upon the human soul, and the result, for Kierkegaard, can be none other than joy and victory. Christian joy, commonly associated with the Wesleyans, is, therefore, not absent from the thought of Kierkegaard.

In many respects, Kierkegaard reflects various facets of historic positions regarding sanctification. As in pre-Reformation patristics, the holiness of God has a prominent place in his concept of sanctity. Kierkegaard's view of God, however, does not make Him as unattainable as that of Justin Martyr, for example. Following Irenaus' lead, Kierkegaard presents a strong sense of immediate communion with God. Communion with God is made possible through Christ, and Kierkegaard includes emphasis upon the Person of Christ in sanctification. Reminiscent, therefore, of Origen, St. Bernard of Clairvaux, George Fox, as well as others, the Person and the Atonement of Christ are part of his emphasis.

The personal guidance of God in the life of the believer

was emphasized by the Alexandrines, of whom Origen and Clement of Alexandria are examples. Kierkegaard, the protagonist of the individual, echoes this emphasis. The ascetic views of Origen prepared the way for monasticism, and pre-Reformation sanctity is perhaps best characterized by its devotion to the cloistered life. The seriousness with which holiness was viewed in monasticism, the primacy it gave to prayer, are certainly part of Kierkegaard's concept of sanctification. He evidenced some interest in monasticism, though certain aspects of it never received his approbation. In particular, the double standard of holiness which it tended to foster is foreign to Kierkegaard. For him the highest level of holiness is available to every man, regardless of rank or position. In this emphasis he reflects the Reformation and post-Reformation periods.

Kierkegaard and Augustine have several common viewpoints. Emphasis upon God as the final goal of life, the essential element of love in sanctification, are examples of this. However, Augustine's stress on the intellectual side of holiness departs from the thought of Kierkegaard. The tendency of Augustine to neglect the humanity of Christ also points to a divergence of thought. The action of the intellect is a theme that is characteristic of St. Thomas of Aquinas as well as Augustine. Here again Kierkegaard parts company with his predecessors. Aquinas' emphasis on love due to the infusion of the Holy Spirit, however, finds a responsive note in Kierkegaard.

Luther's emphasis upon faith in the matter of sanctifica-

tion is an emphasis that Kierkegaard well understood, though his concept of sanctification includes a more practical aspect than does that of the Reformers. The re-discovery of the humanity of Jesus which Luther's doctrine includes, is another point in common with the Danish philosopher-Christian. The implications of the teaching that holiness was a part of everyday existence, an idea that was brought into focus by the Reformation, is to be found recurring in the writings of Kierkegaard.

The seriousness with which the various pietistic groups which arose after the Reformation approached the matter of Christian sanctity has a sympathetic follower in Kierkegaard. His concept of sanctification is, however, less mystical than many aspects of their thinking. Zinzendorf's emphasis on will, however, merits particular mention. The will, in the thought of Kierkegaard, is of considerable importance in sanctification.

The reality with which the Quakers viewed sanctification suggests Kierkegaard's approach to holiness. The Quakers viewed sin from the standpoint of the release Christ gives from it, and their practice of holiness, therefore, included a triumphant, victorious note. Kierkegaard, particularly towards the end of his life, entered into a state of Christian victory that belies the melancholy accorded him. For Kierkegaard as for the Quakers, there is power in Christ as He is appropriated through the exercise of personal faith. William Law, the English author, placed emphasis upon practical Christian living in his writings. This is echoed in the works of Kierkegaard. Law, as did many

of his predecessors, emphasized the work of Christ in sanctification. It has been pointed out that this theme is of importance to Kierkegaard.

The influence of Methodism upon the doctrine of sanctification is evident in the multitude of holiness groups that arose after the advent of John Wesley. The Wesleys emphasized the Person of Christ whose work is consummated in the revelation of the Holy Spirit. There was emphasis upon Christian love, as well as upon the moment by moment experience of sanctification. In all of these emphases Kierkegaard concurs. The matter of sin is, however, a point of dissidence. The Methodists seemed to teach that sinlessness was possible for the sanctified believer, and to justify this doctrine introduced a second work of grace subsequent to and separate from conversion. This was known as the "Great Salvation," and was described as an instantaneous experience. The doctrine of the "Great Salvation" opened the door to a variety of interpretations of holiness, many of which have persisted. Kierkegaard is in sharp disagreement with this interpretation. Sanctification is viewed by him as an existential process, dependent upon the faith of the moment for its perpetration. Any kind of single experience in which the transaction has been terminated once and for all avoids the issue of Godliness, since it sidesteps the necessity of the constant exercise of the will in choosing God. The Wesleys emphasized the fellowship of saints, a concept, too, that is foreign to Kierkegaard. The solitary individual is his

criterion for holiness; group activity appears, in his view, to be suspect.

The sanctity of Schleiermacher, though not neglecting the concept of faith, placed emphasis upon the awareness of God through the natural world. For Kierkegaard, God cannot be known in this fashion. He sees God as utterly other-worldly, who can be reached only by a leap of faith. Kierkegaard's view of the infinite and absolute difference between God and man contrasts with the ameliorating properties of Schleiermacher's interpretation. Ritschl's emphasis upon the wholeness of the sanctified life also contrasts with the emphasis of Kierkegaard. Ritschl seems to indicate that the life of holiness is equivalent to the "good" life. Kierkegaard, on the other hand, sees the sanctified believer as a sufferer, as one who suffers more intensely as he comes closer to God.

Later groups who have emphasized sanctification have tended to concentrate upon the separation of justification and sanctification, thus introducing a second experience in the acquisition of holiness. Kierkegaard, though not clear on this point, seems to link sanctification with justification and in doing so points to the necessity of an existential approach to holiness.

It was earlier suggested[1] that the history of sanctification may be described by the use of three terms, holiness

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1. Cf. <u>ante</u>, p. 35.

improving, holiness imputed, and holiness imparted. Kierkegaard does not, in his concept of sanctification, fit neatly into any one of the three categories. His concept includes facets of holiness that are reminiscent of all three. From the first category, holiness improving, Kierkegaard has borrowed the concept of modified asceticism. His doctrine of self-renunciation, for example, suggests the early Catholic divines, who, deserting the world, cloistered themselves to separate as completely as possible from the evil influences of the world. Kierkegaard never went this far; he repudiated monasticism, but his bent toward the ascetic practice of monasticism and mysticism suggests a certain affinity for holiness improving.

The second term, imputed, has been associated with the Reformed tradition. The major emphasis was upon the holiness of God and its action upon man. In this emphasis Kierkegaard is a reflection of imputed sanctity. The Reformation removed holiness from the seclusion of the monastery and introduced it to the man-on-the-street. Sanctification was no longer the right of the few; it had become the privilege of the masses. The doctrine of the "priesthood of all believers" announced that holiness was available to whomsoever would have it. In this emphasis Kierkegaard also belongs to the imputed stream of thought. The individual, as a humble sinner before God, was a candidate for sanctification. Kierkegaard aligns himself with imputation.

The emphasis upon perfection for all believers was not

neglected by the third group - holiness imparted. In the continuance of this emphasis, therefore, Kierkegaard belongs, as well, to the imparted tradition. There is another side to imparted sanctity which Kierkegaard follows. This is the emphasis upon the reality of holiness, the vital constitution of sanctity that propounders of the imparted persuasion stress. To Kierkegaard, this is a necessary component of holiness ; the hearty joy of the early Methodists would, had he known of it, have awakened a sympathetic response in Kierkegaard, if only on account of its existential reality.

It may be concluded, therefore, that Kierkegaard incorporates facets of all three emphases. Theologically, he may be considered most closely allied with imputed sanctification. Practically, he reflects both improving and imparted holiness.

II. Relation to Christian Education

Sanctification, according to Kierkegaard, affects every area of life. Implications, therefore, in the field of Christain Education, are inevitable.

A. The Goal of Christian Education

The goal of Christian Education, briefly stated, focuses on the development of personality and character of the individual under God. The individual is nurtured and taught in such fashion that he will adequately relate to God and to other human beings.[1] From the Christian viewpoint to accomplish this

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1. Cf. Marvin Taylor, Religious Education, p. 74.

to any satisfactory degree necessitates a concept of holiness. The Christian educator, therefore, should have an adequate understanding of sanctification. Inasmuch as Kierkegaard presents a concept of sanctification that is founded upon divine revelation, the Christian educator should seek to give the pupil an understanding of revelation, if Kierkegaard is to be used as a model. This involves the ability to set forth the claims of the infinite and to present these as goals to which individual pupils may be motivated to relate themselves. The endeavor will concentrate upon the authority of God, upon the "otherness" of His holiness, upon the necessity of encounter as opposed to a permissive, experimental presentation. Thus the goals of Christian Education will tend to emphasize theology rather than exclusively emphasizing social adaptability and moral and ethical self-realization.

One of the most significant contributions of Kierkegaard to Christian Education is his insistence on individual confrontation with the claims of the infinite and absolute God as contemporized in Christ Jesus. Apart from this, according to Kierkegaard, there can be no Christian Education or development of Christian personality. Thus all plans, materials and methods must be tested in the light of this inflexible goal, the goal of contemporaneousness with Christ.

B. Content of Christian Education

In order to achieve the final goal of existence, Kierkegaard recognized the necessity of specific content. The whole

existential framework in which his concept of sanctification was presented is a study in specifics. Thus his analysis of the human condition attempted to objectify intimate, subjective areas of life. His theological presentation was no less specific. God, though infinite and wholly other, was nonetheless carefully defined. The same is true of the other persons of the Trinity. Even such intangibles as love and faith received precise treatment. Kierkegaard attempted to be specific and accurate regarding the most elusive concepts in order that the God-man relationship might be understood and personally experienced.

Kierkegaard's analysis of the human condition has implications for Christian Education. Thus individual responsibility rather than group reaction is the focus of his attention. Content, therefore, of Christian Education will include specific consideration of the individual's position before God. This includes recognition of sin and grace, freedom and responsibility, of self-renunciation and sanctification. In the light of Kierkegaard's contribution, a balanced view of Christian Education will include specific treatment of Biblical theology and concern with the individual person.

C. Method of Christian Education

The goals and content of Christian Education, apart from implementation by effective methods, are of limited value. One of the most interesting facets of Kierkegaard's educational precepts was his "indirect method." This was reflected in the

complicated pseudonymous system he employed. Although the goal and content of Kierkegaard's teaching were specific, his presentation was dialectical. It was not his desire to present facts, which, objectively considered, would have no bearing on existence. To prevent this Kierkegaard suggested indirect communication. By the use of this technique he attempted to discover the level of existence of the learner. Only when this was discovered could he begin the educative process. Following Kierkegaard's pattern the teacher would then attempt to arrest attention by the use of the Socratic method of questioning. In response to this the learner could be stimulated to an awareness of new areas of experience, hitherto unknown.

In the indirect method the character of the teacher is of great importance. In the light of Kierkegaard, the aim of Christian Education is to produce involvement. The teacher, as the pattern, therefore, must reflect the kind of involvement he seeks to elicit from his pupils. Once self-motivation has been achieved in the pupil the indirect method is no longer valid. This is an extension of Socrates' thought that since there was latent truth in every individual the process of indirection would automatically bring forth results. Kierkegaard, however, recognizing the limitations of man, and that ultimate truth was to be found only in God, realized that the indirect method must be followed by a content emphasis. More specifically, God, the source of truth, becomes the teacher, and all content must ultimately find its origin in God. There is a

sense, therefore, in which the human teacher is always in an indirect relationship. Although in the role of the indirect communicator, the teacher, nevertheless, must use specific content, recognizing its relation to the voice of God.

Limited in his knowledge of child development, perhaps due in part to his own abnormal childhood, Kierkegaard was unable to develop a satisfactory understanding of the Christian nurture of children. The immaturity of childhood did not, in his view, allow for a complete Christian experience. Without awareness of guilt, an involvement with Christ was impossible, and without involvement Christian nurture was without meaning. The child was incapable of this level of experience. Kierkegaard, therefore, spoke to adult Christian Education.

With the current interest of Christian educators in Biblical theology, Kierkegaard is of special relevance in the field of Christian Education. His duo-focus on contemporaneity with Christ and on individual existential experience makes his an incisive voice to mid-twentieth century man.

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