A question occurs again and again in Kierkegaard's thought — 'How can I become a Christian?' The question leads to problems about the nature and truth of Christianity. Does Christianity consist in a set of doctrines put forth in the scriptures and interpreted by the theologians from time to time speculatively, or is it an infinite inward process to be realized? For Kierkegaard however, a speculative inquiry into the nature of Christianity amounts to making it an objective theoretical problem, whereas the 'how' in the above question implies a reference to an existential act, which is an incessant process.¹

To become a Christian according to Kierkegaard,

¹"The objective problem consists of an inquiry into the truth of Christianity. The subjective problem concerns the relationship of the individual to Christianity." (S. Kierkegaard: Concluding Unscientific Postscript, p.20).

Ibid., p. 523: "No one starts by being a Christian, everyone becomes such in the fullness of time... if he does become such."


Cf. "... he was not yet truly a Christian but only in the process of becoming one." (Preface to the above).

Cf. "... he (Kierkegaard) writes that whereas an objective approach enquires into 'the truth of Christianity', a subjective approach asks, rather: 'How can I become a Christian?'" (David E. Roberts: Existentialism and Religious Belief, New York, p. 93).
is to become at the same time an authentic individual, to become aware of the innermost depth of one's being. Thus the whole question of becoming a Christian is an inward subjective question, rather than a speculatively objective one. Kierkegaard, therefore, looks at the problem of Christianity from an out-and-out individualist point of view rather than from the traditionalist philosophers' or theologians' objective standpoint, in which they themselves are not involved. Christianity for Kierkegaard, lies in the intensification of subjective experience, it lies so to say, in a process of appropriation of a transcendent reality inwardly into the subject. It is therefore not something outside the individual but that which is realised in inwardness; it is what Kierkegaard calls 'internal thinking' — thinking of one's own self:

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2"But to speculate upon Christianity is not the labor of inwardness". (S. Kierkegaard; Concluding Unscientific Postscript, p. 536).

And Ibid., p. 540: "SUBJECTIVELY, WHAT IT IS TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN IS DEFINED THUS; The decision lies in the subject. The appropriation is the paradoxical inwardness which is specifically different from all other inwardness. The thing of being a Christian is not determined by the what of Christianity but by the how of the Christian."

And Ibid., p. 201: "Christianity on the contrary is subjective; the inwardness of faith in the believer constitutes the truth's eternal decision. And objectively there is no truth; for an objective knowledge of the truth of Christianity, or of its truths, is precisely untruth... Christianity is inwardness."
"The very first condition for becoming a Christian is to be absolutely introverted. Being thus infinitely introverted, the introvert has nothing whatsoever to do with anybody else — this is what it means to be serious.... Being thus introverted, the learner then understands, or learns to understand, what the task of becoming and being a Christian really is — every instant that he is extraverted is wasted, and if there are many such instants, all is lost."

Thus Christianity consists throughout in a unique personal experience, whereas speculative Christianity is traditionally founded in the realm of the outward and cannot probe into the depth of the inward being. In the philosophy of Kierkegaard, it is only the individual that constitutes the reality; the 'congregation', mankind, society, state etc. are but sum-total of the individuals. Thus the individual is the only reality. The true Christian self, contrary to the general theological belief, is not a social self. Traditional Christianity unfortunately has made the individual a part of the 'crowd', in the same

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And *Ibid.*, p. 220: "Thus endless introversion teaches a man to understand to the utmost what the task is..."

way as an attempt has been made politically to 'assimilate' man into the 'nation'. Such a process of 'assimilation' of the individual into the class or the church or nation or society is to falsify completely his unique character.

At this point one might note the difference between Kierkegaard and Karl Marx - the two great nineteenth century thinkers, regarding their outlook on man and society. Like Kierkegaard, Marx also deals with man, though from an anti-religious standpoint. But the reality of man for Karl Marx is not the individual qua individual, but only as a member of general classes like the exploiters and the exploited, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. At the stage of industrial revolution, the human individual is dehumanised and becomes the exploited labourer in the factory. The relations which govern between man and man are economic i.e. they are external. And it is not the individual that matters so much, in a new society envisaged by Karl Marx. On the contrary, Kierkegaard's position is individualistic. The human individual stands over and above the social order. The relations governing the individuals are religious i.e. internal. The class, the nation, the 'congregation' etc. are fictions of objective speculative philosophy. In the words of Kierkegaard himself, the Christian combat is waged by the single individual and not by him as a member of a
Kierkegaard remarks at another place:

"In this way Christianity protests every form of objectivity; it desires that the subject should be infinitely concerned about himself. It is subjectivity that Christianity is concerned with, and it is only in subjectivity that its truth exists, if it exists at all; objectively, Christianity has absolutely no existence."

Thus speculative theology according to Kierkegaard does not authentically represent Christianity, or for that matter any other religion, if it merely consists of a set of doctrines, moral rules or objective truths external to man's inner needs. Christianity however has been identified for a long time with a kind of theology closely allied to certain philosophical systems, for instance Hegelianism. As against this, Kierkegaard

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And Ibid., p. 211: "The external world has nothing whatever to do with the fact that I am a Christian: my being a Christian is therefore not measurable... and the true Christian I am is a thing for itself, a thing for myself, something I am in hidden inwardness..."


7. At this point it is relevant to discuss Kierkegaard's relationship with Martensen. Martensen was greatly influenced by Hegel and he made Hegelianism the ruling philosophy in Denmark. Talking of Martensen,
remarks that truth understood truly in a Christian manner consists "not in knowing the truth but in being the truth... knowledge has a relation to truth, but with that I am (untruly) outside of myself; within me (that is, when I am truly within myself, not untruly outside of myself) truth is, if it is at all, a being, a life." Christianity

Reider Thomte remarks in his book 'Kierkegaard's Philosophy of Religion' on p. 6: "He saw the possibilities which Hegel's philosophy offered for a speculative theology which could mediate between rationalism and orthodoxy."

After the death of Bishop Mynster, Martensen succeeded him as a Bishop of Sjaelland and Primate of the Danish Church. Martensen characterised Mynster as "a witness for the truth, one of the true witness for truth". Kierkegaard makes a sweeping polemic against this. His attack deals with the whole established church. His article is named as "The point at issue with Bishop Martensen".

"For if Bishop Mynster is a witness to the truth, then, as even the blindest can see, every priest in the land is a witness to the truth. For what was distinguished and extraordinary in Bishop Mynster has nothing whatever to do with this question whether he was a witness to the truth or was not a witness to the truth, a question which has to do with character, life, existence; and in that respect Bishop Mynster was perfectly homogeneous with every other priest in the land who does not offend against civil justice, so every priest in the land is at the same time a witness to the truth... with this assertion it is, Christianly, an impudent indecency, an effort in the direction of making a fool of God.... The Honorable and the Right Reverened Bishop Martensen, Privy Counselor (whoever it may be he counsels) transforms the whole church Establishment, Christianly understood, into an impudent indecency..." (S. Kierkegaard: Attack Upon Christendom, translated by Walter Lowrie, Boston, 1960, pp. 18-20).


And Ibid., p. 202: Kierkegaard amplifies this position further: "Therefore Christ compares truth with
then is a way of life, it is to be 'lived' and it is not a doctrine to be preached or speculated upon.⁹

Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, both launch a sweeping polemic against the official Christianity of the priests— in particular against Protestant theology, though both of them come from a priestly background— Nietzsche's father and grandfather were both the Protestant priests. The parallel between the two philosophers' attitudes will be described later. Kierkegaard's immediate focus of agitation was the established Protestant Church in Denmark, though his attack can apply to Christianity as a whole¹⁰— indeed to all organised priestly religions. The apostolic Christianity, states Kierkegaard, is not

food, and the appropriation of it with eating; for just as food, corporally, by being appropriated (assimilated) becomes the sustenance of life, so also is truth, spiritually, both the giver of life and its sustenance; it is life."

⁹"Christianity is not a doctrine... Christianity has to do with existence, with the act of existing; but existence and existing constitute precisely the opposite of speculation." (S. Kierkegaard: Concluding Unscientific Postscript, p. 339).

¹⁰"... a lively fire against the official Christianity, and thereby against the clergy in this land... the official Christianity is aesthetically and intellectually a laughing stock, an indecency, in the Christian sense a scandal." (S. Kierkegaard: Attack Upon Christendom, pp. 47-48).
authentic Christianity, it is just a 'hypocrisy'.\textsuperscript{11} Official priesthood is misrepresentation of Christianity.\textsuperscript{12} Those who walk in 'long robes' tend to regard themselves as the apostles of true Christianity and convey the false impression that they know everything about God. Kierkegaard uses very strong words to describe them. He even calls them "Cannibals".\textsuperscript{13} Doctrinal Christianity — by which is meant the Christianity represented through official doctrines of the Church — cannot be true and honest Christianity.\textsuperscript{14} Kierkegaard regards even the theatre more honest than the church. The church pretends to be honest but preaches false doctrines; on the other hand,

\textsuperscript{11}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 210: "... official Christianity is an abyss of falsehood and illusion.... Therefore there is nothing so displeasing to God as official Christianity and taking part in it with the claim that this is worshipping Him."

And \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 289-290: "So the existence of the 'priest' has the significance of making society feel secure in its hypocrisy."

\textsuperscript{12}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 174: "Beware of them that walk in long robes'."

\textsuperscript{13}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 268-269: "... the priests are cannibals, and in a far more odious way.... It is different with the 'priest' as a cannibal. His cannibalism is well thought out, cunningly planned, calculated on the basis of having nothing else to live on throughout his life...."

\textsuperscript{14}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 33: "... for 'Christendom' is... the betrayal of Christianity; a 'Christian world' is... apostasy from Christianity."

And \textit{Ibid.}, p. 39: "Therefore I want honesty; but till now the Established church has not been willing of its own accord to go in for that sort of honesty..."
the theatre is authentic and it says honestly what it is. The church on the contrary, hides what it is.15

Further, the church is characterised by its authority, which runs contrary to the uniqueness and freedom of the individual.16 The individual is bound to an invariable set of dogmas. The institutionalised religion in general, degrades the individuality of man by equalising everybody, like the sheep in the flock, so as to remove all the concrete differentiations and distinctions. Kierkegaard's criticism of the church is supported by Nietzsche with equal vigour. The latter maintains that Christianity is totalitarian and dogmatic.17 The individuals are forced to follow the

15Ibid., p. 197.

16"Authority is either an apostolic call, or the specific quality of ordination. To preach is precisely to exercise authority..." (S. Kierkegaard: On Authority and Revelation, translated by Walter Lowrie, Princeton, 1955, p. 111n).

17"'Ye higher men', — so blinketh the populace — 'there are no higher men, we are all equal...!'." (F. Nietzsche: Thus Spake Zarathustra, translated by Thomas Common, in The Philosophy of Nietzsche, New York, n.d., p. 320).

Cf. "Here is one of the few hints in Nietzsche's finished works of his ideals about 'breeding'; he charges Christianity with having bred only conformity and mediocrity and with having thwarted the development of single superior individuals — 'The Church sends all 'great men' [Menschen]' to hell, it fights against all 'greatness of men'..." (Walter Kaufmann: Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist, Princeton, 1950, p. 275)."
conventions of the church and to remain at the level of the herd. They are, to quote the poet, like the "hungry sheep which are not fed". Curiously enough, the word 'pastor' (in Latin 'pastorem') means both the priest and the shepherd. And the analogy of the sheep and the shepherd occurs so often in religious discourse that the loss of individuality seems to have been impressed upon us again and again. The individual thus is forced by dogmatic Christianity to sink into general mediocrity. Nietzsche calls upon man to rise above the level of mere 'statistics' which represents the so-called humanity, and to achieve the dimensions of the truly unique, the truly heroic. This is not possible if the individual follows mechanically the dogmatic doctrines of the church. The institution of priesthood unfortunately characterises almost all religions and true religion which Kierkegaard discovers in 'inwardness' has rarely been recognised in philosophy of religion. Karl Jaspers, echoing the thought of Kierkegaard, explains the outer characteristics of all religions: prayer and worship, revelation, congregation of the faithful, institutionalised church, dogmatic theology and above all blind obedience to the dogma. The believer obeys in so far he is expected to surrender himself completely, he does not question why. In his thoughts he obeys theology and in his actions he obeys the commands of the church. Thus there is complete
self-surrender to the authority of religion which in the past has also been backed by force. The criticism of dogmatic theology and institutionalised religion is common to these three thinkers who tried to discover true religion in the inward act of freedom, which is a movement of man to authentic existence. But Nietzsche expounds an anti-Christian — anti-religious outlook, whereas Jaspers refutes the uniqueness of the Christian type of revelation and recognises that unique religious


19"'We have no responsibility, we are privates, we abide by the priest, who has taken an oath'... while society shoves responsibility away from itself upon the priest." (S. Kierkegaard: Attack Upon Christendom, p. 290).

Cf. "It moveth my heart for those priests... prisoners are they unto me, and stigmatised ones. He whom they call Saviour put them in fetters:— In fetters of false values and fatuous words.... But whom would that disguised affliction convince! Verily, their saviour themselves came not from freedom and freedom's seventh heaven!" (F. Nietzsche: Thus Spake Zarathustra in The Philosophy of Nietzsche, pp. 97-98).

Cf. "It first makes the deceptive presupposition that the human is null and void unless the determine contents of revelation and grace are effective therein. And then Christianity is falsely brought nearer to us and made easier by supposedly theological thought through a clarification of the human, which is essentially a philosophic, and not yet Christian, faith. Perhaps in such a connection, philosophy is the better theology since it is more honest even if it is negative. It shows how far theology lives from philosophic ideas, which, as its own possession of philosophy will not abandon." (K. Jaspers: Reason and Existenz, pp. 144-145).

experience can be discovered also in religions other than Christianity. His thought is characterised by universality of outlook — by an open horizon. Kierkegaard on the other hand attempts to rediscover Christianity in each authentic act of freedom and rejects the authority of the church and the official dogma. A proper Christian life, is an expression of each individual's authentic free choice. It is a unique individual experience and cannot be socialised.

At this point, it may be useful to elaborate the similarities and differences between Kierkegaard and Nietzsche. While Kierkegaard's objection is mainly against official Christianity, Nietzsche's attack is more general i.e. against all institutionalised religion. But both of them ridiculed the prevalent Christian institutions. The Church is only an instrument of power in the hands of the priests; according to Nietzsche, it is one of the most 'ferocious frauds'.

20 "Without authority to call attention to religion, to Christianity, is the category for my whole activity as an author, integrally regarded. That I was 'without authority' I have from the first moment asserted clearly and repeated as a stereotyped phrase. I regarded myself preferably as a reader of the books, not as the author." (S. Kierkegaard: The Point of View, p. 155).

21 "What defines me, what places me apart from the rest of humanity, is the fact that I unmasked Christian morality.... Blindness in the face of Christianity is the essential crime — it is the crime against life....
provides the handle for controlling the masses. Christian morality for Nietzsche, is an artificially constructed system of rules meant only for the weak-willed. Christian morality therefore is regarded as slave-morality.

Christian morality is the most pernicious form of the will to falsehood, the real Circe of humanity, that has corrupted it." (F. Nietzsche: Ecce Homo translated by Clifton Fadiman, in The Philosophy of Nietzsche, New York, pp. 929-930).

22Ibid., p. 931: "There still remains the possibility that it is not mankind that is degenerating, but only the parasitical kind of man — the priest, who by means of morality has lied himself into his position of determiner of values, who has divined in Christian morality his road to power. And in fact, this is my opinion. The teachers and leaders of mankind — including the theologians — have been, every one of them, decadents: hence their transvaluation of all values into a hostility to life; hence morality. Here is a definition of morality. Morality is the idiosyncrasy of decadents, actuated by a desire to avenge themselves successfully upon life.

23"All the world's efforts against the 'aristocrats', the 'mighty', the 'masters', the 'holders of power', are negligible by comparison with what has been accomplished against those classes by the Jews — the Jews, that priestly nation which eventually realised that the one method of effecting satisfaction on its enemies and tyrants was by means of a radical transvaluation of values... Yet the method was only appropriate to a nation of priests, to a nation of the most jealously nursed priestly revengefulness. It was the Jews who, in opposition to the aristocratic equation (good = aristocratic = beautiful = happy = loved by the gods), dared with a terrifying logic to suggest the contrary equation, and indeed to maintain with the teeth of the most profound hatred (the hatred of weakness) this contrary equation, namely, 'the wretched are alone the good; the poor, the weak, the lowly, are alone the good; the suffering, the needy, the sick, the loathsome, are the only ones who are pious, the only ones who are blessed, for them alone is salvation — but you, on the other hand, you aristocrats, you men of power, you are to all eternity the evil, the horrible, the covetous, the insatiate, the godless;
Perhaps it is an artful device evolved by the inferior class for its self-preservation.\(^{24}\) Slave-morality (Sklavmoral), which Nietzsche distinguishes from master-morality (Herrenmoral), breeds such meek virtues as pity, sympathy, humility, obedience etc.\(^{25}\) Master-morality on the other hand inculcates strong virtues as courage, power, self-reliance etc.\(^{26}\) The latter contributes to creativity and activity while slave-morality is passive and fosters a very low type of life.\(^{27}\)

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eternally also shall you be the unblessed, the cursed, the damned!" (F. Nietzsche: The Genealogy of Morals in The Philosophy of Nietzsche, pp. 642-643).

\(^{24}\) Cf. "In his (Nietzsche) bitterest diatribes against Christianity his object was not to shake the faith of great majority of mankind in their idols. He sought merely to free the strong men from the restrictions of a religion which fitted the needs of only the weaker members of society.... He saw the positive necessity of such religions as a basis for his slave-morality..." (W.H. Wright: Introduction to Nietzsche's Beyond Good and Evil, translated by Helen Zimmerm, in The Philosophy of Nietzsche, pp. 373-374).


\(^{26}\) Ibid., p. 643.

\(^{27}\) Ibid., p. 643.

Cf. "The real horror of Christianity for Nietzsche is not so much that it coddles the weak as that it suppresses and cows the strong. Indeed, he is willing at times to welcome Christianity as a means by which, in better times, a minority of masters, free spirits, might keep in useful contentment a majority of slaves, herdmen." (Crane Brinton: Nietzsche, Cambridge, 1948, p. 104).
The prevalent institutionalised religions are based on ascetic ideals which teach us to renounce the world rather than live in it truly. Religion is based on the notion of a permanent reality — a reality which is fixed, unified, eternal and other-worldly. It is hostile to life, it is "in opposition to the fundamental presupposition of life," it is based on the false

And Ibid., pp. 102-103: "Among all religions of gentleness — that is, among social diseases — Christianity is for Nietzsche by all odds the worst, partly because it has succeeded in corrupting the most manly and capable of the human race. 'Faith, hope and charity' make a complete charter for the domination of the masters by the slaves. Christian morals are consistently, coherently, the expression of the basic instincts of low men, instincts that make them try to avoid real living — that is, to try to perpetuate existence at the lowest possible level."

And Ibid., p. 102: "... priest believes, perhaps from the very first, the pious fictions he invents. He really believes the meek are blessed; he even believes that he himself is meek, and that he ought to inherit the earth.... He takes joy in his disease, in his meekness."

28 Talking of Christianity Nietzsche says: "Behind such a mode of thought and evaluation, which, if at all genuine, must be hostile to art, I would always feel something hostile to life, the wrathful, vindictive negation of the will to life: for all life rests on appearance, art, illusion, the human vision, the necessity of perspective and error. From the beginning, Christianity was, essentially and thoroughly, the nausea and surfeit of Life for Life, which merely disguised, concealed and decked itself out under the belief in 'another' or 'better' life." (Genealogy of Morals III, in The Philosophy of Nietzsche, p. 941).

Cf. "Christianity is thus the perfect form of decadence, the denial of life, the use of instinct against itself." (Crane Brinton: Nietzsche, p. 103).
conception of life hereafter. All religions do deny the reality of this world and ask the believers to give it up. Nietzsche criticises these ascetic ideals of all religions. He rejects this conception, which is typical

"I conjure you, my brethren, remain true to the earth, and believe not those who speak unto you of super-earthly hopes! Poisoners are they, whether they know it or not. Despisers of life are they, decaying ones and poisoned ones themselves, of whom the earth is weary: so away with them!" (Nietzsche: Thus Spake Zarathustra, pp. 6-7).

Cf. "The doctrine of immortality as it appears in Christianity is for Nietzsche one of the most diabolical of priestly inventions. Believers are not promised that pity, self-abnegation, chastity, asceticism will bring them success in this world...... By the ingenious device of the Kingdom of Heaven, however, they are promised complete fulfilment of their crudest desires in an after-life." (Crane Brinton: Nietzsche, pp. 103-104).

And Ibid., pp. 96-97: "Idealistic rationalists, taking their cue also from Socrates, had achieved a similar falsification and suppression by erecting the even more fantastic dream-world of idealism...."

Cf. "... that without a recognition of logical fictions, without a comparison of reality with the purely imagined world of the absolute and immutable, without a constant counterfeiting of the world by means of numbers, men could not live — that the renunciation of false opinions would be a renunciation of life, a negation of life." (F. Nietzsche: Beyond Good and Evil in The Philosophy of Nietzsche, p. 384).

Nietzsche hates all that seems to him hostile to life, to struggling, to the free expression of a restless energy in man he called the Will to Power. He hates anything finished, complete, contented, 'dead'." (Crane Brinton: Nietzsche, p. 108).
of Christianity; he says that the apparent world is the only one, and the 'real' world is merely a lie.\textsuperscript{31}

Nietzsche perhaps takes an extreme position by rejecting the metaphysical altogether. A religious conception of a reality beyond is also metaphysical. Man must learn to live without such a religious consolation, which denies all values of life and hence is nihilistic.\textsuperscript{32} Nietzsche says, 'God is dead', we have killed Him, now man must tend for himself and must be totally responsible for his actions. Such supreme responsibility aided by a 'will-to-power' — a will towards authenticity and self-mastery characterises Nietzsche's conception of the superman. The superman is one who has absolute control over his will and accepts life and values of this world.

\textsuperscript{31}F. Nietzsche: Ecce Homo in The Philosophy of Nietzsche, p. 812, preface.

And Ibid., p. 932: "The concepts 'beyond' and 'true world' were invented in order to depreciate the only world that exists — in order to leave no goal, no significance, no task, to our earthly reality."

\textsuperscript{32}Among philosophers who are nearer to our own times, it is above all Nietzsche, with his criticism of the Platonic — Christian tradition and the nihilistic culmination of this tradition in his own thought, that has provided the springboard for Heidegger's quest and which in some measure explains the intensity and the passion with which he seeks to bring into view the thread that runs through the history of Western metaphysics, connecting its beginning (Plato) with its end or consummation in Nietzsche." (J.L. Mehta: The Philosophy of Martin Heidegger, Varanasi, 1967, p. 31).

And Ibid., p. 458: "With Nietzsche's philosophy, in which the tradition of Western thinking comes, in an
Kierkegaard's position is not so radical as that of Nietzsche, perhaps because he is deeply religious and has an ardent faith in Christianity. He is overwhelmed by the desire to become a true Christian whereas Nietzsche is anti-Christ, anti-religious. Kierkegaard attacks the institutionalised Christianity of priests and dogmas in order to affirm what he regards to be authentic Christianity. Nietzsche criticises Christianity in order to destroy it, whereas Kierkegaard does so in order to preserve it. Thus both these thinkers, while they agree in their criticism against official Christianity, are poles apart in their conclusions. For Kierkegaard, man himself is grounded in God, and human existence is meaningless without God, whereas Nietzsche does not need Him. But in spite of these differences the similarities between the two are also striking. So it has been important sense, to a focus and fulfils itself, we come to the end of the metaphysical epoch in the history of that tradition."

33"The superman is the meaning of earth". (F. Nietzsche: Thus Spake Zarathustra, p. 6).

And Ibid., p. 83: "'Dead are all the Gods; now do we desire the Superman to live?'. — Let this be our final will at the great noontide!—"

Kierkegaard's Knight of Faith has sometimes been compared to Nietzsche's Superman. "Nietzsche's Superman and Kierkegaard's Knight of Faith are both conceptions of the transcendence of passion and intellectualism
remarked paradoxically that "Nietzsche and Kierkegaard are divided as poles and as close as twins."\(^3\)

It is futile according to Kierkegaard, to base Christianity on any objective theoretical evidence. The relation between the authentic individual and God is not a matter for academic discussion. So the existence of God cannot be logically demonstrated nor can it be proved through the consequences of His life on earth, through the miracles he performed.\(^3\) Such trivialities are important in case of man but they are insignificant for God. Further God cannot be known through speculative history.\(^3\) He can be realised only through faith. What Kierkegaard means by faith will be discussed in one of the next chapters. History deals with past — what really

through the power of some purely inward integrity, though the one is an integrity of mastery and the other of obedience. These ideals are at least alike in their quality of their subjectivity." (Ref. Philip Mairet: Introduction to J.P. Sartre's Existentialism and Humanism, London, 1957, p. 9).


\(^3\)To judge Him by the consequences of His life is mere mockery of God; for, seeing that He is God, His life (the life which he actually lived in time) is infinitely more decisively important than all the consequences of it in the course of history." (S. Kierkegaard: Training in Christianity, p. 26).

\(^3\)Ibid., p. 26.
happened; but what really occurred is not the real. The only tense according to Kierkegaard is the present. History lacks the determinant which is the determinant of truth (as inwardness) and of all religiousness, the for thee. The past is not reality for me... The only evidence of Christianity therefore is to be contemporaneous with Christ.

Kierkegaard distinguishes what he calls religion A (which he identifies with the religion of immanence) from religion B (which is synonymous with Christianity). Religion A, he calls also as paganism and it presupposes that truth is immanent in human subjectivity and moral and religious life could be "brought to normalcy by means of an inner effort or concentration of the personality." This form of religion is independent of the historical situation. "It represents a relationship to an eternal happiness which is not conditioned by anything outside the

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37Ibid., p. 67.
38Ibid., p. 67.
39Ibid., p. 66.
41"In the religiousness of immanence therefore the individual does not base his relation to the eternal upon his existence in time, but the individual's relation to the eternal, by the dialectic of inward appropriation, determines him in transforming his existence in accordance
individual." The eternal is considered as immanent in all men. Religion B or 'Christian religiosity' on the other hand, presupposes that 'personality' can be 'restored' only through a revelation of God in history.

Kierkegaard states that the truth of Christianity is paradoxical in character. The paradox is put as follows: How can the eternal (God) come into being in the historical person of Christ? On rationalistic grounds, it would be regarded as absurd, as it is humanly incomprehensible.

"What now is the absurd? The absurd is — that the

with this relation and expresses the relation by the transformation." (S. Kierkegaard: Concluding Unscientific Postscript, pp. 508-509).

42 Reider Thomte: op. cit., p. 93.

Cf. "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."

And Ibid., p. 494: "Religiousness A is the dialectic of inward transformation; it is the relation: to an eternal happiness which is not conditioned by anything but is the dialectic inward appropriation of the relationship, and so is conditioned only by the inwardness of the appropriation and its dialectic." (S. Kierkegaard: Concluding Unscientific Postscript, p. 509).

43 The paradoxical religiousness (religion B) places the contradiction absolutely between existence and the eternal; for precisely the thought that the eternal is at a definite moment of time, is an expression for the fact that existence is abandoned by the concealed immanence of the eternal." (S. Kierkegaard: Concluding Unscientific Postscript, p. 506).
eternal truth has come into being, has been born, has grown up and so forth, precisely quite indistinguishable from other individuals."44 'Offence' (to use Kierkegaard's term) arises out of this paradox. It has two forms: first, it has to do with 'loftiness' — one is 'offended' at the fact that "an individual man says of himself that he is God,"45 and secondly, the 'offence' has to do with 'lowliness' that "He who is God is this lowly man, suffering like a lowly man."46 How can the eternal God become the lowliest man and is executed like a common individual? 'Offence' like faith is highly characteristic of Christianity,47 and it is concerned with the composite term God-Man.48 According to Kierkegaard, Christ is not divided, he is one and the same, whether in 'loftiness' or in 'lowliness'. "The choice is not between lowliness and exaltation; no, the choice is Christ; but Christ is composite, though one and the same, he is the humble one

44Ibid., p. 188.
Ibid., p. 183: "But the eternal essential truth is by no means in itself a paradox; but it becomes paradoxical by virtue of its relationship to an existing individual."
45S. Kierkegaard: Training in Christianity, p. 84.
46Ibid., p. 84.
47Ibid., p. 83.
48Ibid., p. 83.
and the exalted..." Kierkegaard holds that the paradox or the absurd cannot be understood through reason, it can be realised only through faith. "The God-Man is the paradox, absolutely the paradox; hence it is quite clear that the understanding must come to a standstill before it." It is realised in objective uncertainty, in inwardness. True Christianity is characterised by the

49 Ibid., p. 160.

50 Ibid., p. 85.

Cf. "This is the paradox-religious sphere, the sphere of faith. It can be believed altogether — against the understanding." (S. Kierkegaard: Concluding Unscientific Postscript, p. 513).

And Ibid., p. 191: "Christianity has declared itself to the eternal essential truth which has come into being in time. It has proclaimed itself as the Paradox, and it has required of the individual the inwardness of faith in relation to that which stamps itself an offense to the Jews and a folly to the Greeks — an absurdity to the understanding."

And Ibid., p. 189: "The absurd is precisely by its objective repulsion the measure of the intensity of inwardness,... For the absurd is the object of faith and the only object that can be believed."

51 Ibid., p. 182: "Without risk there is no faith. Faith is precisely the contradiction between the infinite passion of the individual's inwardness and the objective uncertainty."

And Ibid., p. 183: "When subjectivity, inwardness, is the truth, the truth becomes objectively a paradox; and the fact that the truth is objectively a paradox shows in its turn that subjectivity is the truth. For the objective situation is repellant and the expression for the objective situation is repellant; and the expression for the objective repulsion constitutes the tension and the measure of corresponding inwardness. The paradoxical character of the truth is its objective uncertainty; this uncertainty is an expression for the passion of inwardness, and this passion is precisely the truth."
inward relationship of the individual himself before God: 
"To become sober is to come to oneself in self-knowledge, 
and before God..."$^{52}$ Thus and thus only does man become 
authentic and this is the highest examination in life.$^{53}$ 
The whole question of Christianity therefore hinges on 
what Kierkegaard calls the 'single one' or the 'extraordinary 
individual', and not on any objective general proof for 
the truth of its doctrines. Christian experience is 
possible only in non-cognitive relationship with oneself 
i.e. in 'passionate' subjectivity.

$^{52}$ S. Kierkegaard: For Self-Examination and Judge 
For Yourselves, p. 120.

$^{53}$ S. Kierkegaard: Training in Christianity, p. 182.