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Kierkegaard's early life and early views

1) From the "Early Journal Entries", what similar concerns does Kierkegaard have for potential work in the sciences and in theology as he contemplates his future?

A: When speaking of science, Kierkegaard points out that the accomplishments of those who partake in the studying and working of science are content in making new discoveries and adding on to the details of other sciences. To him, there is little significance in doing this and it is comparable to “a man who nourishes the earth by the decay of his dead body” (p 5). In dedicating so much time for something like that, Kierkegaard says there it is not exactly worth it. When Kierkegaard speaks of theology, he mentions how “in Christianity itself there are contradictions so great that they prevent an unobstructed view” (p 6). He finds that as time goes on and he learns more, the components of Christianity are harder to come to terms with.

2) From the "Early Journal Entries", what do you think Kierkegaard means by saying that life can only be understood backwards, but that it needs to be lived forwards?

A: Kierkegaard means that an individual can only contemplate and learn from the things they experience once they have experienced it and/or taken those steps in the first place. So, when he says that “life can only be understood backwards”, he is referring to reflecting on the steps that have already been taken. The second half which says life “needs to be lived forwards” means that we cannot go back in time to before the steps were taken or prior to events happening. So,

we continue to live and move forward in time, starting with our present selves and moving to the point of our future selves.

3) From “Johannes Climacus”, after learning a bit about both Johannes and his father, what poignant lesson do we see in his father's ironic struggle between genius and making a difference in the world? (131)

A: The lesson that we can learn from Johannes' father's struggle between genius and making a difference in the world is that similar to that of what Socrates said in order to begin learning true wisdom; “I know that I know nothing”. By making knowledge seeming to be as unimportant and valueless as possible, we get a similar idea from that. In doing that, there is humility and also a chance to allow Johannes himself to learn from that humility so that he can be confident.

4) From “Johannes Climacus”, characterize Kierkegaard's discussion of the world of immediacy (un-mediated) and the mediated experience of language, thought, and reflection.

A: In Kierkegaard's discussion of the world of immediacy, it seems that there is a constant going back and forth between whether immediacy itself can or cannot be. It was there in itself and then it wasn't because it can't be there in the very next moment. In regards to language, it is ideality and for ideality, it is completely the same as being in reality. Kierkegaard says “Insofar as what was said is supposed to be an expression of reality, I have brought this into relation with ideality; insofar as what was said is something produced by me, I have brought ideality into relation with reality” (p 135). As Kierkegaard continues, he seems to be pinpointing certain concepts and linking them to others in order to make it seem as philosophical under the pseudo-identity of Johannes Climacus.