St. Paul as the Paradigm of a Christian Way of Life: Kierkegaard's Climacus Writings on Faith/*Pistis*

Roel Wolters
Faculty of Philosophy, Theology and Religious Studies
Radboud University
Houtlaan 4, Nijmegen, The Netherlands
Email: roel.wolters@ru.nl

Abstract:

This article examines how Søren Kierkegaard engages with Classical-Hellenistic-Roman thought to root modern day Christian faith in ethical practice and the pursuit of truth. Kierkegaard challenged Greek and Jewish perspectives on Christianity by advocating a form of scepticism that, arguing against the attainability of *ataraxia*, embraces faith (*pistis*) as a conviction that transcends rational understanding (influenced by Aristotle's *Rhetorica* and *Ethica Nichomachea*). He contrasts the Jewish objective rituals with the Christian emphasis on inwardness, urging a life driven by personal faith and truth (influenced by Saint Paul's works and disputed works such as Acts of the Apostles). Kierkegaard seeks to return to a primordial form of Christianity, as exemplified by St. Paul, where Christianity emerged not in the context of early childhood, but within a complex political milieu marked by deep Jewish spiritualism and Greek scientism. This analysis reveals that Climacus views faith not as mere belief, for example turning the question of Christ's resurrection into a 'yes' or 'no', but as a deeply personal and passionate commitment to a way of life that confronts life's inherent challenges, uncertainties, and paradoxes. Interpreting Christianity as a way of life — distinct from Greek and Jewish traditions — has significant implications even today, as Christians reflecting on St. Paul's teachings and Kierkegaard's insights are likely again to become distinct subjects, much like early Christians did in their time.

Keywords: Ethics, Epistemology, Hermeneutics, Scepticism, Faith, Pistis, Truth, Conviction, Kierkegaard, St. Paul, Aristotle.

> To treat it as though Christianity were an invention of Johannes Climacus is precisely a biting satire on philosophy's impudence towards it (Kierkegaard, *Papers and Journals*, 45 VI A 84).

Introduction

The inquiry into the relationship between Søren Kierkegaard and St. Paul the apostle's work has been limited, despite Kierkegaard's frequent and extensive references to Paul throughout his oeuvre. Moreover, when researchers do examine the relation between Kierkegaard and Paul, their focus is on explicit mentions of Paul's epistles, while largely overlooking the implications present in Kierkegaard's Climacus writings (Barrett and Stewart 2010, preface ix).

In *Philosophical Fragments* (1844) Climacus adopts the stance of having forgotten about Christianity, characterized by an amnesia. In the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments* (1846), he openly declares he is not a Christian and explores the process of becoming one. The latter, I shall argue, is answered by a return to antiquity, or to the primordial form of Christianity for which Paul is an exemplar, absolving the amnesia previously mentioned. Thus what Climacus sets out to do is to communicate the old way of Christian life as handed down by the early Christians (Kierkegaard 2009, 209). Additionally, for Climacus this discussion does not just involve an amnesia towards the historical situatedness of antiquity, this form of amnesia also manifests itself in the present. One can understand this in terms of continually forgetting oneself, and thereby, de facto, ethical and religious existence. In other words, the importance is not just placed on a return to antiquity, we are also amnesiac in the sense that we continually lose sight of our ethical and spiritual commitments in the present moment. Through this exploration, the faith, as can be found in the Bible, and the philosophical faith or *pistis*, as can be found all throughout antiquity, are brought closer together.

At the time of Kierkegaard writing the pseudonymous *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, various developments led to the Pauline legacy to be under stress. Christian scholars doubted the authorship of multiple Pauline epistles. As Lori Unger Brandt notes: "The sheer variety of interpretive options tended to undermine the certainty traditionally associated with faith and threatened to defer all religious commitments until the scholarly disputes had been resolved" (Barrett and Stewart 2010, preface xi-xii). Kierkegaard, troubled by these disputes, felt the need to explicate the significance of faith in a situation of decreasing academic consensus, while having to contend with contested interpretations of Paul (Barrett and Stewart 2010, preface xi-xii). Consequently, Climacus ended up being more concerned with having faith, than as to the question of what faith is. One has nevertheless to assume Kierkegaard, under his Climacus pseudonym, approached used material carefully and deliberately. Furthermore, this led Brandt to conclude that Kierkegaard, familiar with all these discussions, was heavily influenced by philosophers such as Johann Gottfried Herder and Friedrich Schleiermacher, whom emphasized individual piety and living a Christian way of life.

During Kierkegaard's first, yet unpublished, Climacus work: *De omnibus dubitandum est* (1842-1843), Kierkegaard emphasizes his pseudonym as someone preoccupied with Greek and modern philosophy. As the subtitle to the first part (*pars prima*) states: "Johannes Climacus Begins to Philosophize with the Aid of Traditional Ideas," (Kierkegaard 2013, 127). This work, and later *Philosophical Fragments* and *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, reflects Kierkegaard's interest in Ancient Greek philosophy, and in particular: Aristotle. His engagement with Aristotle was at its height after studying Wilhelm Gottlieb Tennemann's *History of Philosophy* (*Geschichte der Philosophie*) during his time in Berlin. Kierkegaard's preoccupation with Aristotle started to show in his journals after his return to Copenhagen in March 1842 (Carlisle 2005, 15). Aristotle's philosophy is a significant element in Kierkegaard's Climacus writings and serves as a recurring reference point throughout this article.

In conclusion, Climacus draws extensively from the Classical-Hellenistic-Roman periods. Ultimately a dialogue with Paul can be discerned, although Climacus is not withholding to filling in

the gaps where Paul's epistles proved to be either ambiguous or inconclusive. He also does not steer away from disputed works, and rather enthusiastically employs them. In a similar vein, Climacus took a delight in referencing the truth speaking non-Christian, such as Aristotle, and also Socrates (Barrett and Stewart 2010, 255). In regards to Paul, Kierkegaard reads Paul in a similar manner as he reads Abraham. He imagines the pathos of the individual, envisaging emotions and motivations to more profoundly comprehend the nature of the story (Barrett and Stewart 2010, 195). Ultimately, what emerges is a fascinating discourse on biblical and philosophical faith or *pistis*, enlightening not only our understanding of the past but also illuminating our path forward.

At the heart of our exploration from here on out is a detailed examination of faith, or *pistis*, as presented in the works of Climacus. To navigate this inquiry, we must first address the fundamental question: What entails the Christian way of life? Answering this sets the stage for our next inquiry: How does having faith manifest within Climacus' interpretation of a Christian way of life? By examining Kierkegaard's construction of this discourse, particularly in light of Paul's distinction between the Greek, Jewish, and Christian way of life, we seek to clarify the multifaceted nature of faith (*pistis*) through distinct cultural contexts. This explorations helps us to elucidate what it means to have faith, or *pistis*, for Climacus.

The Greek, the Jew and Paul

For Climacus, becoming a Christian is not merely about having been baptized or choosing one day to become a Christian; it is about changing one's way of life, or mode of existence. Climacus' inquiry concerning the primacy of existence leads him to place his contemporaneity in relation to the Hellenistic-Roman period, drawing on Paul's distinction between the Jew and the Greek (Kierkegaard 2009, 295-296). These distinctions have in common that they each focus on existence, an ethos, or simply, a way of life. Our objective is to delineate these distinct ways of life. For now, it is sufficient to recognize their common emphasis on one's 'existence-inwardness', i.e. subjectivity or spirit, essentially the subject's transformation within oneself to which the Hellenistic-Roman period was heavily indebted (Kierkegaard 2009, 33).

Climacus observed that the emergence of Christianity occurred within a complex milieu, marked by a deep Jewish spiritualism and Greek scientism. Therefore, Climacus distinguishes it from the modern practice of teaching Christianity from a young age. Had Christianity in antiquity emerged in the same manner, the role of apostles would have been redundant (Kierkegaard 2009, 301).[1] This implies that the apostles' existence and role were necessitated by the sophisticated and mature intellectual milieu of the time of Paul's writing.

The complexity of this discussion is heightened by acknowledging that the opposing Greek and Jewish ways of life, though distinct from the Christian way of life, are not diametrically opposed. Instead, their characteristics are highly interwoven, allowing for nuanced differentiation. This concept of discernment through contrast is echoed by Climacus, who asserts that to truly embrace Christianity, one must initially stand outside its bounds. By comparing and contrasting the Christian way of life

with those of the Jews and Greeks, we may gain deeper insights and advance our exploration of these differing, yet interwoven, ways of life:

> For anyone who has really become a Christian there must have been a time when he was not a Christian; there must, in turn, have been a time when he found out what Christianity is; and he must, again, provided he has not wholly forgotten how he existed before becoming a Christian, be able, by comparing his earlier life to his Christian life, to say what in his own case Christianity is (Kierkegaard 2009, 312).

This quotation illuminates our ability to understand the Christian way of life through a juxtaposition of 'before' and 'after' scenarios. This method not only aids in comprehending the essence of Christianity but also highlights the complexities involved in grasping the Christian way of life, such as the necessity of evaluating it on an individual basis. It is similarly asserting that adopting Christianity by choice, rather than by birth, is preferable. At present, the methodological approach of contrasting the distinct paradigms of Greek, Jewish and Christian ways of life will have to suffice in serving our inquiry.

Climacus references 1 *Corinthians* 1:23: "A Greek philosopher was truly a man who could think, and therefore it means something when Christianity defines itself as the teaching that is an offence to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks, ..." (Kierkegaard 2009, 245-246). Christianity presented a radical challenge to Jewish expectations of the Messiah. The offensiveness was found in proclaiming a low-born man, born between animals, to be the supreme being on Earth (Kierkegaard 2013, 238-239).[2] For the Greeks, foolishness was found in the tales about Christ. This perspective aligns well with Paul facing mockery in Athens for proclaiming Christ's resurrection to the Greeks, as recounted in Acts 17:16-34. This leads us to two critical issues: first, a disdain for the notion of Christ as the supreme being, and second, a scepticism towards the nature of Christ. Exploring these issues offers deeper insight into the Christian way of life and a more nuanced understanding of Christian faith.

To summarize, Climacus observes that during his time, there was a lack of focus on existence-inwardness, i.e. one's subjective transformation. He concludes that both the Jewish and Greek ways of life, despite being opposing paradigms, at least represented legitimate approaches to life (Kierkegaard 2009, 245). We have furthermore shortly put our focus on examining the contrasting elements within these paradigms, a Greek scepticism and a Jewish contempt towards Christ. Climacus views scepticism and passion as means to further deepen our understanding of the Christian way of life and of faith (Kierkegaard 2009, 335-336). Examining these notions helps differentiate the Christian from Greek and Jewish ways of life, clarifying the essence of a Christian faith.

Scepticism and Faith

Starting off, Climacus sees scepticism as more than just mere doubt about knowledge claims, it delves into a deeper inquiry into the very framework of life and existence. It involves a retreat from immediate experiences and certainties (Kierkegaard 2009, 266). Climacus states:

> The Greek skeptic did not deny the correctness of sensation and of immediate cognition, but, said he, error has an utterly different basis - it comes from the conclusion I draw. If I can only avoid drawing conclusions, I shall never be deceived (Kierkegaard 2013, 82).

This quotation primarily highlights the distinction between Cartesian scepticism and Greek scepticism. Cartesian scepticism focuses on abstractly doubting sense perceptions, while Greek scepticism is concerned with the ethical implications of deception (Kierkegaard 2013, 211-212).[3] Climacus thus roots scepticism within the ethical, and therefore within existence. For the Greek sceptic it was most ethically advisable to avoid forming any strong opinions whatsoever. Climacus provides the following example:

> If, for example, sensation shows me in the distance a round object that close at hand is seen to be square or shows me a stick that looks broken in the water although it is straight when taken out, sensation has not deceived me, but I am deceived only when I conclude something about that stick and that object (Kierkegaard 2013, 82-83).

In this context, it becomes evident that the Greek sceptic would view it as ethically problematic to make affirmative conclusions in the face of uncertainty. This tendency to avoid definitive claims sharply contrasts with Paul's proclamation of Christ's resurrection, an event he did not witness firsthand. Consequently, Climacus criticizes the Greek sceptics for their inclination towards certainty, distinguishing it from the Christian paradigm, which embraces a shift towards embracing uncertainty. However, Climacus similarly to the Greek sceptic argues that true understanding comes from recognizing the limits of our knowledge and the inevitability of uncertainty. To make his argument, Climacus draws upon the teachings of Socrates, but the philosophical validity of his argument he derives from Aristotle.

Climacus interprets Socrates in Plato's *Phaedo* as initiating a unique form of scepticism, arising from his acknowledgment of the soul's immortality, without having any proof. Kierkegaard views Socrates' method of inquiry, which often leaves questions unanswered, as sharing similarities with scepticism, evident in Plato's *Apology* (Lippitt and Pattison 2015, 136-137). Here, Socrates' admission of his limited knowledge, a mark of humility, distinguishes him from those claiming false knowledge (Plato 2005, 83). Climacus sees Socrates' recognition of life's contingency and finiteness as reconciling the paradox of his scepticism coexisting with his belief in the soul's immortality—a belief that would typically be subject to criticism through the very method of questioning he advocates.

In this context, Rick Anthony Furtak introduces the notion of a Socratic *pistis*. He observes: "Like Abraham, Socrates abides by his beliefs in the context of finite existence, orienting his life in accordance with a conviction that is formed and maintained in the face of uncertainty" (Lippitt and Pattison 2015, 137). This perspective embodies a form of scepticism rooted in human finiteness that strives to make knowledge claims beyond what can be firmly established. Similarly, when a servant asked Kierkegaard for a solid conviction on the soul's immortality, Kierkegaard responded: "... that

we are all equally ignorant on such points; that one had to choose between the one possibility and the other; and that conviction then comes in accordance with the choice" (Kierkegaard 2021, 195). Having a conviction is thus a matter of choice, similar as for the Greek sceptics it was a matter of choice whether one is deceived or not. The relation between conviction and *pistis* requires some further elucidation.

In his journals, Kierkegaard reflects on Aristotle's concept of *pistis* as outlined in *Rhetorica* and also *Ethica Nichomachea*. Aristotle introduces the idea of non-scientific knowledge, or practical wisdom (*phrónēsis*), which pertains to the realm of actual, contingent existence. Within this framework, he describes moral certainty or conviction using the term *pistis* (Kierkegaard 2009, 174).[4] Kierkegaard observes:

> *Pistis* in classical Greek is the conviction (more than *doxe*, opinion) which relates to what is probable. But Christianity, which always turns the natural man's concepts upside down and extracts the opposite, lets *pistis* relate to the improbable, to that which is not meant to be grasped. Only faith or *pistis* is knowledgeable to this realm of that which cannot be grasped (Kierkegaard, Papers and Journals, 50 X 2 A 354).

In this section, Kierkegaard juxtaposes the classical Greek conception of *pistis*, which is rooted in probability and conviction, with its reinterpretation in Christian faith. The Christian paradigm shifts the focus of *pistis* towards embracing the improbable and includes convictions that transcend human understanding, such as the resurrection of Christ. This redefinition significantly diverges from Greek scepticism, as it associates faith with the realm of the improbable, a domain Christians identify with the divine or God.

For Kierkegaard, as interpreted again through Climacus, human beings inherently seek to understand themselves. Climacus observes that Greek scepticism reaches a limit when all phenomena have been evaluated for their truth value, and progress then simply depends on the emergence of new phenomena (Kierkegaard 2013, 324). Although scepticism promotes a focus on subjectivity, it ultimately leads to a kind of annihilation, as the objective of subjectivity is continuous knowledge expansion. This perspective sees existence-inwardness, subjectivity or spirit, as a precursor to expressions affirming the improbable. However, Climacus emphasizes that we should only discuss these from a contingent, and finite standpoint. These aspects are already found in Socrates and Aristotle, yet find new meaning in the Christian faith and way of life.

To summarize, Christianity introduces a nuanced perspective, advocating for the affirmation of the improbable. Climacus states that if the Greek use of scepticism would win certainty, and does not lead to new doubts, then no Christian category could be sustained and Christianity would be abolished (Kierkegaard 2009, 281). In other words, Climacus asserts that a Greek sceptic is bound to a perpetual cycle of doubt. This is because achieving tranquillity, or *ataraxia*, would necessitate an end to doubting, yet this is contradictory to the perpetual uncertainty inherent in human experience. Socrates' conversational method exemplifies this contradiction, as it consistently demonstrates the ongoing nature of doubt and questioning. Therefore, Christian faith emerges as a logical outcome

in a process of maturation. A mediocre doubter will always be the first to succeed in getting certainty, and thus the certainty achieved through conviction or Christian faith, is more notable. The Christian concept of faith is further characterized by a unique passion, which will be the primary focus of our discussion going forward.

Faith and Passion

In the previous section, we explored the concept of life's contingency and finiteness, underscoring the significance of subjectivity as a foundation for formulating statements oriented towards the improbable, as framed within the Greek sceptical tradition. This exploration is closely linked to the notion of passion. For example, one can be uncertain as to the truth of Christianity, but it would be more correct to say one thinks it true because one is a Christian. Similarly, Climacus refrains from making absolute claims about Christianity being the definitive religion. Instead, he places greater emphasis on the way of life it represents, rather than making propositional statements. Climacus contends that such a perspective necessitates a profound sense of passion, as becomes evident in the following:

> [today we speak of a] Christianity of the kind where Christ has become 'Yes and No', while in Corinth, as preached by Paul, he was not 'Yes and No' (2 *Corinthians* 1:19)! Existing subjectively with passion (and to exist objectively can be done only in distraction) is an absolute condition for being able to have any opinion at all on Christianity (Kierkegaard 2009, 234).

Climacus offers an interpretation of Paul's insights in 2 *Corinthians*, emphasizing the crucial role of the individual in their own faith. He articulates that while subjectivity is not the root cause of faith, it is a vital precondition—the 'condition of the condition'—for its genuine emergence. This perspective posits God as the primary grantor of faith, with the individual's subjectivity acting as a deep, passionate longing or *telos* for realizing one's potential as a Christian (Kierkegaard 2009, 234). In other words, God is the source of one's faith, yet inwardness is the centre.

The concept of *telos* requires further clarification, as it finds its origins in Aristotle's *Metaphysica*. Aristotle posited that all movement and change in the world can be rendered intelligible by insisting upon an underlying subject (God) that persists through change, and is called the 'unmoved mover'. This concept serves as a reference point through which all finite motions can be elucidated. In Aristotle's view, everything in nature has an inherent developmental direction toward an ultimate end, goal or measure, termed its *telos* (Kierkegaard 2009, 261). The concepts of potentiality (*dunamis*) and actuality (*energeia*) help to clarify this notion. Potentiality marks the inherent possibilities something like a seed contains, actuality marks the actual state of being, and end result of the potential being realized, e.g. a tree (Kierkegaard 2009, 287). The unmoved mover, as the cause of all motion, must be solely in a state of actuality, because something with mere potentiality need not exercise it. The reason for this is that any motion or change implies the existence of potentiality. In this context, God serves as the unmoved subject which moves all (Kierkegaard 2009, 261). Aristotle's viewpoint operates within a cosmological framework, where God serves as the eternal stabilizing element.

In contrast, Christians lacked a similar eternal being of God, as the realm of the divine was separated from that of the human. In this conception the individual has to anchor and empower the Aristotelian movement in some other way. The intensity of passion, pushed to its maximum by Christian faith, functions as a kind of finite approximation to eternity. Clare Carlisle suggests that Climacus in essence places the source of movement, as found in Aristotle, within the individual subject itself, fully exercised through a state of passion (Carlisle 2005, 16-18). Climacus writes: "... all idealizing passion is an anticipation of the eternal in existence, in order for one who exists to exist" (Kierkegaard 2009, 262). Climacus contends that passion offers a way to momentarily transcend existence, as seen, for example, in Abraham's faith. Yet, it is precisely this state of passion that provides the impetus to exist. For Climacus, passion is inherently related to a will to existence, and everything that tries to remove itself from existence, is hitherto dispassionate (Kierkegaard 2009, 514). In this reasoning, whenever people are dispassionate in their lives, their movement is stalled, as is their development.

Abraham's faith is one characterized by a deep sense of passion, which is why he is prominently featured as the model of Christian faith in *Genesis* 15: 6.5.[5] Moreover, Schleiermacher acknowledges Paul's perspective on Abraham as the archetype of Christian faith, particularly in Romans 4 where Paul asserts that Abraham was justified by faith alone, prior to Mosaic Law (Schleiermacher 2016, 61).[6] This discourse propels Climacus further into the realm of passion's and inwardness' significance. His argument is further rooted within the Pauline '*hos me*' principle – meaning: 'as if not' – as a new mode of existing. Paul urged the Corinthians to make use of the world as if they do not use it in 1 *Corinthians* 7:29-31. This is emphasized by Climacus when he writes about 'the eternal religiousness of hidden inwardness', i.e. the deeply personal and subjective aspect of faith:

> ... someone with no religiousness at all cannot be offended by Christianity, and the reason the Jews were closest of all to being offended was that they were closest to Christianity. ... Offence is possible precisely because the novelty is not straightforward but first has to dispel an illusion. ... the novelty of Christianity has the eternal religiousness of hidden inwardness (Kierkegaard 2009, 452).

The hidden inwardness was offense to the Jews. The law handed down to Moses at Sinai held paramount importance in the Jewish understanding of their relationship with God, and permeated every facet of Jewish life. Adherence to this divine law set them apart from the Gentiles (non-Jews) and served as a cornerstone of their own identity. The Jews placed their trust in an objective God and safeguarded themselves against doubt and inner contemplation through their observance of ceremonies and rituals. In times of uncertainty, they could readily reference these rules as a point of certainty (Kierkegaard 2009, 398).

In contrast, for Christians, God was perceived as unattainable, as the realms of infinitude and finitude were fundamentally distinct, only bridged by the paradoxical arrival of Christ. Consequently, Christians had to turn their focus inward, as in the discussion on Aristotle. To exist in a mode of *hos me*, characterized by a hidden inwardness, entails a suspension of established laws, a delegitimization of the prevailing societal structure, and an emphasis on the triviality of one's existing

social role. The novelty of Christianity is thus found in Paul's *hos me* principle. Thereby offending the Jews, and emphasizing the subjectivity in the Christian way of life. As Climacus references 1 Corinthians elsewhere:

> I can then say with truth: it is a matter of indifference whether or not one has been married, just as it is a matter of indifference whether one is Jew or Greek, free or slave. Marriage is still a jest, a jest to be treated with all seriousness, though without the seriousness resting in marriage itself, but rather as the reflection of the earnest of the God-relationship, a reflection of the husband's relation to his absolute τέλος [telos] and of the wife's absolute relation to her absolute τέλος [telos] (Kierkegaard 2009, 381-382).

Climacus highlights that relationships, whether with a human or the divine, are dynamic and not solidified by a single act, like a marriage contract. Rather, they require continual nurturing and renewal. This perspective extends to faith, which Climacus views not as a static state of contentment, but as a perpetual journey marked by ongoing renewal. Such a perspective intensifies the passion within Christian faith. This process of renewal positions faith as a finite attempt to mirror eternity, which, because it is never fully realized, demands continuous renewal. The displacement of the significance of marriage in relation to one's subjective *telos* or goal, which is now perceived as a form of hidden inwardness, exemplifies how Christianity altered the individual's relationship with the divine.

To summarize, the philosophical discourse presented here delves into the profound misalignment between the Jewish perception of spirituality and the essence of Christian doctrine as exemplified by Christ. This misperception was rooted in the Jewish belief that spiritual attainment was intrinsically linked to external indicators of divine favour. Christ, with his humble origins, stood in stark contrast to these expectations, embodying a form of spirituality devoid of the expected grandeur. This stark contrast formed the crux of Paul's teachings and subsequently influenced Climacus' philosophical reflections. For Climacus, this underscored the necessity of seeking spiritual growth through internal reflection rather than external validation.

Conclusion

In our exploration, we have delved into how Climacus, echoing the Classical-Hellenistic-Roman periods, strives to anchor Christianity in the realm of ethical practice (Kierkegaard 2009, 70). Although Climacus may be a mere creation of Søren Kierkegaard's imagination, his perspectives are deeply influenced by early Christian writings and dialogues. This context illuminates the significance of the statement on the title page: "To treat it as though Christianity were an invention of Johannes Climacus is precisely a biting satire on philosophy's impudence towards it" (Kierkegaard, Papers and Journals, 45 VI A 84). This quotation reveals both jest and earnestness, as Kierkegaard has skilfully presented the reader with concepts that appear novel, yet are steeped in orthodoxy (Kierkegaard 2009, 58).

Climacus begins with Paul's observation that Christianity is seen as foolishness by the Greeks and as offensive to Jewish beliefs. He challenges these views with a mature scepticism and a humility driven by a deep-seated inward passion. He revisits the ancient Greek concept of scepticism,

highlighting its limitations in achieving tranquillity (*ataraxia*) and advocating for a more evolved form, one that acknowledges human uncertainty while embracing personal conviction (*pistis*). This revised scepticism aligns with the Christian narrative that leans into the improbable and paradoxical aspects of Christ through faith.

Furthermore, Climacus contrasts the Jewish reliance on an objective God, manifested through rituals, with the Christian emphasis on subjectivity or inwardness. He interprets Christ's arrival as the only breach in the unbridgeable gap between the infinite and the finite. This perspective compels a shift towards personal agency in faith, moving away from external validation. Climacus' notion of hidden inwardness underscores this shift, illustrating faith as a deeply personal journey, distinct from the Jewish emphasis on communal identity through rituals.

This analysis culminates in a nuanced understanding of the evolution of Christian faith from Greek and Jewish traditions. Climacus' integration of Christian faith within the Greek debate on scepticism, and its portrayal as an act of personal and passionate commitment, redefines the relationship with the divine. Ultimately, Climacus asserts that faith transcends academic discourse, being an affirmation of existence amidst its inherent challenges, uncertainties, and paradoxes. It represents a pivotal shift in attitude, suggesting that true understanding of faith lies not in knowledge, but in a subjective, passionate engagement with life's questions, a theme central to both Kierkegaard's and Paul's teachings. Christianity as a way of life—distinct from Greek and Jewish traditions—has significant implications even today, as Christians reflecting on St. Paul's teachings and Kierkegaard's insights are likely again to become distinct subjects, much like early Christians did in their time.

Endnotes:

1. Kierkegaard emphasizes the emergence of Christianity within a complex historical and cultural context, noting for example: "This, indeed, would have excluded the apostles, for I have no knowledge of them having entered [Christianity] as small children" (Kierkegaard 2009, 301).
2. The offensive nature of the figure of Jesus Christ is addressed in Kierkegaard's writing where he states: "Christ was to be born and live poor, abandoned, abased so as to show indirectly to everyone the contradiction of being simultaneously so high and so low" (Kierkegaard 2013, 238-239).
3. In *De Omnibus Dubitandum Est* Kierkegaard states that René Descartes later too came to a similar conclusion as the ancient Greeks, quoting *Principia Philosophiae*: "Errors do not depend so much on intellect as on the will ..." and adds: "(in belief, therefore, lies the annulled possibility that it could have been deceived)" (Kierkegaard 2013, 211-212).
4. In the footnote, Climacus notes that the ancient Greeks, including Aristotle, used the term *pistis* differently from how it is understood in the modern context. He points out that this difference, particularly as seen in Aristotle's *Rhetorica*, offers valuable insights into how this concept differs from the more widely recognized meaning of faith (Kierkegaard 2009, 174).
5. The title *Fear and Trembling* is a reference to St. Paul's letter to the Philippians: "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" as found in Philippians 2:12, underscoring the passionate aspects as found in emotions, such as fear and terror (Kierkegaard, 2013).
6. Schleiermacher writes: "... Paul does view Abraham's faith as the prototype of Christian faith, and represents the Mosaic Law simply as something slipped in between" (Schleiermacher 2016, 61).

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