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| Kierkegaard, Søren Aabye (1813 - 1855) |
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| Soren Kierkegaard was a Danish theologian, philosopher, and literary critic generally credited as the founder of modern Christian existentialism. Kierkegaard was born in Copenhagen to a very wealthy family, a background that ensured him ample leisure time to pursue his literary and recreational interests. His work was informed by two especially formative relationships: the first was with his father, Michael Pedersen, an austere and forbidding merchant who rose from humble beginnings to become one of Denmark’s richest men. Although their relationship was at times fractious, Michael’s love of philosophy profoundly influenced the young Kierkegaard. Of even greater significance was Kierkegaard’s failed engagement to Regine Olsen, who was 14 years old when the two first met in 1837. They were instantly attracted, but the following year Kierkegaard began having doubts about the relationship; nevertheless, in September 1840 he proposed marriage, before abruptly breaking off the engagement less a year later. Regine soon married another man, and Kierkegaard remained single and celibate for the remainder of his life. Indeed, his life was in many ways a lonely one: by the age of 25, five of his six siblings, as well as both parents, had died. |
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| Further reading:  (Swenson)  (Adorno and Hullot-Kentor)  (Arbaugh and Arbaugh)  (Bejerholm, Thulstrup and Thulstrup)  (Clark)  (Grimsley)  (Hannay and Marino)  (Pattison)  (Watkin) |