

**By Catalina Elena Dobre**

Assistant in Philosophy,  
Faculty of History and Philosophy  
University “Dunarea de Jos” of Galati  
Romania

## ***MAKING A LEAP INTO REAL-LOVE***

***(Kierkegaard’s point of view about love)***

### ***Abstract***

*Being a brilliant author, Søren Kierkegaard was not only a philosopher, but also a theologian. The theology of the Dane has been distinguished from that of other modern theologians because of his existential attitude, even in this kind of problems. His theology is the theology of Paradox which means that Christianity in its central affirmation cannot be understood except as a paradox. The God-man is the unity of God and an individual man; it is the revelation of eternal truth in time. It is the inward passion, the fear and trembling, and the divine revelation. All of these could not exist without love between God and his creature, between God and Man. Kierkegaard’s Works of Love are the sign of a good understanding of what means to be a Christian. The book is centered on this problem and tries to find some responses. The main idea is that only love is our salvation, and that our duty is to share love. Our intention here is not only to make a presentation of this book, but also to demonstrate how great was Kierkegaard when he told us that God is Love.*

*Works of Love*<sup>1</sup> published on September 29, 1847 is the most important book for Kierkegaard as authorship, but I must say that is not only a complex and very difficult book, but also a serious study. The fact that Kierkegaard publishes the book under his own name is an action which indicates that Kierkegaard personally changes his attitude and his conception about communication. I can speak about a *moment of transition* from Kierkegaard’s early study to later one. This later period is characterized by a change of his point of view about the relation between individual and existence. What does “to exist” mean in this context? It means to be a good Christian. In this way, the Danish philosopher starts from the essential questions: What does it mean to be a Christian? Is it possible that Christianity should be a mode of existence? And what is supposed to be the attitude of individual under these circumstances?

*Works of Love* is the key for this kind of question and I think that Kierkegaard gives an answer to these problems in this study. Philip. L. Quinn says that “according to Bruce Kirmmse, this book is Kierkegaard’s major ethical work and one of the most important works in his entire authorship and it contains his clearest and starkest formulation of a Christian ethics”<sup>2</sup>.

What we must remember is that Kierkegaard never speaks of himself as a Christian “but always and emphatically of the unfulfilled task of becoming a Christian, that is, a follower of Christ”<sup>3</sup>, how Kurt

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<sup>1</sup> Søren Kierkegaard, *Works of Love* (Abbreviation: **WL**), Edited and Translated with Introduction and Notes by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1995

<sup>2</sup> P. L. Quinn, *Kierkegaard’s Christian ethics*, in *The Cambridge Companion to Kierkegaard*, edited by Alastair Hannay and Gordon Marino, Cambridge University Press, 1999, 349; (Bruce H. Kirmmse, *Kierkegaard in Golden Age Denmark*, Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 1990, 306)

<sup>3</sup> K. Reinhardt, *The Existentialist Revolt*, New York, 1967, 29

Reinhardt sustains, because it is easy to know what Christianity is, but it is extremely difficult to be a Christian. It is true that, later, in *Practice in Christianity*, Kierkegaard's Anti-Crimacus proclaims himself a Christian, a title never claimed by Kierkegaard. Despite of these problems, *Works of Love* is a "dictionary" which teaches how we can change ourselves making a leap in real Christian's life.

The necessity of this book is obvious and, in this sense, Theodor Kaecker tells us that "it was Kierkegaard's historical mission to defend the supernatural against the natural, the transcendence of God against the immanence of the rational philosophers, the personal God against pantheism"<sup>4</sup>.

I will pass in review the whole previous development of ideas and I am aware that this review is just a trial for understanding Kierkegaard's viewpoints about Christian life. My task it will be the question: is possible for a human being to perform works of love?

For the beginning, I would like to start with a few rhetorical questions: "what does love mean to me?", "is this feeling the most important in our live?", do I know what love means or not?". Personally, I have an answer to all these questions which are in connection with Kierkegaard's ideas about love: love means responsibility in front of the other and in front of God. But, the most important thing is the last responsibility: to be with all love in front of God. Why? Because how Kierkegaard points out in his *Prayer*, God is love; He is the source of all love. To be responsible means that you, as a single individual, must deliberate in this sense. In *Preface* of the book Kierkegaard speaks about deliberation. Moreover, the second title of the book is *Some Christian Deliberations in the form of Discourses*: "These Christian deliberations, which are the fruit of much deliberation, will be understood slowly but then also easily, whereas they will surely become very difficult if someone by hasty and curious reading make them very difficult for himself. That single individual who first deliberates with himself whether or not he will read, if he then choose to read, will lovingly deliberate whether the difficulty and the ease, when placed thoughtfully together on the scale, relate properly to each other so that what is essentially Christian is not presented with a false weight by making the difficulty or by making the ease too great. They are Christian deliberation, therefore not about love but about works of love"<sup>5</sup>.

Chapter One, *Love's hidden Life and Its Recognizability by Its fruits*, starts, again, with the concept of decision because like human being our duty is to deceive. This is a very interesting point of view because, for Kierkegaard, to deceive is the way to eternity. To deceive to love [*Kjerlighed*] is the same and in this sense I agree with Kierkegaard when he says: "what is the namely, that connects the temporal and the eternity, what else by love".

But where does love come from? Where does it have its origins and its source? Where is its place and where does love take you? Is this place hidden or is secret? I must claim that this Chapter opens with Luke 6:44 "Every tree is known by its own fruit, for figs are not gathered from thorns, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush". The secret, actually the main problem, is this: which are the fruits of love? Maybe these fruits are the faith, the light, and the responsibility, if I consider that to love means to be in connection with the other person (your friend, your woman or man, your God). In all this cases, love must be unconditional and the fruits of love will be your decision: what you are and how you are in connection with the other person, what you decide to become. It is about *self-deceived* person who wants to think that he is able to console the other person. This is what love is all about: to deceive to help another person. In generally, as human beings, we

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<sup>4</sup> T. Haecker, *Søren Kierkegaard*, New York Oxford University Press, 1937, 58

<sup>5</sup> WL 7

make mistakes when we think that love is self-love, and Kierkegaard argues: “If someone makes a mistake, it must be because he does not know the fruits or does not how to judge properly in the particular case. For example, when a person makes the mistake of calling something love [*Kjerlighed*] that actually is self-love, when he loudly protests that he cannot live without the beloved but does not want to hear anything about the task and requirement of love to deny oneself and to give up this self-love or erotic love [*Elskov*]”<sup>6</sup>.

The true love is known by its own fruits, and that love is Christian love. So, we can see how Kierkegaard distinguishes between three forms of love: Erotic-love, friendship and Christian love. Erotic-love is a preferential love and it is different from love to the neighbor, which is earnestness. P. L. Quinn says that it is commonplace of Christian thought that there is a distinctively Christian form of love (*agape, caritas*) that stands in sharp contrast to both erotic love (*eros, amor*) and friendship (*philia*). The aim of both erotic love and friendship is to love this single human being above all others and in distinction from all others. Both kinds are preferential, while *agapeistic* love is not<sup>7</sup>. At the same time, Kierkegaard holds: “Erotic-love and friendship are related to passion, but all passion whether it attacks or defends itself, fight in one way only, either/or: Either I exist and I am the highest, or I do not exist at all, either all or nothing (...). Christianity teaches that love for God and for the neighbor is the true love”<sup>8</sup>. This because Christian love discovers that the neighbor exist and, above all, that everyone is the neighbor. In *the New Testament* there is not a single word about erotic love in the sense in which the poet celebrates it and the paganism idolized, says Kierkegaard and, in this context, I think at the young man in the book *Repetition* who is a poet and who tries to obtain a religious repetition like Job. He wants to make the movement (which is a dialectic movement) from erotic-love to religious love, but in vain, he obtains himself back like a poet, meaning a *redintegratio* of personality. He cannot experiment the religious repetition, because he loves himself too much. The religious love means to love the other. It is true that you need first of all to love yourself and then the other, but the love for the other must be unconditional, more than self-love.

For Kierkegaard, only the Christian love can be unconditional because it is about another type of object. It is known that love is a relation between a subject and an object of love. Erotic love means to love a person more than God and has preference (the woman or man who is loved in contrast to the whole world). In Christian love the object is the neighbor; to love the neighbor means to love the whole human race, all people, even the enemy, and not making exceptions. “Erotic love [*Elskov*] is defined by the object; friendship is defined by the object; only love for the neighbor is defined by love [*Kjerlighed*]. In other words, since the neighbor is every human being, unconditionally every human being, all dissimilarities are indeed removed from the object, and therefore this love is recognizable precisely by this, that its object is without any of the more specification of dissimilarity which means that this love is recognizable only by love”<sup>9</sup>.

This must be our duty as human beings and this because only when you, as a person, understand which your duty is, only then you shall love. Only when it is a duty to love, only then love is eternally secured against every change, eternally made free in blessed independence, eternally and happily secured against despair. But this is very controversial because the commandment “love your neighbor as yourself” is

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<sup>6</sup> WL 7

<sup>7</sup> P. L. Quinn, 354

<sup>8</sup> WL 45

<sup>9</sup> WL 66

apparently a contradiction. It seems to be like an utopia and the reason is that, humanly speaking, one can feel love for some people only: your friend, your wife, your child but not for every human being.

Other questions raise here: what does duty mean? What is the Kierkegaardian's viewpoint about this? Duty is the absolute; moreover, it is the requirement, the absolute requirement which must be realized. Kierkegaard answers that duty means action; to love your neighbor is an action and, at the same time, it must be an obligation. Moreover, duty makes a person dependent but eternally independent. Why? "Because only law can give freedom. Alas, we very often think that freedom exists and that it is law binds freedom. Yet it is just the opposite; without law, freedom does not exist at all, and it is law that gives freedom. We also believe that it is law that makes distinction because when there is no law there are no distinctions at all. Yet it is the opposite; when it is law that makes distinctions, it is precisely law that makes all equal before the law"<sup>10</sup>.

In this case our duty is to love. Christian love is an obligation to do things in a certain way, which implies rejoicing and in this point Christian love transcends the ethic because despite the fact that love must be an obligation, at the same time, love is a sentiment. I know that as a human being I must love, I must understand my neighbor. This is the requirement of Christianity. The question is am I able, indeed, to love my neighbors? And the answer is hard to find. Only when I will see in the other a duplication of myself, only when I will recognize myself in the other, or to find a source of love, which can inspire me, I will be able to do this.

Kierkegaard is acutely aware that in erotic love or friendship the source is inside us but, in Christian love, the source, the origin, is in God. God is the source of love; this is what Kierkegaard wants to teach us. This is important, it is about to be able to make distinction between these forms of love. And the next question is "how can we make this kind of distinction?" First of all we must know that the source of Christian love is hidden, and for this we can see it and we can find it in our emotions. This is hard indeed because when I examine myself all I see is wants, desires, egoism, and an egocentric life. And this is the point when I begin to learn about love starting with the self-examination. After this, I am able to realize that in erotic love the *body* plays an essential part, in friendship – *psyche*, and in the Christian love – *spirit*. Kierkegaard will develop this idea in a later book, *The Sickness unto Death* (1849), and I can say that, maybe, the *Works of Love* is an analysis of this relation between *body-psyche-spirit*. Man must make the leap to the body perception to the spirit; he must become spirit, because like spirit he shall be able to love. What is spirit? Kierkegaard maintains: "Spirit is the self. But what is the self? The self is a relation which relates to itself or that in the relation which is the relating to itself. The self is not the relation but the relation's relating to itself. A human being is a synthesis of the infinite to the finite, of the temporal to the eternal, of freedom of necessity. In short a synthesis. A synthesis is a relation between two terms. Looked at in this way a human being is not yet a self"<sup>11</sup>. So, the real task of the human being is to become self and then spirit, with other words to become Christian.

Love means to understand the other, moreover your enemy! This is an exaggeration, isn't it? Let's think: can we love our enemy? Humanly speaking, no, we cannot do this. But Kierkegaard tries to make us understand even our enemy, we must love the other because the other is a human being and he says: "In a mysterious, inexplicable manner, according to the poet's view, the lover should find his object or fall in love

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<sup>10</sup> WL 38-39

<sup>11</sup> Kierkegaard, *The Sickness unto Death*, Translated by Alastair Hannay, England 1989, 43

and then became -blind from love, blind to every defect, to every imperfection in the beloved, blind to everything else but this beloved – yet not blind to this one’s being the one and only in the whole world. When this is the case, erotic love certainly does make a person blind, but it also makes him sharp-eyed about not confusing any other person with this one and only. Therefore, with regard to this beloved, it makes him blind by teaching him to make an enormous distinction between this one and only and all the other people. But love for the neighbor makes a person blind in the deepest sense of the word, so that blindly loves every human being as the lover loves beloved”<sup>12</sup>.

I agree with Danish philosopher, but I continue to think that a condition for love is not only to be blind; love for the neighbor implies to be open for the other people - to help, to understand, to be able to listen, to respect the other - these are the fruits of love.

In the Chapter *Love is the Fulfilling of the Law* (Romans 13:10), Kierkegaard defends his ethics of interiority and begins making a difference between someone who was a deceiver and someone who become a deceiver. This is a problem of interiority which is not indifference. Kierkegaard states: “If anyone asks what love is? Paul answers: it is the fulfilling of the Law; and instantly every further question is precluded by that answer”<sup>13</sup>. Christian love is the fulfilling of the Law, it is action. But was Christ the end of the Law? We just know that what the Law was not capable of accomplishing, as little as it could save a person – which Christ was. In this situation the coming of Christ was not to abolish the Law but to perfect it, and this is the most interesting part. “Yes he was love and his love was the fulfilling of the Law. His love made not distinction”<sup>14</sup>, Kierkegaard claims. And indeed, Christ’s life was shared love, a divine-human love which was an equal love for all the people. Obviously, this is the essence of Christianity, that all people are equal in front of God.

Anyway, Christ life was an example and in this context Kierkegaard asks “What does mean a real Christian? How can I be a good Christian?” Is this possible for me as a human being? In his book *Practice in Christianity*, Kierkegaard has the answer. A good Christian is that who can make the act of *imitation*. But his responsibility is to be an imitator or an *admirer*? And the answer is this: a real Christian is that who decides to be a good *imitator* [*Efterfølger*]. “...for truly to be a Christian certainly does not mean to be Christ but mean to be his imitator; and to be an imitator means that your life, has as much similarity to his as it is possible to human life to have”<sup>15</sup>. Christ is in the more ordinary sense a teacher, a teacher of godliness, of inwardness. When God become a Teacher his love is creative, giving a new being to the learner who makes the transition from non-being to being. For this our duty is to imitate Christ in the most purely sense of the word. Christ is the Paradox, he is God in the likeness of the humblest, He comes in this world like a servant and His entire life is a story of suffering and he must be a paradigm. In *Philosophical Fragments* Johannes Climacus says that “it is love that suffers, the love which gives all is itself in want. What wonderful self-denial”<sup>16</sup>. This is what we must understand if we want to be Christians. Only when we will be able of self-denial, only then we can make the imitation. As I said, the problem is not to be only an admirer of God because “an admirer will make no sacrifices, will not transform his life, and will not be what is admired (...). The imitator however aspires to be

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<sup>12</sup> WL 69

<sup>13</sup> WL 95

<sup>14</sup> WL 99

<sup>15</sup> Kierkegaard, *Practice in Christianity*, Princeton University Press, 1991, 106

<sup>16</sup> Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Fragments*, Princeton University Press, 1974, 40

what is admired. By means of the imitator's life it will be once again become manifest who the admirers are"<sup>17</sup>.

I think that Kierkegaard's viewpoint is "if I want to be an imitator, it means that in front of God, I have to be nothing", and this is very interesting and because Kierkegaard perspective about the condition of individual is change. He teaches ourselves that before God we are individuals (see. CUP) and now he says that we must annihilate ourselves. It is about self-renunciation or self-denial. As human being I know that God is blessed and if I want to be an imitator I must annihilate myself.

All of us know that love is a relation between persons. In this case what kind of relation do we have, when we speak about Christian love? And Kierkegaard tells that it is a relation between a person-God-a person and God must be in the middle because "to love God is to love oneself truly; to love another person to love God is to love another person; to be helped by another person to love God is to be loved"<sup>18</sup>. In this case, love is a relation to another person or to other person but first of all you must be in a relation with God.

In erotic love this kind of relation does not exist because erotic love has its motive in personal preference, and thus remains closed in-itself. In this case love practices discrimination between people; it is a form of self-love. The other exists as long as his existence is good or me. Kierkegaard distinguishes two attitudes in the act of love: in erotic love the attitude is passive because the subject (the person) wants only to receive love (egoistic love); in Christian love the attitude is active because the subject (or person) has an infinite obligation to the other (altruistic love). This is the task for the next chapter III B *Love is a Matter of Conscience*. The main focus is on interiority and the message is that if you want to have an active attitude first of all you must change your passive attitude and this change must occur in your interiority. For Kierkegaard interiority is equivalent with conscience and if we want to be real Christians we must have a relation between our person and our conscience. This means to choose yourself if you are able to love. Only in this way we can be in relationship with God.

God's intervention makes love a duty. And Kierkegaard is very direct when he sustains that even in a relation between husband and wife, in a marriage, you must see your neighbor in the other. In any kind of relationship an individual must start with God. Kierkegaard accepts the Socratic principle that self-knowledge is knowledge of God and in this case the relationship between God and man is a relation which is based on confidence, a communication between spirit and spirit.

*Our Duty to Love the people We See* this is the requirement of the next chapter which starts with the idea that in the human nature the need of love is very deep. This need for love must be understood as a requirement for companionship, inherent in man's nature. In this spirit, all men need a companionship but the most important is the companionship of God. In this sense Kierkegaard maintains: "So deeply is this need rooted in human nature, and so essentially does it belong to being human, that even he who was one with the Father and in the communion of love with the Father and the Spirit, he who love the whole human race, our Lord Jesus Christ, even he humanly felt this need to love and be loved by an individual human being. He is indeed the God-man and thus eternally different from every human being, but still he was also a true human being, tested in everything human"<sup>19</sup>. In this context my question is what does human being mean? Is this about individuality or speaking of God, is about universality? I find the answer in the idea that God-man is,

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid. 252

<sup>18</sup> WL 107

first of all, a human being like individuality but, at the same time, he is universality because like Spirit he can participate in everything human. I think that this problem of the relation between individuality and universality is interesting in this case because according to Kierkegaard's doctrine of love the individual is important only with respect to the universal human and the universal consist in the very fact of individualization.

On one side, love is a relation between two individual people. This means to be able to love a person despite his (her) weaknesses, faults and imperfections. But, on the other side, the perfect love means to begin with God because God is the person who says "If you want to love me, and then love the people we see; what you do for them, you do for me". The main idea which Kierkegaard wants to tell us is that only when you as individual serve people continually with God in your mind, only then you show that your life is indeed to serve God. So, love must be a duty, a duty of our conscience. "When it is a duty in loving to love the people we see, then in loving the actual individual person it is important that one does not substitute an imaginary idea of how we think or could wish that this person should be"<sup>20</sup>. Moreover, even if your enemies hated you, you must understand them and not make a difference because they are like the other who you love. This is a very interesting idea but I am aware that only the perfect love (Christian love) can do this. As human being it is very hard to love your enemies. But I agree with Kierkegaard that we must educate ourselves in this spirit. He says: "Christ's love for Peter was boundless in this way: in loving Peter he accomplished loving the person one sees. He did not say <<Peter must first change and become another person before I can love him again>>. No, he said exactly the opposite <<Peter is Peter and I love him>>"<sup>21</sup>. This is an example that love means to love a person with perfection and imperfection.

*Our Duty to Remain Love's Debt to One Another*, says Kierkegaard in the next chapter (V). It starts with the same questions: What is to love? What is love?" The answers are very difficult. Paul Müller says that "love is primarily, a sovereign manifestation of life, which ontologically – and therefore originally – belongs to every human life"<sup>22</sup>, and this is true. Moreover love means more than we, like human beings, can say: love is a feeling, a mood a life a passion, etc. At the same time God is love and love is His gift for us, and this is the main idea in this book. God is love and love is God and I must mention here that Kierkegaard never says that God is faith because how Arnold B. Come says "Hence love is a relationship of continuity with the ontological reality and dynamic power of God's own being; faith involves a relationship of possible discontinuity because of our instability"<sup>23</sup>.

Love means existing for the other, not for yourself, love is self-renunciation and here we have a problem: how can human beings make the leap from self-love to self-renunciation? Is this possible? Yes, says Kierkegaard but only then when he understands that, because God is love, He can exist for the others and exist in and for itself, both are going out of itself and returning back into itself, maintains the same A. B. Come<sup>24</sup>.

At the same time Kierkegaard points out: "love is not a being for itself but a quality by which or in which you are for others"<sup>25</sup> and in this situation the human being cannot be unless he is before God. These are

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<sup>19</sup> WL 155

<sup>20</sup> WL 164

<sup>21</sup> WL 172

<sup>22</sup> P. Müller, *Kierkegaard's Works of Love. Christian Ethics and the Maieutic Ideal*, Denmark, 1993, 14

<sup>23</sup> A. B. Come, *International Kierkegaard Commentary, Works of Love*, Volume 16, Mercer University Press, 1999, 88

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.* 95

<sup>25</sup> WL 223

the ideas in the *Second Part* of the book about *Some Christian Deliberation in the Form of Discourses*. “The Christian deliberations, which are the fruits of much deliberation, will be understood slowly, but then also easily (...). They are Christian deliberation not about love but about works of love”<sup>26</sup>, or about works of God, because God is Love. In *Philosophical Fragments* Johannes Climacus claims: “The works of God are such that only the God can perform them”<sup>27</sup>, and he is right. Which are these works of love? And Kierkegaard answers that love builds up, love believes all things, love hopes all things, love does not seek its own, love hides a multitude of sins and... love abides

“*Love builds up*”. This is the first work. To build up is to erect something from the ground up. This is the essence: the work must be from the ground up. But, in the spiritual sense to build up is exclusively a characteristic of love: “But what, in the spiritual sense, is the ground and the foundation of the spiritual life that is to bear the building? It is love. Love is the source of everything and, in the spiritual sense; love is the deepest ground of the spiritual life. In every human being in whom there is love, the foundation, in the spiritual sense, is laid”<sup>28</sup>. The question is: how can I build up love in another person? Or how can I implant love in the other? This is indeed a hard problem because even if I as a person I want this, it is almost impossible. To build up – is a superhuman effort and, in this case, Kierkegaard show us that as a human beings we cannot built up. Only God who is the Creator can do this. He himself is Love.

To be love means that Love does not seek its own, Love bears all things, Love believes all things, Love hopes all things, Love endure all things. Only when we learn this, only then we can love the other, only then we are in relationship with God. God must be the *telos* of our existence, and only I will take love as a *telos*, God becomes the absolute *telos*. Without God the individual is nothing and this is the most important idea in Kierkegaard’s viewpoint about Christianity: a human being can do nothing of himself, because he is a sinner! Before God, man is guilt and he must suffer. These are the conditions for all religious life. In *Conclusion* of his “little book”, Kierkegaard says that “before God you yourself are a guilty party. (...) What is guilt? This, that you forget yourself, forgets that God is present (and he is indeed always present), or that you forget yourself in his presence”<sup>29</sup>.

After all this presentation of Kierkegaard’s book we can understand that the new preoccupation of the author is Christianity life. What can I do as an individual to have such a life? What we should remember is that Kierkegaard makes the distinction between two forms of religion: *immanent* and *transcendent*, or Religion A and Religion B or Christianity, as he claims in *Unscientific Postscript*. Religion A is a “natural” religion which is characterized essentially by a passive manner or relation with God; it is a religion which moves in the categories of relative and conditional, and moreover it is discriminative, selective and polemical. Religion B, moves in the category of the absolute, it is an active relationship with God, a relation in which the main action is love. A condition for this form of religion is the sin-consciousness because to exist means merely that the individual having come into the world is in the process of becoming. Becoming what? A sinner. So, in this context, to come into being is to become a sinner. Kierkegaard tells us: “From eternity the individual is not a sinner; so when the being that is planned on the scale of eternity comes into the world by birth, he become a

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<sup>26</sup> WL 207

<sup>27</sup> Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Fragments*, Princeton University Press, 1974, 52

<sup>28</sup> WL 215

<sup>29</sup> WL 338



sinner at birth or is born a sinner”<sup>30</sup>. Even in *Repetition* we can find this idea that “there is something darkly in our soul”<sup>31</sup> and this is sin. In his *Journals* from 1854 Kierkegaard states: “To exist, therefore, means for a Christian to be a sinner. But to exist as a sinner in the sight of God is not only the mark of human misery but simultaneously the mark of human grandeur: existence in the Christian sense is at once sinfulness and bliss, the annihilation of the individual before God and his rebirth in God”<sup>32</sup>.

In sin-consciousness the individual becomes aware of his difference from Deity, from God. The main idea is that in relation to God we are always in wrong but this is not an impediment to approach to Him and the only way is faith. Christianity is – as Kierkegaard claims – the paradox religious-sphere, the sphere of faith. Faith must be the task for a whole lifetime. What does faith means? Faith is the highest passion in the sphere of human subjectivity<sup>33</sup> and in *Fear and Trembling*, he answers: “faith is precisely the paradox that the single individual as the single individual is higher than the universal, is justified before it, not as inferior to it but as superior – but in such a way ... that the single individual as the single individual stands in an absolute relation to the absolute... The paradox of faith, then, is this... that the single individual determines his relation to the universal by his relation to the absolute, not his relation to the absolute by his relation to the universal”<sup>34</sup>. And in *Concluding Unscientific Postscriptum* he adds that faith is the contradiction between the infinite passion of inwardness and the objective uncertainty. In other words, faith is happy passion [*likkelig Lidenskab*]. As Phillip L. Quinn claims<sup>35</sup> we must know that Kierkegaard’s God is the Lutheran God from whom salvation comes through faith alone (*sola fide*), in this sense we must practice works of love which are indeed a hard work, but can be realize only with faith. Job has faith, Abraham has faith. They are symbols for all human beings who want to make the leap on Christianity’s life.

My point of view is that both *Fear and Trembling* and *Works of Love* are connected one with other. The task is the relation between human being and God, a relation which must be based on love. In his *Journals* Kierkegaard holds: “Fear and trembling is not the primus motor in the Christian life, for it is love; but it is what the oscillating balance wheel is to the clock – it is the oscillating balance wheel of the Christian life”<sup>36</sup>. Abraham, the “knight of faith” sacrifices his son because he loves God and the word of God is a duty for him. This is an ethical task. Johannes de Silentio claims that “it is correct to say that all duty is ultimately duty to God. (...) The duty becomes duty to God by being referred to God, but I do not enter into relation to God by duty itself. Thus, it is a duty to love one’s neighbor; it is a duty in so far as it is referred to God; yet it is not God that I come in relation to in the duty but the neighbor I love”<sup>37</sup>.

In conclusion what I keep in mind from Kierkegaard’s viewpoint about “works of love” is that who wants to share real love must make a leap in another world, in Christian’s world, a world where you can see in your enemy your neighbor, a world where you, like an individual, must assume your existence and your responsibility for you and for the others, a world where you are able to give your love unconditionally. The leap is full of risk but you will receive everything back infinitely more than you are able to give, you will gain

<sup>30</sup> Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, (Abbreviation: **CUP**), Princeton University Press, 1968, 517

<sup>31</sup> Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling. Repetition*, (Abbreviations: **FT, R**) Princeton University Press, 1983, 210

<sup>32</sup> After K. F. Reinhardt, *Existentialist Revolt*, New York Oxford University Press, 1967, 42

<sup>33</sup> CUP 118

<sup>34</sup> FT 56-70

<sup>35</sup> P. L. Quinn, 366

<sup>36</sup> WL *Supplement*, 395

“authentic existence”, a union and communion with God’s Love. And, in the end we must remember Kierkegaard’s words: “the birds on the branches, the lilies in the field, the deer in the forest, the fishes in the sea, and countless hosts of happy men exultantly proclaim: God is Love. But underneath all these sopranos, supporting them as it were, as the bass part does, is audible the *De profundis* which issues from the sacrificed one: *God is Love*”<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> FT 96

<sup>38</sup> W. Lowrie, *Kierkegaard*, New York Oxford University Press, 1938, 588