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Michael Plekon

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KIERKEGAARD AT THE END: HIS 'LAST' SERMON, ESCHATOLOGY AND THE ATTACK ON THE CHURCH

Michael Plekon

At the end of his life, in the public attack on the Church of Denmark, Kierkegaard was vicious in his criticism of the clergy and their preaching, ruthless in his condemnation of the abdication of the Church to bourgeois culture and society. So radical is his attack that some have read in this late Kierkegaard a wholesale rejection not only of the Church but of Christianity. In this essay it is argued that Kierkegaard might be understood differently, that his was an eschatological perspective, one which criticized the Church while holding on to a vision of the Kingdom present in her, despite her failings.

One of the Many Kierkegaards: the Preacher

Kierkegaard at the center of the universe!¹ This is not an egomaniacal fantasy but the cartoon done of him during his conflict with the Copenhagen newspaper, *Corsaren*.² Kierkegaard is at the center of everything, with the sun, planets, earth, Copenhagen (among others, the cathedral- Our Lady's Church, Our Savior's Church with its twisting spire, the Round Tower and other monuments visible) all turning around him.³ Though satirical, the image is accurate in at least one respect. In his thousands of pages one follows Christianity and the Church, philosophy and literature, the human heart and mind, even the state and—one might go as far as *Corsaren* and say that all the cosmos—passed through the filter of Kierkegaard's experience and the lens of his interpretation.

Kierkegaard the inspector of all—this is an image in which even he would perceive more humor than hurt. In any case, it is impossible to forget Kierkegaard in his writing, even when he is entwined in an issue or speaking through the voices of his numerous pseudonyms. This is true when one listens to the voice of a very different Kierkegaard, that of the preacher. There are discourses he never gave but produced, sometimes even for an imagined occasion, such as a wedding, confession, a burial service.⁴ There also are the texts of several sermons he actually preached, one a trial sermon, others at the Friday morning eucharistic liturgy in the cathedral, and one at the Citadel Church on Sunday, May 18, 1851. I have studied some of these to explore Kierkegaard's rich eucharistic theology.⁵ Others correspond to feasts of the liturgical year such as Ascension and Pentecost.⁶

Taken together, the discourses and sermons constitute a significant



though complex portion of Kierkegaard's authorship, stemming from all phases of his work and life. While length and style vary, most have a consistent form. There is a dedication, most often to his father's memory, a title, an introductory prayer, the citation of the scriptural text, most often that appointed in the Church's lectionary for a particular Sunday or feast, an opening section and then the principal text. There is usually a disclaimer, particularly in the prefaces to the "upbuilding discourses," about their genre. Since he was not ordained, Kierkegaard acknowledged that he had no "authority" to preach, hence the pieces are called "discourses" (*taler*) rather than "sermons." (*prædikener*) He was a graduate in theology who even completed the Pastoral Seminary course and trial sermon, but lacked the ecclesiastical/governmental issuance of the call and episcopal ordination. In his study of the discourses at the Friday Eucharist, Niels-Jørgen Cappelørn makes it clear that in mid-19th century Copenhagen, those not ordained but with the degree *cand. theol.* were nevertheless regularly called on to preach.⁷ Documentation cited in his study confirms that Kierkegaard did preach on several occasions apart from his trial sermon, mostly at the Friday Eucharist in the cathedral, Our Lady's Church, but once on a Sunday, in the Citadel Church. Kierkegaard himself typically goes even further in these prefaces, noting that the pieces are "upbuilding discourses," not "discourses for upbuilding," since "the speaker by no means claims to be a teacher."

The "Last" Sermon: Origins and Context

In Kresten Nordentoft's manner of identifying "many Kierkegaards," we already have several in this genre: the writer of such discourses, the labeler of their proper genre and description, their critic and the interpreter of their meaning and, not least of all, the actual preacher of some.⁸ In this essay the focus is on a single "discourse," in fact, Kierkegaard's last preached sermon, one whose scriptural text, James 1: 17-22 was his favorite, by his own admission, and one he employed in several discourses: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above."⁹

The sermon is the last Kierkegaard actually preached, but even this description is complicated. While it appears in print, in the midst of the literature of the attack on the Church, between numbers 3-7 and 8-10 of *Øieblikket*, (*The Moment*) "The end of August, 1855," it was actually preached in the Citadel Church on Sunday, May 18, 1851.¹⁰ Kierkegaard describes his feelings and health before and afterwards, and notes the congregation's difficulty in hearing him.¹¹ A contemporary, Pastor Peter Christian Zahle, noted the distinctive quality of his preaching, a voice weak but unforgettably rich in expression.¹² Apprehensive beforehand, Kierkegaard thought the sermon went passably well, and was "animated" the rest of that Sunday at home. Inspired, he was eager to again serve in the pulpit that summer, using the precise word "preach" ("prædikede jeg...holde nogle saadanne Prædikener..at prædike...") He even considers preaching extempore, that is, without manuscript or memorization of the same. Yet these positive feelings rapidly dissipated, leaving him exhausted, "plainly sick." Perhaps, he thought, this was a punishment for his going against his entire being in

believing he could or should preach extemporaneously. He also describes his customary reading of one of Bishop Mynster's sermons the next Sunday, May 25, one which dealt with St. Paul's "thorn in the flesh: be content with my grace." "It struck me," he wrote. He had been venturing beyond his personal "border" in thinking about preaching, even extemporaneously. He should be content with grace, with his task of working for inwardness. After all, he was more of a poet than a preacher.

Further, Kierkegaard recounts that on the morning he preached he had prayed that something new be born in him. He was not sure of the source of this thought, comparing it to parents' raising their children and bringing them to the rite of Confirmation. Something new, he senses, was indeed born in him—a new understanding of his task as an author, to straightforwardly spread religiousness, and of this he had received a confirmation from God. Yet he says that he is in dread of having entertained a serious delusion: wanting to venture even further out, rather than having pursued his real task as an author. But, he concludes, God will make all work out to good for him, for which he must be grateful.

The "Last" Sermon and the Church Attack

It is significant that in journal entries around the time of the sermon's preparation and preaching, Kierkegaard is much taken up with the theological critique that eventually would erupt as the public attack on the Church. The connection between this criticism and the sermon's point of view however, is complex. "God frightens—but out of love."¹³ "The 'quiet hours' in Church are truly not the maximum of religiosity, they are really school-exercises, for you must make religiosity actual, put it into practice in life..."¹⁴ Kierkegaard uses Bishop Mynster's own words, *de stille Timer*—"quiet hours." Mynster's errors are examined.¹⁵ In sum, the Bishop has done away with the "imitation" of Christ (*Efterfølgelse*). The sentimental levity and ease with which we speak of trust in God's unchangingness is castigated as illusion.¹⁶ There really should not be enormous churches (as in Copenhagen) but small houses of prayer where there is daily preaching and worship.¹⁷ To say that we're afraid to pray the Holy Spirit for help is 50% more serious than the "priest-nonsense" (*Præste-Sludder*) one hears, such as Pastor Paulli's Pentecost sermon on June 8, 1851, in which he wishes that we again had the apostles themselves as preachers. No, Kierkegaard bitterly says, such worldly beings as we are better served by the "fat preachers earning their livelihood who are also decorated Knights of Denmark," exactly the polemical language of the attack on the Church of 1854-55.¹⁸

The progressive deterioration of the Church, Kierkegaard's interpretation of its erosion or disintegration (*förfallsteori*) as Berndt Gustafsson has called it, can be tracked through many of the 1851 journal entries and in *Practice in Christianity* published the year before: contrasts between the time of the apostles and later Christendom, between the time before the Reformation and the present, the centrality of the "imitation" of Christ as the essential movement in Christianity and hence the only path for renewal of the Church and of the individual Christian.¹⁹ In Catholicism "imitation" has significance, much more so than in worldly, accommodated

Protestantism.²⁰ Bishop Mynster, who in Kierkegaard's eyes is especially responsible for the Church's deterioration, is indicted, but the rank and file of the clergy are criticized too.²¹ In fact, as many students of the late Kierkegaard, particularly Nordentoft, Sløk, Kirmmse and myself have emphasized, the outrageous polemics of the published attack on the Church in *The Moment* and accompanying pieces in 1854-55 are not sudden developments. Years before the war is already being waged and vigorously, in the journals.²² *Practice in Christianity* and the smaller works *For Self-Examination* and *Judge for Yourselves* contain much of the substance of the attack, in muted form and indirectly, in the hope of an "admission" (*Indrømmelse*) from Bishop Mynster that the Church was far from the ideal of the New Testament. In the heat of the public attack, in fact towards its end, Kierkegaard put the sermon he had preached, *Guds Uforanderlighed*,—"God's unchangingness," into print. His death came less than two months later, on November 11, 1855. Kierkegaard's very brief foreword is dated 5 May 1854, his 41st birthday.

The sermon's text, James 1: 17-22, was by his own admission Kierkegaard's favorite and he used it in two collections of upbuilding discourses published in 1843. In these, his accent was upon the Father of lights as the giver of every good and perfect gift. Although God's unchanging nature is touched upon, the preponderant contemplation is of his love. He is the Giver of what is good, even if this does not appear so, even if the gift is suffering. Over against God's graciousness, Kierkegaard contrasts human weakness, ingratitude and selfishness. Adam and Eve's disobedience provide the quintessential image.²³ In another of these earlier discourses, he explores how in giving one makes oneself more insignificant than the gift given. Again the contrast is with God, whose goodness fills each of his gifts and who is greater than any and all of these. The point of each of God's gifts is to lead a person back to him.²⁴ As in the rest of the upbuilding discourses, Kierkegaard does not attack aggressively. Rather, the tone is one of tranquillity in God's presence, the voice of the discourses's author "without authority" of ordination, only the skills of a poet. The listener is faced with the distance between humanity and God, with the regular human effort to have one's own way rather than God's and thus be, before him, "always in the wrong." Yet God is not the vengeful judge, seeking the sinner's punishment. God is love, desiring only the creature's good, doing all to draw the individual toward him.

An Eschatological Vision: "Contemporaneity"

The last sermon appears as a rupture in the tone and style of the church-attack polemics. However, it is not just a spiritual oasis in the heat of the attack, or a brief respite from its fury, even for dramatic purposes. Rather, it is an important key to Kierkegaard's theological stance, more nuanced than the attack literature would indicate. If his work in this last conflict with the Church is a corrective, then this sermon is that corrective's corrective. Put differently, I believe that in this last sermon Kierkegaard wants to reveal a perspective he continues to hold, a Christian faith and even a confession of the Church he maintains despite the polemics of the attack. However, he

does not does not wish to lead with or emphasize this perspective in the attack literature. Yet he does not want it absent either, hence its statement, indirectly, in the earlier preached sermon. It is, in my view, an eschatological vision, but as with everything in Kierkegaard, a complex, dialectical one.

Earlier he had discoursed at length, in *Practice in Christianity*, about the "contemporaneity," (*Samtidigheden*) of Christ with the sinful world, of the Kingdom with the most imperfect Church and each sinful Christian.

The past is not actuality—for me. Only the contemporary is actuality for me. That which you are living simultaneously is actuality—for you, Thus every human being is able to become contemporary only with the time in which he is living—and then with one more, with Christ's life upon earth, for Christ's life upon earth, the sacred history, stands alone by itself, outside history....If you cannot prevail upon yourself to become a Christian in the situation of contemporaneity with him, or if he cannot move you and draw you to himself in the situation of contemporaneity, then you will never become a Christian.²⁵

This is not a spiritualistic escape but recognition of the eschatological perspective and tension of Christ and the early Church in the New Testament: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent and believe in the good news." (Mark 1: 15) Kierkegaard had also expended considerable effort in this direction in *For Self-Examination and Judge for Yourselves*.²⁶ "Eschatology" has many meanings in the Christian tradition. New Testament scholarship and the *ressourcement* of the Fathers and liturgical tradition in this century has not only elaborated the sense of eschatology but drawing from the early Church, has enriched and sharpened it. Here, "eschatological" refers to not just the "last things," the end of this age and beginning of that to come, but to an existential immanence of the divine in the human, the penetration of *chronos* by *kairos*. It thus implies transformation of this life and human beings by the presence of Christ and the kingdom here and now. It is not too much to argue that this may be the most powerful sense in which Kierkegaard is an "existentialist." This is *not* in terms of the philosophical features much later associated with a perspective, a style, even a movement called "existentialism," but rather in terms of Kierkegaard's occupation with the human subject, the actual experience and world of the "single individual," *in relation to the ever-present kingdom of heaven, the constant "relationship with God," (Gudsforhold)* in which each person exists.

Although Kierkegaard uses theological vocabulary which suggests that he sees only an unbridgeable gap between God and humanity, between the kingdom of heaven and that of this world, in the concept of "contemporaneity" he works out not only an existential but a dialectical eschatology. As *Practice in Christianity* and later, the attack literature make clear, the only authentic Church is a struggling one, *Ecclesia militans*.²⁷ The only true Christianity is to find oneself in contemporaneity with the despised, suffering, kenotic Christ, the crucified one. Any Church triumphant in confidence or "assurances," any acceptance of the good, pleasurable things of this life as the substance of the kingdom is mockery of God, a misunder-

standing of Christ, his teaching, life and suffering. With great insight Bruce Kirmmse refers to this as Kierkegaard's "prioritarianism," rooted in Matthew 6:23-34, the "seeking first" of the kingdom of God.²⁸

All this is familiar, even obvious in the radical view of "authentic New Testament Christianity" and in Kierkegaard's other marks of radical discipleship. "Imitation of Christ," "dying from" self and the world, "suffering for the Teaching" are highlighted in the journals and published writings of his last years, the attack literature in particular. However, along with, better, *within* this negative perspective is an *affirmative one* which must be apprehended without losing the first. The last sermon is a lyrical evocation of what Kierkegaard also believes and teaches, along with his negative theology. It is not an exhaustive eschatology, yet I believe, there is enough of a recognition of the divine realities inhabiting the earthly ones to enable us to reject any reading of Kierkegaard as anarchic or nihilistic.

God is Savior as well as Judge. Christ, as Kierkegaard repeatedly put the dialectic, is both Redeemer and Prototype. In some of the eucharistic homilies, Kierkegaard used the very image of the imposing Thorvaldsen statue above the altar in the Copenhagen cathedral, the Christological iconography that dominated every celebration of the Eucharist there. This is the Risen One who beckons: "Come to me, all you who labor..." the text carved into the statue's base. The crucified One whose broken body and outpoured blood are offered in the sacrament is the same One who, triumphant over death, holds out the life of the kingdom to all in the Eucharist.²⁹

Even amid the militant and critical theology of the last years, the crucified One to be imitated *is also* the all-compassionate, suffering and forgiving Lord. In this sermon, inserted into the fury of the church-attack literature, we are given a glimpse of God's infinite love, much in the manner of the New Testament images and parables—the great banquet, the prodigal son and loving father, the yeast in the dough and so on. One would search in vain for hidden clues, code phrases or other gimmicks in this sermon. Within the context of the rest of the attack literature, the numbers of *The Moment* into which it is placed, the sermon makes a subtle yet powerful eschatological proclamation of infinite divine love, of the risen Christ's forgiveness and the truly triumphant Church's joy, that of the kingdom.

"God's Unchangingness"—"Infinite Love"

The sermon evokes tranquillity and confidence in God, who never wavers in love. But as in the epistle, so too in Kierkegaard's contemplation of it, there is recognition of the tendency to rage: "But let every one be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger: for your anger does not produce God's righteousness." (James 1:19-20) The apostle continues as does Kierkegaard, in urging his listeners to rid themselves of what is wicked and to receive the saving word of God. New Testament scholarship understands this letter to be addressed to a Palestinian Jewish-Christian congregation. Elegant in echoing the Septuagint and crafted in the language and mood of the wisdom literature, it well may be a Christian adaptation of an earlier sapiential collection of aphorisms, rather than a composition in the genre of New Testament letters.³⁰ In the wisdom literature as in James, the focus is

on how to enact ethics, how to live the life God has set out in his Law. This focus is often accomplished by comparisons and contrasts in human behavior, namely between the right and the evil, the wise and the foolish ways of behaving. Throughout Kierkegaard's explication of James these distinctions are framed by another contrast, namely that between God's ways of acting and of being and the human. With humanity, there is inability to hear and comprehend God, as well great evil that comes from what people say and from their angry actions. To add to all of this, people change, and not usually in the good sense—they deteriorate, while God is essentially unchanging, constantly giving "good and perfect gifts."

Such realization fills the apostle with joy and peace, but, Kierkegaard argues, for ordinary people it is terrifying, (*forførdende*), creating "fear and trembling" (*Frygt og Bæven*).³¹ God is always and everywhere present, and with a lucidity (*Klarhed*) of intention, which is the root of His unchangingness. No matter that our wills do not mesh with God's as they should. No matter even that the world goes its own way to evil and destruction. In his unchangingness, God seems not to pay attention. He does not regularly punish those who harm his creation, though he is able to do so any time.

God gives people time. He can do so because he has an eternity and does not change in this. God can wait. Ask parents, Kierkegaard says, and others occupied with care and training. For punishment to be effective it must follow the offense as immediately as possible, otherwise its impact and meaning will be lost. Yet God gives time, takes much time without punishing, but he is the same for eternity and remembers everything, for eternity. Note the eschatological interweaving of human time and God's eternity. Kierkegaard tightens the screws here as far as they will go. He intensifies the pressure of the guilty, changeable human being before the unchanging, ever-present and all-knowing God. The scene has been visited before in Kierkegaard's pages, the most notable being the "Ultimatum," the seemingly terrifying sermon of the Jutland priest at the end of *Either/Or* II, sent by Judge William to his young, confused friend, the esthete: "The Upbuilding That Lies in the Thought that in Relation to God We Are Always in the Wrong."³²

What would appear to be the epitome of dread, that before God the person is nothing but a perpetrator of evil, paradoxically, in Gospel inversion, becomes the source of comfort and blessedness (*Beroligelse og Salighed*)³³ For the Jutland preacher only in longing and seeking for God, that is, in love for God, does the end of doubt and fear come. Only in God, who is love, do we find joy and peace.³⁴ Such realization is transforming, "it animates and inspires to action."³⁵ In this last sermon, Kierkegaard echoes the Jutland priest. The wanderer finds the cool, refreshing "spring" or "source" (*Kilde*) to drink from, an image also employed in *Works of Love*.³⁶ Thirst is quenched, the heat abates, the traveler comes home to God, the only "source." At the sermon's end, Kierkegaard has returned to what he spoke of in the customary sermon-prayer at the beginning—that the one who is unchanging, immovable, the One who is "Infinite Love" (*uendelige Kjerlighed*) let himself be moved by so small a thing as a human sigh, a prayer, and thus changes the one who prays to be one with his unchanging will.³⁷

Kierkegaard's sermon neither begins nor concludes with the dread seemingly attached to being always in the wrong before God. He did not employ such forceful language in his published writing until quite late, the first versions, still restrained coming in *Practice in Christianity* and *For Self-Examination*, and the most powerful appearing in the articles in *Fædrelandet* and *The Moment* in 1854-55, although the journals for the last four years teem with such stronger language. Throughout "God's Unchangingness" human fluctuation and confusion, weakness and duplicity are met with divine forgiveness and refreshment, a theophany of divine compassion, the *agape* hymned in *Works of Love*. Love is the source, always present like the "sprout in the grain," (*Spiren in Kornet*) in both God and the neighbor.³⁸

An Eschatological Vision: God as "Infinite Love"

How different a key here than what has immediately preceded in the earlier articles in *The Fatherland* and numbers of *The Moment*. In number 7 of the latter, the essays are very sharp indeed. One is a sarcastic rhapsody on the words of Christ: "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men." (Matt. 4: 19) comparing this with the booming fishing industry. If millions of herring and cod, and great success in whaling, why not in Christians?³⁹ There follow meticulously crafted, acerbic images of Christianity's bourgeois domestication: Baptism's radical dying and rising with Christ domesticated into young parents' stylish, sentimental celebrating of a birth; the businessman's infrequent, obligatory reception of Holy Communion (in one's best clothes and with an extra contribution to the church), and his returning to "business as usual" with no clue to the true eucharistic obligation to follow Christ, to be his witness. The priests live off such "business," Kierkegaard says, erupting in fury.⁴⁰ The domestication of the rites of confirmation and marriage are likewise criticized for their secularization. Most devastating of all is the novella about the theological graduate Ludvig From, literally "Louis Pious." He has worked hard at university and the pastoral seminary, has had the necessary interviews with the officials of both government and church, filed all his papers and procured a parish call, only to find it pays considerably less than expected. He actually starts the process to remove himself from this call, but is persuaded by friends to keep it. After ordination, at his installation service, the Dean speaks on St. Peter's words: "We have left everything and followed you," and the new Pastor From follows with a sermon on the day's gospel text: "Seek *first* the kingdom of God."⁴¹

Kierkegaard is merciless with the professionalism of the clergy and their reduction of Christianity to a trade, to the business of "childish sweets" (*Barne-Slik*) which no more resemble the cross and Christ's and the Christian's suffering than sweet jam resembles cream of tartar.⁴¹ The priests not only allow this, they are the architects of this bowdlerizing of Christianity, and hence Kierkegaard weaves a whip of abuse: the priests are liars, perjurers, shop-keepers.

And then comes "God's Unchangingness." Directly after, its mood is sustained. In number 8 of *The Moment*, Kierkegaard begins with an article identified as written two years earlier, on the difficulty yet decisive impor-

tance of "contemporaneity." This is no mere historical reminiscence, but an eschatological action--understanding oneself as contemporary, present here and now with the prophets, apostles, martyrs and with Christ himself. This is contrasted with Bishop Mynster, who romantically associates himself with the holy ones while acting in a self-serving political manner. Christ and the Gospel are not dead historical objects but alive and powerful, and they demand a response.

On the one hand, in most of these texts Kierkegaard uses this eschatological vision of contemporaneity in great seriousness and rigor. We are trifling with eternity, not just ecclesiastical apparatus. We are making a fool of God with the sentimentalized, domestication of Christianity at life's passage points. How sober we would be if we recognized that we were acting not just within our relatively brief lives or the historical frame of the century, but simultaneously within eternity. This keen sensibility to the contemporaneity of the temporal and the eternal of course runs through much of Kierkegaard's authorship, the human person consistently conceived of as a synthesis of the finite and the infinite, *Sickness unto Death* being but one important text. The origins of this kind of eschatological vision in Kierkegaard are complex, still the matter of debate and well beyond the borders of this essay. I believe that Kierkegaard appropriated from both the classical sources of Lutheran orthodoxy and Pietism and the literary and Revival movements (*Vækkelser*) so strong in his childhood and adolescence in Denmark.⁴² We can hear Brorson and Kingo as their hymnody nourishes Kierkegaard's prayer and reflections. We can easily perceive those rejected: H.N. Clausen and Grundtvig, Mynster and Martensen, as well as Heiberg and Oehlenschläger and Lehmann, as Bruce Kirmmse comprehensively documents.⁴³ Yet there are more complex, not so easily attributable influences: the focus of the Herrnhuter community (with which Kierkegaard's father remained associated) on Christ and His suffering, of Poul Martin Møller's struggle to hold onto faith, even resemblances with the early associate of Grundtvig, Jacob Christian Lindberg's passion for the Church's tradition and the ordinary person.⁴⁴

On the other hand, the eschatological tone is carried further by other pieces underscoring the present as knit together with eternity, and God as Infinite Love, wanting us to be joined to him, to his will and heart. In fact, for all the fury of the sustained polemics, for all the suffering Christianity demands, the figure of God is by contrast, one of compassion and infinite love. It is a kenotic, suffering God whom Kierkegaard reveals in these pages, just as in *Practice in Christianity*.⁴⁵

Divine compassion, however, the unlimited recklessness in concerning oneself only with the suffering, not in the least with oneself, and of unconditionally recklessly concerning oneself with each sufferer--people can interpret this only as a kind of madness over which we are not sure whether we should laugh or cry.⁴⁶

This is very much the *eros mannikos*, the absurd love of God described by the 14th century Byzantine theologian Nicolas Cabasilas, also stressed by the 19th century Russian theologian Alexander Boukharev and the

Orthodox lay theologian of our time, Paul Evdokimov and the “Monk of the Eastern Church,” Fr. Lev Gillet, all inspired by the apostle Paul’s reckless, mystical vision of divine eros.⁴⁷ The God who loves mankind (*theos philanthropos*) not only gives life but loves us with great passion, yet without ever compelling us to reciprocate. God is infinitely easy to fool, Kierkegaard observes.⁴⁸ God’s justice is terrifying, but as St. Isaac the Syrian stresses, it is indeed good that it is not like our justice, but full of mercy, so that were we to adopt it, we would forgive and pray for all, even for the animals and the demons.⁴⁹

In the journalistic venom of the church attack, this other tonality, this deep confidence in the mercy of the One who is Infinite Love is overshadowed. However, among others, the Danish church historian P.G. Lindhardt, himself not a Kierkegaard specialist, nevertheless drew attention to the import of this “last” sermon about God’s unchanging compassion years ago in his introduction to a paperback edition of *The Moment*.⁵⁰ Kierkegaard’s single concern, he claimed, was with the Gospel of God’s unchanging mercy toward those who had no other to fall back upon, and his singular attack on the Church can only be understood in relation to this concern.

Eschatology and the Church

Now this last sermon cannot be said to absorb all the negativity of Kierkegaard’s attack or neutralize his radical understanding of “authentic New Testament Christianity.” Neither would the journal entries found here and there, nor the pages of text, such as those in the 9th number of *The Moment* just noted. However, this sermon was hardly placed in the last phase of the church-attack literature without reason. Its own bringing together of eternity and the present, as well as its interaction with the rest of the attack-literature, I believe, places the attack on the Church in an eschatological perspective we seldom perceive.

If one can only regard the Church, in this case *Folkekirken*, literally “the Peoples’ Church,” as a social and political institution, then I suspect Kierkegaard leaves very little untouched in his fury. In the last issue of *The Moment* published while he was alive, number 9, he calls the priests cannibals—not only do they live off their parishioners, but worse, they feed off Christ, the apostles and martyrs. Kierkegaard pictures the holy ones kept as provisions by the clergy, pickled in barrels like herring or salt pork, used to the priests’ own advantage while their witness cries: “Follow me.” It becomes difficult to salvage anything of the mess, clergy or Church, from the withering blast he directs at it. Bruce Kirmmse argues that for Kierkegaard, in his last days, any institutional and any communal/congregational dimension of Christianity was a deviation from Christ’s intent and his invitation to each individual.⁵² “The Established Church,” (*Det Bestaaende*) was precisely that for him, an establishment of the political and cultural order, the state. In the brave new world of modernity, and in honesty before God, Kierkegaard, according to Kirmmse, would see no need for the compromised, accommodated Church, whether of Mynster, Martensen or for that matter, Grundtvig. While there is a “relative” place for social institutions in the externalities of providing bridges and street

lighting and collecting taxes, there is for Kierkegaard no longer any place for a state-church in the business of salvation.⁵³ And this stance is pushed even further, as any version of "church" we apparently know would appear to be rejected by him as hindering Christ's invitation to each individual, cluttering it with clergy and ceremony. This is no hypothesis, for Kierkegaard actually wrote such things. Bruce Kirmmse holds out a journal passage from 1854 as particularly expressive of Kierkegaard's opposition to the very existence of the Church, his deep distrust of the three thousand who entered the Church at Pentecost, an entry entitled by Kierkegaard himself as "an alarming note."⁵⁴ With Christ, Kierkegaard argues, there is "pure intensity" and "in Christ Christianity is the single individual [*den Enkelte*], but with the apostle there is at once-community." And so, Kierkegaard radically asserts that "Christianity is transposed into an entirely different conceptual sphere" which in time has led to the "ruination of Christendom...the confusion that whole states, countries, nations, kingdoms are Christian." As if this were not enough, Kierkegaard adds in the margin of this entry a further question about whether the essential Christian principle of hating oneself "is not so asocial that it cannot constitute community." "State churches, people's churches and Christian countries" amount to "nonsense" for him. When coupled with his attacks on the clergy and their preaching and on the misuse of the sacraments themselves, it is difficult to maintain that there is some shred of Church left that escapes Kierkegaard's wrath. Could it be that in our time we have more precise labels for Kierkegaard's stance at the end: Bonhoeffer's "religionless Christianity" for a "world come of age," or an "anonymous" Christianity as Karl Rahner and others would describe it. It is significant that Grundtvig, for whom Kierkegaard had nothing but contempt, came to somewhat similar conclusions, although for quite different reasons, namely those of religious freedom, much influenced by a visit to England in 1843. For him, the institutional ecclesial structure was only the civil arrangement or lodging in which the Church was a "heavenly guest."⁵⁵ Grundtvig in the end would not jettison the sacraments, ministry or Church, but dramatically redefine their relation to the ecclesial institution, the social apparatus.

As much as I respect Bruce Kirmmse's magisterial scholarship and perceptive reading of Kierkegaard, I do not agree with this conclusion of his regarding Kierkegaard. The "last" sermon and many other places in Kierkegaard's texts say otherwise. When I say that this last sermon reveals Kierkegaard's "eschatological" vision of Christianity and the Church, I do not mean that his theological stance was an over-spiritualized one, viewing the faith and the church in solely other-worldly terms. Neither do I concur that the Church, sacraments and the rest of the visible faith disappear into an essentially private religiosity. Kierkegaard's understanding, as I have argued elsewhere, is too classically catholic, as confessional Lutheranism is, and too much infused with the Incarnation's meeting of the divine and the human.⁵⁶ For him, the relationship with God (*Guds-Forholdet*) is inescapable and comprehensive. *Nothing* in human life and action, as his numerous discourses indicate, can be separated from God. "Double-mindedness" and "despair" very precisely are instances of resistance to and

flight from God's presence. Although for Kierkegaard eternity would seem to loom ahead, after this life and beyond the grave, in fact, eternity already envelopes us in God, his gracious dwelling among us. This is what "Grace," (*Naade*) is for him, not something, but *Someone*.

Kierkegaard, at the End

The kingdom of heaven has come very close. The meeting of the eternal and the temporal strikes fear and implies great suffering, greater than any human variety. But it also brings great reassurance, the peace and joy which radiate not only in this last sermon, not just in the other discourses employing James as text, but in other places in both the published works and journals.⁵⁷ In addition to the radical demands to imitate Christ, to follow after him, to suffer for Gospel, to die from oneself—all the ways in which Kierkegaard struggles to reveal the cross in Christianity to a church and culture which have domesticated it—there is another dimension in his theological standpoint. I have called this his "incarnational optimism," trying to describe a faith which also affirms, one suffused with the light of the Resurrection, the kind of eschatological vision often ascribed to the Eastern Orthodox Church's liturgy and iconography.⁵⁸ While it is not possible to develop this claim at length here, it can be perhaps captured in imagery, iconographically, and in rather a "domestic" manner.

Not far into his massive exposition of the Eastern Church and her theology, the émigré Russian theologian Paul Evdokimov suddenly detours into a short chapter, *Pro domo sua*.⁵⁹ Here, in a sensitive *apologia* for his ecclesial home, he confronts what many Westerners find alongside the splendor of Orthodoxy—the liturgical chant, the lights, incense, and the icons. This taste of heaven exists amid much poverty, ethnic particularity, ritual obsession, ecclesiastical disorder, even anarchy. Yet, Evdokimov observes, evoking Dostoevsky's landscapes of human mess and evil, beneath the apparent chaos and misery is the freedom of children with their God, whose only power is that of love. Those completely guilty and deserving of punishment yet somehow hope for God's compassion, and this very depiction bears the author's conviction that they will receive it, for God is infinite in his love.

I want to argue that the writings of Kierkegaard's last years are eschatologically embroidered with threads of the kingdom's immanence, expressed most often in the image of God as inexhaustible, forgiving and self-giving love. Certainly, this is woven throughout *Works of Love* from 1847, but is also traceable even amid the criticism of *Practice in Christianity, For Self-Examination and Judge for Yourselves*.⁶⁰ The discourses from the Friday Eucharists, as Niels-Jørgen Cappelørn and I have shown, stress Christ's gift of himself in the bread and cup and the obligation of the one who receives to live the transformed life given in the sacrament. Quite contrary to many, but not all the sermons Kierkegaard heard in Copenhagen churches, his own, whether actually preached or not, particularly in these last years, consistently present Christianity as a way of life to be concretely enacted, with significant cost and suffering. Yet many entries in his journals, the bulk of his earlier productivity, reveal a consistent, unswerving

grasp of God's self-giving and forgiving love for mankind. For all the caricatures of bitterness in which Kierkegaard permits, perhaps even encourages himself to be understood in these last years, particularly in the furor of the church-attack, there is, as he himself admits, another dimension to his understanding and proclamation of Christianity.⁶¹

As students of his theological criticism themselves observe, one is hard pressed to ever find a direct attack on the core of the Christian tradition.⁶² A reader will look in vain for rejections of the Trinitarian nature of God, of the divinity of Christ, or of his virgin birth, miracles, death, resurrection and ascension. Neither will one find any abandonment of the sacraments as the work of God and his presence, the scriptures as the communication of God, the ordained ministry as proclaimers of this communication and leaders of the faithful, in short of the Church as the gift of God, the point of contact with the saints and the rest of the kingdom of heaven. The institutional church and its clergy virtually seem to vaporize in the fall-out of Kierkegaard's attack, both privately in his journals and publicly in print. Yet, is it the case that attacking the weakness, self-righteousness and abuse of the tangible, audible, visible church means that the very existence of such an ecclesial reality is challenged? Does even Kierkegaard's refusal to receive Holy Communion on his deathbed from his life-long friend, Pastor Emil Boesen mean his ultimate rejection of the sacrament of the Eucharist and of the sacramental ministry and community only by and in which the Eucharist can be celebrated and received? There is no more difficult action of Kierkegaard for me to deal with than this final act of protest, this radical fasting from the Eucharist. However I believe that in the Eucharist, at least as I have studied Kierkegaard's significant contemplation of this sacrament and his homilies for eucharistic liturgies, it is possible to perceive his eschatological sensibility to both this most ecclesial of sacraments and to the eucharistic community which is the Church.⁶³

I believe that the eschatological perspective in Kierkegaard works in two different ways. The "realized eschatology" of the Kingdom contained and expressed in the visible, human and most imperfect Church is not an illegitimate "theology of glory," a compromise of the age to come, of the significance of the cross, Christ's sufferings. It does not have to be a canonizing of the ecclesial *status quo*. In Kierkegaard's hands, in fact, the eschatological understanding is wielded as a powerful prophetic weapon. He holds up the fact of being contemporaneous with Christ and the apostles as a terrible indictment of the Church's domestication, its bourgeois captivity. It is crucial to recall here that the clergy, Bishop Mynster in particular, are not the targets of attack for their economic, political or social crimes. Rather, it is precisely their abdication of spiritual leadership, their reluctance to suffer for the Gospel, their unwillingness to live the Gospel out radically, that serves as the bases for Kierkegaard's accusations. They have ceased to be shepherds of souls.

However, Kierkegaard just as deftly, I believe, occupies another vantage point, and from it the conclusions can be strangely different. All this selling-out, all the ecclesiastical weakness and failure of spirit—none of this affects the presence of God, his love and forgiveness. None of it eclipses the kingdom which both is to come and is present here and now. The last ser-

mon affirms, so I am arguing, that the Church, as bearer of the kingdom, cannot be reduced to Bishop Mynster or Martensen or any of the pastoral incumbents. Neither is the Church equivalent to the expressions Kierkegaard rejects: Christendom, state or people's church, Christian nation or even congregation and community numerically, socially or culturally understood. Rather than rejecting the Church in toto, both in principle and in practice, I am struck by Kierkegaard's setting her in judgment before Infinite Love, over against the kingdom. The eschatological sensibility here I would compare to the divine, philanthropic madness, God's own "foolish love" displayed as well by numerous figures, not only the "fools for Christ," (*Yurodivyye*) of the Eastern Church—the unusual jesters who call the court, the society and Church to order and repentance by their outlandishness, but also many others, Saints Francis of Assisi and Seraphim of Sarov being notable examples.⁶⁴

If Kierkegaard is operating with an eschatological perspective, even if he does not use this precise term, could it not be that his critique still accepts and respects the divine presence and nature the Church also possesses? As with others in the history of Christianity who struggled with the abuses of the Church's leadership, members and practices—a long line from Irenaeus, Cyprian, Athanasius and Maximus, down to Jan Hus, John Wycliffe, Savonarola and Catherine of Siena, and of course, Luther, Melancthon, Calvin, Wesley and Grundtvig—passionate challenges and even hard language meant profound commitment to the Gospel and the Church rather than rejection. I have argued that Kierkegaard, as well as being one of the fiercest critics of the Church, is also one of her faithful teachers. Others besides me have recognized this, one being the noted Danish ecclesiastical historian, P.G. Lindhardt, cited earlier. David Gouwens' fine recent study affirms it, as does the decision of the American Lutheran churches to include Kierkegaard in the liturgical calendar on his "heavenly birthday," *dies natalis caelestis*, the day of his death, November 11, designating him as a teacher of the Church.⁶⁵

Perhaps it is helpful to apply here, the insight of Khomiakov and other teachers of the Church East and West in the modern era who might be said to have rediscovered the meaning of the Church in addition to its institutional existence. They emphatically underscore the problems inherent in separating the church from her constitutive head and substance, Christ, as the Augustinian line has it: *Totus Christus, caput et corpus*: the entire Christ, head and body, is the Church.⁶⁶ I think Kierkegaard implicitly is following such ecclesiological insights, echoed into our own time by a truly ecumenical procession of those "returning to the sources."⁶⁷ Chief among their rediscoveries was that the Church is one with Christ, incapable of being split into competing orders, and most erroneously dealt with if treated as only a cultural institution, merely a sociological reality.⁶⁸ Over against the New Testament, liturgical and patristic images of the Church, the abuses and schisms stand out all the more starkly, and the need for repentance is seen more urgently. Lastly, though he is not an Eastern Orthodox Christian, I wonder if he does not possess something of the ecclesial and eschatological vision retained in the Eastern Church, as well as by some in the West, perspectives very much alive in the era of the undivided Church,

the centuries of the Fathers, East and West. I mean by this a deep sense of the sinfulness of the humanity of the Church, a profound grasp of her historical messiness and outright corruption and righteous indignation at all this, but at the same time a childlike communion with her divine heart. Paul Evdokimov, along with many other Orthodox theologians, points out this is why, in the East, the icon of the Mother of God tenderly clinging to Christ her child is also understood as an icon of the Church, Christ hanging on to humanity, his body in a "foolish" or absurd love (*mannikos eros*).⁶⁹

Finally, any judgment about the late Kierkegaard must be a wager based on how one reads the texts he leaves. While there are significant passages in the later writings to warrant the interpretation that there was more to his thinking than the negativity of the attack literature, I am arguing that his fully deliberate location of the sermon on God's unchangingness should be taken as an important expression of his theological understanding. The sermon places the entire project of his attack on the Church before God, in the context of the unchanging love and forgiveness of the kingdom. Such a vision does not obliterate the rigor and integrity of his criticism of the Church. By no means is such an understanding satisfied with merely a spiritual solution, or a pietistic retreat from actual existence. While there is little evidence that he read them, I am struck by the resonance between Kierkegaard's demanding proclamation of the Gospel, his uncompromising expression of Christ's call to imitate him and the vigorous spiritual vision of the 3rd and 4th century Egyptian, Palestinian and Syrian ascetics called the "desert fathers."⁷⁰ For them, as for him, suffering for the Gospel was not only a given but the joyful gift of following after Christ, taking up his cross. Just as obvious for them, as for Kierkegaard, were the constant human tendencies toward duplicity, self-deception and hardness of heart. Yet equally, for both, was the ultimate recognition of God's unfathomable and unswerving compassion. The goal of all the struggle was to free one to "hasten to Grace," to the gracious One. Could it not be that what appears as madness and anarchy, negativity and misanthropy on Kierkegaard's part, is, in the end, just this simplicity of heart before Infinite Love?

Baruch College of the City University of New York

NOTES

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especially grateful to William Cahoy for his insightful response there, and as always to my colleague and friend, Bruce Kirmmse, clearly America's preeminent Kierkegaard scholar, for honest disagreement and criticism.

2. Much of the literature is reviewed in Elias Bredsdorff, *Corsaren, Goldschmidt og Kierkegaard*, (Copenhagen: Corsarens Forlag, 1977). Also see the collection of essays in Robert L. Perkins, ed., *The Corsair Affair, International Kierkegaard Commentary* 13, (Macon GA: Mercer University Press, 1994)

3. *Corsaren*, no. 285, Friday, 6 March 1846, 9.

4. See *Eighteen Upbuilding Discourses, Kierkegaard's Writings*, V, Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, eds. and trans., (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).

5. See my essay, "Kierkegaard and the Eucharist," *Studia Liturgica*, 22, (1992), 214-236, as well as Niels-Jørgen Cappelørn, "Die ursprüngliche Unterbrechung," *Kierkegaard Studies Yearbook 1996*, (Berlin & NY: Walter de Gruyter, 1996), an exhaustive examination of Kierkegaard and the Friday Eucharist in Vor Frue Kirke in Copenhagen.

6. See Andreas Davidsen and John W. Hørbo, eds., *Søren Kierkegaard og søndagsteksterne*, 2 vols., (Copenhagen: C.A. Reitzel, 1995).

7. See the Danish text of his already cited study, "Oprindelighedens Afbrudelse," (University of Copenhagen: Kierkegaard Research Centre, 1996).

8. Kresten Nordentoft, "Hvad siger Brand-Majoren?" *Kierkegaards opgør med sin samtid*, (Copenhagen: Gad, 1973), 261-291.

9. The editors of the first edition of *Søren Kierkegaards Samlede Værker* (SV), J.L. Heiberg, H.O. Lange, A.B. Drachmann (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1901-1906), note that Kierkegaard used this text in the second of the *Two Upbuilding Discourses* from 1843 (SV 3: 35-52) and again in *Four Upbuilding Discourses* also from 1843. (SV 4: 24-53) Portions of this epistle are appointed in the lectionary of the Danish Church for two of the Sundays after Easter, the precise text here, on the Fourth Sunday after Easter.

10. SV 14: 277-294. *Kierkegaard's Writings*, XXIII. The sermon does not appear in Walter Lowrie's earlier translation, *Kierkegaard's Attack Upon "Christendom,"* (KAUC), (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 19680 but his translation of it is in *For Self-Examination and Judge for Yourself*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), pp. 223-240. There are earlier entries about a sermon on God's unchangingness and trustworthiness, with references to Savonarola and Luther. (X-4, 237, 264, 297, 305). All journal entries are cited from *Søren Kierkegaards Papirer*, 25 vols, 2nd ed, P.A. Heiberg, V. Kuhr, E. Torsting, N. Thulstrup and N.J. Cappelørn eds., (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1966-1978).

11. X-4, A318, 323.

12. P.C. Zahle, *Til Erindring om Johan Georg Hamann og Søren Aabye Kierkegaard*, (Copenhagen, 1856), 9-10, published in *Erindringer om Søren Kierkegaard*, Steen Johansen, ed., (Copenhagen: Reitzel, 1980), 69, and Bruce H. Kirmmse, ed. and Virginia R. Laursen, trans., *Kierkegaard: A Life As Seen by His Contemporaries*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996). and cited in N.J. Cappelørn, "Oprindelighedens Afbrudelse," 47-48.

13. X-4, A309.

14. X-4, A306.

15. X-4, A296.

16. X-4, A311.

17. X-4, A317.

18. X-4, A330.

19. Berndt Gustafsson, *I den natt: studier till Søren Kierkegaards förfallsteori*, (Stockholm: Diakonistrelsens Bokförlag, 1962). See X-4, A340, 345, 349.

20. X-4, A354.
21. X-4, A361, 365, 368, 371, 375, 393, 404.
22. See Kresten Nordentoft, "*Hvad siger Brand-Majoren?*, Søren Kierkegaard. *Bidrag til kritikken af den borgerlige selvoptagethed*, Copenhagen: Dansk Universitets Presse, 1977); Johannes Sløk, *Da Kierkegaard tav. Fra forfatterskab til kirkestorm*, (Copenhagen: Hans Reitzel, 1980); Bruce H. Kimmse, *Kierkegaard in Golden Age Denmark*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990) and "Tordenviret: Søren Kierkegaards ekklesiologi," in *Vinduer til Guds Rige*, Hans Raun Iversen, ed., (Copenhagen: Anis, 1995), 97-113 and my "Introducing Christianity into Christendom: Reinterpreting the Late Kierkegaard," *Anglican Theological Review*, 64, 3, (1982), 327-352; "Prophetic Criticism, Incarnational Optimism: On Recovering the Late Kierkegaard," *Religion*, 13, (1983), 137-153; "Kierkegaard, the Church and Theology of Golden Age Denmark," *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 34, 2, (1983), 245-266, "Kierkegaard the Theologian," in *Foundations of Kierkegaard's Vision of Community*, C. Stephen Evans and George C. Connell, eds., (NY: Humanities Press, 1991), 2-17.
23. SV 4: 24-26. *Eighteen Upbuilding Discourses*, 125-128.
24. SV 4: 151-156. *Eighteen Upbuilding Discourses*, 266-273.
25. SV 12: 61. (The translations here and elsewhere are from *Practice in Christianity, Kierkegaard's Writings*, XX, Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, eds. and trans., (Princeton University Press, 1991), 64.
26. See my "Kierkegaard's Theological Fullness in For Self-Examination and Judge for Yourselfes," forthcoming in *The International Kierkegaard Commentary*.
27. SV 12: 185-212. *Practice*, 201-232.
28. *Kierkegaard in Golden Age Denmark*, 294ff, 354, 438, 476.
29. See "Kierkegaard and the Eucharist," 224-236.
30. See Martin Dibelius and Heinrich Greeven, *A Commentary on the Epistle of James*, M.A. Williams, trans., *Hermeneia Commentary*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976); Bo Reicke, *The Epistles of James, Peter and Jude*, vol. 37, *The Anchor Bible*, (Garden City NY: Doubleday, 1964).
31. SV 14: 287.
32. SV 2: 307-318, *Either/Or II, Kierkegaard's Writings*, IV, Howard and Edna Hong, eds. and trans., (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 339-354.
33. SV 14: 292
34. SV 2: 314-316. *Either/Or*, II, 349-352.
35. SV 2: 318. *Either/Or*, II, 354.
36. SV 9: 13. *Works of Love*, Howard and Edna Hong, eds. and trans., (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 27.
37. SV 14: 283.
38. SV 9: 210. *Works of Love*, 207.
39. SV 14: 243. *Kierkegaard's Attack*, 203-204.
40. SV 14: 244-247. *Kierkegaard's Attack*, 205-207.
41. SV 14: 255. *Kierkegaard's Attack*, 215.
42. Kaj Baagø, *Vækkelse og Kirkeliv i København og Omegn*, vol. I, *Vækkelsernes Frembrud i Danmark i første Halvdel af det 19. Århundrede*, Copenhagen: G.E.C. Gads Forlag, 1960; *Väckelse och Kyrka*, A. Pontopiddan Thyssen, ed. Copenhagen: G.E.C. Gads Forlag, 1969.
43. *Kierkegaard in Golden Age Denmark*, 31-44.
44. See Kaj Baagø, *Magister Jacob Christian Lindberg*, (Copenhagen: G.E.C. Gad, 1958), Jørgen Bukdahl, *Søren Kierkegaard og den menige mand*, (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1970).
45. SV 12: 39ff. *Practice*, 40ff.
46. SV 12: 55. *Practice*, 57-58.

47. Nicolas Cabasilas, *The Life in Christ*, C. J. deCatanzaro, trans., (Crestwood NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1974), 164ff; Paul Evdokimov, *L'amour fou de Dieu*, (Paris: Seuil, 1973), 11-39 and *Le Christ dans le pensée russe*, (Paris: Cerf, 1970); A Monk of the Eastern Church (Fr. Lev Gillet), *Jesus-A Dialogue with the Savior*, (NY/Paris: Desclée, 1962, *In Thy Presence*, (Crestwood NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1977). Also see my essay, "The God Whose Power is Weakness, Whose Love is Foolish: Divine Philanthropy in the Theology of Paul Evdokimov," *Sourozh*, 60, 1995, 15-26, and Elisabeth Behr-Sigel, *Alexandre Boukharev*, (Paris: Beauchesne, 1977), *Prière et sainteté dans l'Eglise russe*, (Bellefontaine, 1982), Michel Evdokimov, *Le Christ dans la tradition et la littérature russe*, (Paris: Cerf, 1996), Nadia Gorodetsky, *The Humiliated Christ in Modern Russian Thought*, (London: SPCK, 1938).

48. SV 14: 318-319. *Kierkegaard's Attack*, 255-256.

49. *St. Isaac of Nineveh on the Ascetical Life*, Mary Hansbury, trans., (Crestwood NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1989; *The Ascetical Homilies of St. Isaac the Syrian*, D. Miller, trans., (Boston: Holy Transfiguration Monastery, 1984).

50. "Søren Kierkegaards opgør med kirken," in *Øieblikket*, (Copenhagen: Hans Reitzel, 1961), 5-24. Also see his *Søren Kierkegaards angreb på folkekirken*, (Århus: Aros, 1955).

51. SV 14: 333-335. *Kierkegaard's Attack*, 268-270.

52. "Tordenveiret," 108-110.

53. *Kierkegaard in Golden Age Denmark*, 474.

54. *Pap. XI-1 A 189*, no date (1854), quoted in "Tordenvejret," 109 and in translation in *Søren Kierkegaard's Journals and Papers*, Howard V. and Edna H. Hong, trans., vol. 2, Bloomington IN: Indiana University Press, 1970, #2056.

55. P.G. Lindhardt and K. Baagø, "Borgerlige indretning—himmelskgæst," *Dansk Teologisk Tidsskrift*, 12, (1949), 129-151; K. Baagø, "Grundtvig og den engelske liberalisme," *Grundtvig-Studier*, (1955), 7-37; P.G. Lindhardt, "Til belysning af Grundtvigs Englands-rejse 1843," *Kirkehistoriske Samlinger*, (1972), 97-156.

56. "Kierkegaard the Theologian," and "Judge William: Bourgeois Moralism, Knight of Faith, Teacher?" in *International Kierkegaard Commentary: Either/Or II*, Robert L. Perkins, ed., (Macon GA: Mercer University Press, 1995), 125-137.

57. See for example throughout SV 12: 11-24, 57, 73-77. *Practice*, 16-25, 60-61, 75-79.

58. See Alexander Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World*, (Crestwood NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1973.) Also see my essay, "Prophetic Criticism, Incarnational Optimism."

59. *L'orthodoxie*, (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1979, 2nd ed.), 41-43.

60. See Nordentoft's emphasis on this constructive view, "recovery," alongside criticism in *Kierkegaard's Psychology*, Bruce H. Kirmmse, trans., (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1978), 365-386,

61. X-1 A246, 1849; XI-2 A99, 1854; A422, July 2, 1855; A439, Sept. 25, 1855.

62. In addition to the studies already cited by Kirmmse, Sløk, Nordentoft, Gustafsson and myself, also relevant here are Niels Thulstrup, *Kierkegaard and the Church in Denmark*, *Bibliotheca Kierkegardiana* 13, (Copenhagen: C.A. Reitzel, 1984); Emmanuel Skjoldager, *Den egentlige Kierkegaard. Søren Kierkegaards syn på kirke og de kirkelige handlinger*, (Copenhagen: Reitzel, 1982); Gregor Malantschuk, *Den kontroversielle Kierkegaard*, (Copenhagen: Vinten, Stjernebørgernes Kulturbibliotek, 1976).

63. See my study of Kierkegaard and the Eucharist previously cited in note 5 above.

64. Paul Evdokimov, *Saint Seraphim of Sarov, An Icon of Orthodox Spirituality*, (Minneapolis: Light and Life, 1988).

65. *Kierkegaard as Religious Thinker*, (Cambridge University Press, 1996). *The Lutheran Book of Worship*, (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1978), p. 12. Also see Philip Pfatteicher, *Festivals and Commemorations: Handbook to the Calendar in The Lutheran Book of Worship*, (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1980), 421-425.

66. A.S. Khomiakov, *The Church is One*, (Seattle WA: St. Nectarios Press, 1979) and "On the Western Confessions of Faith," in *Ultimate Questions: An Anthology of Modern Russian Religious Thought*, Asheleigh E. Moorhouse, trans., Alexander Schmemmann, ed., (Crestwood NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1977), 31-69.

67. Among others, I think of Orthodox such as the creative and controversial Sergius Bulgakov, the irascible "neo-Patrologue" Georges Florovsky, lay theologians Vladimir Lossky, Paul Evdokimov and Olivier Clément, canonist and ecclesiologist Nicolas Afanasiev, liturgical theologian Alexander Schmemmann, Byzantinologist and ecumenist John Meyendorff, Lutheran theologians Peter Brunner, K.E. Skydsgaard, Gustaf Aulén, Yngve Brilioth, Nathan Söderblom, Anders Nygren, Arthur Carl Piepkorn and Roman Catholic theologians such as Louis Bouyer, Yves Congar, Henri deLubac, Jean Daniélou and Lambert Beauduin.

68. See Sergius Bulgakov, *The Orthodox Church*, Lydia Kesich, trans., (Crestwood NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1988); Georges Florovsky, *Bible, Church, Tradition: An Eastern Orthodox View, Collected Works*, vol. 1, (Belmont MA: Buchervertriebsanstalt, 1987); Paul Evdokimov, *Ages of the Spiritual Life*, rev. trans. Michael Plekon and Alexis Vinogradov, (Crestwood NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1998); Nicolas Afanasiev, *L'Église du Saint-Ésprit*, Marianne Drobot, trans., (Paris: Cerf, 1975), *The Lord's Supper*, Michael J. Lewis, trans., M.Div. thesis, Crestwood NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary, 1988); Alexander Schmemmann, *Church, World, Mission, and The Eucharist: Sacrament of the Kingdom*, Paul Kachur trans., (Crestwood NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1979, 1988), John Meyendorff, *Catholicity and the Church; Living Tradition; The Orthodox Church: Yesterday and Today*, (Crestwood NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1983, 1978, 1997.) Jaroslav Pelikan broadly sketches this regaining of ancient, i.e. scriptural and patristic ecclesiology, with its liturgical core and incarnational communion of the divine and human in the last chapter of the final volume of *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine*, 5 vols., (University of Chicago Press, 1971-89), "The Sobornost of the Body of Christ," 282-336.

69. *The Art of the Icon: A Theology of Beauty*, Steven Bigham, trans., (Torrance CA: Oakwood, 1990), 259-267.

70. See Benedicta Ward, trans., *The Desert Christian: The Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, (NY: Macmillan, 1980), Tim Vivian, ed. and trans., *Journeying into God: Seven Early Monastic Lives*, (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996).