Labor of Love: Kierkegaard on Vocation

Nathanael Blake

Introduction: Labor via the Laborers

The obvious answer to the question of what Soren Kierkegaard thought about labor is that he didn’t. His writings are devoid of serious economic analysis or ideas.

He did offer a satirical economic agenda in the first volume of *Either/Or*, which suggests that Denmark borrow for “public entertainment.” The result would be that “everything would be free” from the theater to prostitutes to carriage rides to funerals. But amidst this largess, “No one would be allowed to own any property. An exception should be made only for me.”[[1]](#endnote-1) This jesting proposal only highlights Kierkegaard’s overall silence on economics; political economy does not seem to have interested him. Yet this does not mean that Kierkegaard has nothing to teach us about labor.

Kierkegaard teaches us something about labor though his insights into the person who labors. Kierkegaard’s writings contain a deeply Christian understanding of labor as part of one’s vocation. He proclaims that there is a distinct calling for each life, and that despite earthly differences of status, all are persons are equal before God as they pursue their callings.

A Radical Kierkegaard?

Fascinating though it is, Kierkegaard’s life provides little fodder for those searching for a Kierkegaardian economic theory. He lived well on money inherited from his rags-to-riches father, though Soren become more careful with it as he grew older and his savings grew smaller. He worked hard while pretending not to, for a time even putting in an appearance at the theater each night, but leaving after lingering just long enough to be seen.[[2]](#endnote-2) There is no clear model for the rest of us to follow here, and Kierkegaard never claimed to provide one.

As for politics, Walter Lowrie claims that Kierkegaard “was decidedly conservative and remained so to the end of his days—even when he was attacking the Established Church.”[[3]](#endnote-3) Nonetheless, some scholars have sought to establish a radical Kierkegaard. For example, Eliseo Perez-Alvarez has argued that Kierkegaard’s attack on the established church and its clergy was an attack on entire political and economic system. Yet the claim that “Kierkegaard’s economic agenda indeed challenged the structures that produced economic inequality,”[[4]](#endnote-4) provokes the obvious rejoinder: what economic agenda?

Kierkegaard did not have an economic program or theory. It may be fair for Perez-Alvarez to claim that, with regard to the established church, “He was a radical thinker. He did not assume a reformist position, he adopted a revolutionary attitude.”[[5]](#endnote-5)But even if we accept this assertion, there is nothing close to an economic agenda here, radical or not. And Perez-Alvarez has no evidence beyond bare assertion that “Kierkegaard’s attack on the established church must be seen as an attack upon the established state.”[[6]](#endnote-6) Even if we accept this claim it still doesn’t include any real economic platform or systematic consideration of labor by Kierkegaard.[[7]](#endnote-7)

Perez-Alvarez is on stronger ground in asserting that Kierkegaard “chose solidarity with the economically most unfortunate.”[[8]](#endnote-8) Kierkegaard’s affinity for the common man was genuine, as Jorgen Bukdahl, has argued, citing a passage from Kierkegaard’s papers that is echoed in his published work: “before God, it is just as important to be a maidservant, if that is what one is, as to be the most brilliant genius. This is also the source of my almost exaggerated sympathy for the simple class of people, the common man.”[[9]](#endnote-9) Indeed, until *The Corsair* made him a figure of ridicule, Kierkegaard loved to walk the streets, talking and listening to all sorts of people.[[10]](#endnote-10) And in his campaign against the church establishment, he directly appealed to the common people. In the end, as Bukdahl notes, “He dropped the established order with its cultivation and its ecclesiastical retinue, and took to the streets with *The Moment*, pinning all his hopes for the future of Christianity upon the awakening of the common man.”[[11]](#endnote-11) However, looking to the common people for religious revival does not provide a Kierkegaardian economic platform, let alone prove that he had a radical one.

Despite the escalating radicalism of his attacks on the established church in *The Fatherland*, and then *The Moment*, there are also passages that support Lowrie’s view of Kierkegaard’s conservatism. For example, Kierkegaard not only declared that he hated politics, but that he might defend the clergy’s livings if they were politically threatened.[[12]](#endnote-12) Indeed, he granted that “by the ordinary human rule…it is a matter of course that a man should receive a wage for his labor, a wage sufficient to support a family, and a considerable wage to enable him to enjoy the consideration due to a government official” except “for the Christian requirement of poverty,” which makes family “a luxury” and a substantial government wage “very high pay.”[[13]](#endnote-13) This, for Kierkegaard, was the rub. The ethics of ordinary life require that a laborer should receive a fair wage for his work, and even that important officials be compensated well—but should Christian ministry be such a sure route to earthly rewards? Kierkegaard did not call upon revolutionaries to storm rectories across Denmark, or for a political assault on the established church, but he did demand a spiritual awakening among Christians whom he thought had become far too comfortable in the world.

Criticism of lukewarm Christianity was nothing new for Kierkegaard. In *The Sickness Unto Death* he had written that “it has to be said, and as bluntly as possible, that so-called Christendom” has “taken Christianity’s name in vain.”[[14]](#endnote-14) He added that it ought to be a point of condemnation that “The majority think that being a priest differs not at all from the altogether everyday activities of a merchant, attorney, bookbinder, veterinarian, etc.”[[15]](#endnote-15)And in *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* he had observed that “Just as it once required energy and determination to become a Christian, so now, though the renunciation be not praiseworthy, it requires courage and energy to renounce the Christian religion, while it needs only thoughtlessness to remain a nominal Christian.”[[16]](#endnote-16)

However, Kierkegaard’s campaign in *The Moment* took his critiques of established Christianity to extremes—on this subject, unlike economics or politics, he really did write radically. Yet this radicalism is often absurd. For example, he averred that, “The result of the Christianity of ‘Christendom’ is that everything, absolutely everything, has remained as it was, only everything has assumed the name of ‘Christian’…we live a life of paganism.”[[17]](#endnote-17) Even if we allow for hyperbole, this claim was ridiculous, and Kierkegaard surely knew it—the pagan lifeworld was very different from even the most lukewarm established Christianity. Similarly, Kierkegaard made scriptural arguments that he knew were unsound, such as his claim that “Christianity in the New Testament consists in loving God, in hatred to man, in hatred of oneself, and thereby of other men, hating father, mother, one’s own child, wife, etc., the strongest expression for the most agonizing isolation.[[18]](#endnote-18) He added that, “In the New Testament, according to Christ’s own teaching, to be a Christian is, humanely speaking, sheer anguish, an anguish in comparison with which all other human sufferings are hardly more than child’s play.”[[19]](#endnote-19) He reiterated this in a latter issue of *The Moment*, arguing that Jesus “not only suffered death upon the cross, but His whole life was suffering from first to last.”[[20]](#endnote-20) But such claims do not comport with the gospel accounts of Jesus’ life, and Kierkegaard knew it, just as he surely knew that the anti-natalism he repeatedly expressed was contrary to scripture.[[21]](#endnote-21)

These passages lack the genius and subtlety of the great works that proceeded them, and they are obviously wrong at times. Kierkegaard surely knew that the “New Testament Christianity” he was setting as a foil to the established church was not, in fact, that of the New Testament, with both scripture and tradition contradicting his wilder claims. Thus, there has been speculation that Kierkegaard was mentally unbalanced toward the end of his life. However, Lowrie argues against attributing any of Kierkegaard’s later work to insanity, arguing that “he was never more sane…the attack upon the Established Church was the logical and necessary outcome of all his thinking.”[[22]](#endnote-22) But why then did he trade his intellectual scalpel for a rusty hatchet?

One explanation is that Kierkegaard, who had written as so many characters, was now living as a character. David Walsh observes that “It was almost as if Kierkegaard, instead of inventing characters, had himself slipped into the roles as a means of ironic communication.”[[23]](#endnote-23) This comports with his behavior during this time, such as his sudden and ostentatious church non-attendance. Just as he had once presented himself as an avid theatergoer rather than the assiduous writer he really was, Kierkegaard now made a show of his attacks on the established church, even as he remained dedicated to Christianity. This view is bolstered by a journal entry that Lowrie included alongside his translation of these late writings:

He who must apply a ‘corrective’ must study accurately and profoundly the weak side of the Establishment, and then vigorously and one-sidedly present the opposite. Precisely in this consists the corrective, and in this too the resignation of him who has to apply it. The corrective will in a sense be sacrificed to the established order. If this is true, a presumably clever pate can reprove the corrective for being one-sided. Ye gods! Nothing is easier for him who applies the corrective than to supply the other side, but then it ceases to be the corrective and becomes the established order.[[24]](#endnote-24)

This suggests that if Kierkegaard was unbalanced, it was because he meant to be so, like a man straining with all of his might to push a wayward cart away from a ditch. Kierkegaard’s radicalism was meant to provoke, to stir up a complacent Christian establishment. He feared that the end of making everyone a Christian was that no one would really be a Christian. And so he pushed, in the end to the point of absurdity. But it is also absurd to read economic radicalism into Kierkegaard’s religious provocations. He was seeking revival, not redistribution or revolution.

**Judge William on Labor and Love**

Even if they are taken literally, rather than as a consciously one-sided “corrective,” Kierkegaard’s criticisms of the established church are, well, religious, which make it difficult to apply them to the rest of society. Complaining that being a clergyman is too much like worldly professions is not a critique of the “merchant, attorney, bookbinder” and so on, let alone an economic or social scheme for how their affairs are to be regulated. Kierkegaard had something important to say about labor, but it will not be found by looking for a theory of political economy in his works, let alone by extending his more radical religious writings to the economic and political realms. Rather, Kierkegaard examined labor through consideration of the laborer. His most extensive comments on the subject are expressed though the voice of Judge William in the second part of *Either/Or*.

Judge William’s task is “to show that romantic love can be united with and exist in marriage—indeed, that marriage is its true transfiguration.”[[25]](#endnote-25) But though marriage is the focus, the ethical life necessarily includes considerations of money and labor. The judge has pointed words for his friend, “A,” on the subject of money, accusing him of fearing anyone “entering into a relationship with you that is incommensurable with money.”[[26]](#endnote-26) For A, money is a shield against relationship, and he uses it to avoid the natural interdependence, obligation and vulnerability of human relationships and society.

Judge William also accusingly asks if A has “demeaned” himself with the “scandalous division that gives the esthetic to the aristocratic and powerful, the wealthy, the cultured, and gives, at most, the religious to the poor?” The judge sides with the poor, chiding A by noting that “the poor, if they truly possess the religious, also have the esthetic, while the rich, insofar as they do not have the religious, do not have the esthetic either?”[[27]](#endnote-27) The ethical and religious modes of life are available to all, in contrast to the esthetic ideal, which depends on financial independence. Judge William’s elevation of the ethical is thus a vindication not only of marriage, but also of a life of labor over idle estheticism. And so Judge William argues not only that honest labor is necessary, but that it is worthy and good in itself.

It is, he concedes, difficult to depict artistically the patience, daily cross-bearing and dying to self of the ethical in marriage.[[28]](#endnote-28) And we might extrapolate from this to the diligent, faithful laborer as well. Nonetheless, despite the artistic difficulties of representing patience and fidelity, Judge William avers that “The married man has not killed time but has rescued and preserved it in eternity. The married man who does this is truly living poetically.”[[29]](#endnote-29) Instead of trying to recall the ideal esthetic moment, the ethical man repeats that which is right, and thereby exists in this movement between the universal and the particular. In doing so he is living out love, for “Duty is always consonant with love.”[[30]](#endnote-30) Using labor as an example, William insists that separating love and duty produces incoherence, for

“If a person were to view his occupation merely as the sum total of assignments he carries out at specific times and places, he would demean himself, his occupation, and his duty. Or do you believe that such a view would make for a good public official? Where, then, is there room for the enthusiasm with which a person devotes himself to his occupation, where is there room for the love which with he loves it…or is this not required of him precisely as duty?[[31]](#endnote-31)

Neither a marriage nor an occupation should be reduced to a sequence of tasks, rather, their respective tasks must be understood in the context of a whole that is good in and of itself. Judge William writes that “I sacrifice myself to my work, my wife, my children, or to be more accurate, I do not sacrifice myself to them but find my joy and satisfaction in them.”[[32]](#endnote-32) Though particular tasks may indeed be unpleasant, they are done for the sake of love. The key to understanding this truth about the ethical life is to realize that the duties it sees, and the tasks it carries out, are concrete manifestations of the individual’s love. This is why Judge William deems it wrong and a slander of the ethical, to say that it places the meaning of life “in living for the performance of one’s duties.” This view is wrong, for the “individual is placed in an external relation to duty” in which “the individual and duty stand outside each other.”[[33]](#endnote-33)

Instead, we should understand duties as acts of love. In some cases the connection is obvious and direct, in others it is more remote, but either way, it arises from who a person is and is becoming, not from something entirely external. Indeed, the person who would live ethically must incorporate the universal within particularity. As Judge William explains, “Not until the individual himself is the universal…can the ethical be actualized. This is the secret that lies in the conscience; this is the secret the individual life has with itself—that simultaneously it is an individual life and also the universal.”[[34]](#endnote-34) Duty and ethical action are not given as something alien to the person, derived from an abstract universal; rather they arise from who one is, as the ethical is instantiated in particular circumstances. Thus, “he who lives ethically has himself as his task. His self in its immediacy is defined by accidental characteristics, the task is to work the accidental and the universal together into a whole.”[[35]](#endnote-35)

One’s ethical responsibilities are not abstractions, but are instead rooted in the particularity of who one is, what one’s circumstances are, and how one is related to others, for

the self that is the objective is not an abstract self that fits everywhere and therefore nowhere but is a concrete self in living interactions with these specific surroundings, these life conditions, this order of things. The self that is the objective is not only a personal self but a social, a civic self. He then possesses himself as a task in an activity whereby he engages in the affairs of life as this specific personality. Here his task is not to form himself, but to act, and yet he forms himself at the same time.[[36]](#endnote-36)

As David Walsh has put it, “In the commonsense reflections of Judge William, we find a most complete exemplification of Aristotle’s observation that the truth of ethics lies in action.”[[37]](#endnote-37) We are particular and must love particularly, rather than abstractly. And so our duties and our loves are bound up together in the task of becoming more concretely who we are in living out the ethical.

**The Labor of One’s Calling**

This understanding resolves the apparent tension of duty being both universal as the ethical and also particular as the concrete task of a particular individual. As Judge William puts it, “The personality is the absolute, is its own objective, is the unity of the universal and the particular.”[[38]](#endnote-38) He explains this is concrete terms, writing that, when looking out his window,

I see each person according to his beauty. However insignificant he may be, however humble, I see him according to his beauty, for I see him as this individual human being who nevertheless is also the universal human being. I see him as one who has this concrete task for his life; even if he is the lowliest hired waiter, he does not exist for the sake of any other person. He has his teleology within himself.[[39]](#endnote-39)

This insistence on the significance and beauty of each particular individual is a stark contrast to the “aristocratic” esthetic view which sees little worth in humble lives. The leisured esthetic lifestyle is inaccessible to the poor. In contrast to this aristocratic ideal, Judge William champions the proposition that “it is every person’s duty to work for a living.” Indeed, he adds that a man with enough money that he need not work will humble himself and view this as “a sign that a greater demand is made upon him.”[[40]](#endnote-40) This assertion of the importance of labor even for those who are amply provided for shows how the “duty to work” is more than mere acquiescence to “dismal necessity.” Judge William asserts that “it is precisely by working that a person liberates himself; by working, he becomes master over nature; by working, he shows that he is higher than nature.”[[41]](#endnote-41) He sees beauty and human dignity in working, for the necessity of labor gives rise to human achievement, and furthermore labor is intrinsically dignified and good for us.[[42]](#endnote-42)

Of course, the Judge is aware that he has it comparatively easy. He has never had to worry about the necessities of life, for though he works, he also has a good income.[[43]](#endnote-43) And he understands that if a man only sees the struggles of laboring for the necessities of life, and nothing higher, he will be miserable.[[44]](#endnote-44) Nonetheless, Judge William insists that work can be more than mere hard necessity, that it can be “the most beautiful and the most perfect thing.” What the worker requires is “a higher expression for his work, an expression that signifies the relation of his activity to his person and to that of others, an expression that can define it for him as pleasurable and also uphold its meaning.”[[45]](#endnote-45) This meaning is found in the idea of calling, or we might say, of vocation. Labor is about more than necessity or achievement, but rather extends to relationships. Labor, whether esteemed or humble, may serve God and neighbor, and so Judge William writes that,

“Every human being has a calling…The most eminent talent is a calling, and the individual who possesses it cannot lose sight of actuality; he does not stand outside the universally human, because his talent is a calling. The most insignificant individual has a calling; he must not be expelled…He does not stand outside the universally human; he has a calling. The ethical thesis that every human being has a calling expresses, then, that there is a rational order of things, in which every human being, if he so wills, fills his place in such a way that he simultaneously expresses the universally human and the individual.”[[46]](#endnote-46)

This view affirms the worth of all people, yet without denying differences of talent and circumstance, for the “most talented person can complete his task, and so can the humblest of men. Neither of them can do more.”[[47]](#endnote-47) Labor is something that is universally human, yet each person has a distinct vocation. Labor is a task and a duty, and therefore rooted in love. And so fulfilling one’s vocation is “bound up with a satisfaction for his whole personality.”[[48]](#endnote-48) This view of labor as a vocation in which are all called by, and accountable to, God for service in particular ways, is a very Christian view of labor. And Judge William’s defense of the dignity of even humble labor is tied to his defense of marriage, which is integral to vindicating the ethical over the esthetic. The ethical is not about a privileged few chasing the extraordinary esthetic moment, but ordinary people finding fulfillment in their vocations of marriage and labor.[[49]](#endnote-49)

**Beyond the Ethical**

Judge William’s understanding of labor as part of one’s calling was not political or even economic as such, but it provides a robust pre-political understanding of labor that is distinctly Christian in its regard for all useful and honest labor, regardless of its social prestige. But the voice of Judge William is not necessarily interchangeable with Kierkegaard’s. Indeed, in sections of *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* Kierkegaard had another of his characters critique Judge William on some philosophical points.[[50]](#endnote-50) And though this commentary does not repudiate the Judge’s views regarding labor or marriage, the tensions Kierkegaard teased out between the religious and ethical modes of life threaten Judge William’s understanding of vocation, with its focus on marriage and family.

Judge William, for example, denigrates a certain sort of religious life, which he sees as neglecting its concrete duties in the world. He criticizes the “mystic” who rejects “the existence, the actuality, in which God has placed him, because he thereby actually rejects God’s love or demand another expression for it than that which God wills to give.”[[51]](#endnote-51) He accuses mystics of neglecting relationships (either real or potential) with others, writing that “It is especially as a married man and as a father that I am an enemy of mysticism.”[[52]](#endnote-52) The mystic makes a “poor husband,” and because Judge William believes it a “duty for every person to marry” he necessarily has “an animosity toward all mysticism.” A one-sided devotion to mystical life alienates the mystic from other people and makes him indifferent to them, and Judge William is emphatic that it is “not in this sense that one is to love God more than father and mother.”[[53]](#endnote-53)

He acknowledges that there may be beauty in mysticism, but still attacks it because the mystic “chooses himself abstractly” and “out of the world” whereas the ”true concrete choice is the one by which I choose myself back into the world the very same moment I choose myself out of the world.”[[54]](#endnote-54) This existential movement is that of repentance. By trying to flee the world, the mystic is neglecting the love he owes others and the repentance he owes to God. As Walsh summarizes the Judge’s view:

The mystic does not choose himself ethically, through repentance, but metaphysically in an almost esthetic mode. It is for this reason that he does not live the full meaning of temporality as the horizon of his finite enactment of the infinite. By leaping into the eternal he, like the philosopher, abandons the realization of eternity within time. We cannot, in the view of the married man and the public official, turn away from our obligations in this world.[[55]](#endnote-55)

Of course, the religious perspective might well concede the existence of false, irresponsible and even self-indulgent mysticism. But for Kierkegaard the problem of the religious exception remained, which was necessarily of the utmost personal importance for him. As Walsh observes regarding the move from the ethical to the religious,

The problem is that once the religious is reached, it might also point beyond marriage. When one is related only by the singularity of the God relationship, there is nothing left of the ethical universal to guide one. Could it be that I am the exception? That is the question that preoccupied Kierkegaard in his relationship to Regine Olsen, although it cannot obviously concern a happily married man like Judge William…In the case of marriage the religious secures the universal, in the case of the exceptional individual the religious calling goes beyond the universal. Judge William recognizes that such a summit of faith exists, although his is not familiar with it.[[56]](#endnote-56)

Indeed, Judge William seems hostile to it, especially in his treatment of the issue in *Stages on Life’s Way*. There, he imposes painful requirement upon painful requirement by which the exception may prove himself to really be an exception.[[57]](#endnote-57) Yet the problem remains, as seen in Kierkegaard’s meditations in *Fear and Trembling* upon Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice Isaac. As he put it, “Either the individual as the particular can stand in an absolute relation to the absolute, and then the ethical is not the highest, or Abraham is done for.”[[58]](#endnote-58) Abraham’s response to a call beyond the ethical left him with no guidance except for his relationship to God through faith. This is the problem that led Kierkegaard to repeatedly return, often self-accusingly, to the problem of the exception.[[59]](#endnote-59) For example, in *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* he wrote that “entering the cloister must not be regarded as something meritorious. On the contrary, this step must be taken in humility before God, and not without a certain self-deprecation.”[[60]](#endnote-60)

Here Walsh again defuses the tension by suggesting a commonality between the married, laboring life Judge William extols and the dedicated religious life, which is that both are relational and sustained by faith. To this we may add that Kierkegaard’s emphasis on individuality, acknowledged in the very idea of vocation, further mediates the tension between the ethical and the religious. No single life can instantiate all the different forms virtue may take, or in which grace is expressed. Indeed, Judge William’s insistence on vocation also implicitly sanctions the possibility of vocations dedicated to the religious life, rather than marriage, family and mundane labor. Thus, despite his stern words toward those who forgo marriage and family in service to God, Judge William has provided the framework to vindicate them. This call to vocation offers an answer to Kierkegaard’s self-criticisms expressed in Judge William’s one-sided condemnation of religious celibacy. The idea of vocation recognizes the individual as before God with a unique calling, and therefore necessitates accepting the validity of celibate religious life alongside the norm of marriage and worldly labor. At the same time, the idea of vocation may also offer the clergy he criticized an answer to his one-sided corrective, as it is not obvious that all vocations to Christian ministry require celibate poverty.

**Conclusion**

The personal and intellectual tension Kierkegaard experienced and expressed between the ethical and the religious does not negate his defense of marriage and labor through the voice of Judge William. Despite his one-sidedness, Judge William has provided a Christian view in which one’s labor should be understood as part of one’s vocation; none of Kierkegaard’s later writing overrides this perspective.

Kierkegaard’s understanding of vocation means that one’s work, like the tasks of marriage, are to be done out of love, first for God and then for one’s fellow man. This necessitates respect for, and justice toward, all who labor honestly, and humility from those who have worldly status, wealth and power. Christianity, as Kierkegaard explained, “teaches that…every single human being, whether husband, wife, servant girl, cabinet minister, merchant, barber, student, etc., this single human being is *before God*… this human being has an invitation to live on the most intimate footing with God.”[[61]](#endnote-61) Indeed, he added, Christians believe that God humbled Himself to come into the world, suffer and die for this—for each person, in all of his or her individuality.

Therefore, our service to God and others must also be understood in this individuality and particularity, for God has called us each to our own vocation. Thus, though Kierkegaard did not provide an economic theory or scheme, he still provided something of great worth: an existential understanding of who we are that includes and honors labor. As Kierkegaard saw, it is love sustains us in our vocations, which encompass both our relationships and our labor.

1. Soren Kierkegaard. *Either/Or, Part 1*, Edited and Translated by Howard V. Hong and Edna H Hong. (Princeton University Press, 1990). 287. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Lowrie, *A Short Life of Kierkegaard*, 148. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Lowrie, *A Short Life of Kierkegaard*, 90. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Eliseo Perez-Alvarez. *A Vexing Gadfly: The Late Kierkegaard on Economic Matters*. (Pickwick Publications, 2009). 84. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Perez-Alvarez. *A Vexing Gadfly*. 120. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Perez-Alvarez. *A Vexing Gadfly*. 142. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. This argument also relies heavily on Kierkegaard’s private writings, rather than published works, an approach that cuts both ways. Though it seems to give us more immediate access to Kierkegaard’s thoughts, it is also relies on that which he never revised or refined for publication. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Perez-Alvarez. *A Vexing Gadfly*. 40. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Quoted in *Soren Kierkegaard and the Common Man*, 95. Citation below. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. Walter Lowrie. *A Short Life of Kierkegaard*. (Princeton University Press, 2013). 180. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. Jorgen Bukdahl. *Soren Kierkegaard and the Common Man*. Translated, revised and edited by Bruce H Kirmmse. (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 2001). 123. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. Soren Kierkegaard. *Attack Upon “Christendom”*, Translated by Walter Lowrie. (Princeton University Press, 1972). 48. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. Attack, 38. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. Soren Kierkegaard, *The Sickness Unto Death*. Translated by Alastair Hannay. (Penguin Classics, 2004). 134. [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. Kierkegaard, *The Sickness Unto Death*. 135. [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. Soren Kierkegaard. *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, Translated by David F. Swenson and Walter Lowrie. (Princeton University Press, 1974). 326. [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. Attack, 164. [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. Attack, 163. [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. Attack, 168. [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. Attack 268. [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
21. For examples, see 189 and 214 and 223 of Attack. [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. Lowrie, *A Short Life of Kierkegaard*, 242. [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. David Walsh. *The Modern Philosophical Revolution: The Luminosity of Existence*. (Cambridge University Press, 2008). 450. [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
24. Quoted on 90 of Attack [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
25. Soren Kierkegaard. *Either/Or, Part 2*, Edited and Translated by Howard V. Hong and Edna H Hong. (Princeton University Press, 1990). 31. [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
26. Kierkegaard , Either/Or *Part 2*, 100 [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
27. Kierkegaard , Either/Or *Part 2*, 124 [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
28. Either/Or *Part 2*, 135 [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
29. Either/Or *Part 2*, 138 [↑](#endnote-ref-29)
30. Either/Or *Part 2*, 149 [↑](#endnote-ref-30)
31. Either/Or *Part 2*, 151-152 [↑](#endnote-ref-31)
32. Either/Or *Part 2*, 170 [↑](#endnote-ref-32)
33. Either/Or *Part 2*, 254 [↑](#endnote-ref-33)
34. Either/Or *Part 2*, 255 [↑](#endnote-ref-34)
35. Either/Or *Part 2*, 256 [↑](#endnote-ref-35)
36. Either/Or *Part 2*, 262-263 [↑](#endnote-ref-36)
37. Walsh, 407. [↑](#endnote-ref-37)
38. Either/Or *Part 2*, 265 [↑](#endnote-ref-38)
39. Either/Or *Part 2*, 275 [↑](#endnote-ref-39)
40. Either/Or *Part 2*, 281. [↑](#endnote-ref-40)
41. Either/Or *Part 2*, 282 [↑](#endnote-ref-41)
42. Either/Or *Part 2*, 283 [↑](#endnote-ref-42)
43. Either/Or *Part 2*, 283 [↑](#endnote-ref-43)
44. Either/Or *Part 2*, 285 [↑](#endnote-ref-44)
45. Either/Or *Part 2*, 289 [↑](#endnote-ref-45)
46. Either/Or *Part 2*, 292 [↑](#endnote-ref-46)
47. Either/Or *Part 2*, 295 [↑](#endnote-ref-47)
48. Either/Or *Part 2*, 293 [↑](#endnote-ref-48)
49. Either/Or *Part 2*, 305 [↑](#endnote-ref-49)
50. See Postscript 161-162 and 227-231 [↑](#endnote-ref-50)
51. Either/Or *Part 2*, 244 [↑](#endnote-ref-51)
52. Either/Or *Part 2*, 244 [↑](#endnote-ref-52)
53. Either/Or *Part 2*, 245 [↑](#endnote-ref-53)
54. Either/Or *Part 2*, 249 [↑](#endnote-ref-54)
55. Walsh, 413 [↑](#endnote-ref-55)
56. Walsh, 438. [↑](#endnote-ref-56)
57. Soren Kierkegaard. *Stages on Life’s Way*, Edited and Translated by Howard V. Hong and Edna H Hong. (Princeton University Press, 1991). See the section starting on 169. [↑](#endnote-ref-57)
58. Kierkegaard. *Fear and Trembling*, 137. [↑](#endnote-ref-58)
59. Soren Kierkegaard. *Repetition*. Published in *Repetition and Philosophical Crumbs*. Translated by M.G. Piety. (Oxford University Press, 2009). 78. [↑](#endnote-ref-59)
60. Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 371. [↑](#endnote-ref-60)
61. Kierkegaard, *The Sickness Unto Death*, 117. [↑](#endnote-ref-61)