

## TRANSLATORS' INTRODUCTION

THIS is the third part of that trilogy which Kierkegaard published in 1847 as *Opbyggelige Taler i Forskellig Aand*. The first part consisted of what is sometimes called the “long” discourse, on the text, *Purify Your Hearts*, a “moral” analysis of doublemindedness. (It was translated by us and published in 1937, the first of Kierkegaard’s works to be published in England.) The second part (also translated by us and published in 1940) was *Consider the Lilies*, an “aesthetic” contemplation on what it means to be a man. And now the seven discourses that follow in this volume are definitely “religious”, with an ultimate appeal neither to the moral imperative nor to the aesthetic sense, but to faith. Thus is well illustrated the distinction Kierkegaard insisted on, the distinction of faith from ethics on the one hand and from aesthetics on the other.

The phrase “i forskellig aand” is capable of meaning not only “in a different vein”, but “in different veins”, or “in various modes”. But we prefer to render it here “in a different vein” for a special reason. The volume of *Opbyggelige Taler* published by Kierkegaard in 1847 marked a departure from the series of Edifying Discourses that preceded it. The writer now sought to be not only edifying but definitely religious, and that in a Christian sense.

He had supposed that his work as an author was finished when he published, earlier in the same year, the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*. But now it was to begin all over again, on a higher plane, as it were. The occasion for this new departure can be studied in Dr. Lowrie’s *Kierkegaard*, and in Kierkegaard’s own *Journals*, translated by Alexander Dru (Oxford University Press, 1938).

One element in the situation was the campaign of cheap ridicule launched against him by the journal *Korsaren*. This made him acutely aware of opposition and isolation. It also constituted a challenge, so that instead of retiring to a country parish, he resolved to remain in Copenhagen and contend for what he believed in. So he was made aware of tribulation as an inevitable part of following Christ.

The true preacher, it has been said, will preach out of his own experience, but he will not talk about himself. The pages that follow bear witness how far that is true of Kierkegaard. In one place, in the fourth discourse, he seems explicitly to endorse the popular opinion that the greatest human unhappiness is unhappy love. Of his own unhappy love, enough—perhaps too much!—has already been written. But besides that there are evidences here, particularly in the seventh discourse, that he found the scorn of his contemporaries a bitter draught to swallow. Nevertheless he would himself have been the last to wish his readers to find in what he wrote a mere self-disclosure. Not what distinguished him from others, but what he had in common with others—or rather let us say, what others may, if they will, find that they have in common with him—this constitutes the theme of these discourses. The theme is our sufferings. It is also the gospel that pertains to, and is appropriate to, our sufferings. It is in the realm of faith, and through this gospel that is the peculiar property of those who suffer, that sufferings are found to contain joys. We may say therefore that it is the purpose of this volume to disclose the meaning in the most meaningless element of life. Which might be held to be quite a good definition of the Christian faith.

In conclusion, we quote from the author's preface to Part I: "It is the individual whom with joy and gratitude I call my reader, the individual, willing to read slowly, to read repeatedly, and to read aloud for himself to hear."

A. S. A.  
W. S. F.

## PREFACE

THESE Christian discourses (which in more respects than one are not sermons, and therefore have more than one reason for not being so named) were not intended to gratify “the curiosity of an idle moment”; but if there be only one who is suffering and has perhaps lost his way in many thoughts, and if he should find by them a heavy moment made more light, should find in them a guiding thread through many thoughts, then the author will not be sorry for the purpose that inspired him.

“The Gospel of Our Sufferings!” Not as if these discourses had exhausted the theme, but because each discourse is a draught of this supply which is—God be praised!—inexhaustible; not as if anyone of them exhausted the draught, but because each discourse drinks deep enough to discover joy.