

## SICKNESS UNTO DEATH – KIERKEGAARD, SOREN

Soren Kierkegaard. *Sickness unto death* (Wilder Publications, 2008),

Despair is a sickness in the spirit, in the self, and so it may assume a triple form: in Despair at not being conscious of having a self; in despair at not willing to be oneself; in despair at willing to be oneself. Man [human] is spirit. Spirit is self, or it is that in relation that the relation relates itself to its own self. <sup>1</sup>

The concept of the sickness unto death must be understood in a peculiar sense. Thus one speaks of a mortal sickness as synonymous with a sickness unto death. In this sense despair cannot be called the sickness unto death. But in the Christian understanding of it death itself is a transition unto life. In view of this, there is from the Christian standpoint no earthly, bodily sickness unto death. For death is doubtless the last phase of the sickness, but the death is not the last thing. If in the strictest sense we are to speak of a sickness unto death, it must be one in which the last thing is death, and death the last thing. This is precisely despair. Despair is the sickness unto death. ..So when the danger is so great that death has become one's hope, despair is the disconsolateness of not being able to die. It is in this sense that despair is the sickness unto death, this agonizing contradiction, this sickness in the self, everlastingly to die, to die and yet not to die, to die the death. For dying means that it is all over, but dying the death means to live to experience death; If one dies of despair as one dies of a sickness, then the eternal in him, the self, must be capable of dying in the same sense that the body dies of sickness. .. The despair consumes the eternal thing, the self, which is the ground of despair. Despair is precisely self-consuming, but it is an impotent self-consumption which is not able to do what it wills. <sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Soren Kierkegaard. *Sickness unto death* (Wilder Publications, 2008), 9.

<sup>2</sup> Soren Kierkegaard. *Sickness unto death* (Wilder Publications, 2008), 13.