

N.F. S. Grundtvig and the Concept of Love.

Introduction:

The material of the following article is primarily the sermons in the Vartov Church of Copenhagen which was held by the Danish historian, educator, theologian, and priest N.F.S. Grundtvig (1783-1872) during the years of 1839 to 1845. These sermons have been published in recent years¹. Grundtvig's concept of "love" in these sermons and in some other of Grundtvig's writings is analyzed in the following pages. Apparently, Grundtvig's concept of love has strong similarities with Thomas Aquinas and is also related to the worlds of Plato and Aristotle – the ideas of "Eros" and "Philia". Often, these similarities have been ignored in the research on Grundtvig. Frequently, Grundtvig's Danish concept of love - "Kierlighed" – is translated as "charity" (instead of "love") which according to the view in this article gives a wrong impression of Grundtvig's concept of love. According to Grundtvig there *is* only *one* kind of "love". All "love" is of the *same kind*.

The quotations in the article are all my own translations from Grundtvig's original text.

The Concept of Love:

According to Grundtvig in his *The Christian Child's Learning* ("Den Christelige Børnelærdom"), the Christian faith must have a transforming influence on real life². With good reason – Grundtvig maintains - the world has "ridiculed" the Lutheran dream of eternal life after death as the only advantage of Christianity. The criticism against the church has been well deserved. No man of truth can believe in a gospel only speaking

¹ N. F. S. Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov*. 1-7. Udgivet af Jette Holm m. fl. (København Vartov 2003, 2007).

² N. F. S. Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*. Udgivet ved Georg Christensen og Hal Koch. (København, 1944), 79.

about a life after death. This Lutheran Christianity has been life-less, dead, and spiritless! We are reborn to eternal life and transformed in this life³.

In his *The Christian Child's Learning*, Grundtvig attacks as violently the Lutherans as the so-called "Papists"⁴. In Grundtvig's sermons in the Vartov Church, the Lutherans are frequently identified as belonging to the scribes or the opponents of Jesus.⁵ But the so-called Papists did according to Grundtvig at least understand one important thing: The reborn, new life means that man must be developed, trained, and educated. The point (i.e. the beginning or baptism) is not enough – process and Praxis is necessary.⁶ We must "fulfil the law."⁷ In Grundtvig's perception, Martin Luther did not know much about love⁸, and love was not "developed" in the 16th Century⁹. We must become more and more loving. Our relationships and behaviour must be transformed. Human nature must be matured. (Grundtvig's metaphors of child – adult, small sprout – big tree). In a way, this was understood by the "Papists". At least, they tried. (Grundtvig refers to monastic life and Praxis).

The Lutherans have not understood this *process* of salvation.¹⁰ The "Father" loves his own sons and only his own sons.¹¹ We are the "chosen ones". Over time, we will mature and grow to be God's full sons. (Already and not yet). Slowly we *become* Christ in a healing process¹². Sin is like a *disease* or leprosy. (According to Grundtvig, sin is not

³ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 79. Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 126: With his theory of pervasive sin, Luther "has sold himself to the Devil". – Luther "denies the kingdom of God any existence in this life" (Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 140).

⁴ Very often, the state-church (Lutheran) is as bad as the church-state (Roman)! (E.g. Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 140).

⁵ E.g. Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov* 3, 342.

⁶ Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov* 7, 75: We work out eternal life and salvation in life and praxis. In Grundtvig we find a subjective (re-birth, transformation), objective (Christ pays the debt, Anselm) and classical (Christ's victory) theory of atonement and reconciliation (e.g. Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 125).

⁷ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 133.

⁸ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 121-122: The church (Lutheran and Roman) is "afraid of" and "confused with" and totally "ignorant" about the reality of love. The church tries to reduce the importance of, tries to control and diminish love. Basically, the church perceives man-woman love to be the work of the Devil. The church's relation with love has been a "pitiful failure". Love has proved much stronger than the so-called church. The church's perception of man woman love is "an open revolt against God, a clear blasphemy and a mocking of God" (Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 122. 124).

⁹ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 139.

¹⁰ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 105.

¹¹ Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov* 3, 351 et legio. Compare the ideas of Thomas.

¹² Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov* 3, 350.

only relation). Sin is a defeat and humiliation¹³ of man and damage to our nature and mind. Christian life is a “Christ-life”. Christ is that colour or quality which is achieved through human growth and maturation. (Evolution is a growing transparency, penetration, and permeation of the spirit). Love makes us more and more transparent¹⁴. Christ is my “alter ego”.¹⁵ – “He [Christ] grows bigger, and we grow smaller”. Christ is our immanent pattern, model, or design.¹⁶ The gospel is essentially the beginning of a new kind of man¹⁷. Christ is the watermark hidden in our love. Historical Jesus “grew” and developed in love and spirit – from birth to baptism. Jesus “became” the son of God, educated by the spirit, in a slow process¹⁸ – exactly as we do¹⁹. Christ attained the goal of spiritual maturation and glory which we are seeking. Christ’s love is growing within our love (the body of Christ). Christ is a model or schema of how man must and will evolve. Scripture is a prediction of world history and of individual man’s destiny. This process of growth happens in all mankind. Heathen or Christian, no man is an animal (an object or machine without evolution) and every man has the ability to experience God.²⁰ Life and love advance in the life and history of all mankind, in the history of the people of God, and in the life and history of every single man. Eternal life begins here in this earthly life.²¹ Eternal life is not “belief” but something we can feel²². Eternal life is this organic growth process of human life - from the darkness and weakness of childhood to man’s maturity and strength (Grundtvig references St. Paul: Galatians), the organic growth of the body of Christ. To Grundtvig, the growth and quality of love cannot be separated from the context, Praxis, or contingencies of history, experience, time and location. In a structural way, Grundtvig’s concept of love and spirituality is related to the Praxis theory of Aristotle. Love and spirituality move

¹³ Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov 7*, 81: Basically, Sin is *outside* man. Sin is to be a victim in the Devil’s prison. To be a sinner is to have been defeated and humiliated by a stronger foreign force (evil king). The experience of real love is the only possible liberation from the humiliation of Sin. Sin is isolation, loneliness, powerlessness, and a state of victim.

¹⁴ Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov 1*, 303. Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov 7*, 9 et legio. This growth is *phylo-genetic* (mankind) as well as *onto-genetic* (single man).

¹⁵ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 140.

¹⁶ E. g. Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov 7*, 19.

¹⁷ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 129.

¹⁸ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 123.

¹⁹ Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov 7*, 79: Until 30 years old (baptism) Jesus was only “hoping” to attain his goal.

²⁰ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 126.129.

²¹ Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov 7*, 74.

²² Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov 5*, 289. – Grundtvig conceives of our feelings as true cognitive states or ways of information and cognition.

forward. Christianity is designed to increase happiness²³, good luck, and love. Christian life is joy and self-realization.²⁴ – “Only love has the hand of happiness”.²⁵

The “focus point”²⁶ of this Christ-life is marriage and the relationship of man and woman. – “All life is exclusively driven by desire and inclination”.²⁷ In our growth we acquire a growing inclination and desire to be loving²⁸. Man’s character is transformed.²⁹ We are attracted, seduced and persuaded.³⁰ We are drawn by the invisible strings of love. Love is attraction. Christ and eternal life is realized and manifested gradually in marriage. This form - the intimate relationship - is the only nursery or school for eternity. Marriage and the erotic attraction – God’s project - were initiated in Paradise. (To Grundtvig, there is a continuity of growth before and after Christ).³¹ Without the erotic intimate relation, humanity's (and our) ultimate goal will not be achieved³². The intimate relationship is the main channel, medium, and tool of the Holy Spirit. Only through this channel (i.e. the experience and feeling of melting together) we can achieve eternal life and come to be like Christ and “Christ-like”. Only in this intimate relationship we can be or become eternal and immortal!³³ – “Love is a heavenly capability that makes life eternal”³⁴. “Love is outside time”³⁵. This love is the end and the road to the end³⁶.

²³ Grundtvig’s concept of happiness also resembles the idea of Aristotle in his *Ethics*. To Grundtvig, happiness is not a passive state of pure feeling. Happiness is activity and functioning in real life. To Grundtvig, happiness is a “bene vivere” and a state of empowerment and achievement like the concept of Thomas and Aristotle. Grundtvig’s happiness should not be identified with a modern conception of happiness as a passive, vegetative, purely emotional state.

²⁴ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 345. Compare Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 406: Faith should be joy and happiness. Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov 3*, 342: happiness and empowerment.

²⁵ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 376. Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov 1*, 15: “We are the children of peace” i.e. success, happiness, and welfare. – “The experience of love makes all things easy and makes especially belief in love easy” (Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 120). In his fatherland, Jesus grew in popularity, strength, and joy. (Grundtvig references St. Luke 2,52).

²⁶ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 121.

²⁷ E. g. Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov 1*, 422. Compare Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 367: The “hand” is a mirror of the “heart”. Our hands and actions mirror our heart and desire. When man sees love, he reaches out his hand. Man follows his desire.

²⁸ Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov 6*, 304.

²⁹ Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov 7*, 31.

³⁰ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 404.

³¹ Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov 7*, 83: Love is the tree of life.

³² Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 134-135.

³³ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 135.

³⁴ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 425.

³⁵ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 431.

³⁶ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 139. Compare. Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov 2*, 353: “Love is the road to eternal life, a road which we can follow and a road which gives us bliss and joy”.

The church (Lutheran and Roman) has been busy with devaluing the intimate erotic relationship. Inspired by his readings of Ireneus, Grundtvig attacks the dualism of Orficism: The body is not the “agent of sin”, not a “prison” or a “shame”.³⁷ Spirit and love rejuvenate our bodies like the tale of Phoenix.³⁸ The de-valuing of the body is “Unchristian”. The Holy Spirit works within the human body and its physical love (the spiritualizing of the body).³⁹ – “It is a terrible misunderstanding that the body is evil and the soul is good (...) Natural sensuousness is not the source of sin and the dominance of reason is not virtue.”⁴⁰ The church could not possibly have committed a greater error. “Because where there is no body, there are for us only shadows”.⁴¹ – “Christ tore down the wall between spirit and body which Sin had mad”⁴². Natural man loves his own body with good reason⁴³. Love and loving is body. The “flesh-taking of Christ” is equal to his love⁴⁴. Christ is body.⁴⁵

The earthly love “is a Fore-Taste of Heaven” and “a true image of life hither”.

On June 16th 1844⁴⁶, Grundtvig makes an animated sermon in the Vartov church mainly about earthly love. His ideas are very close to his later ideas in *The Christian Child's Learning*.

“Marriage (...) is certainly not an obstacle to life (...) Christianity gives marriage a Paradise form and marriage gives us a splendid idea of eternal life in Heaven (...) and a real Fore-Taste of the life in Heaven”.⁴⁷

In his own mind, Grundtvig has a very different view of marriage than Luther. To Luther, marriage was a sort of self-repression or self-discipline (body is mostly enemy,

³⁷ Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov* 7, 402. Grundtvig translated Ireneus 1828 with the title of “The Body’s Part in the Kingdom of God”. The body participates in eternal life. (Grundtvig’s theory of participation).

³⁸ Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov* 7, 404. Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 338. Compare: Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 406 (1863): Grundtvig feels young eighty years old.

³⁹ Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov* 1, 415.

⁴⁰ Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov* 3, 356.

⁴¹ Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov* 6, 240. Compare: Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov* 3, 381: attack explicitly on the hypocritical Pietists – they fear and hate the body, are self-made saints.

⁴² Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov* 2, 355: The Pietists are mere actors. Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov* 3, 372 vs. the Pietists who maintain that Grundtvig is a horrible heathen. – Compare: Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 408.

⁴³ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 128: The love of God springs from our self-love.

⁴⁴ Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov* 3, 371.

⁴⁵ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 385: vs. belief in the immortality of the soul – the so-called soul is a ghost.

Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 343: Sexual or bodily life is not the cause of sin.

⁴⁶ Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov* 6, 222.

⁴⁷ Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov* 6, 222.

sexuality is mostly bad). As Grundtvig later explained: – “The fundamental form of human life is the house-life (...) the loving and fruitful marriage between man and woman”⁴⁸. According to Grundtvig, Luther saw no real love in marriage. To Grundtvig, love and house-life is a true mirror and picture of living with God in Heaven. Man’s or woman’s love is a sign. We perceive the divine in an unclear “mirror of amber”⁴⁹. But the love of man and woman gives us a true experience of God. The romantic connection is the most important instrument in the salvation plan of God. The source of life and of eternal life is the love between man and woman. In this love we can walk on water⁵⁰. Love gives us wings⁵¹. Love is stronger than death. We experience God in the form of the intimate relation. To Grundtvig, this love is the kingdom of Heaven, unification, and fulfilment⁵². The love between man and woman is a “kingdom not of this world”. Love creates new reality. The Devil’s message (and the message of 18th Century Rationalism) is that love is an illusion. The world is “star blind” and can and will not see or acknowledge the fact of love. The world reduces true love to a lie and denies it⁵³.

“Marriage is (...) the master piece of love and the triumph of the heart on earth (...) an immense eternal blessing (...) the life-spring of all life, light and joy (...) a glory of Heaven (...) which the world does not know but which the world must acknowledge when it sees it”.⁵⁴

Marriage is a Eucharist that miraculously melts man and woman into one soul and one body.⁵⁵ To Grundtvig, melting together in union is the essence of love.⁵⁶ Grundtvig’s idea of love is clearly related to the Eros idea of Plato.⁵⁷

⁴⁸ Hans Raun Iversen, *Ånd og livsform. Husliv, folkeliv og kirkeliv hos Grundtvig og sidenhen*. (København, 1987), 36.

⁴⁹ Sune Auken, *Sagas spejl. Mytologi, historie og kristendom hos NFS Grundtvig*. (København, 2005), 282. - Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 333. Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov 1*, 303: “mirror of riddle”.

⁵⁰ Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov 7*, 398.

⁵¹ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 389.

⁵² Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 430.

⁵³ Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov 5* 291: To Grundtvig, Rationalism is mainly the view of pessimism: To Rationalism, love is unreachable and illusion.

⁵⁴ Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov 6*, 222.

⁵⁵ Also: Iversen, 103. 50: On Grundtvig and his second wife Marie.

⁵⁶ Quote Iversen, 51.

⁵⁷ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 138-139. Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov 5*, 201 (Emmaus): Meeting love means that our heart is warmed up and we melt into the fire of divine love. – Elijah’s experience (and Grundtvig’s May 31 1811).

God has created marriage as “a joyful preparation”.⁵⁸ We cannot receive salvation without a preceding preparation and evolution.⁵⁹ In this way, marriage is a sort of sacrament in it-self and is also nourished by the Holy Supper⁶⁰. We experience and taste this living love - as the Lord’s Supper is a sort of physical love experience. Christ is really present at the Supper – he takes off his clothes and is naked. (Grundtvig is inspired by St. John).⁶¹ Faith comes from feeling and direct experience. (Grundtvig’s important model, schema, and matrix is the example and experience of Mary). Marriage is a “Fore-Taste of Heaven”⁶², and this love creates a miracle by uniting and melting together man and woman. Our love is an incarnation of the love between Christ and his bride and our love is “the invisible world of man, the real kingdom of God”⁶³. – “God put on this body of dust so that this body should be nourished and grow”⁶⁴. “This love is stronger than death”.⁶⁵

“Yes, the guest in the gospel rightly says: Salvation is to eat the bread in the kingdom of God but we [Grundtvig] boldly says further that there is even more salvation for the two lovers who eat the bread together in the kingdom of God because they feel the real love that the Lord talked about”.⁶⁶

The only living Plant-School.

“Marriage is the only living Plant School for the Christian life”.⁶⁷ The relationship between man and woman is the “focal point of human life”⁶⁸ and main channel for God’s blessing⁶⁹. God’s will is to transform and develop the human being and this can only happen in the house-life, in the real life of man and woman. This marital

⁵⁸ Grundtvig’s schema is: Her love for me *prepares* me for the love of Christ. Compare: Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 131: “We must become true lovers before we can become true Christians (...) Christ’s union with his bride presupposes man’s and woman’s love in marriage”.

⁵⁹ Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov 7*, 28-29.

⁶⁰ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 132-133.

⁶¹ Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov 1*, 300.

⁶² Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov 7*, 85: - Love comes “from our sweet hope already in this life to see the Paradise of God and have a fore-taste of the power of eternal life”.

⁶³ Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov 3*, 363.

⁶⁴ Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov 3*, 367.

⁶⁵ Also Iversen, 103-104: Grundtvig and his second wife Marie.

⁶⁶ Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov 6*, 226-227.

⁶⁷ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 134.

⁶⁸ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 121: All God’s love is realized and projected into one single point – marriage.

⁶⁹ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 121. 124.

relationship is a green house or growth house.⁷⁰ In this relationship, God takes us out of Babel, dispersion, and out of the kingdom of Satan, and leads us to the Promised Land⁷¹. In the intimate relationship, we feel the presence of God. Love gives us new eyes (a new sort of recognition), and through the experience of real love we acquire glory and immortality. Sin is also damage to our eyes (capability of recognition). Grundtvig talks about the “veil” of the “physical” eye of the “dust”.⁷² When we love each other, we can see reality, love, and God. To Grundtvig, the Eros love of the intimate relationship *blends* with divine love, is *strengthened* by the love of Christ and is the *schema* to *understand* and *accept* Christ's love. Love is as well *noetical* as *ontical*, a new understanding as well as a new being⁷³. We are seeing and experiencing God's love. Erotic love is enriched by divine love as it flourishes up house-Life⁷⁴. Divine love can only be born (or made real) of the relationship between man and woman. It can only be “raised” (as a botanical metaphor) and developed and completed there. In Grundtvig's thinking, a new being or a new consciousness can only be developed through an actual participation (Pragmatism). Marital love is a participation in the body of love. To Grundtvig, love is a Praxis. If we did not know the love of house-life from real experience we could not *understand*, could not *receive*, and we could not be *transformed* by God's love. Human growth, evolution or development of a stronger love are only possible within practices, relationships, or communities.

In this world, the divine spirit and love always work within a form⁷⁵. To Grundtvig, life at the table and in the bed is in some way the community of saints⁷⁶. Woman and man are made saints or sanctified in their relationship and bond. They make each other immortal, spiritual, or divine because the spirit is present and working. This relationship is holy in it-self. It certainly does not need to be made holy by a church wedding.⁷⁷

⁷⁰ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 135.

⁷¹ Cf. Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov 3*, 371.

⁷² Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 376: “only the eye of light” can see God and love. Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 125: The world of course cannot see God – but we can. – Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 134: “The most important issue now” is to “understand” the importance of man-woman love.

⁷³ Cp. also Iversen, 103.

⁷⁴ Iversen, 103: Grundtvig and Marie.

⁷⁵ Iversen, 26.

⁷⁶ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 135.

⁷⁷ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 122.

We are saved in this close relationship - that form through which God works – “that love which the world does not know”⁷⁸. She saves me and I her (Grundtvig references St. Paul) as the spirit works and grows in the relationship. We are plants. The spirit is the water coming down from Heaven – “rain on the cornfield and dew to the flower”⁷⁹. Our love is a plant, and the root of this plant is God. Or according to Grundtvig’s metaphors: This love is a stream, and this stream – the “Love-Stream” – springs from one and only source – God. Romantic love is an experience of eternal life⁸⁰. The stream of love comes from the streams of Eden (Genesis) and “the stream of God is full of water”⁸¹. Water is water, love is love, and spirit is spirit. Our romantic love (in a sort of asymmetrical dialectics) is the opposite stream, and this stream ends within God. God is the source, and God is the Telos or destination of the “Love-Stream”. In this love or Eros, man and God melt together⁸². Grundtvig’s idea of love is close to Plato’s idea of Eros but according to Grundtvig the process is asymmetrical. The tree only grows (a process or an evolution) because God started the process (at a point or birth).

Spirit is not equal to words⁸³. Spirit is the “Power from the High” - the vitality, strength, courage, dignity, and power of God which works within human life. – “Spirit is for Man what money or capital is in the world”⁸⁴. The spirit is some sort of resonance, harmony or music⁸⁵. Spirit is breath, wind, storm, and fire. God sets fire to our hearts, and we “burn”.⁸⁶ We can feel God’s spirit. Afterwards – like Mary - we are not in doubt. The spirit of love is the “Steam Engine” which drives life - the real intrinsic operation and drive towards that Telos, which is inherent in man (as a watermark or an imprint of God), the last goal in evolution where man is made “clear” (or transparent⁸⁷) or is made perfect – the “Christ-Man”.⁸⁸ Only the actual experience of love can make us divine and

⁷⁸ Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov* 7, 250.

⁷⁹ Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov* 3, 362.

⁸⁰ Also: Iversen, 102-103. Compare: Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 369.

⁸¹ Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov* 3, 373.

⁸² Iversen, 104-105: Grundtvig’s poem 1856.

⁸³ E. g. Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov* 3, 378.

⁸⁴ Iversen, 26.

⁸⁵ Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov* 7, 397. Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 373.

⁸⁶ Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov* 5, 201.

⁸⁷ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 410.

⁸⁸ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 122. Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 134 (definition of man’s Telos): maturity, target of growth, the Christ-target, enlightenment, transparency of the sun and of the spirit. Compare: Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 135: This Telos (or final salvation) “can only be born, created, developed, enlightened, and perfected in marriage”.

give us power, dignity, and freedom⁸⁹. God is *love*, Christ is *truth*, and Spirit is *power* – and not just words or information. We are no poor victims any longer. Grundtvig's theology was frequently determined by the national humiliation of Denmark - the 1807 experience. His thoughts very often move within the spectre of humiliation, defeat, being a victim, and the experience of empowerment. (Compare e. g. his sermons in the Vartov Church on the Samaritan of St. Luke). To Grundtvig, Spirit is the only thing that matters and all we need. Jesus or Christ or baptism or Eucharist is nothing compared to belief in the Holy Spirit (Grundtvig's *Spiritualism*).⁹⁰ Belief in the spirit is the absolute dominating centre of Christian faith⁹¹. The Holy Spirit is our king and god⁹². "The spirit is our only authority (...) our only assistance and advisor"⁹³. – "We experience and communicate directly with the spirit which is only possible with no intermediary what so ever".⁹⁴ – "The spirit knows all things also the depths of God and the spirit tells us everything we need to know"⁹⁵. (Grundtvig had strong beliefs in certainty, experience, immediacy, and resting-point). Grundtvig's interest in the Holy Spirit grows markedly around 1841-42. (His Vartov sermons around this turning-point are a clear witness of this growing interest).

To Grundtvig, "Christ" is a sort of colour gradually colouring the fabric of man. Spirit realizes itself in an evolutionary process in history and in marriage - not in the wedding of the church but in the actual relationship.⁹⁶ Gradually, we manifest and realize ourselves within our Praxis and relationships. Man cannot find himself (his identity) alone or on free hand. Human life is the only source and ruler of Christian faith and life and human life (love, joy, and happiness) is the Telos and only purpose of Christianity.

⁸⁹ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 152.

⁹⁰ Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov 7*, 180-181. Cp. Grundtvig's ideas of Servants of the scripture vs. of the spirit.

⁹¹ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 144. The *experience* of the Spirit is the only possible resting-point (or rock). The congregation shall seek its light and life in Christ alone – in the spirit – not at second hand (through priest or authority) but at *first* hand – directly. We – the priests – should really be superfluous (Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 181). The only possible resting-point is within our *heart* (feeling) – the Bible can give us no peace. Faith is totally free, untouchable, and independent – a direct product of God's love (Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 177).

⁹² Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 44. 148. 150-151.

⁹³ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 209.

⁹⁴ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 242.

⁹⁵ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 139. 140: the source of our knowledge is not the Bible but the Spirit

Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 49. Father is *hidden* within the Son, and the Son is *hidden* within the Spirit. – "Even if we strongly believe in Father and Son it is only a dead belief without belief in the Holy Spirit. Only Spirit can make us alive and only the Spirit can save us" (Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 49).

⁹⁶ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 124: Grundtvig attacks and ridicules the so-called Christian wedding of the church. Grundtvigians later on proposed to abolish the church's wedding in Denmark. (Cp. Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 133).

The bodily experience of love is the most important source or cause of Christian faith. – “When we actually see love, it is not difficult to believe in love”⁹⁷. If we have never experienced love it is hardly possible to believe in love. If we know about love or if we get a better “light” from life, love will increase and life and happiness will grow. To Grundtvig, there is an asymmetrical dialectics between “light” (understanding) and “life” (experience). Man finds himself – that is: finds back to the Eden or “Paradise-Life” - and realizes his true nature in his relationship to her. She is an image or shadow of God⁹⁸. Every man has a mysterious hidden memory of Paradise because man lived in Eden originally⁹⁹. To Grundtvig’s contemporary Søren Kierkegaard, there was an eternal excluding opposition of divine and human. In many ways, Kierkegaard’s work on Christian love is the anti-thesis of Grundtvig’s work. To Grundtvig, spirit or divinity is more like the content within a form. The “life-signs” prove the spirit within. (They are witnesses). Praise and gratitude is a proof of actually experienced love. Between form and content, between divine and human love there is according to Grundtvig a dialectical relationship. Insight is action or Praxis and action or praxis is insight. (This is the formula of Grundtvig’s philosophical Pragmatism).

In the intimate relationship, the new man or the “God-Man” – is begotten by the Holy Spirit According to Grundtvig, what happened to Mary happens to every Christian. Mary is a schema or matrix of being a Christian. The relationship of man and woman is a sort of church. The Holy Spirit spiritualizes our earthly forms and makes them holy¹⁰⁰. “House-life” is a sort of sacrament. Marriage mirrors the Incarnation and the Eucharist and Jesus Christ's flesh-taking:

“When the Son of God’s human life was created in Mary’s body, so he got the flesh of her flesh and bones of her bones, like Eva got from Adam”¹⁰¹

Man and woman are melted together for one flesh and one soul. They receive flesh, blood, and bones from each other. The purpose of the relationship is that we become

⁹⁷ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 120: Love is the *mother* of faith.

⁹⁸ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 148. 151. Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 367.

⁹⁹ Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov 7*, 248. Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 347. 363. Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov 6*, 304-305.

¹⁰⁰ Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov 7*, 42.

¹⁰¹ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 125.

like God or “Christ-like”. Eros love causes an evolutionary recovery of divine man¹⁰². This process of divinity spiritualizing marriage and body began in Paradise. Love between man and woman is the “Paradise-Rose” which began to germinate and grow in Paradise and will reach its flower and mature form “on Jesus Christ's Day”. Our spiritual growth is also a transformation of our bodies. Grundtvig expresses a holistic perception of man. Ireneus inspired Grundtvig to reject dualism and Orficism.

“[The] body becomes spiritual (...) until the body is the full seat of the Spirit (...) the body becomes the mirror of The Holy Spirit (...) the word of God is a prophesy of the evolution of man to divinity”¹⁰³.

Gradually, in Grundtvig's vision, man becomes more and more energetic, powerful, healthy, loving, and still younger.

There is only one kind of love¹⁰⁴.

“All love for your neighbour and for other people must necessarily start with the love for those most near and this of course is the person we are married to”.¹⁰⁵

To Grundtvig, our neighbour is the person most near. – Can we love just anybody, he asks in his Vartov sermons? – Certainly not! A quite “unnatural” and “Un-Christian” thought.¹⁰⁶ Only the evil scribes talk about loving your neighbour in that distorted way. The Samaritan of St. Luke is Christ himself loving us¹⁰⁷. God does not love the sinners¹⁰⁸ and we – the “children of light” - should hate and fight all sinners – the “sons of the world”. – “All the ungodly ones shall melt down before the face of God”¹⁰⁹.

Grundtvig rejects the idea of *Simul Iustus et Peccator*. We are not powerless or poor

¹⁰² Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 134.

¹⁰³ Quotation: Bent Christensen, *Omkring Grundtvigs Vidskab. En undersøgelse af NFS Grundtvigs forhold til den erkendelsesmæssige side af det kristeligt nødvendige livsengagement*. (København, 1998).420-421. This quotation is an example of Grundtvig's theology of *Theosis*.

¹⁰⁴ This thesis – there is only one kind of love – is the thesis of Aristotle in his Ethics. Compare: Aristotle, *Selections. Introduction and translation by Irwin and Fine*. (Indianapolis, 1995), 423-432. (Book IX in Ethics).

¹⁰⁵ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 133: the man-woman love is the fulfilling of the law. Cp.Iversen, 9.

¹⁰⁶ Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov 2*, 349! Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov 7*, 253. Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov 2*, 349: Grundtvig talks very ironically about the so-called right of the neighbour.

¹⁰⁷ Grundtvig's “christological” interpretation' e.g. Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov 7*, 316. Christ is our neighbour. We should love God and *not* the evil ones. Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 376: - “Love only loves itself”). – Compare: Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 385: neighbour love is to love *God*, or Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*,343: neighbour love is God's love of our heart).

¹⁰⁸ They are an abomination (Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov 7*, 255).

¹⁰⁹ Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov 1*, 311.

sinner. We are God's proud sons.¹¹⁰ We – the re-born - have been given the right to expect the salvation¹¹¹. God has made us his sons and he will not desert his own sons. Joy, happiness, dignity, and power are our just expectation to our friend and king Christ¹¹².

“We cannot love God without hating his enemies”¹¹³. – “As representatives of God we should hate the voices of Hell”¹¹⁴. Jesus only loved his “few friends”¹¹⁵. Likewise, we should love our friends and God's “friends” is obviously “a small gathering”, much less than ten percent of the baptized Christians.¹¹⁶ (This is an example of Grundtvig's criticism of the so-called Christianity of culture of Romanticism which in the Danish context was exemplified by the Danish professor H. L. Martensen). In the Vartov Church, Grundtvig is talking to his “friends”. (He always addresses the congregation of Vartov as “My Friends”).¹¹⁷ Compare “Friends' meetings” held 1863 and the following years around Grundtvig's birthday). The vast majority (i. e. the “Un-Christians”) is a “pollution” and “obstruction” to the growth of spirit and love and we should probably leave the church of Denmark.¹¹⁸ We should separate ourselves from the sinners.¹¹⁹ Grundtvig wanted the right of “conscience” to turn away the sinners from service, baptism, and Holy Supper.¹²⁰ According to Grundtvig, spirituality and the growth of

¹¹⁰ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 123.

¹¹¹ Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov 7*, 192. 189. Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov 1*, 307.

¹¹² Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 141. 124: We have security, pledge, token, guarantee. Compare: Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov 1*, 307.

¹¹³ Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov 3*, 359.

¹¹⁴ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 206.

¹¹⁵ Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov 1*, 301.

¹¹⁶ Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov 3*, 350-55. Grundtvig references St. Luke 17.11: one out of ten. Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov 2*, 353: ninety percent condemn themselves. Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov 6*, 149-150: vs. “the great swarm of shameless sinful Un-Christians in the church (...) they think that service, sermon and sacraments will save them”. Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 380: We are a “small sect”).

¹¹⁷ Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov 1*, 21-22: Grundtvig's first sermon and introduction in the Vartov Church 1839: Only the friends – reborn, conversed – are allowed at the Supper. In Vartov the vast majority of the congregation was Grundtvig's friends – from his ‘free’ period 1832-39 in the Frederik's Church of Copenhagen. In practice (but not legally), Grundtvig had a wider ‘freedom’ in Vartov. – Grundtvig's idea of *friends* seems to be close to the *Philia* ethics of Aristotle.

¹¹⁸ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 394. 430 (the years of 1863 og 1871).

¹¹⁹ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 142-143. Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 418: The “church” is a “prison” where we are “locked up” with the “sinners”.

¹²⁰ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 395: “freedom of the spirit”. His friends did not agree with this demand.

love could not be separated from the Praxis and human relationships of the real life of the congregation¹²¹.

“the old [natural] man’s love is of the same kind as the new man’s love (...) else it was impossible for natural man to have a clear understanding of the new man’s faith, hope and love (...) which is necessary if natural man should re-cognize and want the Christian love (...) the love between man and woman is totally equal to the love of the heavenly father toward his earthly children”.¹²²

Originally, in Paradise, there was only one kind of love. There were no children, fathers, mothers, or friends¹²³. There was only one kind of love – the love of man and woman. *This* love is the “Paradise-Rose” - the one plant and source of *all* love, love in essence, and the starting point of all human love. All other kinds of love were developed by this initial germination and seed. In this love we become limbs of the cosmic body of love. (Grundtvig’s theory of love as participation).¹²⁴ We are God’s partners. (Grundtvig had a strong belief in a sort of friendly synergism)¹²⁵. She is my body and I am hers¹²⁶. We are limbs of the eternal body of love. We have the same heart (i.e. the heart of Mary), the same soul, and the same body (the body of Christ). God is the source and end-point of this love¹²⁷. Body is spirit. Love is body. Plato’s myth seems to underlie Grundtvig’s concept of love as a melting-together and re-union¹²⁸. The major impact of the Fall was that this original love between man and woman “was seriously damaged in the ground”¹²⁹. According to Grundtvig, the Fall of Adam and Eve was essentially this divorce and alienation between the sexes¹³⁰.

¹²¹ Grundtvig’s concept of Praxis is related to the idea of Aristotle. In Aristotle’s *Ethics* virtue cannot be separated from Praxis, i. e. relationships, community, activity, and tradition. Virtue is as well a quality of the individual as of the Praxis. According to Aristotle we can only manifest, learn or develop virtue within social practices.

¹²² Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 131.

¹²³ Compare: Iversen, 50: Grundtvig’s re-assessment of love for the children (his daughter Meta) after his meeting with Marie 1851.

¹²⁴ Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov 3*, 376.

¹²⁵ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 135.

¹²⁶ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 338.

¹²⁷ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 133.

¹²⁸ E..g. Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 343, Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 125.

¹²⁹ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 128.

¹³⁰ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 128).

The church has been busy making a difference between kinds of love. – “But when you look at life with such dead eyes, you see nothing”.¹³¹ Also Luther (and later Kierkegaard) is a child of Rationalism and “the abstract spirit”. When God speaks to man about love he is of course talking about a kind of love that we *know* of and which we can *recognize*. When we see or hear God, we recognize him.¹³² God is not talking about a new strange kind of love which we know nothing about. God speaks to man in a language or form which man understands. To Grundtvig, God is not absurd or “ganz anders”. Christianity is not “supra-natural” or “un-natural”. Christianity is “reasonable”¹³³. When we experience God we discover that he is “like us”.¹³⁴ Heathen or Christian, every man communicates with God.¹³⁵ Also pre-Christian man knows and is touched and moved by the love of God¹³⁶. “Paradise-Love” was much stronger among the heathen Norse people than in Israel.¹³⁷ Mythology is a true mirror of God¹³⁸. If we did not know real human love from actual experience we could not understand God¹³⁹.

The Church with its “star blind eyes” has made bodily life a sin – “this inhuman conception which has destroyed all natural life and has been a plague and pestilence to all human life”.¹⁴⁰ The Lutherans have completely distorted the message of St. Paul. Body is not sin¹⁴¹. Divine and human nature are not contradictory but compatible and of the same kind. Christianity is about our natural human feelings¹⁴². “God came to his own kind”¹⁴³. Quite wrongly, the Lutheran church has made natural man and natural love a sin, a stupidity, an evil, and revolt against God - a selfish, malicious, and God hostile action.¹⁴⁴ The church of the Lutherans humiliated and degraded natural and God-

¹³¹ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 132.

¹³² Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov 7*, 170.

¹³³ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 406. vs. Kierkegaard. Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 140: Christian faith is *reasonable*, a sort of *knowledge*.

¹³⁴ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 105.

¹³⁵ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 123.126.129. Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov 7*, 72.

¹³⁶ Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov 5*, 203.

¹³⁷ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 130-131.

¹³⁸ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 370.

¹³⁹ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 346-347.

¹⁴⁰ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 122.

¹⁴¹ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 123.

¹⁴² Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov 7*, 169.

¹⁴³ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 125.

¹⁴⁴ Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov 7*, 169: attack on the Pietists’ unnatural, strange, inhuman feelings.

created man in a way “never seen before or since in world history”.¹⁴⁵ The purpose of the gospel is not to degrade man but to raise man to dignity.¹⁴⁶ The Lutheran church has transformed life on earth to a kingdom of weeping and crying – to a hell of suffering. The Christianity of the Lutherans is “unworthy to God” and completely “undesirable to man”.¹⁴⁷ Nobody wants to own this so-called happiness or salvation of the church.¹⁴⁸

Grundtvig analyzes history and evolution as a growth in an ontical as well as noetical way. The evolution of history is a growth of being as well as a growth of understanding:

“Before the original, natural, human life will appear and be understood in its proper light (...) [and this is only starting to happen now at this moment around 1860] (...) and this [understanding] was so far to happen in Luther's days that this original human life (...) has never in the history of Christianity been in a so fatal and thick darkness, as it was during the lectures of the Protestant scribes in the church as well as in the school“.¹⁴⁹

“Only what we actually see can make us happy”.¹⁵⁰ “Only what we have seen and felt with our own hands can make us happy”.¹⁵¹ But when we see the beloved we are happy. Only what “satisfies natural man’s longing” and desire can make him happy¹⁵². The idea of the gospel is to give us happiness, joy, and peace¹⁵³. When we see, feel, and experience the beloved and longed-for we feel that joy which we shall never lose¹⁵⁴. This eternal love we see in a humanly body¹⁵⁵. The depressing Christianity of the Lutherans cannot make anybody happy. We are not saved by some judge’s verdict or “Imputatio” but by our transformation and by receiving and developing a new loving life¹⁵⁶. God is not indifferent to the suffering of his sons¹⁵⁷. “Common sense and all

¹⁴⁵ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 122.

¹⁴⁶ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 128.

¹⁴⁷ Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov 1*, 334.

¹⁴⁸ Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov 5*, 292. Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov 1*, 16 (first sermon in Vartov): - “The church offers man a Heaven he does not want at all”.

¹⁴⁹ Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 122. Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 105.

¹⁵⁰ Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov 3*, 342.

¹⁵¹ Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov 3*, 345.

¹⁵² Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov 3*, 343.

¹⁵³ Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov 3*, 345.

¹⁵⁴ Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov 3*, 346.

¹⁵⁵ Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov 3*, 346.

¹⁵⁶ Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov 3*, 349 vs. *Simul Iustus et Peccator*. Compare: Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 125: God’s spirit makes a difference and transforms man’s will, feeling, and nature. Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 103:

experience prove that we can impossibly be saved by this dead belief in scripture”¹⁵⁸. Luther “contradicts St. Paul and is a slanderer of God”¹⁵⁹. “In justification it does not make any difference what you can find in the Bible”¹⁶⁰ – only real life matters. Justification is a transformation and sanctification and “can only be proved and learned by living life”¹⁶¹. If justification could not make us happy, more loving, and stronger “then Christianity would be a great stupidity and illusion”¹⁶².

Summary

Grundtvig was a philosophical Pragmatist and his epistemology was clearly experiential. What is the truth we learn by actual experience. Grundtvig had a life-long longing for safe knowledge, certainty, and some sort of resting-point. He found this resting-point in our actual experiences. Christianity is the love of truth and to be a Christian is to be a quite fearless truth-lover without any compromise. God is the spirit of truth in the most fundamental and most human way. The things we can see and perceive are witnesses, signs, and images of another world. The actual love we experience in our human and intimate relationships is a witness to the love of Christ. We are participators in a collective body of love and only by this participation can we learn and develop our human capacity for and understanding of love. The abstract spirit is the spirit of death, as Grundtvig often repeats. Grundtvig conceived of our feelings as real cognitive states and not as wild inhuman chaotic drives. Our feelings can give us a true picture of reality. He was a moral realist like modern philosophers like John McDowell. Grundtvig’s conception of love is unlike much traditional Christian thinking

Luther’s so-called justification is an impossible and unnatural shortcut. Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov* 1, 307: Luther’s justification is of no use. - Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 123: Luther’s justification is an “absurd Arabic fairy tale” (i.e. a paradox – Grundtvig *hated* paradoxes). – Luther “has turned Christianity upside down” (Grundtvig, *Værker i Udvalg VI*, 140).

¹⁵⁷ E.g. Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov* 3, 363: vs. Luther. We can of course feel and experience our own happiness, and we can feel and experience our own salvation. To be *lost* is equal to being powerless, poor, humiliated, victim, lonely, sick. To be *saved* is equal to being successful, rich, powerful, happy, beloved, thankful, and healthy. *If* we are saved we experience sweetness, love, strength, and life-energy – else we are *surely* not saved! *Everybody* can feel the difference! (Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov* 3 286). ‘Grace’ (Naade) is not really pardon or mercy (or verdict) – but Shalom: power, success, and happiness – real change of life. Forgiveness of sins means that we are no longer living in the prison (kingdom) of Sin – we are no longer sinners. (We are *removed* from Sin or sin is *removed* from us).

¹⁵⁸ Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov* 3, 348.

¹⁵⁹ Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov* 3, 349.

¹⁶⁰ Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov* 3, 348.

¹⁶¹ Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov* 3, 348.

¹⁶² Grundtvig, *Prædikener i Vartov* 3, 349.

of the concept of love but there are similarities between Grundtvig's ideas and the thinking of Thomas in the 13th Century. To Grundtvig, love is a natural phenomenon and Christian love is a development of natural love. Christian love is related to Aristotle's concept of *Philia*. God wants to strengthen our natural love. God does not want to destroy it. According to Grundtvig, love is not law but gospel. Love is an inherent part of our nature – the imprint of God. We are God's sons and within the development of history our love converges with divine love. Evolution is convergence and penetration of the dust by the divine spirit. Every human being experiences this evolution and growth in his own life and relationships. Love increases and gets stronger in history as well as in individual man. There is only one kind of love.