

Works of Love

by Søren Kierkegaard

5 What, then, must be done in order to remain in the debt of love to one another? When a fisherman has caught a fish and wants to keep it alive, what must he do? He must put it in water immediately; otherwise it becomes exhausted and sooner or later dies. Why must he put it in water? Because water is the fish's element, and everything that is to be kept alive must be kept in its element; but love's element is infinitude, inexhaustibility, immeasurability. Therefore, if you want to maintain your love, you must see to it that love, caught for freedom and life, continually remains in its element by means of the infinitude of the debt; 10 otherwise it wastes away and dies—not sooner or later, because it dies immediately, which is precisely a sign of its perfection, that it can live only in infinitude.