

A Prayer
of Jesus

I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to babes; yea, Father, for such was thy gracious will.

FOREWARD

With Credits to Soren Kierkegaard

This has to be said again, now:

"This has to be said; so be it now said,

Whoever thou art, whatever in other respects thy life may be, my friend, by ceasing to take part (if ordinarily thou doest) in the public worship of God, as it now is (with the claim that it is the Christianity of the New Testament), thou hast constantly one guilt the less, and that a great one: thou dost not take part in treating God as a fool by calling that the Christianity of the New Testament which is not the Christianity of the New Testament."

S. Kierkegaard, 1854

When first I read these words, some forty years ago, I was enthralled. From that moment to this, S. K. has been my hero of the faith. What courage! What abandonment of all earthly care must he have had to proclaim them, for these words were published one hundred and forty-six years ago in a time when they could easily have cost him his life. Here was a man of integrity, a lonely witness to the Truth in the world, who loved God and the Truth and hated his life according to the Great Principle of Jesus.

Times have changed. Now religion is not taken that seriously. Anyone can say any radical thing publicly or otherwise and no one cares, or they make a joke of it, or they ignore it. So, I have perfect freedom to praise such words, words that I must admit I once envied – wishing I had been the one to say them first. Why then do I bother to praise them? It is the most one can do in an age that no longer cares about Truth.

My reader, you are to be praised also if you have read this far! Stay with me now and read what is really in my heart. You see, I have learned that S.K., courageous as he was and so fully dedicated to Jesus, was in error. Yes, in error! I required years to realize the error – so subtle that even such a religious genius as S.K. could overlook it. It is implicit – he assumed that the Christianity of the New Testament is the religion of Jesus and in this he was absolutely wrong. Yes! The Christianity of the New Testament is not the religion of Jesus. Whose religion is it if not that of Jesus?

The Christianity of the New Testament is the religion of Paul. It is the religion that emanates from what is called "The Church" and that was first identified at Antioch where "the disciples were first called Christians." Please listen carefully, now, for this is critical: the religion of Paul, which is the Christianity of the New Testament, is not the religion of Jesus. It is the religion of Christendom. It is the religion of the churchmen but . . . it is not the religion of Jesus.

By failing to recognize this important distinction between the religion of Paul and that of Jesus, S.K. erred in his statement but his heart was right, for the religion of Jesus is the religion of S.K. No, the churchmen were not and are not taking God for a fool by calling that the Christianity of the New Testament that is not the Christianity of the New

Testament. The churchmen were, and are, precisely correct in calling that the Christianity of the New Testament that is the religion of the church, of Paul and of Christendom, for it is indeed the Christianity of the New Testament. No, they were not and are not taking God for a fool; they are only making fools of themselves by believing that the Christianity of the New Testament is the religion of Jesus.

The Christianity of the New Testament, which is the Christianity of Christendom and of the churchmen to this day, is infinitely far removed from the religion of Jesus because of its powers of deception. It appropriates the name of Jesus. It honors and glorifies the name of Jesus. But it ignores precious words that he said in the world at so high a price. It takes its converts, young and old, and baptizes them. Then it teaches them the doctrine. Then it tells them, "Yes, it is true, you are now a Christian! You are a member of the church so you are partaker of the Christianity of the New Testament." And of course the power of the deception is just this . . . it is perfectly true. They are indeed partakers of the Christianity of the New Testament but, unlike S. K., they are not partakers of Jesus and his religion.

Yes! This has to be said so let it be said now but in a different way:

Whoever thou art, whatever in other respects thy life may be, my friend, by ceasing to take part (if ordinarily thou dost) in the public worship of God, as it now is (with the claim that it is the religion of Jesus), thou hast constantly one guilt the less, and that a great one: thou dost not take part in treating God as a fool by calling that the religion of Jesus that is not the religion of Jesus but is only the Christianity of the New Testament.