

6 Against the Crowd

We warn young people against going to dens of iniquity, even out of curiosity, because no one knows what might happen. Still more terrible, however, is the danger of going along with the crowd. In truth, there is no place, not even one most disgustingly dedicated to lust and vice, where a human being is more easily corrupted – than in the crowd.

Even though every individual possesses the truth, when he gets together in a crowd, untruth will be present at once, for the crowd is untruth. It either produces impenitence and irresponsibility or it weakens the individual's sense of responsibility by placing it in a fractional category. For instance, imagine an individual walking up to Christ and spitting on him. No human being would ever have the courage or the audacity to do that. But as part of a crowd, well then they somehow have the "courage" to do it – dreadful untruth!

The crowd is indeed untruth. Christ was crucified because he would have nothing to do with the crowd (even though he addressed himself to all). He did not want to form a party, an interest group, a mass movement, but wanted to be what he was, the truth, which is related to the single individual. Therefore everyone who will genuinely serve the truth is by that very fact a martyr. To win a crowd is no art; for that only untruth is needed, nonsense, and a little knowledge of human passions.

But no witness to the truth dares to get involved with the crowd.

Kierkegaard, *Provocations Chapter Six* Spiritual Writings of Kierkegaard

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