

Only a Rumor

Soren Kierkegaard

Although the scribes could explain where the Messiah should be born, they remained quite unperturbed in Jerusalem. They did not accompany the Wise Men to seek him. Similarly we may know the whole of Christianity, yet make no movement. The power that moved heaven and earth leaves us completely unmoved.

What a difference! The three kings had only a rumor to go by. But it moved them to make that long journey. The scribes were much better informed, much better versed. They sat and studied the Scriptures like so many dons, but it did not make them move. Who had the more truth? The three kings who followed a rumor, or the scribes who remained sitting with all their knowledge?

What a vexation it must have been for the kings, that the scribes who gave them the news they wanted remained quiet in Jerusalem! We are being mocked, the kings might have thought. For indeed what an atrocious self-contradiction that the scribes should have the knowledge and yet remain still. This is as bad as if a person knows all about Christ and his teachings, and their own life expresses the opposite. We are tempted to suppose that such a person wishes to fool us, unless we admit that they are only fooling themselves.