

CHRISTIAN HYPOCRISY AND MAMMON

Jesus promised money and houses in Heaven. He never said one word about how wonderful and kind and compassionate and loving we will be in Heaven. Jesus replaced earthly materialism with a heavenly one. If people are materialistic it will depend on what they have. The problem will be bad. But to promise an earth style heaven is just telling even those who cannot be materialistic that they can be after all - just not in this world. That is not bad but horrendous. It is cruel if it is a false promise.

Jesus said, "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it." See Matthew 13. He clearly said that all must be sold in order to gain a life with God. Christians say it means that Christians can have money and property but as long as they use them only in the service of God and God's people. You are to be happy to give up your millions if the poor need it.

Christianity has given us the well-known saying: "The love of money is the root of all evil". St Paul made that statement (1 Timothy 6:10). Theologians explain that the love of money means an attachment to material things which causes all sin for sin is always choosing a thing instead of God. When a person commits adultery the love of money has caused it because it makes a person prefer pleasures to God.

This teaching leads to hypocrisy. If religion really believes it then why does it not tell people to live with the bare essentials and do that itself? If money causes sin then it is a sin to have it. Having the bare essentials alone can be excused on the grounds that you can't live without some material things.

Jesus gave his core teaching in the sermon on the mount. Read Matthew 6. He said no man can be the slave of two masters for he will love one and hate the other. It is interesting how he thinks you can love a master at all! Anyway he says you will love one and hate the other. You will treat one with respect and the other with disrespect. So he says if God is your master you cannot also let money be your master. So those who love money hate God. This is a very naive teaching but surprisingly few have a problem with adopting it and preaching it with a straight face. But he goes on to say that the impossibility of loving God and money is why he says that you must not worry about your life or food or clothing for God will provide.

A rich man once asked Jesus what he had to do to enter Heaven. Jesus asked him if he kept the commandments and he said he did. Jesus told him he lacked only one thing and that was not selling all he had and giving it to the poor. The man said he kept all the commandments all his life.

The Vatican has a tough time with telling lies to make Jesus' words of no effect for it is passionately in love with money and courts those who are rich and who love their wealth to make converts of them and keep them Catholic. The Church says it is only your duty to obey Jesus' command to get rid of wealth if you are over-attached to it – that is if you would rather sin against God or do harm than part with it. But you cannot get rich without being egotistic and miserly to some degree. Miserliness the sin of holding on to money that the poor need better and since God is generous to us we have to be generous to him and do his will for he wants the poor helped. The pat-answer clearly shows how deep the concern of the Church for the poor really is. It is a pat-answer for Jesus never says the rich man gave money the place God should have in his heart. The story does not say why Jesus had a problem with him. It could be yes that the man cared too much for money or it could be that wealth is just a sin!

The rich man went away from Jesus for he had great wealth. So Jesus then comments how hard it is for the rich to be saved. The apostles were aghast! Why were the apostles so astonished when Jesus said it is hard for the rich to enter the kingdom? He then says its easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle and they respond as the Mark gospel says by being more shocked than ever! He says it is impossible indicating that he meant a real needle you hold in your hand. Their response shows they regarded him as saying it was impossible.

So Jesus said that it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of Heaven. The idea that the eye of the needle is a gate in Jerusalem is speculation and very unlikely to be correct. No text indicates that a gate was meant. And Jesus was far from Jerusalem when he said about the eye of a needle. The gate is a Christian urban legend. (Urban Legends of the New Testament: 40 Common Misconceptions, 63). Needle means it is impossible. It is insane to imagine that a camel getting through a tight gate compares to a rich man getting to Heaven. It is obvious that whatever Jesus meant he was saying it was impossible for the rich to be saved.

Suppose the reason Jesus had a problem with him is that the rich man is blind to the uselessness of treasure and to how hard the wealth has made him. Wealth then is dangerous for you can think you are not attached to it and be really attached. Jesus said a rich man, not some rich men. The Church lies that he didn't have all rich men in mind. Also people who are not rich can be even more attached to material goods than any rich person. Jesus was condemning wealth in itself. People who are attached to wealth in a bad way will defraud but this man said he never did that and Jesus agreed. The man then was not breaking any social-moral rules.

The gospel says that Jesus looked at the rich man who said he never defrauded or broke the commandments and loved him. Jesus tells him he has one sin – which seems to be either wealth or attachment to wealth. He says afterwards that it is impossible for a rich man to enter heaven – meaning like this one and that only God can make it possible. Jesus had been called good teacher by this man and Jesus retorted that nobody is good but God alone so why is he calling him good? Attempts are made to argue, "Jesus did not deny that he was good but was saying that as God alone is good Jesus if good must be God." That is not an obvious interpretation and so must be discarded. Jesus is best understood as denying that he was good and the apostles at the time would have seen him as a sinner like everybody else. Why is Jesus talking that way to a man who apart from one sin is sinless! That makes the man very special! The man would be regarded as a saint by the vast majority of the human race. It is interesting that regardless of how holy this man was and despite his wealth he never defrauded.

The Bible speaks of Abraham and Job and Joseph of Arimathea as rich men who God approved of. This seems to contradict Jesus' firm assertion that there was no salvation for a rich man. But the scriptures never say they held on to their wealth. The rich in the Bible means those who fail to give so that in reality they really have nothing. Wealth would not be a sin if you had it but had no way of getting rid of it. It would be an evil then but not a sin.

The apostles realised that in a sense everybody was rich so they asked how anybody could be saved. Also the apostles would have felt that Jesus was contradicting the doctrine of the Old Testament that wealth is a sign of God's favour (Deuteronomy 8:18). They felt that if the rich were blessed and still damned then there was no hope for anybody. Jesus simply replies that it is impossible to get right with God unless God makes it possible (Matthew 19:26).

Most of the saints of Rome lived in convents and supported these institutions which depended on a good deal of money to exist. They claimed to be living in perfect poverty. They took a vow of poverty, a vow not to own anything and then they depend on the property of others. Imagine a man who was told to do what he liked with a friend's money by that friend. It is still the friend's money. If the man takes a vow of poverty then isn't it hypocrisy for him to enjoy that money? The vow of poverty is for sacrifice for it is not owning that is bad but what you do with what you own makes it bad or good. The vow of poverty is a mockery therefore the other vow that nuns and monks take, obedience to superiors, is also evil for it is handing over your will to hypocrites.

In Luke 12, Jesus tells the disciples, a group including the apostles, to sell what they have for the poor. Then he told them a parable on the need to be ready for the coming of the master. Peter asked him if this parable was for them and not for everybody. This was because the preparation Jesus asked for was giving away all property for otherwise the query would have been inexplicable. This is because Peter would have known that everybody would be expected to be ready for Jesus if Jesus simply meant: "Be good to prepare for the coming of the master". Some say that Jesus never answered the question and this silence alone implies that Peter was asking a stupid question. But Jesus' answer was only that anybody who does not prepare is not much of a servant. In other words, anybody who does not get ready is bad which can only be referring to the everybody in Peter's question. The gospel says it is a reply.

When the Church says that pre-marital sex performed with more love than happens in marriage is still wrong then why can't it teach that wealth is wrong in itself just like the sex? It's not morality the Church has but prejudice.

Jesus though he was supposedly God refused to avail of the world's comforts and slept rough and had no money. He asked a rich man to part with all he had and give it to the poor and sleep rough with him. Clearly then if you keep money that you could use to save those worse off from death then that is a grave sin. All of us today are rich by the standards of Jesus' time. Middle class people have better comforts than wealth King Herod.

Jesus told a huge crowd that nobody could be his disciple without giving up all he had (Luke 12:33:14:33). He meant what he said when he said it to all these people for they were not theologians who would work out if he was talking literally or not so he was speaking literally. He said that our money must be donated all to the poor (an indication that the apostles may have set up the Church against his will for you can't run a Church without money or it could indicate that the apostles were apostates or perhaps fakes) for your heart lies where your treasure and he wants our hearts to lie in Heaven meaning we must have no treasures on earth. Jesus also stated that just as a king will make peace with a stronger rival king to avoid the latter waging a war he cannot win, so we learn that nobody can be a disciple of Jesus' unless he gives up all his possessions. His logic is clearly that to be a man of God in reality you have to recognise that you cannot win if you try to fight for material things and yet be detached from them. The only way to make peace with them is to get rid of them. Nevertheless, the Church pretends that he meant they must be detached from these things but may still use the things of the world. Then

why didn't he say that then? The gospel itself accuses the Church of theft because it is stealing for a Church to try and make money out of the gospel when the gospel does not allow it. Worse the Church tries to get the blame for the money being given and taken on Jesus! Its interesting that the Church claims a deeper insight into matters of faith and morals than any other organisation for it is the true Church of God. If it looks into things that deeply then there is no excuse for it missing what Jesus said about money and it is clear that it only looks deep when it suits it. It claims the ban on birth control is one of its deep insights which is a sick and cruel boast for there are many things in which its insights are completely off the wall.

Is it unreasonable to expect all Catholics to give all they have to the poor? The world would be so impressed by such a gesture that the Catholics would probably end up happier and better off than before. They will be treasured everywhere.

Only a minority would give all away anyway.

Christians enjoying their comforts are just fakes. Is money neutral? Is it only how you use it that is good or bad? Many say yes but what if having money though not bad in itself makes you love yourself and your trappings far more than you should and others less than you should? Love that is limited is not love at all for real love holds that when it comes to doing the right thing it has to be the right thing not the right enough thing. If love is the most important thing then to make a clever copy of it is the worst sin despite how nice you may seem!