

Miracles & Faith & Hope

Religion, religion based on miracles in particular, claims to help people by giving them hope no matter how bad their lives have been or how bad it looks that they will be. This contradicts religion's promise that if we think of God and others not ourselves we will be happy or at least no unhappier than what we are. This means we have to hope for other people not ourselves. An atheist can do that so what do we need religion and religious faith for?

The teaching of hoping in God implies that even if this is not the best of all possible worlds, then God intends it to be. God cannot know exactly what would have happened in Toronto in 1971 if John F Kennedy had not been murdered in Dallas. Knowing all things does not mean that God cannot guess. The evil thing about teaching that this universe is intended to be the best possible universe is that it endorses complacency.

Some believers in healings have false hope. A person who allegedly gets a miracle healing at Lourdes will feel cured. But many of these people are considered even by the Church to have been cured by natural factors and not God's intervention. Miracle claims give such people false hope that they have received a miracle. That is cruel. No happiness got at Lourdes is worth it when vulnerable people get a slap in the face.

The Catholic Church by operating shrines of miraculous healing such as that at Lourdes or Fatima has come under fire for giving false hope to the sick. The Church replies that the chance of a miracle is so remote that this accusation is false. Then where are the disclaimers in Lourdes for example?

If a mother is dying of cancer and doesn't want to leave her little children, the argument that a miracle is very unlikely won't wash. She will get her hopes up for emotion not reason will be in charge. The woman will be devastated and crippled with disappointment. She will naturally feel that if miracles are rare, she is a special case and has a good chance of getting better. Desperation will make her feel that. And the Church says that God is responsible even for all the non-miraculous healings that take place at such shrines so the woman will believe that if she doesn't get a miracle healing, God will provide that she will be healed without a miracle. So her hopes will be strong. The Church tells us to hope in God so it has no business pretending it doesn't not give false hope to the sick at Lourdes and Fatima.

Many people cured by miracle say they felt that something special was going to happen. The Church teaches that God communicates with the soul. A lot of Lourdes pilgrims must sense that God will heal them miraculously. But it won't happen. The Church then is to blame for encouraging the most vulnerable of people to set themselves up for a disappointment.

Finally

Believers are told that real miracles are very rare. Thus religion thinks it gets out of the charge that it is dishing out false hope to vulnerable people. But those people are told that God inspires them and guides them. If you are desperate enough you will easily feel that God is calling you to Lourdes to experience a miracle healing. The improbability of a miracle will not stop you feeling it can and will happen to you. Religion is setting them up for false hope.

Further Reading ~

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