

*Then the Pharisees going, consulted among themselves how to insnare him in his speech. And they sent to him their disciples with the Herodians, saying: Master, we know that thou art a true speaker, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou dost not regard the person of men. Tell us therefore what dost thou think, is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not? But Jesus knowing their wickedness, said: Why do you tempt me, ye hypocrites? Shew me the coin of the tribute. And they offered him a penny. And Jesus saith to them: Whose image and inscription is this? They say to him: Caesar's. Then he saith to them: Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and to God, the things that are God's.*

PSEUDO-CHRYS. As when one seeks to dam a stream of running water, as soon as one outlet is stopped up it makes another channel for itself; so the malevolence of the Jews, foiled on one hand, seeks itself out another course. Then went the Pharisees; to the Herodians. Such as the plan was, such were the planners; They send to Him their disciples with the Herodians.

GLOSS. Who as unknown to Him, were more likely to ensnare Him, and so through them they might take Him, which they feared to do of themselves because of the populace.

JEROME; Lately under Caesar Augustus, Judea, which was subject to the Romans, had been made tributary when the census was held of the whole world; and there was a great division among the people, some saying that tribute ought to be paid to the Romans in return for the security and quiet which their arms maintained for all. The Pharisees on the other hand, self-satisfied in their own righteousness, contended that the people of God who paid tithes and gave first-fruits, and did all the other things which are written in the Law, ought not to be subject to human laws. But Augustus had given the Jews as king, Herod, son of Antipater, a foreigner and proselyte; he was to exact the tribute, yet to be subject to the Roman dominion. The Pharisees therefore send their disciples with the Herodians, that is, with Herod's soldiers, or those whom the Pharisees in mockery called Herodians, because they paid tribute to the Romans, and were not devoted to the worship of God.

CHRYS. They send their disciples and Herod's soldiers together, that whatever opinion He might give might be found fault with. Yet would they rather have had Him say somewhat against the Herodians; for being themselves afraid to lay hands on Him because of the populace, they sought to bring Him into danger through His liability to pay tribute.

PSEUDO-CHRYS. This is the commonest act of hypocrites, to commend those they would ruin. Thus, these break out into praises of Him, saying, Master, we know that You are true. They call Him Master, that, deceived by this show of honor and respect, He might in simplicity open all His heart to them, as seeking to gain them for disciples.

GLOSS. There are three ways in which it is possible for one not to teach the truth. First, on the side of the teacher, who may either not know, or not love the truth; guarding against this, they say, We know that You are true. Secondly, on the side of God, there are some who, putting aside all fear of Him, do not utter honestly the truth which they know

respecting Him; to exclude this they say, And teaches the way of God in truth. Thirdly, on the side of our neighbor, when through fear or affection any one withholds the truth; to exclude this they say, And cares for no man, for You regard not the person of man.

CHRYS. This was a covert allusion to Herod and Caesar.

JEROME. This smooth and treacherous inquiry was as a kind of challenge to the answerer to fear God rather than Caesar, and immediately they say, Tell us therefore, what You think? Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar or not? Should He say tribute should not be paid, the Herodians would immediately accuse Him as a person disaffected to the Emperor.

CHRYS. They knew that certain had before suffered death for this very thing, as plotting a rebellion against the Romans, therefore they sought by such discourse to bring Him into the same suspicion.

PSEUDO-CHRYS. He makes an answer not corresponding to the smooth tone of their address, but harsh, suitable to their cruel thoughts; for God answers men's hearts, and not their words.

JEROME; This is the first excellence of the answerer, that He discerns the thoughts of His examiners, and calls them not disciples but tempters. A hypocrite is he who is one thing, and feigns himself another.

PSEUDO-CHRYS. He therefore calls them hypocrites, that seeing Him to be a discerner of human hearts, they might not be hardy enough to carry through their design. Observe thus how the Pharisees spoke fair that they might destroy Him, but Jesus put them to shame that He might save them; for God's wrath is more profitable to man, than man's favor.

JEROME; Wisdom does ever wisely, and so the tempters are best confuted out of their own words; therefore it follows, Show me the tribute money; and they brought to Him a denarius.

This was a coin reckoned equivalent to ten sesterces, and bore the image of Caesar. Let those who think that the Savior asks because He is ignorant, learn from the present place that it is not so, for at all events Jesus must have known whose image was on the coin.

They say to Him, Caesar's; not Augustus, but Tiberius, under whom also the Lord suffered. All the Roman Emperors were called Caesar, from Caius Caesar who first seized the chief power. Render therefore to Caesar the things which are Caesar's; i.e. the coin, tribute, or money.

HILARY; For if there remain with us nothing that is Caesar's, we shall not be bound by the condition of rendering to him the things that are his; but if we lean upon what is his, if we avail ourselves of the lawful protection of his power, we cannot complain of it as any wrong if we are required to render to Caesar the things of Caesar.

CHRYS. But when you hear this command to render to Caesar the things of Caesar, know that such things only are intended which in nothing are opposed to religion; if such there be, it is no longer Caesar's but the Devil's tribute. And moreover, that they might not say that He was subjecting them to man, He adds, And to God the things that are God's.

JEROME; That is, tithes, first-fruits, oblation, and victims; as the Lord Himself rendered to Caesar tribute, both for Himself and for Peter; and also rendered to God the things that are God's in doing the will of His Father.

HILARY; It is necessary for us also to render to God the things that are His, namely, body, soul, and will. For Caesar's coin is in the gold, in which His image was portrayed, that is, God's coin, on which the Divine image is stamped; give therefore your money to Caesar, but preserve a conscience void of offense for God.

ORIGEN; From this place we learn by the Savior's example not to be allured by those things which have many voices for them, and thence seem famous, but to incline rather to those things which are spoken according to some method of reason. But we may also understand this place morally, that we ought to give some things to the body as a tribute to Caesar, that is to say, necessaries. And such things as are congenial to our souls' nature, that is, such things as lead to virtue, those we ought to offer to God.

They then who without any moderation inculcate the law of God, and command us to have no care for the things required by the body, are the Pharisees, who forbade to give tribute to Caesar, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God has created. They, on the other hand, who allow too much indulgence to the body are the Herodians. But our Savior would neither that virtue should be enfeebled by immoderate devotedness to the flesh; nor that our fleshly nature should be oppressed by our unremitting efforts after virtue.

Or the prince of this world, that is, the Devil, is called Caesar; and we cannot render to God the things that are God's, unless we have first rendered to this prince all that is his, that is, have cast off all wickedness. This moreover let us learn from this place, that to those who tempt us we should neither be totally silent, nor yet answer openly, but with caution, to cut off all occasion from those who seek occasion in us, and teach without blame the things which may save those who are willing to be saved.

JEROME; They who ought to have believed did but wonder at His great wisdom, that their craft had found no means for ensnaring Him: whence it follows, When they had heard these words, they marveled, and left Him, and went their way, carrying away their unbelief and wonder together.

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