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Miscellaneous Articles.

CÆSAR AND GOD.

Luke xx. 25.—“Render unto Cæsar the things which be Cæsar’s, and unto God the things which be God’s.”

These memorable words were spoken by our Lord, in answer to the question put to Him by the Herodians, “Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Cæsar or no.” This party had made a league with the Pharisees and Sadducees for the purpose of destroying Jesus: it was resolved that he should die. How they might best accomplish their nefarious design was the only question. After some deliberation it was agreed to try him with ensnaring questions, by his answers to which he might commit himself, and furnish some pretext for informing against him, and having him seized by the public authorities. The Herodians were appointed to begin the attack, and their question sank deep unto the rankling sore of the nation’s heart. Nothing, too, could be more artfully contrived than this. The lawfulness of paying tribute to the emperor was fiercely debated among the Jews—the Pharisees maintaining that they could not, as the chosen people of God who alone was their sovereign, in any way recognize a pagan government; while the Herodians, who were the partizans or adherents of Herod, and, of course, friendly to the Roman domination, were of opinion that it was not only lawful but obligatory to pay tribute. It is needless to say that the common people generally, sided with the Pharisees on this question. It seemed evident, then, that whether our Lord answered affirmatively, or negatively, he would bring himself into trouble. In the former case, he would, in all likelihood, cool or offend the common people who were decidedly friendly to him—while, should he say “It is not lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar,” the Herodians, of course, were ready to carry his answer to the authorities and represent him as an exciter of sedition—a pestilent fellow who was instilling doctrines into the minds of the people, unfavourable to the Roman power.

But how simply and easily was all their cunning craftiness turned to foolishness! Calling for a denarius—the coin in which the tax was paid—he pointed to the head of the emperor engraved on one side of it, and asked whose image it was—Cæsar’s, was the reply. Then said he in return, “Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which be Cæsar’s,” and for the benefit of the Herodians who were rather remiss in the discharge of their religious duties, he added—“and to God the things which be God’s.” It was a principle admitted by the