

SELECTIONS

FROM THIRTEEN CHAPTERS

OF THE

CURAL OF TIRUVALLUVAR,

WITH

FREE TRANSLATIONS

AND

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

BY F. W. ELLIS, ESQ. OF THE H. C. S.

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PREFACE.

THE following remarks concerning the eminent work, of which specimens are given in the following pages, are from the pen of the Rev. W. H. DREW, Missionary of the London Missionary Society. "The Cural of Tiruvalluvar is held in the highest veneration by the Tamil people. The writer of it (Tiruvalluvar, who is said to have lived 1,500 years ago) is deemed an *incarnation of wisdom*. It is called the first of works, from which, whether for thought or language, there is no appeal." The most eminent look upon it as their *law-book*, and in their disputes quote verses from it as evidence of what they assert. The morality of the book is similar to that of Seneca. "The author maintains in general a dignified style, though it must be acknowledged that he descends at times to puerilities."

The Cural contains 108 chapters, and is divided into three parts, in which virtue, property, and sensual pleasure, are severally treated of. The last chapter painfully differs from the two former as to moral character. "It is omitted in reading the volume. The following pages contain translations of selections from the first part, and will give to English readers a clear idea of the highest code of morals extant among the Hindús. Who can read these pages without subscribing to the exclamation (quaintly expressed) of the "Sweet singer of our Christian Israel."

Let all the heathen writers join
To form one perfect book,
Great God when once compared with Thine,
How mean their writings look.

QUESTIONS PROPOSED TO AND ANSWERS RETURNED

BY THE GREAT TEACHER.

Introduction.

WHEN an individual has shown himself possessed of more than ordinary wisdom, he must expect to be often questioned as to his opinion upon subjects of general interest and importance. It was so, in ancient times, with Solomon. "All the earth sought to Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put into his heart." (1 Kings x. 24.) It has been so with the sages of every nation. It was emphatically so with that wisest of beings, *Jesus Christ*. He was a Divine Teacher, and multitudes flocked to Him daily to see His miracles and hear His instructions. They did so from a variety of motives; some wished to learn the truth, while others desired to cavil against His doctrines, and to detect something in His opinion by which they might condemn Him before the Rulers. To them all He declared His sentiments clearly and boldly. Many believed Him, and many who continued unbelievers were silenced by the truth and force of His answers. The Evangelists—Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, have recorded some of the questions that were put to Him with His replies. These we have taken pains to collate and arrange, and will bring to the notice of our readers in successive numbers of our paper, hoping that their perusal may be interesting and instructive.

I. THE WAY TO OBTAIN HEAVEN. Luke x. 25—28.

Question.

A certain lawyer stood up, and tempted Him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

Answer.

He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.

And He said unto him, *This do, and thou shalt live!*

Remark.—This lawyer was evidently trusting in his own obedience of the law for salvation. The meaning of our Lord's reply is this

“Keep the whole law and you shall obtain eternal life. But you have not kept it, therefore you cannot be saved in that way. You need a Redeemer, a Saviour.”

II. FREQUENCY OF FORGIVENESS. Matthew xviii. 21, 22.

Question.

Then came Peter unto Him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?

Answer.

Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.

Remark.—The meaning of this reply is that there should be no limit to our forgiveness. As often as a fellow being sins against us and asks forgiveness, so often we should forgive him.

III. CONCERNING THE SABBATH. Matthew xii. 10, 11, &c.

Question.

They, (the Pharisees) asked Him, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath-days?

Answer.

He said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath-day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man better than a sheep? wherefore *it is lawful to do well on the sabbath-days.*

Remark.—It is the opinion of all wise and good men that works of necessity and mercy may be done on the Sabbath. But it becomes us to examine carefully whether a work be necessary ere we do it on a day which God has commanded to be sanctified to His service.

IV. THE GREATEST IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. Matthew xviii. 1—4.

Question.

At the same time came the Disciples unto Jesus, saying, *Who is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?*

Answer.

Jesus called a little child unto Him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily, I say unto you, except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. *Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven.*

Remark.—Jesus said at another time, “*Blessed are the poor in spirit (the humble) for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*” Matt. v. 3. See also Ps. cxxxviii. 6. Pr. xi. 2.—xviii. 12.—xxii. 4. Is. lviii. 15. As all who are now in heaven are humble, so all who expect to enter that world must be free from pride.

V. JOHN THE BAPTIST’S QUESTION CONCERNING CHRIST.

Luke vii. 20, 22, 23.

Question.

When the men were come unto Him, they said, John Baptist has sent us unto Thee, saying, *Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?*

Answer.

Jesus answering, said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; How that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the Gospel is preached. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.

Remark.—Christ would have John compare these wonderful acts with the prophecies contained in Isaiah xxxv. 5, 6.—lxi. 1.—viii. 14. and liii. 1—3—from which he would receive an answer to his question, and from which he would draw an unhesitating conclusion that He was indeed the Messiah, Immanuel, God with us.

VI. THE COMPANIONSHIP OF CHRIST WITH PUBLICANS AND SINNERS.

Luke v. 30, 31, 32,

Question.

The Scribes and Pharisees murmured against His disciples, saying, *Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners?*

Answer.

Jesus answering, said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. *I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.*

Remark.—Jesus went not to the feast to eat, drink, and to be merry, but to do good. Knowing that they who gave the entertainment were notoriously wicked, He sought an opportunity to warn them of their danger, and call them to repentance.

VII. CONCERNING FASTING. Luke v. 33, 34, 35.

Question.

They said unto him, *Why do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers, and likewise the disciples of the Pharisees; but thine eat and drink?*

Answer.

He said unto them, Can ye make the children of the bridechamber fast while the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.

Remark.—Christ was the “Bridegroom.” The disciples were His “Children.” While He was on earth and with them they would rejoice—when He should leave them and return to His heavenly home they would mourn.

VIII. CONCERNING DOING GOD’S WILL. John vi. 23, 29.

Question.

Then said they unto Him,
*What shall we do, that we
might work the works of
God?*

Answer.

Jesus answered and said unto
them, *This is the work of God,
that ye believe on Him whom He
has sent.*

Remark.—Faith is the most important of all duties. Without it all our good deeds are unavailable to secure the Divine favour. “Without faith it is impossible to please God.” (Heb. xi. 6.) “He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned.” (Mark xvi. 16.)

IX. WONDER AT CHRIST’S EARLY KNOWLEDGE. John vii. 15, 16, 17.

Question.

The Jews marvelled, say-
ing, How knoweth this man
letters, having never learn-
ed?

Answer.

Jesus answered them, and said,
My doctrine is not mine, but His
that sent me. If any man will
do His will, he shall know of the
doctrine whether it be of God, or
whether I speak of myself.

Remark.—Christ would have the people listen to His discourses not as the words of one who seemed like them a mere man, but as the messages of the Great Jehovah—His Father who sent Him into the world to instruct and save. He would farther impress upon their minds the important truth, that as he who is decided to do the will of God, is afraid of being deceived, distrusts himself and seeks diligently for Divine teaching, so he will assuredly be guided to the knowledge of every essential truth.

X. ADULTEROUS WOMAN. John viii. 3—11.

Question.

The Scribes and Pharisees
brought unto him a woman
taken in adultery; in the
very act. Now Moses in
the law commanded us, that
such should be stoned: but
what sayest thou?

Answer.

Jesus stooped down, and with
his finger wrote on the ground, as
though he heard them not. So
when they continued asking Him,
He lifted up himself, and said un-
to them, He that is without sin
among you, let him cast the first
stone. And again He stooped
down, and wrote on the ground.
And they which heard it, being

convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.

Remark.—This was a very insidious question, and intended so to entrap our Lord, that they might with apparent justice execute against Him their malicious designs. If He had said, “Kill the woman,” they would have accused Him of taking the law into His own hands without referring to the authority of their Roman Rulers. If he had said “Spare her,” they would have charged Him with altering the laws of Moses. (Lev. xx. 10—19.) He continued writing on the earth as if He did not notice them. He at length arose and ordered the accusers (as the law required,) to cast the first stone. None were disposed so to do, and at once went out. He then reproved the woman for her sin, and dismissed her with a pardon of her offence. The whole passage illustrates the wisdom and mercy of Christ.

XI. ACCUSATION THAT CHRIST HAD A DEVIL. John viii. 48—58.

Questions.

Answers.

The Jews said unto Him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?

Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me. And I seek not my own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth. Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.

Then said the Jews unto Him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, who is dead, and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself?

Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that He is your God: yet ye have not known Him; but I know Him: and if I should say, I know Him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know Him, and keep His saying. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.

Then said the Jews unto Him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham ?

Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.

Remark.—Our Lord asserted three things in the above mentioned replies—1, That inasmuch as in all His preaching He sought the glory of God, and not His own renown, He could not have been possessed of the devil, for that evil being was supremely selfish, and would use every possible means to elevate himself and dishonour Jehovah. 2, That whoever followed the will of God would secure that eternal life beyond the grave which will be the portion of the blessed. Though their bodies die their souls shall live. 3, That as He was coequal with God the Father in existence, having lain in His bosom from eternity, so He had lived before Abraham, and had been witness of all the holy actions of that Father of the faithful.

XII. MARTHA'S CAREFULNESS. Luke x. 40, 41, 42.

Question.

Martha being cumbered about much serving, came to Jesus, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister has left me to serve alone ?

Answer.

Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things : but one thing is needful : and Mary has chosen that good part, which shall never be taken away from her.

Remark.—It is the duty of those entrusted with families to make proper provisions for their household. An inattention to this duty will entail a curse upon the unheeding transgressor (1 Tim. v. 8.) But there is a duty prior to this, it is to seek the obtainment of piety, a holy heart, the Divine favour. This is that "better part" which all should be in earnest to obtain, and which having been once granted will never be taken away.

XIII. OF THE NUMBER WHO SHALL BE SAVED. Luke xiii. 23, 24.

Question.

Then said one (who stood by) unto Him, Lord, are there few that be saved ?

Answer.

He said unto them, *Strive to enter in at the strait gate : for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.*

Remark.—The question asked was one of idle curiosity. An answer such as the questioner desired would have done little good. Our Lord endeavours therefore to divert the man's attention from such useless inquiries and vain speculations, and urges him to attend first to his own salvation, lest the day of mercy being passed, the door of heaven be closed against him for ever.

XIV. CONCERNING A VILLAGE OF THE SAMARITANS. Luke ix. 52—56.

Question.

He sent messengers before His face, and they went and entered into a village of the Samaritans to make ready for Him. And they did not receive Him, because His face was as though He would go to Jerusalem. And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?

Answer.

He turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.

Remark.—The reason why the Samaritans were unwilling to give our Lord a hospitable welcome was this, they contended that the proper situation of the temple should be on Mount Gerizim, and the Jews that it should be at Jerusalem. As soon as they learned that Jesus was going to Jerusalem to worship, they saw at once that He was deciding this question *against* them, and in their rage would afford Him no entertainment. Our Lord reproved the spirit manifested by these too zealous disciples, and taught them (as He now does us) that the spirit which He approves and commands is that of mildness, kindness, and patience, forgiving those that would harm us, even as Jesus forgave His enemies, and walking at all times carefully in the footsteps of Him who came not to “destroy men's lives but to save them.”

XV. CONCERNING DIVORCE. Matthew xix. 3—6.

Question.

Then the Pharisees also came unto Him, tempting Him, and saying unto Him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for any cause?

Answer.

He answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that He which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.

Remark.—On the subject of divorce there were two opinions among the Jews. Some contended that a man might put away his wife for

mere dislike, or any, even the slightest cause; while others maintained that he ought not so to do except for the crime of adultery. Our Lord's opinion was decidedly against the former of these sentiments. The two persons had by marriage become one person. God had joined them together. When the Jews asked Him if Moses did not allow a man to put away his wife for other causes? He said that he did, because of the hardness of their hearts, but that now He, who was greater than Moses, gave them this new law; which was, that, "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery."

XVI. CONCERNING THE TWO GREATEST COMMANDMENTS.
Matthew xxii. 35—40.

Question.

One of them, who was a lawyer, asked Him a question, tempting Him, and saying, Master, which is the *great commandment in the law?*

Answer.

Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment, And the second is like unto it. Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

Remark.—The Jews divided their law into greater and lesser commandments, and there was a constant contention among them as to what things belonged to each class. Some held that the laws concerning *sacrifices* were most important—and some those concerning *circumcision*, &c. Our Lord informed this young man and those that stood around, that sacrifices, purifications, circumcision, &c. were all matters of secondary importance, but that the first duty incumbent upon every human being was to love God with all his strength, and to love his neighbour as himself. The apostle said to the Christians in Rome that "Love is the fulfilling of the law." (xiii. 10.)

XVII. CONCERNING DUTIES TO GOD AND THE KING.
Matthew xxii. 16—21.

Question.

Then the Pharisees sent unto Him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Tell us, what thinkest thou? Is it lawful to pay tribute unto Cæsar, or not?

Answer.

Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? Show me the tribute money. and they brought unto Him a penny, and He said unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto Him, Cæsar's. Then saith He unto them, Render unto Cæsar the things that be Cæsar's; and unto God the things that be God's.

Remark.—The object sought to be attained by this question was not a *knowledge of duty* but the *life of our Lord*. It was hoped and expected that He would say something in reply by which there might be excited against Him the indignation of the *ruler* or the *people*. The Jews were at this time subjects of Cæsar, the Roman king, but this subjection was deeply painful to them considering, as they did, that obedience to a foreign and heathen emperor was unworthy of the descendants of Abraham. They were strongly disinclined from paying tribute to their king. The Herodians on the other hand did not consider it so improper thus to pay tribute, inasmuch as Cæsar was not a king of their choice, but that they had by Providential direction become His subjects. If Jesus had said “It is *not lawful* to pay tribute”—the Herodians would have at once arraigned Him as an enemy of Cæsar, and a rebel against the government. If He had said “It *is lawful* to pay tribute”—He would have rendered Himself obnoxious to the mass of the people. He saw their wicked design, and foiled the blow aimed at His life by not giving a direct reply, but by assuring them that they owed certain duties to God and to him they, through the coin they circulated, acknowledged as king. These duties it was obligatory on them to perform with faithfulness and diligence. Hearing this wise reply they “ *marvelled—left Him—and went their way.*”

XVIII. AN IMPORTANT REQUISITE. Mark x. 17—24.

Questions.

There came one running, and kneeled to Him, and asked Him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life ?

He answered and said unto Him, Master, all these things have I observed from my youth

Answers.

Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me *good* ? there is none good, but one, and that is God ! Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy Father and thy Mother.

Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest : go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven ; and come, take up thy cross, and follow me, and he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved ; for he had great possessions.

Remark.—This young man did not believe that Jesus was a Divine person, and yet in addressing Him he used that term which the Jews applied only to God—“*good.*” For that our Lord reproved him.

Jesus then asked him concerning his obedience of the commandments. The young man replied, that he had carefully observed them all. Our Lord, contemplated his high moral character with much pleasure ("He loved him")—but in order to test the strength of his religious principles, told him to give away all his property and become his disciple. This the man was not prepared to do. He loved his property—his wealth was his idol. He, like many in all ages, regarded his riches more than God and the soul; and thus it proved, we fear, his destruction. Most truly did Jesus then say to His disciples, "How hardly can a rich man enter the kingdom of God."

XIX. CHRIST'S TRANSGRESSION OF THE TRADITION OF THE ELDERS.

Matthew xv. 1—6.

Question.

Then came to Jesus Scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, Why do thy Disciples transgress the tradition of the Elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat?

Answer.

He answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandments of God by your tradition? For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and thy mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die. But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; and honour not his father and his mother, shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandments of God of none effect by your traditions.

Remark.—The Jews had two kinds of law—written and traditionary. The latter, they said, Moses delivered to Joshua; he to the Judges; they to the Prophets; and thus it was kept pure until it was recorded in the Talmud. They regarded these last laws as equally if not more important than the recorded enactments of Moses and the Prophets. Washing the hands before eating was one of these traditionary laws. Jesus in His answer told them, that these were not the commands of God, and that some of them were contrary to the laws Jehovah gave to Moses. It was a part of the traditional law to devote property to the Lord, even though a parent were starving with hunger; but God said by Moses, "Honour thy father and thy mother." It becomes us to be careful lest we take something else as our guide than the revealed commands of God—they and they alone are to be our directors.

XX. PETER'S CURIOSITY. John xxi. 21, 22.

Question.

Answer.

Peter seeing him (John) saith to Jesus, and what shall this man do?

Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? *follow thou me!*

Remark.—Peter asked this question out of curiosity. This curiosity Christ did not see fit to gratify. From the reply of Jesus we learn that our first business is to follow the Lord, and that we should do this whatever may happen to others. Whether John was to die a violent death, or whether he was not to die at all, were questions of little comparative importance. In the same way we must think less of others and more of ourselves. Our language should correspond with that of Joshua, "As for me and my house we will serve the Lord."

XXI. CONCERNING THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD.

Matthew xxii. 23—33.

Question.

Answer.

There came to Him the Sadducees, which say that there is no resurrection, and asked Him, saying, Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. Now there were with us seven brethren: and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and, having no issue, left his wife unto his brother: likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh. And last of all the woman died also. Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her.

Jesus answered and said unto them. Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. And when the multitude heard this, they were astonished at His doctrine.

Remark.—The Sadducees did not believe that there was any resurrection from the dead, or any existence of the soul after the death of the body. Believing this, they asked a question which they thought our Lord could not answer. But in this opinion they erred. Christ was infinitely wise. When but twelve years old He

astonished the wise men at Jerusalem with His wisdom. We learn from the reply He returned to the Sadducees, (1.) That as God said, "I am the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob," therefore these holy men are *now alive*. If they were *not alive* God could not thus say concerning them. (2.) That though mankind will exist in the next world, yet that there will be a great difference between the manner of their intercourse and habits of life there and here. They will be like "the angels of God in heaven." Does any one ask how that will be? We cannot now know—but if we are so happy as to enter heaven at last we shall learn from sweet experience. Let us strive by repentance, faith, prayer, and good works to enter that glorious world.

XXII. CONCERNING CHRIST'S DIVINITY. Luke xxii. 66—70.

Question.

The elders of the people and the chief priests and the scribes came together, and led Him into their council, saying, *Art thou the Christ?—tell us.*

Then said they all, *Art thou then the Son of God?*

Answer.

He said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe: and if I also ask you, ye will not let me go. Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God.

And He said unto them, *Ye say that I am.*

Remark.—The meaning of the first part of our Lord's reply is this, that though He should declare positively, that He was the Christ, they would not believe Him, and if He should ask them for reasons why they did not believe Him to be the Messiah, they would not reply, and would not release Him. Our Lord therefore stated that they would hereafter be convinced, that He was a Divine Being, for they should see Him sitting on the right hand of God. Hearing this they urged a definite reply, and He told them distinctly, that He was the Son of God. In possessing that high and divine character, we are called upon to believe in Him. Had He not have been very God, He could not have satisfied the Divine law, for an infinite law requires an infinite satisfaction. Had He not been very man, He could not have stood in the sinner's place and could not be a present sympathizing High Priest. He is therefore very God and very man.

XXIII. PILATE'S THREE QUESTIONS. John xviii. 33—37.

Questions.

Pilate called Jesus, and said unto Him, *Art thou the King of the Jews?*

Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the Chief Priests have

Answers.

Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?

Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom was of this world, then would

delivered Thee unto me :
what hast thou done ?

Pilate therefore said un-
to Him, *Art thou a king
then ?*

my servants fight, that I should
not be delivered to the Jews : but
now is my kingdom not of this
world.

Jesus answered, Thou sayest
that I am a king. To this end
was I born, and for this cause
came I into the world, that I
should bear witness unto the truth.
Every one that is of the truth
heareth my words.

Remark.—We learn from the first of these replies that our Lord knew that Pilate thought Him innocent, but he asked this question at the urgent solicitation of the malicious and envious Jews, who hoped he would utter some treasonable expression, which would lead to His immediate condemnation and death. Our Lord admitted that He was a King, but not of a temporal realm. If He were a worldly Sovereign, His subjects would not allow Him to be thus treated, without making at least an attempt at His acquittal or rescue. His Kingdom was spiritual. Being one with the Father He was King of kings and Lord of lords, and was incarnate to make known the truth which all would embrace and practise, who were lovers of truth.

XXIV. PETER'S QUESTION. Matthew xix. 27, 28, 29.

Question.

Then answered Peter and
said unto Christ, Behold, we
have forsaken all, and fol-
lowed thee; what shall we
have therefore ?

Answer.

Jesus said unto him, Verily I
say unto you, That ye which have
followed me, in the regeneration
when the Son of man shall sit on
the throne of His glory, ye also shall
sit upon twelve thrones, judging
the twelve tribes of Israel. And
every one that hath forsaken
houses, or brethren, or sisters, or
father, or mother, or wife, or
children, or lands, for my name's
sake, shall receive an hundredfold,
and shall inherit everlasting life

Remark.—Many people at the present day ask the question that Peter did. "If we become Christians what important advantage will be secured to us"—they anxiously inquire. If worldly gain be promised they are ready to follow Christ—if not they seek a gratification of their worldly mindedness elsewhere. This was not Peter's motive. Upon this subject the question should be what is *duty*, not what is *advantage*. But of this we may be assured that "there is a reward for the righteous." They who boldly and perseveringly follow Christ will enjoy peace on earth and glory in eternity.

XXV. CONCERNING PECUNIARY DIFFICULTIES. Luke xii. 13, 14, 15.

Question.

One of the company said unto Him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me.

Answer.

He said unto him, Man, who made me a judge, or a divider over you? And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

Remark.—Christ came into the world not to settle disputes of property, &c. These matters belonged to the Civil Magistrate. If He should express an opinion in the matter it would be an interference with the duties of their appointed ruler, which He ought not to make. Having directed the person who asked the question to the judge, He added some important advice on the subject of *love of the world*.—After giving this counsel, He enforced the same by the important Parable of the Foolish Rich Man.

XXVI. THE DIFFICULTY OF BEING SAVED. Mark x. 26, 27.

Question.

The disciples said among themselves, Who then can be saved?

Answer.

Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.

Remark.—When we see how negligent men naturally are of the duties they owe to God—how prone they are to think and feel and do what is evil—how much they prefer sin to holiness, and the opinion of the world to the glory of God—we are led to say, “how can they be saved?—how can God pardon so many sins—how can He sanctify such wicked hearts?”—But “all things are possible with Him? He is infinitely merciful, and can forgive the worst sins of the worst transgressors.—He is *all powerful*, and can subdue the most evil hearts. If He but give His grace, the sinner will obey all the commands, and perform all the duties, and make all the sacrifices required of him—all who enter heaven will ascribe all the praise of their salvation to God alone.

XXVII. THE COMING OF ELIAS. Matthew xvii. 10, 11, 12.

Question.

His disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come?

Answer.

Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them.

Remark.—It was a common opinion, among the Jews, that Elijah (here called Elias) should appear before the Messiah came. Our Lord assured his disciples that this was true, and that Elijah had come—*John the Baptist being he*—and that he had been maliciously and causelessly put to death. Thus had the prophecy been fulfilled.

XXVIII. CONCERNING THE POWER OF FAITH. Matthew xvii. 19, 20, 21.

Question.

Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out?

Answer.

Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.

Remark.—The Apostles and disciples of Christ were enabled by the power of faith to perform the most surprising miracles. In proportion to the strength or weakness of their faith was this power increased or diminished. The same power is not now conferred upon Christians, but still it is true that God's richest spiritual blessings come through the medium of faith in Christ. When we pray we must pray in faith, and thus praying we shall receive pardon, holiness and peace, and eternal life from Him "from whom cometh down every good and perfect gift."