

SPECIAL
ARTICLES

Our Contributors

BOOK
REVIEWS

MAN AND SHEEP.

By A. W. Lewis, B.D.

The shrewd man looks after the sheep. If he has ten thousand, he does not neglect one of them, but strives to make every one worth as much as possible. This is a practical age, and common sense has an eye to the fleece. The Divine Teacher, with a master-mind, puts volumes of truth into these words: "How much is a man of more value than a sheep!"

In the South Seas the parents sell their daughters in marriage for so many pigs. It is not in that mercenary spirit that we are to consider the man and the sheep. Human life is so far above the mere animal that it is sacrilege to sell human flesh at any price; and all civilized lands are agreed upon this point. This emphasizes the worth of man, even when sheep are at a premium.

Sheep have their rights. Jesus taught this. If one falls into a deep ditch or into an old well, it is right for a man to lift it out as gently as possible, even if it is Sunday. When at large on its feet, in its proper pasture, the sheep has its rights. Man is in duty bound to protect it from dogs and wild animals; from the boy of practical jokes, and the robber of brutal ways. Whenever the sheep gets into circumstances too adverse for its powers it is the duty of man, who is stronger, to help it in its weakness to secure its rights. In proportion as a man is of more value than a sheep, he is responsible for kind treatment of this innocent creature of God. He must champion the rights of the defenceless sheep.

A child, being man, is of more value than a sheep. Man is the guardian of the child, whether it is his own child or the child of some other man, a brother man. If God holds man responsible for the care of the sheep, how much more does He hold man responsible for the care of little children! Man naturally takes good care of the sheep, that it may grow and fatten and bear wool. How much more should he take great care of the child, that he may become a valuable citizen. It does not matter whose child it is. Only a selfish man would distinguish, in case a service can be rendered. The investment of influence is infinitely better than the investment of a sheep's value in money. Besides all this, we are our brother's keeper, and God's entrusting of guardianship to us, with its unavoidable responsibility, is not arbitrary but benevolent.

The governments of Christian countries recognize the great worth of the citizen and of the child. They enact stringent laws against the murder of infants, against the abuse of children. Child labor laws are now the popular thing, as well as the right thing. They provide good schools, with proper playgrounds, and compel parents to send their children to school. All good men

uphold the governments in these things, and besides do all they can to help the child to grow up to healthy and clean manhood or womanhood. Jesus took a special interest in children, and encouraged the mothers to do their utmost in training them and in bringing them under ennobling influences.

The home is the school of the human race, and the garden of character. Yet some mothers so far forget their office and the worth of a human being that they neglect their children in their pursuit of pleasure or the approval of a frivolous society. Men, in a race for gold, neglect their own children, and wrong the children of others. They do not make their home what it ought to be. Some are more careful of the barns of their sheep than of the homes of their children. Expensive furnishings and lavish provisions do not make a home. The child's heart and mind and soul must be cared for as well as the body; and no home can be all it may be unless Jesus is the constant guest, His life the model and His spirit the inspiration of every member of the human flock.

Men and women are but children older grown; and we all have the privilege of helping them; and that help is worth as much more than help to a sheep, as they are better than the sheep. This help ranges from the cup of cold water up, through all the needs of man, to more perfect fellowship with the Father of our spirit.

All men try to remove perils from the sheep. They approve all reasonable measures to protect them from pitfalls and wolves and diseases. Every true citizen must then approve every effort to remove from the town or city perils to human life and pitfalls of sin, and the wolves of greed in men's clothing. How can some men obstruct the efforts of the temperance workers? Why do some scowl upon those that try to protect boys and men from the most subtle poison ever mixed? How can any self-respecting person associate with a rum-seller? Would any so associate with men that sold for food sheep saturated with a poison that would distress and torture and finally end in such agonies as the delirium tremens? How much is a man of more value than a sheep.

In what is a man of more value than a sheep? As we consider this, let us think how we can make our own life worth as much as possible. If a man is worth more than a sheep, then the less there is of the mere animal in us and the more of true manhood, the higher is our value to ourselves and to society. It pays to cultivate the higher values in human life.

Some men in body are worth less than a sheep. They lounge, and are worth nothing, living or dead. An industrious laborer is worth about \$1,000 to the State. Skilled labor rises to fictitious prices. Think of the artist. Who can rightly value his fine workmanship in oils, in marble, in music? Education should do marvels for the animal part of man, and raise him to the heights of dominion over the sheep. It is well to cultivate muscular strength, but there are higher values in man's physical nature, and in these we may excel. It is surprising that often colleges are ranked, not according to worth of teaching or the excellence of the graduates, but by prowess in the field of sports.

While man's body is distinctly animal, sharing the fate of animals, though longer lived, the mind of man merely touches the mind of a sheep, from which it rises into unknown

heights, for beauty and for worth. The animal has the five senses, memory, instincts, desires, and passions; and if a man lives by these he degrades his life to the animal. The man in us can reach out and learn from things and from the man in others. We can reason from particulars to general truths, and thus build up palaces in thought which we may realize in our life. It pays to think, if we think along the lines of truth and kindness.

Language is man's possession, his rightful monopoly. Literature testifies to its worth, from the letter of a friend to the immortal poem. And who can put a price upon the living words, flowing from head and heart through the lips? They awaken other souls and mould their future. The gift of tongues should not be prostituted to idle words or to what is worse. We should make the most of this asset of human life. The words of Jesus have echoed down the ages, and have brought life to millions.

Love is man's greatest gift, and we should covet most zealously this attribute of the divine life. There is even in the lower animals something of this impress of the Creator, as seen in the mother-love. In man, made in God's image, this love finds higher expression. In man as in no other creature on earth the life of God finds capacities through which the human character grows into the likeness of the divine, sharing the glory of the divine, and exercising the love of the divine. This unselfish love, rejoicing in making others happier and better, is now recognized, as never before, to be the pure Gospel of Jesus Christ, incarnated in human life. This makes man one with Christ, and links man's worth with the worth of the Son of God. God demands the most absolute loyalty to Christ, not as a despot, but because He knows that the measure of man's devotion to Him is the measure of his worth and his blessedness. Man's supreme value is found in his unconditional surrender to the will of God in Christ, by which he permits the Spirit of God to work out His plans of infinite wisdom in the attainment of the glorious end for which man was created. For worth as well as for happiness we should "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteous will."

Man finds his highest life in fellowship with God. There is no other way. Christ has opened this way, wide enough for all, but straight. "Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name. Ask and ye shall receive." What a life of prayer Jesus lived! Constantly He was in close touch with the Father in spirit. In the worship of the sanctuary and in the communion of soul with the Father in some lonely nook, Jesus found his life while on earth. He is the Divine Leader of men. "As the Father hath sent me, so send I you. Abide in me and I in you. Herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit. Thus shall ye be my disciples." "Worship the Father in spirit and in truth."

"For what are men better than sheep or goats,
That nourish a blind life within
The brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands
Of prayer
Both for themselves and those who
Call them friend?
For so the whole round world is
Every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet
Of God."
Millinocket, Maine.