

WHO OWNS THE WOOL?

Rev. J. B. Gambrell, D. D., LL. D.

In law and in reason the wool on sheep belongs to the owner of the sheep. If a man owned sheep, and sold them, he could not afterwards enforce a claim to the wool they might grow. The right in the wool follows the right in the sheep. The wool is an appurtenance growing out of sheep. God's people are God's sheep. They are his creation, by preservation, by redemption, by their own consent. There never was a better title to any property. This title holds the sheep and the wool. The sheep cannot hold property because they are property themselves. The wool is theirs only as their skins are theirs and their hands and feet by way of accommodation. The supreme title is in God and this title holds against all comers. Our times are in His hands. Whether one of us lives a day is wholly with God. How we shall die, as well as when, is with God. While men live, move and have their being in God, they must allow His right to do what He will with His own.

Not only are the sheep the property of the Creator, but the goats also. "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein." That title takes in everything. Rebellion can never overreach the Divine sovereignty over all men and everything. "The commandment is exceedingly broad" because the Divine authority is as limitless as creation. We have made a poor study of the Bible if these simple truths have not lodged themselves in our hearts. Conversion comes simply as a recognition of the Divine ownership in us. It is an acceptance, on our part, of our proper relation to our Creator and Redeemer.

In the great Hardshell struggle, the cry which ran up and down the ranks of the disturbed Baptists was one touching rights in the wool. Hardshells are covetous professors of religion who give little or no money to God. They hate missions and missionaries because of the cost. They would put an end to all Christian missions if they could. They say: "When God wants the heathen converted, He will do it without any help from men!" This is a specimen of their random and unscriptural talk. In the great struggle above referred to, the Hardshells declared that the missionaries were out shearing the sheep. I have myself heard the cry, with a peculiar twang or sneer to give it all the opprobrium possible, just as now we hear kindred sneers. In many places the missionaries flinched under the accusation, and thus compromised the deepest and most important principle in revealed religion—God's ownership in the wool which grows on His sheep. In yielding God's rights in the wool, they threw up His rights in the sheep; for there is no conceivable way to separate these rights. If God can hold the sheep, He can hold the wool; if He can hold the wool, the sheep will not go much astray.

The greatest question in the world today is: Who owns the wool? Or, to drop the figure, to whom does the property, the gold, the silver, the cattle and all belong? If that is settled on the right principle, the whole question of Christian living is far advanced toward a glorious settlement. Until it is settled, nothing is settled right. Or, in other words, if we settle our financial relations to God on the right principle, our lives are bound up with God's in such a way that we can never go far wrong.

The mightiest controversy of the age is over "rights in wool." It is, or ought to be, a controversy both in the pulpit and among Christians in the pews of every church in Christendom, till God's right is admitted and acted on. To flinch on this fundamental doctrine is to trifle with the greatest practical question the world confronts. Let God's right to the wool of His own

sheep, to say nothing of the hair of the goats—I say let God's right be settled, and we are at the opening of a new era in the world's history. The triumphant march of God's army is slowed up, waiting for us to settle the wool question. There can be but one adjudication, and that is, that whoever owns the sheep owns the wool also.

Shear the sheep? Yes, frequently and close. The pastors are the shepherds; and it is their business to feed the sheep, care for them, and shear them. A shepherd who neglects to shear the sheep ought to be turned off. He is an unfaithful servant of the Great Owner. Pastors need to face this question. They must face it, for the time is at hand when pastors will be judged according to their works, not by their dignity or their pretenses, but their work; and one of the works is to shear the sheep.

But the question has two sides: God's side and our side. Is it not hard on the sheep to shear them? Not at all. It is good for them every way. If sheep are not sheared they become unhealthy. How many of God's saints are surfeited with the things of this world! Their spirituality is smothered by a plethora of the things of this life. Many are sick because their lives have no outlet. Their affections are turned after their earthly possessions, and not set on things above. One of the best things a pastor can do for his people is to induce them to give liberally to the cause. He is doing the best thing for his people when he brings them to recognize their obligations to God in financial affairs.

So important in this matter in the churches and in the lives of the people, that it demands special and extremely earnest treatment. Some of the sheep must be cornered and crowded before they will submit to the process clearly taught in God's Word; but they must be sheared.

The question takes on another practical turn. Where our treasure is there will our hearts be also. This is Christ's word fulfilled in every life. If sheep are not sheared they drop their wool, or the devil picks them. Alas, for the waste of God's money in the service of the world, the flesh and the devil—and this to the hurt of God's people. Sin costs more than religion. Bad habits cost far more than the most liberal giving to God's cause, if we count money, and what is more than money. Robbery of God is a horrible and undoing sin. Giving to God has a wonderful power to bind the life to Him.

Two sisters, daughters of a wealthy father, were converted and started out side by side in the divine life. The father died and left each a fortune. One became at once a liberal giver. The other withheld more than was meet. The first has been these many years successful, useful and happy in her simple life, giving more and more constantly, both of herself and her money. The other is withered. She spent her money for the world. In gazing on the devil's pasture the devil robbed her of money, of health, of happiness, of usefulness, and now her life is not much but a lament. Each is reaping as she sowed. As sure as we live, Christian giving is a long step toward right living.

One more thought. Money kept back from God becomes a curse to a family, often ruining them, both for time and eternity. This is the testimony of Scripture and human experience. Giving liberally on the right principle is the best possible education and safeguard for a family. And the right principle is the principle of God's ownership of the sheep and the wool. Next to redemption the greatest question in the Christian world today is the question of rights in wool. If God's sheep were properly sheared, they would abound in health, and countless missionaries could be sent, as torch bearers, to every benighted region of the globe. The tears of widows and orphans could be dried, the sick cared for, pastors supported, homes illum-

IDOL, WORSHIP.

I. D. Caswell.

While the Apostle Paul waited at Athens for Silas and Timotheus, his spirit was stirred up as he saw the city wholly given to idolatry; so it is to-day, when one observes so many worshipping idols of various kinds. Possibly there never was an age when there were more idol-worshippers than at the present.

Take, for instance, those who build so much on natural ability, and education, both of which are a great blessing when consecrated to God, but nevertheless generally prove a source of hindrance to the possessors thereof, inasmuch as highly educated, and gifted people frequently depend on their learning or natural cleverness, instead of waiting on God to direct them in their discourse. How few who are thus talented or privileged, keep low at Jesus' feet. God evidently foresaw this from the beginning, from the fact that He rarely chose a man which the world would call clever. When He wanted a man to lead His people out of Egyptian bondage, He chose Moses, a man slow of speech; when He wanted a general to lead the Israelites against the Midianites, He hunted up Gideon, who was the least of all his father's house. (Judges 6:15). Elisha was driving oxen before a plow; and David, whom me chose to be king, was a stripling attending his father's sheep. Once in the annals of Christian history God chose a large, fine-looking man to be king; but he compromised, backslid, and doubtless went to the devil.

We hear God say, "Not many wise man after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called, but God hath called the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world, and things which are despised hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are, that no flesh should glory in his presence."

And when Jesus was selecting His disciples did He go to the college at Jerusalem and gather His followers from those who had been taught at the feet of Gamaliel? No; He went down to the seashore and chose fishermen who were ignorant men. (Acts 4:13). The weaker the vessel God uses the more He is glorified. But we are living in an age when those facts are largely lost sight of, and people must have a "big head" for a preacher, let his heart be what it will; and we fear that many in our own beloved Zion have their eyes too much on natural ability and clever appearance.

"The race is not to the swift, or the battle to the strong," nor is it by might nor by power but by My Spirit, saith the Lord." How often is it seen that one whose appearance is not the most attractive becomes wonderfully launched out for God, and feels the Lord is thrusting him forth into the active work. Of course he feels his inability for such a calling, but to be true to God and his conviction of duty, he presents himself as a candidate for the ministry, getting, however, little encouragement from many of those idol-worshippers who cannot see anything but the deficiencies which, of course, the candidate is also well aware of. The most valuable jewels often have the roughest surface.

Let some one who is smart and intelligent looking apply for work, and after a little catechizing, if his smartness enables him to clearly answer the questions put to him, he is put to work and given all encouragement,

ated by the Word of God, and the world belted with the light of truth. This wool question is a tremendous issue in the hearts and lives of Christians and churches. If we settle God's right to the wool of His sheep, we settle the world's destiny.—Examiner.

while another who has not been blessed with those natural gifts is left on the shelf. Still the cry is "More workers!" While a Church is using all the material within its reach, whether it is talent for platform work or to pray, sing, or do house to house visitation, God will raise up more.

Think of the multitudes all over our land who are Church worshippers. Simply because their parents were identified with a certain Church, they claim connection also; possibly their names were enrolled when they were children, but they know nothing of the new-birth. Hence they were never planted there by the Lord. Now, if they are children of the "bride" and have not a legitimate birth then are they bastards and not sons. Heb. 12:8. Generally children do not rise much above their parents; hence the reason why so few are willing to connect themselves to the "true bride," but go whoring after the world. James 4:4.

Again, many worship some preacher; possibly God used him as the instrument of their salvation, yet he is not the only instrument God has to perpetuate the work that has begun in their hearts. "Paul may plant, and Apollis may water, but it is God who giveth the increase."

HOME MISSION NEEDED.

About the easiest copy to get these days is that that pertains to foreign missions. It occurs to the writer that more should be said about the conditions at home. Heathenism is bad in foreign countries, but what about the heathenism that exists in America.

Recently the writer has been making some observations, which might arouse something of a home missionary spirit.

A look at the beach has added some to the stock of information already on hand.

We have seen men about as scantily dressed as a Yuma Indian and with skin as read, reading the papers, conversing with friends or strolling about in the crowds.

We have seen women unclad from above the knees down, and with bear arms and shoulders, the few garments they had on were thin and clinging, lying on the ground or splashing in the water, unashamed before the people.

We have seen a large public wharf given over to vaudeville, dancing and drinking, private dining rooms large enough for two, separated and secured from possible intrusion by another wall and hall, connected with the cafe on this wharf; and some of these private "dining rooms" were secured on the outside with padlocks.

We have seen a large building, decorated with huge figures of dragons, that remind us of "The old dragon which is the devil and Satan," devoted entirely to the entertainment of our "amusement mad" people. There were dance halls, and skating rinks, and a marvelous railroad running through tunnels and gorges, up and down, in and out, at a wonderful speed; and some of the women who were riding on the cars were lying in the arms of their escorts and shrieking like maniacs with fright, as they passed within sight of the street where we stood.

Time would fail us to speak of the billiard halls, saloons, gambling places and the other places of amusement and sin that abound on every hand from Santa Monica to Ocean Park and Venice.

But in all this stretch and amid all this sin, we failed to find one place where anything would rebuke sin, or turn the mind to a remembrance of God. The works of God might, the ocean and the sky, but no mission, or sign, or book, that would serve as an anchor to any soul adrift.

It is true there is at least one good church in Santa Monica, for we attended it, and probably there are more there and at Ocean Park and Venice, but they are not on the ocean front,

KNOWING THE LORD.

Frank D. Brechill.

Knowing the Lord is rich afford,
To sing His praise in one accord,
Assured that He will hear your song,
Victory give as you march along.
Knowing the Lord is peace and joy,
Giving the soul some rich employ,
Feasting on Him the living bread,
Standing a victor from the dead.
Knowing the Lord is life from sin,
Free from the cares of the world's dark
din;

Fetters must fall at the Master's feet,
When in His presence we daily meet.
Knowing the Lord is serving Him,
Helping souls that are gathering in;
Scattering the Gospel far and wide,
Over our land beyond the tide.
Knowing the Lord is worship sweet,
Adorning Him is praise complete;
Knowing only one gracious King,
As to the Rock of Christ we cling.
Knowing the Lord is a life beyond,
The cold, dark grave that on us dawn-

ed.
Death's mighty powers are rent in
twain,

Ever we praise that worthy name.
Knowing the Lord is meeting friends,
After our life on earth here ends;
The blood-washed throng clasp hands
again

On golden shores with heaven's clan.
Knowing the Lord there is no death,
Time does not end by our last breath.
Life grows anew when our body dies
Our souls then live beyond the skies.
Knowing the Lord, knowing the Lord,
Living each day by faith's own sword;
Overcoming power in the precious blood
Prepared for God beneath the flood.

—Selected.

Self-indulgence is the besetting sin of the times; but if you long to be a strong, athletic Christian you must count the cost and renounce the things of the flesh. It will cost you the pulling up of some old favorite sins by the roots and cutting loose from some entangling alliances, and some sharp conflicts with the tempter; it will cost you the submitting of your will to the will of Christ; but you will gain more than you ever gave up.—Theodore I. Cuyler.

nor did we see one from the ocean, although we looked for it.

There should be missions established at frequent points open to the streets, like the places of sin, with mottoes in sight and tracts to give away. There should be a counter, with a missionary behind it to call attention to and advertise the things of God. There should be a few easy seats at one side where the weary could rest. The missionary at the counter should be active and busy with literature to give away and to sell.

In the rear there should be a quiet room, where people might come and pray, with some one there to teach them the things of God. There would be no use to try to compete with the world on worldly lines for it could not be done; it would be useless to expect to draw a crowd and hold meetings beyond prayer meetings in the back room but some souls would be helped, some mothers' boys and girls saved, by a timely word, or a familiar text in sight. It would cost money and time and effort, but it would be a paying investment for eternity.

It is as much needed as a mission in any foreign land, and would not cost more than a mission there costs. Every few rods along the beach there are life saving stations to prevent people from drowning, a few stations are needed to save precious souls.—The Pentecost.

Thank God every morning when you get up that you have something to do that day which must be done whether you like it or not.—Chas. Kingsley.

"In the spiritual life you must burn before you can shine."