

"The Cattle"

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Read the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth verses of the first chapter of Genesis, which tells us that "God made the . . . cattle after their kind." Everything that God made belongs to Him. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof," because He made it and filled it. "The sea is His, for He made it," and we ourselves belong to Him "for it is He that hath made us." And so God says of the cattle that He has made, "Every beast of the forest is Mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills."

And God thinks of and cares for everything that belongs to Him, and so "He maketh grass to grow for the cattle." He who made them knows exactly what they need, and creates just the right kind of food for them.

At the time of the flood, we are told, "God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in the ark." He thought not only of Noah and his family, but He "remembered the cattle" also which were just as much His.

And again, when Jonah was angry because the Lord did not destroy Nineveh as He had purposed to do, God reminded Jonah that there was "much cattle" in the city, as well as many thousand people. To His own people, the children of Israel, He gave special instructions about the treatment of their cattle.

All these things show us with what loving care God thinks of His cattle, and we may be sure that He notices just how they are treated by those who have the care of them. God made man "to have dominion over the cattle," to rule them. That meant that he was to take care of them, to guide, protect, and feed them. God is the Ruler of the whole universe, and has dominion over all, because He has the power to supply all the needs of every creature.

If you have some animal pets, a kitten, a bird, or some rabbits, given to you for your own, you know that makes you responsible for them,—you must see that they are well supplied with the right kind of food, and kept comfortable and happy so far as it is in your power to make them so.

So when God gave to man the whole animal creation, He meant to use man as the channel through which He would supply all their needs, and keep them in a state of perfect happiness.

But oh, what a sad change sin has brought, and how man has fallen from his dominion! For now, instead of being the one through whom the needs of all other animals are supplied, he takes from them all to supply his own needs. He takes the wool from the sheep, the skin from the cattle, fur and hair from other animals, the shell from the tortoise, the ivory from the elephant, and even the feathers from the birds, to make clothes and ornaments for himself.

If he feeds any of the animals for a time it is only that he may use their strength to do his work, or at last feed on them, use their flesh for his own food. If you could see some of the terrible sights in the slaughter-houses, where thousands of God's creatures are slain, sometimes with unnecessary cruelty, to make food for man, you would see how sadly true is God's Word which tells us that "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain."

Think what terrible sufferings have been brought upon the animals through man's disobedience to God, and be sure that you do nothing to add to these groanings that go up to the ears of God; but be sorry for the sins that have made them suffer so, and do all in your power to relieve them. Always be kind to all the animals that you have anything to do with, and try to influence others to be the same.

God did not make the cattle to be eaten. He did not create them for our food, for He gave us "every herb bearing seed," and "every tree in the which is the fruit of a tree bearing seed," to be our food. He made the cattle for His own pleasure for "Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are, and were created." He gave all living creatures to man to care for so that he might share in "the joy of the Lord," the pleasure that He feels in giving life and happiness.

Thank God that the time is coming when God's loving purpose will be fulfilled, when all creation's groans shall cease, when in the new earth man's dominion shall be restored. Then he shall again be king over the whole earth, not to "exercise lordship" over God's creatures and make them his servants, but to be the one through whom God shall serve and give life and happiness to all His creatures in this earth.