

# EDITORIAL . . .

**Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body (1 Corinthians 6:19+20).**

There is something sacred about human beings. A deeply held conviction that acknowledges this truth, will do more to prevent moral lapse than a thousand warnings about the penalties for transgression. Years ago, civic authorities would hang criminals in public because it was thought that the spectacle would dissuade other would-be offenders. Sadly, the opposite proved true. After these public executions, violent crimes increased.

A community wrestles with the problem of drugs and its attendant woes. Angry voices call for swifter and harsher penalties. But none of these have worked very well in the past. Other, more reflective, citizens counsel a different approach; one that seeks to build into the youthful consciousness a reverence for the sacredness of the self. All successful teachers and all good parents know that the time will come when the external restraints they have built around their charges will drop away, and there will be nothing left to keep them from ruining themselves, apart from an interior certainty that they are too hallowed to profane.

All religions hold something to be sacred. In the case of Christianity, it is personality that is revered. This has enabled men and women to think highly of themselves. "Dear friends, now we are children of God . . ." (1 John 3:2). In Egypt, Joseph cannot let himself take advantage of the wife of Potiphar. Why? Because he is man in relationship to God. He will be something less than that if he gives in. The Titanic strikes an iceberg and begins to sink. Self-regard runs riot. But not for everyone. Some men refuse to board a lifeboat; preferring to let women and children go before. Why? Because these men have learned from somewhere that there is

something sacred about women and children, and, failing to honor that, they desecrate themselves.

Spinoza, the philosopher, lived in Holland. He ground and polished lenses, while he thought deep thoughts of God and of the world. Louis XIV offered him a pension and other favors if he would but dedicate one of his books to the king. But Spinoza didn't think much of Louis XIV. He valued himself too highly to be bought so cheap. So he had to be content to go on polishing lenses.

Every person who has had a wonderful mother, has been subjected to one of life's most salutary influences. A devoted mother covers her offspring with love. So attentive is she in her love that she will forgo pleasures, joys and even necessities, just so her child's needs are all met. She will stand between her child and any threat; any harm. She will let the blow fall on her own shoulder. She will do whatever it takes; no matter at what cost to herself, to care for her child. She sacrifices herself.

To know yourself to have been sacrificed for, is to believe that your life is worth far too much to be vandalized. This is the special spiritual power that Christ gives his people. He loves them with such an infinitely sacrificial love that they cannot choose to live loosely or meanly without feeling that they are committing sacrilege. This is self-esteem that is enabling.

There is a self-regard that is destructive. It is more like conceit than esteem. Paradoxically, he who begins by thinking more of himself than he ought to, will finish up being ashamed of himself. From Christ a man can learn to think high thoughts about his own worth that will help to keep him from violating what God has declared holy.

Ron J. Allen



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