with Dean Stanley that "all good history is good religion".[1] Yet "the weight of historic precedent is authoritative, but it is not conclusive: the final criterion is the Word of God".[2] This suggests that the conclusive factor is the genuineness and completeness of each minister's self-dedication and obedience. Jesus sanctified, consecrated himself for others:[3] to similar self-consecration every Christian, and *a fortiori* every minister, is called. The authority of the minister will derive from the Church and from the Lord whose commissioned representative he is, but the authoritativeness of the minister will derive from the authenticity of his own self-offering, from the integrity of his own response to the developing demands of his call to be a pastoral, prophetic, priestly agent in today's world, from the living quality of his own self-consecration. The minister's influence ultimately will depend not on education, nor on social position,[4] nor even on the fact of ordination, but on the quality of his initial and continually renewed response to his vocation. "The mark of a saint is not perfection but consecration:"[5] this is as true of the ordained minister as it is of any Christian. Whether one is depressed about the comparative inadequacy of any Christian discipleship and witness, or by the comparative ineffectiveness of the ordained ministry in particular, the message of the gospel remains one of invincible hope. The Lord's self-consecration provides the pattern and means for each disciple's self-consecration.

If the rejoinder comes that this is but the mixture as before, the last word must be Humpty Dumpty's last word to Alice: "Wait till you've tried."

Christian Duty and Animal Welfare

A. RICHARD KINGSTON

Those who have sought to define the Christian duty to the lower creatures have, broadly speaking, done so from one of three standpoints: biblical teaching, scholastic philosophy or general ethical principles.

A priori we might expect that the first of these, the detailed exposition of all biblical references to the treatment of animals, should be a sufficient guide to our conduct, but scripture in fact is rather silent if not inconsistent in this respect. Its affirmation of man's dominion over every living thing (Gen. 1: 26; 9: 2–3) is at best morally neutral; some would say negligent.

[1] Quoted S. H. Hooke, *In the Beginning*, Oxford, 1947, p. 147.
[2] Charles Smyth, in *The Genius of the Church of England*, by A. E. J. Rawlinson and Charles Smyth, London, 1947, p. 32.
[3] John 17: 19.
[4] Cf. 1 Cor. 1: 26 ff.
[5] Bishop Westcott, quoted J. B. Magee, *Reality and Prayer*, London, 1958, p. 175

Westermarck commented that "they are given over to his supreme and irresponsible control without the slightest injunction of kindness or the faintest suggestion of any duties towards them".[1] Admittedly the Old Testament elsewhere contains injunctions about caring for animals, and by elaborating on these and other verses some writers have presented noble and impressive pleas for mercy. Perhaps the most exhaustive treatise of this nature was written by Dr Humphry Primatt in 1776,[2] yet it is a book more commendable for its concern to discourage cruelty than for the cogency of its exegesis. Sabbatarianism rather than humanitarianism would seem to account for many of the precepts on which he dwells, whilst the prohibition of magical practices, not the promotion of moral ones, lies behind such commands as not seething a kid in its mother's milk (Ex. 23: 19) and not taking the mother bird when robbing its nest (Deut. 25: 4). Indeed the general verdict on much of the moralizing in this book and others like it is that it is pious but extremely forced. This is not to suggest that as regards animal welfare the Old Testament is insignificant: far from it. The often quoted command not to muzzle the ox that is treading out the corn (Deut. 25: 4) indicates positive consideration. But a few isolated verses such as this are not an adequate basis for Christian standards, nor do they justify the contention that "it was therefore hardly necessary for our Lord to give any specific command to be kind to animals. He took it for granted that those whom he addressed would recognize that duty. An ox or an ass fallen into a ditch would be rescued, even on the sabbath day."[3] Actually, such attention was permitted on the sabbath "only if the animal were in extreme pain or in danger of dying",[4] a regulation which not everyone would term humane. But if Jesus was silent on this whole issue, apart from assuring us of his Father's care for even the sparrows, St Paul, unfortunately, was not, and his exclamation on Deut. 25: 4, "Doth God take care for oxen?" (1 Cor. 9: 9), had disastrous consequences, being used by Aquinas to explain away all biblical compassion for animals.[5] When, therefore, a modern Church statement on animal welfare affirms that "Christians owe their interest and inspiration to the Bible",[6] we must realize that this is not due to specific teaching on the subject, but to seeing the implications of its central ethics of love. As C. W. Hume put it in a recent article,

[1] E. Westermarck, *The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas*, Vol. 2, London, 1912, p. 506.

[2] H. Primatt, *A Dissertation on the Duty of Mercy and Sin of Cruelty to Brute Animals*, London, 1776.

[3] C. W. Hume, *The Status of Animals in the Christian Religion*, London, 1957, p. 5.

[4] Paul Ramsey, *Basic Christian Ethics*, London, 1953, p. 56.

[5] See *Summa Contra Gentiles*, II, 112. See also G. M. Lee on this text in THEOLOGY, LXXI., p. 122, March 1968.

[6] "A Statement on the Treatment of Animals" adopted by the British Methodist Conference, 1951.

> "To formulate the Christian attitude towards animals in terms of texts from the Bible would be almost, though not quite, as difficult as to formulate objections to slavery in the same way. In the former as in the latter case our obligations arise from the humility and charity that should characterize a sincere Christian."[1]

We return to this shortly.

A second source for determining the Christian attitude to animals has been Thomist philosophy. Following Aristotle, Aquinas distinguished between the rational soul, which is peculiar to man and higher beings, and the sensitive soul, including the nutritive soul, which he shares with the lower animals. The former is essentially spiritual and immortal, but the latter, even though it permits animals to feel, desire and memorize, is material and perishable. They are guided entirely by instinct.

> "These philosophical principles", explain Addis and Arnold, "determine the morality which regulates the conduct of man to the brutes. As the lower animals have no duties, since they have no free will, . . . so they have no rights, for right and duty are correlative terms. The brutes are made for man, who has the same right over them which he has over plants or stones."[2]

They add a little later, however, that

> "a limitation must be introduced here. It is never lawful for a man to take pleasure directly in the pain given to brutes, because, in doing so, man degrades and brutalizes his own nature."

Although most exponents of this system do not rise above this level, and frequently for good measure disparage the alleged Anglo-Saxon sentimentality about animals, yet some recent articles also stress a higher "limitation", namely that the "ill-treatment of animals is an abuse and perversion of God's design".[3]

Curbing the temptation to comment at length on this thesis I must simply affirm that I find its dogmatic denial of (or explanation of apparent) rationality in animals totally unconvincing, and in any case irrelevant, for as Bentham's familiar words express it,

> "the question is not, Can they *reason*? nor, Can they *talk*? but, Can they *suffer*?"[4]

Rationality is only relevant in that it would intensify that suffering. Whether or not we call it a right, their sensibility does lay a claim upon us not to inflict or permit unnecessary suffering, and we recognize this as in part *their* claim upon us and not just a duty done to avoid moral decay or divine wrath. The Thomist obsession with man's uniqueness provides a poor premise from which to estimate the implications of the common creaturehood of all sentient life.

[1] John Macquarrie (Ed.), *A Dictionary of Christian Ethics*, London, 1967, p. 11.
[2] W. E. Addis & T. Arnold, *A Catholic Dictionary*, 9th edit., London, 1916, p. 31.
[3] J. Murray SJ, in *A Catholic Dictionary of Theology*, Edinburgh, 1962, p. 98.
[4] J. Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, Vol. 2, London, 1823, p. 236.

Finally we should note briefly that Christians have often used general ethical principles or systems, such as Utilitarianism, to work out their obligations to animals, or alternatively have sought to show that humane treatment is demanded by natural as well as revealed theology – not that the religion of nature proved too dependable in this respect. Whilst gladly acknowledging that many of these writers present us with high ideals, we must nevertheless reserve the name "Christian" for conclusions which are not only in considerable harmony with the teaching of Jesus but are actually built upon it.

We turn, therefore, to our positive approach to animal welfare. We begin by stressing that despite current debates on the nature of Christian ethics, no one disputes that the essence of Christ's ethical teaching was neighbourly love. Whether love alone is commanded or whether particular precepts are also binding upon us is a question we need not consider, as there are none of the latter on animal welfare. For most people, however, love by itself is too difficult and indefinite a criterion; we need some derivative principle or guide-line to indicate the more precise application of love to each particular area of conduct. Finding this is no simple deductive procedure. It requires a clear understanding of the general factors involved in the sphere of ethics under consideration and a true insight as to what attitude love demands in such circumstances. In the field of animal welfare this means that we must take full account of their sensitivity and measure of intelligence, their *joie de vivre* and contribution to the glory of nature, yet at the same time not belittle our dependence upon them and our inescapable competition with many of them for food and even for survival. There are, no doubt, many other factors which could be mentioned, but they do not really affect our task of discerning the norm by which the Christian ethic expresses itself in this situation. We have then to find a moral formula which neither lessens the imperative to love nor ignores the harsh facts of nature. Since so much traditional theology has erred in the former respect, just as the popular stories of saints and animals, which even the historian Lecky rated important for inculcating kindness, obviously erred in the latter, we may wonder whether Christian moralists can offer any guidance in our quest; but, in fact, the thought and terminology of several writers merits consideration, although we must here confine ourselves to a few of their central ideas.

Making due allowances for metaphorical usage, it still remains true that those who have described animals as our "brothers", as did, for instance, St Francis, St Basil,[1] or the hymnwriter E. J. Brailsford,[2] meant thereby commend to brotherliness as the proper Christian attitude towards all God's creatures. That this is a magnificent and moving concept no one would question, but equally it is not the formula we seek. It does not give us a principle which without reservation governs our relationship to all

[1] See *the UFAW Theological Bulletin*, No. 2, 1962, p. 3.
[2] See *The Methodist Hymn Book*, No. 852.

forms of sentient life, to the pests which we must control as well as to the pets which we cherish, to those which compete for our food as well as to those which contribute to it.

This criticism also applies, though with less force, to the term "neighbourliness", which the founder of The Universities Federation for Animal Welfare employs in his book *The Status of Animals in the Christian Religion* and in other writings. Strictly speaking its scope, too, is limited, being hardly the most appropriate name, for example, for disinfestation. This is in no way to object to the use of such idealistic terms to evoke humanitarian concern, nor to question Major Hume's penetrating understanding of what neighbourliness entails.

The word "reverence" was being used to characterize the right treatment of animals even before Schweitzer made "reverence for life" the corner-stone of his ethics,[1] claiming that it is

> "the ethic of Jesus brought to philosophical expression, extended to cosmical form, and conceived of as intellectually necessary."[2]

As before, we have no dispute with the practical interpretation of this ethic, at least as far as sensitive life is concerned. Chapter 21, section 4, of *Civilization and Ethics* makes exacting but not improper or impossible demands. Our dispute is rather with the title, which, unless qualified, seems unrealistic. Admittedly one could argue that a reverence for all life may not inconsistently require sacrificing its lower to its higher forms; yet, apart from mercy killing, to give reverence as the reason for taking the life of any animal, and not just for using humane methods of doing so, detracts from, if it does not contradict, the strong moral and emotive significance of the word "reverence" – a word which requires deep respect for the sacred character of its object. Are we therefore to dismiss this term also as inapplicable in the real predatory world? In its absolute and unqualified sense the answer must be Yes. Complete reverence for every creature would be possible only in paradise. And yet, somehow, this term refuses to be dismissed. It still impresses us as the most appropriate if not the perfect name for the manifestation of love in the sentient sphere. Unlike brotherliness and neighbourliness, which are too obviously imported from the realm of human relationships and are only being used here metaphorically, reverence can be taken quite literally as describing our recognition of the sanctity of conscious life and its consequent imperative claim upon our care and consideration. Being thus unwilling to discard this powerful term, yet equally unwilling to retain it in any imperfect or merely poetic sense, I suggest that the phrase "realistic reverence" is the derivative principle for which we are seeking, as best

[1] E.g. by Josiah Oldfield and C. W. Leadbeater. See Henry S. Salt (Ed.), *The New Charter*, London, 1896, pp. 82, 152.

[2] Quoted by George Seaver, *Albert Schweitzer: The Man and His Mind*, London, 1947, p. 285.

expressing the law of love in a partly dysteleological universe. In this formula we have an ethics which can be applied unequivocally to every problem in the field of animal welfare, requiring us to promote their well-being where circumstances permit, yet not forbidding us to take stern measures where necessity compels us to do so. That this new title does little more than make explicit what is understood in the phrase "reverence for life" may readily be granted; nevertheless the change seems important to obviate charges of irrelevance and unreality. It should also obviate the charge of cruelty due to the misapprehension, prevalent in some eastern countries, that reverence means that the lives of certain or of all species of animals are sacrosanct, and hence must never be terminated. They must be left to die naturally no matter what lingering agony that may involve. Where reverence is the realistic embodiment of love it cannot be thus perverted; neither should it be perverted within Christianity by tolerating an unredeemed doctrine of man's dominion over every creature.

Some may wish to substitute for the phrase "realistic reverence" the more familiar one, "reverent realism", which certainly sounds better, but it stresses the wrong concept. Love in the present context is more than realism tinged with reverence, it is primarily reverence – realistically conditioned. This principle, needless to say, is still but a guide-line to our thinking. It provides no easy solution to the actual problems of animal welfare, and perhaps it is only as we try to apply it to these issues, and particularly to the most controversial subjects of blood-sports, vivisection and vegetarianism, that we will appreciate something of its true nature.

The ethics of realistic reverence recognizes the necessity of having to put many animals to death. Pest control, disease control, animal population control and other requirements demand this. It insists, however, that this must always be done with regret and with the utmost attention to swift and humane methods of slaughter. Consequently, to regard the catching and killing of animals as "sport", to be indulged in for enjoyment, is decidedly sub-Christian. Dean Inge was not overstating the position when he wrote that "to take a pleasure in killing our helpless cousins in fur and feathers seems to me a disgusting relic of barbarism".[1]

The ethics of realistic reverence can also recognize the distressing necessity of using lower forms of life for essential medical research, though it would uncompromisingly condemn the brutality of unanaesthetized vivisection. Some accounts of the sickening butchery perpetrated in the name of science in former generations induce the same sort of despair of man's moral nature as accounts of Nazi concentration camps do in ours. Even under today's strictly regulated conditions, however, which unhappily do not exist in all countries, this ethics would plead for at least the three Rs set out by Russell and Burch in *The Principles of Humane Experimental Technique*. These are the *replacement* of animals by non-

[1] W. R. Inge, *Christian Ethics and Modern Problems*, London, 1930, p. 280.

sentient material whenever possible, the *reduction* of the number of animals used by eliminating all unnecessary tests and duplication, and the *refinement* of procedures so as to cause only the minimum of discomfort.

Because of Genesis 9: 3, vegetarianism has never been a prominent issue in Christianity. This verse has been decisive for most theologians, even if, like Paley, they felt that the practice of flesh-eating was otherwise indefensible. Commenting on Paley's reference to what "many tribes of Hindoos actually do", W. H. Drummond pointed out that whilst vegetarianism might be possible "in tropical regions abounding in esculent roots and vegetables", it certainly was not in "regions of perpetual sterility", for "Greenlanders and Esquimaux".[1] The ethics of realistic reverence would undoubtedly concede this point, extending its validity well beyond such geographical limits, but would add that the time is approaching, if not already here (as some of us have become convinced), when the availability of alternative sources of protein will not permit us to argue that meat, fowl or fish are nutritional necessities. Research into the production of simulated meat products, similar not only in food value but in taste and texture, is being undertaken in several countries with encouraging results, and if economically developed it will have a direct bearing on the ethics of diet, apart from helping to meet world food shortage. Natural meat, according to one agricultural magazine, will remain as a prestige food; but if so, it would not be permissible to those motivated by realistic reverence, that verdict being reinforced by the dubious morality of factory farming.

Meanwhile, this ethic requires at least our support of those societies which are doing such excellent work to promote humane standards; to those who occupy pulpits it is also a challenge not to give any occupant of the pew reason to quote the complaint of Mauleverer in Sir Arthur Helps's *Animals and Their Masters*:

> "I am not a great frequenter of preachers now; but, upon a moderate calculation, I think I have heard, in my time, 1,320 sermons; and I do not recollect that in any one of them I ever heard the slightest allusion made to the conduct of men towards animals."[2]

Silence and Speaking about God

Secularization: 3

E. SCHILLEBEECKX, OP

The Christian revelation, in the form in which it has been handed down to us, clearly no longer provides any valid answer to the questions about

[1] W. H. Drummond, *The Rights of Animals and Man's Obligation to Treat Them with Humanity*, London and Dublin, 1838, pp. 30–31.

[2] London, 1875, p. 20.