

Ann Cottrell Free, *Animals, Nature and Albert Schweitzer*
(The Albert Schweitzer Fellowship, The Animal Welfare
Institute, The Albert Schweitzer Center, The Humane
Society of the United States, 1982.)

Most literate people know something about Dr. Schweitzer and "reverence for life." This remarkable book fills

in that knowledge by tracing the general development and implication of Schweitzer's moral philosophy in a

deceptively simple and clear way. The book consists of 81 pages of well-organized quotes from Schweitzer, brief editorial comments and fascinating photographs and, like Schweitzer's life itself, can be appreciated at many levels, depending on one's own capacities and experiences. At ten year-old could enjoy it as much as a philosopher, though for different reasons.

There is, first, the story of an interesting, complex, courageous man. By the age of 30, Schweitzer held two doctorates and was an acclaimed organist and theologian. He then studied medicine and at age 38 established a medical mission in French Equatorial Africa where he spent much of the rest of his life. He also lectured widely, gave organ recitals, and wrote books.

These achievements were part of Schweitzer's attempt to work out a coherent philosophy of life. The book traces his struggle with conflicting feelings and confused thoughts as he tries to clearly conceptualize and articulate a unified philosophy. "To think out in every implication the ethic of love for all creation--this is the difficult task which confronts our age", and Schweitzer took it as the central task in his own life.

In his boyhood, Schweitzer had learned to love nature and had developed as sensitivity to what he later called the will-to-live of every living creature. As an adult, he was well aware that nature included inherent conflict living creatures destroyed each other, sometimes necessarily and sometimes not. He was seeking a fundamental and universal ethical guide for behavior that was realistic in recognizing both the will-to-live and the inherent conflict among living creatures.

After years of struggle, that

answer came dramatically while he was sailing down the Ogowe River.

Lost in thought I sat on the deck of the barge, struggling to find the elementary and universal conception of the ethical which I had not found in any philosophy. Late on the third day, at the very moment, when at sunset, we were making our way through a herd of hippopotamuses, there flashed upon my mind, unforeseen and unsought, the phrase, 'Reverence for Life'.

The phrase, now well-known, summarizes Schweitzer's basic moral principle. For him, the relevant characteristic for inclusion in the moral community is life--not rationality, not sentience, but merely being alive. "The life around me must be full of significance to itself. If I am to expect others to respect my life, then I must respect the other life I see, however strange it may be to mine." The usual boundaries of ethical concern are expanded.

As the housewife who has scrubbed the floor sees to it that the door is shut, so that the dog does not come in and undo all her work with his muddy paws, so religious and philosophical thinkers have gone to some pains to see that no animals enter and upset their system of ethics. Ethics in our Western world has hitherto been largely limited to the relations of man to man. But that is a limited ethics. We need a boundless ethics which will include the animals also.

The book includes comments of Schweitzer's about the implications of such ethics in cases of use of animals as entertainment, for work, for food, and for experimentation; hunting; destruction of animal habitats; and problems of over-population.

In 1952, Dr. Schweitzer was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of his humanitarianism. In 1954, he was honored by the Animal Welfare Institute which created the Albert Schweitzer medal, awarded annually for outstanding service to animals.

This book is carefully documented and includes a bibliography. It is interesting and useful for everyone who has taken upon himself Schweitzer's task—to think out in every implication the ethic of love for all creation.

Connie Kagan
ANPAC

Note: *Animals, Nature and Albert Schweitzer* may be ordered from any of the following publishers at \$3.50 postpaid. Bulk prices on inquiry.

The Albert Schweitzer Fellowship
866 United Nations Plaza
New York, New York 10017

The Animal Welfare Institute
P. O. Box 3650
Washington, D.C. 20007

The Humane Society of the United States
2100 L Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20037