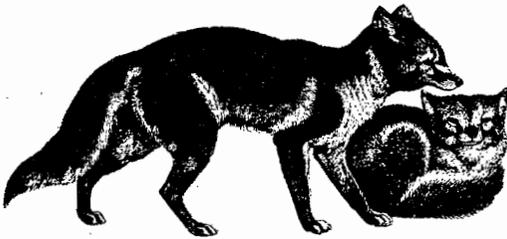


Stewardship: Whose Creation Is It Anyway?

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Having moved to the "Bible Belt" from Chicago several years ago, I have been astounded at the number of people who quote the Old Testament to me whenever I have initiated a discussion of animal rights issues. Discounting the significant number of people who make up biblical passages as they go along, the quotes are intended to discredit animal rights arguments.¹ Philosophers familiar with the animal rights issue say that this approach is based on the "traditional interpretation of the Dominion Theory." Usually this interpretation is countered by quoting other Old Testament passages which support a "stewardship" interpretation of the Dominion Theory. Those philosophers who do not automatically discard the Bible as hopelessly speciesist thus imply that the whole question of whether the Bible is sympathetic to animals is a matter of Old Testament exegesis.

The argument I would like to advance is that we ought to stop selecting specific Old Testament quotations to support a particular position and instead consider the biblical message as a whole, adopting a wider perspective. After indicating the problem with the isolated biblical quotation approach, I will explain the Dominion Theory and its interpretations, then examine a macroscopic

rather than a microscopic view of the Bible pertaining to the treatment of God's creation and conclude by suggesting the implications this view could have for the treatment of nonhuman animals. My primary aim is to find a common ground for discussing the proper treatment of animals with those segments of the general public who find their source of ethics in the Bible.

By selecting certain Old Testament quotations, the average church-goer can support any position on animals he wishes, including inconsistent and contradictory positions. For example, if one wishes to support the right to eat animals, one may cite the passage where God says to Noah, "Every living and crawling thing shall be food for you" (Gen. 9:1-3). Conversely, a vegetarian may point to the passage where God directs man to live off the herbs and fruits of the trees (Gen. 1:29). Animal experimentation may be defended by quoting passages where God looks "with favor" on animal sacrifices (Gen. 4:45). But anti-vivisectionists may respond by referring to the passage where God says, "I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts; I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs or of he-goats" (Isaiah 1:11-12).

Turning from this sparring with biblical passages by the laity to the more sophisticated treatment by scholars, we might expect to find less inconsistency. However, unfortunately we find philosophers and theologians following the same approach. Andrew



RELIGION

Linzey² and Bernard Rollin³ quote texts to show that Western religions are supportive of the idea of animal rights, while Dan Dombrowski⁴ and Peter Singer⁵ quote texts to show that Western religions are hostile to it.

Not only are different scriptural passages inconsistent with each other, but even one and the same passage can be given inconsistent scholarly interpretations. In regard to the ethical treatment of animals, the following Genesis passage is the center of the interpretative controversy:

God said, "Let us make man in our own image...and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of heaven, the cattle, all the wild beasts and the reptiles...."

The crux of the controversy surrounds the interpretation of the word "dominion," giving rise to the "Dominion" theory and its conflicting interpretations.

Linzey explains that the traditional interpretation of the Dominion Theory was initiated by biblical scholarship: "For many centuries, the standard interpretation of the word dominion (*radah*) in Genesis has been nothing less than despotism."⁶ Based on the above passage, the traditional interpretation claims that the creation of humanity in the image of God and the dominion they are given over other creatures permits human beings to use animals as they choose, taking life whenever it suits them. It follows that since animals only exist for human beings to use, they have a merely instrumental value. In the following passage, Singer explains the implications of the traditional interpretation:

The Dominion Theory is a theory within the Judeo-Christian tradition, and it is a central tenet of that tradition that God is all knowing and all good. Hence, God would not have given humans the right to kill animals without good reason, and yet He must have known that humans do not need to kill animals for food to survive. It would therefore appear to be an implication of the Dominion Theory...that animal life is of little or no value—for why else would God have given humans dominion over the other animals and told us that we may kill them for food?⁷

If animals have little or no value, then not only is it unimportant whether we use them for food, but it also doesn't matter if we use them for experimentation,

clothing, entertainment, or any other sort of interest we can dream up. Just as human beings are subject to God's arbitrary and absolute rule, so animals are subject to human beings' arbitrary and absolute rule. Most advocates of this interpretation claim that since animals only exist for the individual and societal welfare of human beings, they must be subdued and controlled. In short, they see human dominion as a divinely appointed license for human tyranny over animals.

In contrast to the traditional interpretation, recent biblical scholars have interpreted human dominion over animals to mean "benign stewardship, expressed more properly in care than in consumption."⁸ According to this interpretation, God's gift of dominion means that we are called upon to be responsible to God for our treatment of the created world. Advocates of the stewardship interpretation might concede to the traditional theorists that animals are in the same relationship to humans as humans are to God. But instead of seeing this relationship in terms of arbitrary and absolute rule, stewardship exegetes emphasize that we must be compassionate, loving, and merciful in our relationship with animals as God is in His relationship to human beings. Just as a parent's guardianship over her child does not entail exploitation, neither does human guardianship over God's creatures. Such a relationship requires care and protection rather than abuse and self-serving tyranny.

In short, there are two conflicting biblical accounts of the role humans should have towards animals. Most theologians agree that the Bible is a collection of texts, containing a wide variety of ethical teachings, that span a period of over a thousand years. Although it is bound together by a common thread, it also exhibits a progressive development over time. This accounts for the many apparent contradictions and inconsistencies found in the Bible.

The problem is compounded when a passage is interpreted in isolation from its broader context, and then cited as the sole warrant for making a judgment. Generally, the method of interpreting isolated biblical passages leads to a very subjective, individualistic ethic. Specifically, such interpretations do not provide concrete moral guidelines for how humans should treat animals. Father Raymond Collins, a New Testament scholar, notes the futility of attempting to use biblical interpretation as a foundation for a Christian ethic:

The claim has been made that biblical exegesis has failed theology particularly in the area of

ethics and spirituality... To be sure, those who voice the hope that Christian ethics be biblically based are expressing an expectation that a methodology be developed which would yield concrete moral norms. To date, such a methodology has not been developed. It is even doubtful whether it is possible to develop such a methodology.⁹

If Fr. Collins is correct that biblical interpretation resulting in a Christian ethic has not been and may never be developed, then surely we should not expect this method to provide us with guidelines for the ethical treatment of animals.

What is the solution? Should theists abandon the Bible as a guide to the proper treatment of animals? But if theists choose this solution, why shouldn't they abandon the Bible in regard to other ethical issues as well whenever there is a conflict between biblical passages? Doubtlessly, this would please atheists, but theists prefer that their ethical and religious views converge and support each other, even if they are based on different sources.

Another alternative, one that would not require theists to reject the Bible as a guide to the treatment of animals, would be simply to add up the number of passages that support the traditional interpretation and those that support the stewardship interpretation. This approach has some force since one way of emphasizing the importance of a concept is to repeat it in a number of different ways. However, just because a concept is not mentioned as many times as a conflicting concept does not establish its falsehood. Although reliance on this approach alone seems quite naive, the repetition of a passage may be a useful indicator of its importance in conjunction with other criteria.

A more fruitful alternative would be to abandon a method based on interpreting isolated texts and approach the Bible macroscopically rather than microscopically. Even Collins, who has expressed skepticism in regard to finding a biblically based ethic, seems to appreciate this approach, "Within the framework of a biblically based ethic, the New Testament must be looked to with respect to its more pervasive significance."¹⁰ His observation about the New Testament can be applied to the entirety of the Bible. In order to understand the biblical message, readers must concentrate less upon isolated passages and more on its common thread. Accordingly, a third

alternative, one that would not lead to skepticism on the part of the theists, is to consider the biblical message as a whole, indicating its broad themes, and then apply these findings to the specific issue of our role in regard to animals.

The development of a macroscopic approach to the Bible necessitates establishing criteria on which to designate the content of such a view, since the Bible contains such a large and diverse number of motifs. By its very nature, a macroscopic view must be as broad and simple as possible without being contentless or characterless. And in order to be communicated easily, it must be both agreeable and understandable to scholars and the laity. Consequently, only those biblical themes will be used that are (1) recognizable to the layperson, (2) non-controversial, and (3) either implied in or repeated in a number of passages.

Fulfilling the first criterion requires the use of the most widely read biblical texts. Generally, the most familiar Old Testament books are Genesis and Exodus. Since the "Dominion" passage controversy concerns the creation of humanity in the image of God and the prescribed role of human beings, the motifs we focus on should address how these early books portray both God and the ordained human role.¹¹

God is first depicted as the Creator of all natural things. This motif is both non-controversial and, after its initial explicit statement, is implied throughout the rest of the Bible. Secondly, the power of God is expressed repeatedly in the concept of His role as ruler of the universe. This motif is also non-controversial. Given the first two motifs, it would be erroneous to claim that it is unimportant to God what occurs in this created order. And He manifests His concern for what occurs in creation in one biblical passage after another. Thus, a third motif, of God's care for creation, is essential to indicate the way He continues His activity in the universe.

Any attempt to discover the nature of human beings' intended role would be hard-pressed to find a better source than Genesis and Exodus. In story after story it is emphasized that the basic human role is to serve God. The motif of human beings as the servants of God leads to another motif, that of humans as answerable for their actions. Assuming them to be responsible agents, God casts His judgment on human creatures for their failure to live up to their responsibility as His servants. Examples abound in these books, including the familiar accounts of Sodom and Gomorrah, the afflictions visited

upon the Egyptians for not freeing the Hebrew people, and, as punishment for idolatrous worship, the Hebrews spending forty years in the desert before entering the promised land. Thus, the two fundamental roles of human beings found in the most familiar Old Testament books are their subservience and accountability to God.

The most widely read books of the New Testament are the Gospels. Christians, whether scholars or laypersons, perceive the Gospels as a continuation of the Old Testament. This perception is vital to Christian belief, since Jesus' messiahship is in large part recognized as the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies. So, for the Christian a macroscopic view of the Bible will entail that the motifs of the Old Testament be examined in the light of the Gospel teachings. This treatment of biblical passages dealing with our prescribed relationship to animals has been neglected by both scholars¹² and laypersons, who primarily, and often exclusively, consider Old Testament passages independent of relation to the Gospel.

The previously mentioned Old Testament motifs are either continued or are elucidated in the Gospels. The first two motifs about God show little, if any, change. The role of God as the Creator is so fundamental that the Gospel writers assume it. And the care that God shows for His creation in the Old Testament is made even more manifest and intensified in the Gospels. The notion that "God is Love" permeates these writings to such an extent that it is commonly recognized as their very hallmark.

But the motif of God as the omnipotent ruler of the universe receives clarification in the Gospels. This clarification is needed since a ruler can discharge his role as anything from a self-serving tyrant to a benevolent caretaker. And there are several texts in Genesis and Exodus which depict God as ranging between these extremes. However, in the Gospels Jesus' character and actions are frequently expressed in the motif of a gentle shepherd who lovingly serves his sheep. Although the Old Testament does refer to God in several passages as a shepherd who watches over his flock, other less benign images sometimes overshadow this metaphor.¹³ But in the Gospels, particularly that of John, the role of God as shepherd comes to the forefront. And contrary to Thrasymachus' contention that the role of the shepherd is to exploit his sheep, Jesus insists that the good shepherd's role¹⁴ is to care for each individual sheep, making sure they are safe and provided for, even to the extent of laying down his life for them. Below we see

the relationship between these three motifs in the Old Testament and the New Testament:

Genesis and Exodus	Gospels
{creator	—> continued
God {ruler	—> shepherd
{care for creation	—> love for creation

Turning to the human role, the Gospels repeatedly emphasize that humans are accountable to God for their actions, a continuation of the Old Testament motif. But some modification occurs, since there is a greater emphasis on humans having to answer not only for their fidelity toward God but also for how they treat each individual, including "the least of these." Thus, human accountability is expanded in the Gospels.

Similarly, the motif of human beings as the servants of God receives further explication in the parables, connecting human servitude to God with how we treat others. The servant parables,¹⁵ a pervasive theme throughout the Gospels, indicate that one can only be a good servant of God by treating that which He cares for with compassion and love. By comparison, when a person is a true and loyal servant, he cares for everything that belongs to his master, whether they be children or anyone else connected with him at all, with the same feeling that unites him to his master. Since God loves His creatures, a good servant of God will care for His creatures because of His love for them.

The Gospel writers, in accord with the motif of servitude toward God's creatures, sometimes describe the role of a servant as that of a steward. In contrast, there are no Gospel teachings which suggest that human beings have absolute and arbitrary rule over the rest of God's creation. This fact, combined with the fact that a macroscopic view of Scripture must understand Old Testament motifs in the context of New Testament teachings, shows us that the explanation of the "dominion" passage as permitting the absolute and arbitrary rule of humans over the rest of creation is false. It is not merely a faulty interpretation, but it is opposed to Christian teachings viewed within a larger context. Thus, the roles of human beings in the Old Testament and the New Testament are related as follows:

Genesis and Exodus	Gospels
{accountability	—> continued
Human	
{servitude	—> stewardship

The motif of man's servitude to God expressing itself in stewardship synthesizes all the previous motifs to show our proper relationship to those beings God has created. For a steward is undoubtedly accountable for the care he gives to his master's possessions. If God cares about His possessions, then human beings, made in the image of God, should also care about them. The kind of care God's possessions should receive must be the kind we give to something we love. When we love something, we wish it well for itself, for its own good, not merely for how we can use it. Other creatures have their own God-given patterns of behavior which insofar as humans acknowledge God's supremacy, they must respect and not interfere with. By recognizing their stewardship role, humans are acknowledging God as the ruler of creation. They then cannot justifiably usurp the role of ruler and exploit the rest of creation for their own arbitrary purposes. The role of steward does not involve the activity of exploitation but of management. The management with which man is charged entails limitations and accountability, an accountability that excludes the view that man is the measure of all things.¹⁶

It can be objected that the only conclusion that may justifiably be drawn from a macroscopic view of Scripture supports a stewardship account of how human beings should respond to God's creation, but it says nothing about specific norms for the treatment of animals. It thus leaves open the possibility that we can treat an ear of corn or a chimpanzee with equal care and respect. Although this may satisfy many environmentalists, it would not provide enough support for animal rights advocates.

Peter Singer has raised another objection, contending that although acceptance of the stewardship interpretation would make a difference in the way human beings "are entitled to treat" endangered animal species, it would not "make a fundamental difference to the principle implication of the theory, which is that we are entitled to kill individual animals if we wish to do so."¹⁷ Once again, stewardship seems to support an environmental ethic but not an animal rights position.

To see if these objections are sound, the macroscopic approach to biblical passages must be narrowed and adjusted. Instead of examining broad biblical themes, only those passages will be considered that deal with the value and recommended treatment of plant life and animals. Granting the veracity of human beings' stewardship role toward God's creation, passages

mentioning nonhuman life should be examined against this larger backdrop. In line with the previously established criteria, the most familiar books from the Old and New Testament will be used, and to avoid controversy and complication, biblical exegesis will be avoided.

Since Linzey, using Old Testament passages, has responded to the first objection (that plant life and animal life have equal value on the stewardship interpretation), his findings may be employed to fill in half of the biblical picture. Referring to the beginning of Genesis, he observes how "the order of creation moves inexorably toward greater relationship with man,"¹⁸ and notes how animals and man are created on the same day. This common birthday indicates that animals, naturally bound with human beings in the divinely created order, have a higher ontological status than that of plant life.

Also within the creation saga, Linzey recounts how God gives animals "the gift of land, territory, food, and sustenance."¹⁹ But, according to Linzey, an "even stronger theological ground for holding that animals have especial value to God"²⁰ is expressed in the covenant text in which animal and human life are bound by a divine relationship. "I will remember my covenant which is between you and every living creature of flesh: (Genesis, 9:15). As further evidence for his claim that the "covenant relationship implied a moral bond between man and beast,"²¹ Linzey cites texts from Exodus establishing the humanitarian provisions of Hebrew Law. In short, an overall view of the Old Testament passages Linzey has reflected on emphasize the theme of moral binding between humans and animals, a binding that plant life does not share in.

The passages in the Gospels that refer to the value and treatment of nonhuman life are primarily found in the parables. These texts are problematic, since they contain a blend of the symbolic and the realistic. The symbolic, of course, requires interpretation, the very procedure we are attempting to avoid. In contrast, although the realistic is not the essential point of a parable, it is non-controversial and easily understood. Jesus' parables use familiar scenes and experiences to reveal a moral or spiritual truth. Even though the realistic references function as a background, Norman Perrin says they confront us with "Jesus' vision of reality" and "challenge us to decide what we will do about it."²² By bracketing the interpretation of the symbolism contained in a parable, we can still derive insightful lessons from examining the realistic.

Our specific aim in considering the realistic elements of a parable is to discover what sort of action it recommends toward nonhuman life. John Dominic Crossan, an authority in this area, comments that the greatest number of extant parables are parables of action. He explains, "These parables portray crucial or critical situations which demand firm and resolute action, prompt and energetic decision."²³ Crossan identifies one such parable as concerning "a barren fig tree which finds itself in serious circumstances. In Luke 13:6-9 the tree is given one last chance to produce fruit else it will be cut down."²⁴ The fig tree parable indicates that the only value the tree has is to bear fruit. But since the fruit and the tree have the same nature as plant life, why should a tree that does not bear fruit be destroyed? What further value does the fruit give the tree? One obvious answer is that although both share the same ontological nature, the fruit is edible, whereas the tree is not. The parable makes it clear that the tree has no value in itself. The further value the fruit gives the tree is that it allows other beings to use it for nourishment. The parable of "The True Vine" in John 15:1-7 is similar, for Jesus says that if a branch "bears no fruit," it will be cut away." These branches are then to be "collected and thrown on the fire."

The claim that the value of a tree lies only in the edibility of its fruit is made more explicit in a non-parable passage (Matthew 21:19; Mark 11:12). In this passage Jesus, feeling hungry, causes a fig tree to wither that could not provide him with fruit, even though "it was not the season for figs." In sum, the two action parables regarding plant life and the non-parable passage in Matthew and Mark show Jesus' view that plants are only conditionally valuable, insofar as they bear fruit. Connecting these passages with our role as stewards of God's creation indicates that we are only required to care for plant life which can be used. Thus plant life should be treated in conformity with its conditional value, a value dependent on its utility for others.

In contrast, parables of action involving animals indicate that they are to be accorded different treatment. Two such parables are those of "The Lost Sheep" and "The Ox in the Well." The latter parable continues the Old Testament theme of moral binding between human and animal since it maintains that both should be given the same sort of treatment, at least in case of a threat to their welfare. In Luke 15:5-6 Jesus asks, "Which of you, if his son falls into a well, or his ox, will not pull

him out on the Sabbath day without hesitation?" Jesus asks this question in such a way that a negative response should produce shame. It is also noteworthy that in comparison with the fig tree and vine parables, neither the son nor the ox has to be in good working condition before being ministered to. Their value does not depend on their use and is not conditional. Similarly, in the parable of "The Lost Sheep" in Luke and Matthew, Jesus frames a question to which one would feel ashamed to reply negatively. "What man among you with a hundred sheep, losing one, would not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the missing one till he found it?" Certainly such an action would not make sense if the sheep had only an instrumental or economic value. The rejoicing which the parable mentions as occurring upon finding the sheep further emphasizes the sheep's intrinsic value.²⁵ And it also brings out Jesus' view of the value of each individual sheep, rather than just the herd as a whole.

As further corroboration of divine concern for each individual animal, Jesus says in a non-parable passage, "Can you not buy two sparrows for a penny? And yet not one falls to the ground without your Father knowing." This passage, like to others, does not connect an animal's value to how he can be used by human beings.²⁶

However, one New Testament passage is often cited as a counter-example to the claim that we should exercise compassion and care towards animals, namely the passage in Mark where Jesus, in the process of casting out devils, induces two thousand pigs to throw themselves off a cliff into the lake. Singer uses this example to show Jesus' "indifference to the fate of nonhuman animals."²⁷ Within the context of the stewardship message, Singer's interpretation of this passage cannot be sustained. As C. S. Lewis says, "From the doctrine that God is good we may confidently deduce that the *appearance* of reckless divine cruelty in the animal kingdom is an illusion."²⁸ Jesus' action toward the pigs may indeed appear indifferent but, given the stewardship message, this indifference is only illusory. The contention that the story has such an illusory nature is strengthened by the consensus of New Testament scholars regarding the story's doubtful authenticity.²⁹ And given that this isolated text, containing an action and attitude not repeated elsewhere in the Gospels, is neither an action parable nor normatively formulated, it tells us nothing about how animals should be treated or valued.

Viewing specific Gospel texts against the larger stewardship backdrop shows that animals have value as individuals, a value that is independent of their use. Thus, neither objection to the stewardship message, that animals and plants should be treated similarly and that only entire species of animals deserve moral consideration, can stand in the face of biblical evidence. Examining the Bible macroscopically reveals that animals, unlike plant life, have a worth of their own, an unconditional and intrinsic worth rather than a conditional and instrumental one. And animals have a worth of their own as individuals rather than merely as members of a species. Contrary to Singer's claim, the human role as stewards of God's creation would not allow us to kill an individual animal merely because "we wish to do so."

Reading the Bible macroscopically, Christians must acknowledge that it is God's plan that people establish a benevolent stewardship over the earth and its plant and animal life. Failure to do so is a sin. It would be a sin to arbitrarily cut down a tree, for although I may not enjoy the tree, someone else may. It would be a sin arbitrarily to trample a flower, for although I may not enjoy its beauty, it may be aesthetically pleasing to others. And not only does this message have implications for an environmental ethic, demanding that we care for all of God's creation, but it also has more specific implications for our treatment of animals. Since a macroscopic biblical view shows animals to have value as individuals, a value independent of human exploitation, those who base their ethics on the Bible are required to reevaluate how animals should be treated, not only in personal interchanges, but also in using them for food, clothing, entertainment, and research.

While a macroscopic view of Scripture does not establish the case for animal rights, it does provide us with an account of what the role of humans should be towards animals, i.e., stewards who must act with care and Christian love toward each individual animal. In regard to the issue of human duties toward other animals, the biblical argument for human stewardship complements rather than conflicts with the claim that animals have rights, a claim that must be established on metaphysical rather than biblical grounds. This complementary function supports the theistic conviction that truth is one, that the same conclusions can be attained by examining both philosophically and theologically grounded evidence.

Notes

¹ Dr. Stephen Kellert, a Yale psychologist, in his 1980 study, "Attitude of the American Public Relating to Animals," found that generally people who attend church most often have more negative, domineering attitudes towards animals than do other people.

² Andrew Linzey, "The Place of Animals in Creation," in *Animal Sacrifices*, edited by Tom Regan (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), pp. 115-148.

³ Bernard Rollin, *Animal Rights and Human Morality* (New York: Prometheus Books, 1981), p. 52.

⁴ Daniel Dombrowski, *Hartshorne and the Metaphysics of Animal Rights* (Albany: State University of New York, 1988), pp. 7-8.

⁵ Peter Singer, "Animals and the Value of Life" in *Matters of Life and Death* (New York: Random House, 1980), p. 349, cf. *Animal Liberation* (New York: Avon Books, 1975), pp. 194-195; 199.

⁶ Andrew Linzey, "Christianity and the Rights of Animals" in *The Animals' Voice*, Vol. 2, No. 4, August, 1989, p. 44.

⁷ Singer, "Animals and the Value of Life," p. 350.

⁸ James Gaffney, "The Relevance of Animal Experimentation to Roman Catholic Ethical Methodology," in *Animal Sacrifices*, *op. cit.*, p. 162.

⁹ Raymond F. Collins, *Introduction to the New Testament* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1983), p. 308.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 309.

¹¹ I am in no way attempting to provide an exhaustive list of biblical motifs pertaining to how the most widely read scriptural passages portray the roles of God and human beings.

¹² Linzey alludes to this deficiency in a footnote (p. 148) to his article, "The Place of Animals in Creation." He says, "I must add that I now see that my small contribution to the debate (Linzey, *Animal Rights*) was insufficiently theological and far too dismissive of many aspects of the Christian tradition."

¹³ God is often depicted in the Old Testament as a stern judge, a destroyer of whole societies, a jealous lover, and so on.

¹⁴ In regard to the related parable of the "Lost Sheep," Mary Ann Tolbert in *Perspectives on the Parables* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), p. 56, comments that it

is clearly not a realistic reflection of the actions of a first-century Palestinian shepherd. For no responsible shepherd having a flock of one hundred sheep would consider "leaving ninety-nine of them unprotected to go in search of one." This observation is also applicable to the "Good Shepherd" parable in John, since what shepherd would even consider "laying down his life for his sheep"? These parables can only reflect Jesus' view of reality if He is offering a normative account of how a shepherd should act towards his animals rather than a descriptive account. That Jesus is giving us a normative account of the Shepherd's role is corroborated by his coupling of the word "good" next to "shepherd" and by the way he poses his question in the parable of the "Lost Sheep." Since the purpose of this paper is to discover how the Bible recommends that we value and treat animals, a normative statement is more relevant to the issue than any other kind of account.

¹⁵ John Dominic Crossan has studied nine parables within the thematic unity of the Servant. He says, "They all concern a master-servant relationship and a time or moment of critical reckoning therein." *In Parables* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), pp. 96-120.

¹⁶ This is the only correct way a Christian can read the Bible, given that she is required to read Old Testament passages in the light of New Testament passages and that it makes more sense to pay attention to general biblical motifs than to isolated texts.

¹⁷ Singer, "Animals and the Value of Life," p. 351.

¹⁸ Linzey, "Animal Sacrifices," p. 128.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Norman Perrin, "Historical Criticism, Literary Criticism, and Hermeneutics: The Interpretation of the Parables of Jesus and the Gospel of Mark Today," *Journal of Religion*, 52 (1972), p. 374.

²³ Crossan, *In Parables*, p. 84.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Cf. footnote 14.

²⁶ The statement about the sparrows is immediately followed by noting that human beings have even greater importance to the Father. But this does not imply that the

value of sparrows is conditional or take away from God's concern for each individual animal. Generally, God's greater concern for human beings neither entails that nonhumans lack intrinsic value nor does it give humans license to exploit nonhumans. In the same way, one may favor one child over another without ceasing to value the second child or allowing the favorite to exploit him.

²⁷ Singer, *Animal Liberation*, p. 199.

²⁸ C. S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1962), pp. 129-130.

²⁹ Canon E. Turnbull, noting that the precise determination of what happened in this incident simply cannot be established, concludes: "New Testament scholars are agreed that it is by no means certain that the incident of the pigs is part of the original story, or that Jesus did not necessarily share the Jewish prejudice about unclean animals." "Animals in Moral Theology," in *Animals' Rights: A Symposium* (London: Centaur Press, 1979), p. 45.



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