

The modernisation of the monarchy will not be achieved by the recent relaxation of royal protocol to allow 'companions', of either sex, of 'people of single status', official entry to Buckingham Palace garden parties. The sovereign's agreement to pay income tax may win some temporary respite from the rigours of public opinion but will not reduce the impact of larger questions. These questions are to do with matters of parliamentary representation and the integrity and accountability of government. The willingness of ministers to hide behind the exercise of the royal prerogative are as scandalous as are their frequent self-protective resort to the interests of national security. Criticism of the monarchy is essentially a distraction from the main constitutional issues facing Britain today. Can a declining power, desperately keen to disguise that decline by an appeal to heritage, tradition and custom, hope to preserve its influence in a world which has expressed its own view of Britain today by destroying its currency? The multi-cultural, multi-ethnic society which Britain has become needs to evolve a system of representation and government which accurately reflects it. Attempts to evade these problems by cutting the role of an Imperial monarchy to a narrowly national stage are doomed to failure. The crisis facing the monarchy is simply a reflection of the political crisis of a declining and directionless nation.

AJW

The Earth as a Gift

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It is often said that the earth and its creatures are God's gifts to humankind. Animals and plants are understood to have been 'sent' for us, so that we may, by and large, do with them as we will. What we must do in return is express our thanks to the Creator for His generosity. We must say Grace over our meals. So John Locke wrote:

The earth and all that is therein is given to men for the support and comfort of their being. . . all the fruits it produces, the beasts it feeds, belong to mankind in common, as they are produced by the spontaneous hand of nature.¹

In the Christian tradition, discussions on the rights of ownership typically propose definite limitations on the private use of the earth: we may not supply ourselves with luxuries while other persons still lack basic necessities. But no limits are explicitly set on the common human use of the earth. The gazelle, then, would seem to have no right to the land on which she grazes; the lion no right to her prey. Only humans have rights of ownership, even over their own bodies. That anything non-human enjoys food, habitat or life itself is only by the mercy of homo sapiens.

A popular belief drawn from this is that certain animals are simply 'made to be eaten'. A sheep is walking mutton. Within the Christian tradition this belief tends to be justified by an appeal to revelation. The most authoritative passage is Genesis 9:1–3, where God gives Noah animals as well as plants to eat. However, in a strikingly similar section coming from before the Fall (Gen.1:28–30), the gift is limited to green plants. In both passages God blesses the human race and exhorts it to multiply. But before the Fall humankind is simply to have dominion over the animals, a dominion which is certainly not equivalent to 'use as you wish'.² After the Fall this rule is to be based on fear and dread. John Austin Baker has correctly written,

Although it [the Old Testament] recognises man's preying on nature as a fact, it characterises that fact as a mark of man's decline from the first perfect intentions of God for him.³

It is best to say, then, with Philo, that in Scripture flesh-eating is allowed but not enjoined (*Questiones in Genesin II. 58*). One is reminded of the Mosaic Law allowing divorce, which Jesus considered a concession to the hardness of the human heart. The fact that Jesus went beyond the Law to appeal to God's original plan gives a basis for those who wish to justify their vegetarianism biblically by a similar appeal. Even if not a command of the Lord, it is arguably a counsel of perfection.⁴

There are also problems with trying to support the view that animals were 'given to us for food' on the basis of natural theology, as can be seen from Origen's attempt to answer his pagan opponent Celsus (*Contra Celsum IV, 78*). Celsus held it wrong to say that animals were made for humans to eat just because we hunt and kill them, for the beasts also hunt and kill us. Moreover, they do so with weapons supplied by nature (claws and teeth), whereas we need to have recourse to nets, hounds and man-made weapons. Clearly, then, nature intended the beasts to hunt us and not the other way around. Origen replied that

humans have the weapon of intelligence, so that although we are physically weaker than many animals, our cunning may get the better of them. Who is a gift for whom depends on the pragmatic criterion of who manages to capture and who is captured; this level of argument is hardly a satisfactory basis for a moral position. Rights, duties and moral obligations cannot be decided simply by an appeal to our physical and intellectual capabilities. Or may the intelligent hunt and kill the dull-witted (who are 'gifts' to the intellectuals)? There is no good reason to suggest that we should do all that it is merely *possible* for us to do.

II

Some might argue that what points strongly towards the position that all things have been given to humans alone is that only human beings can understand what it is to claim ownership of something. But if by this is meant the sort of claim that can be made and verified publicly within a shared tradition and a mutual understanding of the concepts of 'claim' and 'ownership', then the group for whom this is possible is smaller than the human group as a whole: it is limited, at most, to adult, rational humans. In fact, it is more parochial than this. The idea that land could be bought and sold by humans was incomprehensible to the American Indians when they first encountered white settlers, and our modern concept of ownership would be foreign to English men and women living before the Act of Enclosure. It is also foreign to the concept of ownership given in the Mosaic Law: 'No land shall be sold outright, because the land is mine' (Lev.25:23).⁵

Quite apart from the claims of the land itself, or of non-human species, the position of the uneducated, of children and of the mentally ill and disabled is called into question by forging strong links between the notion of gifts and the ability to make claims. It seems more satisfactory to adopt a wider definition, so that a need for something could be seen as a *prima facie* claim which deserved recognition. By this definition, all creatures who value certain states of being rather than others, who can entertain hopes, wants or aspirations can be seen as making claims upon things. Both children and animals are thus claimants.

Within this model we could say that adult, rational humans do have a position of special significance: they are the creatures with the greatest capacity for recognising and responding to the claims of other beings, and placing rival claims within a framework of intelligibly grasped goods. Humans are thus best fitted for the role of stewards of the gifts of God. Still, they are not the only creatures capable of acknowledging the

claims of others. Other kinds recognise and respect both the ownership of goods and territorial limits, at least within their own species.⁶ This is the case whether we are talking about a rabbit's warren or a blackbird's territory.

Familiar material surroundings are reasonably supposed to be an extension of the self. In the Western tradition, property has been regarded almost as an exterior body, an expression of the personality⁷, and from a psychological point of view this is certainly plausible. The boundary of the self is not equivalent to the physical boundary of the body. What is considered to be, in varying degrees, 'me', may extend (rightly or wrongly) to cover my spouse, house, even an ill-defined 'way of life'.⁸ If animals have a less than clear concept of the self, as is normally assumed, then the boundaries between the physical self and the environment are likely to be more blurred than is the case with humans. The beasts are accordingly less adaptable and more intractably territorial than we are, so are more dependent upon the stability of the environment. In this sense, their claims upon their surroundings deserve special attention.

The example of territories is also useful in that it shows that claims by different species need not be exclusive ones. Territorial claims by one species over a particular area do not necessarily exclude members of other species from claiming that same space. A song-bird's territory is the home for countless other creatures as well. This is the basis of ecosystems. Even prey and predator will share territory and will ignore one another for much of the time. The song-bird may try to win a particular territory from another of her kind, but not from a rabbit. My ownership of a piece of land does not prevent its also being the territory of countless other mammals and insects.

We Work for Things

Others have argued that all things are ours because only we are capable of labour and have the capacity to creatively use the earth's resources. Balbus, Cicero's spokesman for Stoicism, says

The produce of the earth was designed for those only who make use of it; and though some beasts may rob us of a small part, it does not follow that the earth produced it also for them.⁹

Clearly this is moving away from the idea of the world's products as gifts. To call something a gift is normally to imply that the gift is not *bound* to be given as an act of justice. But if something belongs to me

because I have worked to get it then it is less a gift than my desert. Still, it could be presented in terms of a 'gift theology': in immediate terms the thing is my desert; but it is also a gift in so far as that which enables me to earn it (i.e. my capacity for labour) is a gift from God.

As far as Balbus is concerned, then, all non-humans are automatically thieves and robbers. To kill an animal is only to protect what is rightfully ours. Interestingly, this position points towards (if anything) the ethical necessity for veganism: the beasts who steal most, and most directly, from us are those whom we ourselves breed for food—unlike many wild animals they typically compete directly with humans for nourishment. We have none but ourselves to blame if we encourage theft.

Moreover, it seems strange that Balbus should deny that animals also make use of the earth. Locke also seems to assume that only humans can really be said to 'labour' and so own property. For him, the main criterion for an article being moved from common property to private property is that labour is 'mixed' with it. He uses the example of a man picking up an acorn from under an oak: because he has taken the trouble to gather the acorn it has become his. He cannot wait upon the consent of the rest of humankind before he takes it, for he would starve before that happened.¹⁰

Even waiving the various criticisms which have been made of this theory¹¹, we can still say that animals mix their labour with the produce of the earth as well as humans. Not only Locke collects acorns: squirrels do as well. And if the person who catches a fish, taking it out of the common state of nature, has a right to it, then surely so does the whale who takes a fish, as long as there is 'enough and as good left in common for others'¹². So if the mixing of a person's labour is what is held to count as the criterion for acquiring property, then animals, too, have a right to the holes they dig, the nests they build, the berries they eat and the beasts they catch.¹³

So there is no good reason to restrict the idea of labour to humans. The universe is not a lifeless factory in which humans work with raw materials, but contains non-human agents capable of creation. The natural world is not only made, it is also maker.

We Confer Existence

This is an argument which differs from the others in an important respect. It locates the giving of life in humans rather than in God. It is asserted that if humans did not want to hunt, eat or vivisect animals they would not be 'enjoying' existence at all. Strictly, then, it does not cover those animals conceived and nurtured outside of any human

jurisdiction—we cannot have been responsible for their existence except in so far as we have allowed them to live and breed undisturbed. It might be argued that they owe us their existence since we have chosen not to take their lives. But if we equate action and letting-alone in this way we will have to accept that we also owe one another our lives in the human domain because we too, have been allowed to continue in life through the mercy of our human brethren.

In the case of animals under human control, though, it might be held that they are in existence only because we humans so desire it, and for our own purposes. Thus William James suggests a Hegelian synthesis of domestication as the solution to the dialectic of, on the one hand, animals desiring to live, and, on the other hand, our desiring to kill them. The synthesis amounts to our keeping and breeding animals in order to slaughter them; but then they are only alive in the first place because of our desire to kill them.¹⁴ So also William Harrison observed in 1577, in an argument often used by the hunting fraternity, that foxes would have been ‘utterly destroyed. . . many years ago’ if gentlemen had not protected them to ‘hunt and have pastime withal’.¹⁵

It is clear that if this kind of argument were applied to the human sphere any number of outrages against particular unwanted groups could be justified. It serves, for example, as a simple justification for the use and destruction of ‘superfluous’ human embryos conceived in vitro. And there is an interesting side-point in the application of such an argument in the realm of theodicy. God, having conferred existence upon us, is presumably quite entitled to deal with us as He pleases. So, then, there is no need for a theodicy. When we vivisect animals we are merely reflecting the image of the God who vivisects us. Those who are unhappy with this picture of the Creator may also wish to understand His image in humankind as something rather more benign.

There is, in any case, a fundamental conclusion in this position. The underlying assumption is that creatures are born either ‘through’ God’s will *or* the will of humans. If an animal is born naturally (i.e. without human contrivance or planning) then it is God’s will. Those creatures belong to God and we are consequently responsible to Him for the ways in which we treat them. If an animal is bred, or allowed to breed, by my directive, however, then any responsibility to God for the way in which we treat the creature is merely by the way. A dichotomy is assumed: God’s will or my will, and with it there is held to be a corresponding ethical seriousness or frivolity.

This ignores the obvious point that God makes the world make itself. There is no dichotomy of this kind. The births of all the creatures which humans do not arrange take place through the causal nexus of the

cosmos, not through God acting independently of His creation. Neither is the fact of our intending the existence of a creature something which excludes God's intention: at the very least, for our intentions to exist at all, God must intend that we should be able to intend them. God does not have to work 'around' human freedom, using only natural forces. In any case, it is almost beside the point by whose will a creature is conceived and born. Once it is in existence its moral status cannot simply be disregarded, or reduced to the significance of the will that initiated its entry into the world.¹⁶

God Loves Us Through His Gifts

A more subtle version of the general belief that all things have been given to humans centres upon the creation as a place of revelation, an environment in which God seeks to make Himself known to His creatures.

All that exists is God's gift to man, and it all exists to make God known to man, to make man's life communion with God. It is divine love made food, made life for man.¹⁷

It is for this reason that humans may eat animals: they are given as signs of God's love for humanity. The world is a vast network of signs, each of them showing the goodness of the Creator.

In this perspective the uniqueness of humanity is held to be that we alone of all creatures can bless God for His gifts, acting as priests of the cosmic eucharist, taking the stuff of the world and offering it back to God in thanksgiving.¹⁸ Unfortunately, the writers who embrace such an outlook often appear to consider the priestly actions of humanity automatically sanctifying, no matter what is being done. Perhaps this is partly due to the tendency to think in terms of 'basic matter' rather than of individual creatures who may be harmed or helped by their contact with humans. It would seem more sensible to say that one lives in communion with God by loving Him in His creation rather than by slaughtering His gifts.

Certainly since God is omnipresent He is communicating with humans through the whole of the natural world: all things share in the one divine life and so tell us something of God. But this need not mean that non-human life should be understood solely as God's-medium-of-contact-with-humanity. For it is equally the case that God continually communicates His being through humans as well as through nature—and far more adequately in humans than in any other part of the creation, as is made clear by the doctrine of the divine image in

humanity. We are even allowed to say that in some sense our neighbour is Christ (cf Matt. 25:31 ff). But although we may at times seem to others to be transparent to the divinity within this does not mean that we are intended solely as mediators of God's presence to our fellow humans. The significance of human life cannot be seen entirely as significance 'for others'. No more need non-human life be seen this way.

There are further problems with understanding all non-human life solely as God's means of communicating with humans, rather than seeing that God may be interested in other kinds of life for their own sake, or for the sake of larger natural wholes quite apart from their connection with human beings. Generations of beautiful and exotic creatures flourish in hidden mountain valleys or remote islands where human eyes will never light upon them. Moreover, the world seems to be in so many ways ill-adapted and awkward as an attempt to express God's solicitude for humanity alone. So much in the universe appears to be either inedible, non-utilisable, uninhabitable or positively harmful to humans.

We could understand this lamentable state of affairs as one of the effects of the Fall what was once beneficial now distresses, and the animals who once came to Adam to be named now flee from him in terror. However, although this is perhaps part of the answer, the 'problem of evil' also becomes less of an intellectual puzzle once it is accepted that the creation need not be understood as orientated solely towards human utility. Tigers are doubtless potentially harmful to humans, are not obviously gifts to humanity from a loving God (if He wanted to provide us with skins He could have presumably arranged a less dangerous supply source), but they do not have to be viewed disparagingly as defective or corrupted gifts. Perhaps God simply likes tigers. And even if all currently existing tigers are fallen specimens, are only caricatures of the perfect Tiger, this need not mean that the exemplar was created as a gift for humans.

The manifestation of God in nature need not be seen, then, as something exclusively for human beings. The self-expression of God in nature is not always heard by humanity, though it reaches to the ends of the earth (see Psalm 19)⁹. Moreover, this account of God's glory is addressed by nature to nature—day tells it to day and night to night. Something of this is perceived by the psalmist, but the gift of God in nature is not presented especially for him. It goes on without him, although he may try to 'listen'.

God's Ownership

If I give a gift to someone I relinquish ownership of it. In the theistic context, however, everything (including myself) already belongs to God, so that if He gives me a gift it is still primarily His. I am the secondary owner.²¹ In this sense it is better to say that the world is 'leased' to us rather than 'given' to us. We are ourselves the gods' possessions, and have no right to dispose of ourselves as we wish (Plato: *Phaedo*, 61). But then neither way we dispose of anything else as we would wish, without reference to God, for all things are His possessions.

Mediaevals believed that the idea of an action existed in the mind of the person who would accomplish it before the action itself was realised. In other words, our effects, before existing in themselves as effects, exist in us as causes (cf Plato: *Philebus*, 27a.). But we are causes only derivatively, for God is the First cause. All things are His effects, and all things exist first in Him as Cause before they exist in themselves as effects. Humans cannot elevate themselves into a position of absolute ownership because they, too, are effects and owe their being to God. Therefore God always has sovereign dominion; creation is only for human use under the commandments laid down by Him.

Interestingly, the gift metaphor has sometimes been used in the Christian tradition with the express purpose of *discouraging* possessiveness. Traherne, for example, insists that one's vision of the world is not correct until 'you see all things in it so perfectly yours, that you cannot desire them any other way'²¹. He uses the concept of gift to prevent a miserly and grasping attitude towards the world, not to licence one. Like St. Francis²², Traherne was so convinced of God's watchful providence that he did not need to stress any 'right' to ownership in order to enjoy. The pages of *Centuries* are filled with tirades against those who have to take from others because they cannot see that the world is already full of gifts for them. Indeed, he felt that too much stress upon actual ownership could inhibit a clear vision of the world as a gift, for it can mean closing oneself off from the world, so that others are seen as antithetical to one's interests rather than joined to them. 'It is enough for you to say, "I have this watch. It is mine", and close your hand on it, to be in possession of a watch and to have lost a hand'.²³

Gratitude

We may come to a clearer understanding of the nature of the gift relationship if we focus on the appropriate response to gifts: gratitude.

By coming to see whether gratitude is an appropriate response to a given situation, we may be able to determine when it is that a gift is genuinely being offered. There are cases when an expression of gratitude is obviously the right response, just as there are cases when it is more suspect. Let us look at a simple example of each:

- (1) There are two children, Alice and Bertram. Alice has a bag of sweets and gives one to Bertram. In response Bertram thanks Alice.
- (2) Alice has a bag of sweets, but she has no intention of offering one to Bertram. But Masie (Alice's mother) tells her that she must share her sweets—so Alice does. In response Bertram thanks Alice.

In the first case, where Alice makes a free choice to give Bertram a sweet the response of gratitude is unproblematic. But that Bertram ought to thank Alice in the second case is less obvious. If we assume that Bertram was ignorant of the fact that Alice had been coerced then it is not surprising that he thanked her. We can say that from Bertram's point of view gratitude was an entirely appropriate response, as much so as in case (1). However, from an outsider's viewpoint, where it is known that the strong hand of Alice's mother was involved, the response seems a little incongruous.

Gratitude for a gift implies that the giver was free to withhold it. If a gift is received from a creature who is, temporarily (like Alice) or permanently, not a free agent, then gratitude should be extended rather to the 'nearest' free agent in the causal chain. Again, if Bertram took the sweet from Alice without her consent (or with her active opposition) it would not then be appropriate for him to thank her for the 'gift'. It would not be a gift: he would have stolen it. If, however, Bertram took a sweet and Alice then said, 'Yes, you may have one', gratitude would again be appropriate: the one who is technically the giver need not necessarily be the one who initiates the giving, although there must be (at least) free consent on the part of the giver.

It does not make sense, then, to speak of gratitude towards a being who cannot make free choices, who cannot choose whether to give or whether to retain. Gratitude is inappropriate in cases where a creature benefits us unwittingly, since the proper object of gratitude is benevolence rather than beneficence. It is a response to a grant of benefits (or the attempt to benefit us) which was motivated by a desire to help us.²⁴ Clearly, given such an account, there can be no question of our being grateful to animals themselves for 'giving' their lives to us: they are normally assumed to be incapable of genuine free choice. And even if they do have a limited capacity for free choice there is no

evidence that they desire to give themselves to us for food.

Perhaps, though, it was never presumed that we owed gratitude towards the beasts. Rather, our thanks are directed towards the Creator who has so liberally supplied the earth to cater for our needs and pleasures. Still, it would be wrong to say that gratitude is *always* appropriate towards any free agent who benefits us and who acts with the best of intentions. It may be that the giver, however well-intentioned, has no right to give the gift. A neighbour may proudly present me with his fatted grandson for my birthday celebrations: am I to be grateful to him for this gift? 'Fatted grandson' or 'fatted calf': the point remains the same. that I cannot be grateful for a gift until it is established that the agent had the right to give it (or him or her) to me.

Surely, though, if the 'neighbour' in this instance is God the issue is easily resolved. God must have the right to give me the calf since He created both of us. The pot can make no complaint against the Divine Potter. nor the calf against the Divine Herdsman. As Brody argues, in his essay 'Morality and Religion Reconsidered'²⁵, since God owns everything He has the right, if He has so decided, to give animals to humanity for food. A divine command to this effect will undermine any purely moral argument that a sympathiser for the vegetarian cause might put forward. Brody is right, of course, although (as we have seen) the evidence of revelation concerning God's intentions in this matter is inconclusive. And of course by the same token it is equally God's right to give me my neighbour's grandson for food (cf Augustine: *City of God* I, 25).

III

Everything which touches our lives is ultimately given by God—the air we breath, the ground on which we walk, animals, food, friends and family, all are gifts. As G.K.Chesterton said, we ought to say Grace over more than just meals²⁶. This means that the question we ought to be asking is not *whether* something is a gift to us from God but *what sort* of gift we have before us.

It is not necessary that all gifts should have utility value for humans. St.Francis recognised this clearly and commanded the brother who looked after the garden to grow not only edible herbs but also flowers, because these give glory to God by their beauty.²⁷ Calling something a gift from God cannot be, then, a reason for waiving all further moral discussion concerning its use. 'This pig is a gift from God' is not analytical of 'this pig was given to us for food'. It is possible, in fact, to isolate four main areas where there are clear limitations set on the use of

the gifts of the earth.

First there are physical limitations. God has given me a body. I am capable of experiencing sensible pain and pleasure. However, there are clear limits to the extent of this gift: I am capable of enjoying only so much pleasure and enduring only so much pain. I cannot make my body invisible, neither can I jump fifty-foot walls. Moreover, God will only continue to give me this gift if I cooperate by respecting it in fairly fundamental ways e.g. I must feed it regularly and take a reasonable amount of sleep. All material objects have some conditions attached to their use and continued existence, simply in virtue of the fact that they are finite.

Secondly, there are moral limitations. The human moral sense is a gift from God. However, for it to be preserved and developed it must be heeded.²⁸ Aquinas opposed cruelty to animals largely on the grounds that it corrupted human sensibility and thereby encouraged cruelty to humans as well.²⁹ Whatever the limitations of this perspective³⁰, the point is well made: if we overstep certain limits with respect to the gifts which God has given us we shall be in danger of dulling the voice of conscience.

Thirdly, we are limited by the nature of the ultimate purpose of all gifts, which is to give glory to God. Since God is the End of all creatures, His gifts should point towards Him. But a despoiling of the gifts, using them without due respect, or as a means to purely human ends, leads only to ourselves and not to God. Traherne has God saying, 'Unless therefore I could advance you hither by the uses of what I give, my Love would not be satisfied in giving you the whole world'.³¹ Calling all things 'gifts', then, is one way of specifying what is an appropriate response to reality as a whole. It encourages an attitude of trust and submission to the will of God as He is revealed in His creation (it is this kind of thinking which provides the foundation for Caussade's *Self-abandonment to Divine Providence*; cf 1 Thess. 5:18.). It also acts as a reminder that we are not self-generated and not self-contained. We receive reality, and do not ourselves decide upon its ultimate content. Life and its meaning are not at our disposal to organise and dispense with as we please. More positively, the notion of the world as gift leads to a respect for life:

Can you then be righteous, unless you be just in rendering to things their due esteem? All things were made to be yours, and you were made to prize them according to their value: which is your office and duty, the end for which you were created.³²

It is not primarily through acquisition and ownership that one comes to appreciate the world as a gift, but through enjoyment of its worth³³ All things are ours in the most important sense: that we may recognise and enjoy their value.

Finally, it is not appropriate to accept a gift when by doing so we seriously deprive another. The God of the Judaeo-Christian tradition demands justice from His servants. All of God's gifts are conditional partly in that they are given into a network of needs and obligations of which we, the recipients, are bound to take account. My understanding of something as a gift to me must be compatible with my knowledge of the Lord who cares especially for the poor and the needy. This principle may be extended to our relations with animals. Suppose God has *allowed* us humans to sometimes use the beasts as gifts sent for our sustenance. But if that use involves their death or severe deprivation while our need is not compelling, then an appeal to justice supplies good reasons for supposing that we should not accept such gifts.

IV

It is frequently assumed that humans are intended as the sole recipients of Divine generosity. But revelation encourages us to abandon this position in favour of a wider view. The picture of the Lord of creation given by Christ is of one who clothes the flowers and feeds the ravens, and this is, of course, entirely consistent with the Old Testament, which details God's provision for a variety of creatures (e.g. Ex. 23:11; Lev. 25: 4ff, Ps. 104). Life itself is the supreme gift and humans share with the beasts in the 'nephesh' of God³⁴. Within this broad perspective there are many possible ways in which the universe might be seen in terms of gifts: perhaps the inanimate world is a gift to the animate; perhaps there are complex hierarchies of gifts; or maybe there are no clear boundaries and one must rest content with saying that all forms and types of existence have something to give to other parts of the creation.

In any case, even if all were rightly ours, why should we not assign goods to those who cannot lay any claim to them themselves? If God is liberal with His gifts, may we not be with ours? Indeed, if we are the only immortals, and so seek a life beyond this one, we should share all the more: while we seek a lasting city which is to come, this is the only one the beasts will have (cf. Heb. 10:34) On the other hand, if we are not the sole heirs to the promise of immortality let us share with them now as joint friends with God, building the earthly city in preparation for the heavenly.

There is a certain generosity which belongs to God alone. Humans cannot attain it since we are not all being: before giving of what we have we have to take of what we are not. All creatures receive their being from God before they can give to others. Still, we also bear the marks of divinity. One area of limitation of the divine is certainly in creating: we surely do well when we plan beautiful landscapes and encourage the spread of habitats in which endangered species may thrive. However, another mark of the divine, as Plato said, is that it is free from jealousy, and does not try to restrict all being to itself, but gives existence to others (*Timaeus* 29e). Our way of giving existence in this sense is by leaving other creatures alone. We imitate God in His 'letting-be' of creation, allowing creatures space to develop and to realise their potentialities. We can let go of the obsession to restructure the earth around ourselves, to orientate all creatures to our own existence. We give freedom as the greatest gift.

- 1 John Locke: *The Second Treatise of Government*, (3rd edition, J.W.Gough ed), (Blackwell 1966.)
- 2 See C.F.D. Moule: *Man and Nature in the New Testament*, (Athlone Press, 1964) pp. 5ff; C. Westermann: *Creation*, (SPCK 1974) pp. 45.
- 3 J.A.Baker, 'Biblical Attitudes to Nature, in H. Montefiore (ed): *Man and Nature*, (Collins, 1975) p. 96.
- 4 For a similar point from a Protestant angle cf K. Barth: *Church Dogmatics*, G.W. Bromley and T.W. Torrance eds., (T. & T.Clark 1961), iii, 4, p. 355.
- 5 See W. Bruegemann: *The Land: Place as Gift, Promise and Challenge in Biblical Faith*, (Philadelphia 1977) p.192. cf Job 31:38.
- 6 For a detailed discussion of notions of territory in non-human kinds see the collection of papers in A.W.Stokes (ed): *Territory*, (Stroudsburg 1974.)
- 7 See, for example, Dante: *Divina Commedia*, L'Inferno XI, 40f; Vatican II: *Gaudium et Spes* 71.
- 8 It is worth noting that the Greek word 'philos' appears to have been in origin possessive, and was applied to parts of the body and clothing as well as to wife and child. See J. Ferguson: *Moral Values in the Ancient World*, (London, 1958.)
- 9 Cicero: *The Nature of the Gods* trans. H.P.C. McGregor, (Penguin, 1972.)
- 10 See Locke: *The Second Treatise of Government* Ch.V.
- 11 e.g. R. Nozick: *Anarchy, State and Utopia*, (Blackwell, 1974) pp.174ff.
- 12 Locke: *The Second Treatise of Government*, 27.
- 13 Locke at one point seems to grant as much, when he writes, 'the grass my horse has bit, the turfs my servant has cut, and the ore I have dug in any place where I have a right to them in common with others, become my property without the assignation or consent of anybody. The labour that was mine removing them out of that common state they were in, hath fixed my property in them.' (*ibid*, 28.). Locke calls the labour in each case his own, but only in so far as the servant and the horse are both his, so that their labour may be seen as legally belonging to him. He has conceded that his animal labours, for no labour has been supplied to the grass except from 'his horse.
- 14 William James: *A Pluralistic Universe*, (London, 1909), p.100.
- 15 Quoted in G. Edelen (ed): *The Description of England*, (New York, 1968) pp. 325f.
- 16 It is this kind of argument which has led the Church to oppose, for example, abortion of a child conceived after rape. The moral status of the child is not dependent on the moral status of the kind of act which brought it into being.
- 17 A. Schmemmann: *For the Life of the World*, St.Vladimir's Seminary Press 1973, p.19.

- 18 Schmemmann is a good example of this from the Orthodox tradition. On the Catholic side see, for example, Teilhard de Chardin: 'The Mass of the World', *The Hymn of the Universe* trans. G. Vann, (Collins 1970.)
- 19 See A.A. Anderson: *The Psalms*, London 1981, Vol.1 p.168.
- 20 Compare this with the claim in the Prologue to John's gospel that the Logos has possessed all things from the beginning. (See R. Bultmann: *The Gospel of John. A Commentary*, (Blackwell, 1971) p.56.
- 21 T. Traherne: *Centuries*, (OUP, 1960) I, 38.
- 22 See E. Doyle, O.F.M.: *St Francis and the Song of Brotherhood* (Allen and Unwin, 1980) and E.R. Armstrong: *St Francis: Nature Mystic*, (California University Press, 1973.)
- 23 A. Bloom: *School for Prayer*, (Darton, Longman and Todd, 1970) p.15.
- 24 See F.R. Berger: 'Gratitude', *Ethics* 85, (1974-5), p.299.
- 25 Brody's essay is in P. Helm (ed.): *Divine Commands and Morality*, (OUP, 1981), pp. 141ff.
- 26 See Masie Ward: *G. K. Chesterton*, (London, 1944), p.59.
- 27 *Mirror of Perfection 118*; see also D.S. Wallace-Hadrill: *The Patristic View of Nature*, (Manchester, 1968), p.109.
- 28 For an authoritative Catholic statement to this effect see Vatican II: *Gaudium et Spes* para.16.
- 29 Aquinas: *Summa Contra Gentiles* V.J. Bourke (trans), (University of Notre Dame Press, 1975), III, II, 112, 13.
- 30 For a full discussion of what he terms 'indirect duty' views towards animals, see T. Regan: *The Case for Animal Rights*, (Routledge, 1983), Ch.5.
- 31 T. Traherne: *Centuries* I. 6.
- 32 *Centuries* I, 12.
- 33 cf G.Berkeley: *Works* (A.A Luce and T.E. Jessop eds.), (London, 1948-56), VII, 195.
- 34 See W. Eichrodt: *Theology of the Old Testament* trans.J.A. Baker (S.C.M., 1967), Vol. II pp. 131ff.

On Baptising the Visual Arts: A Friar's Meditation on Art

Aidan Nichols OP

I owe my sub-title to Winefride Wilson, one of the last members of that remarkable English Catholic experiment in the uniting of art, worship and life, the Ditchling Community, That was how she rendered the German name of an important manifesto for the revival of Christian art Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder's *Herzensgiessungen eines kunstliebenden Klosterbruders* (1797), 'Heartfelt Outpourings of an Art-loving Cloister-brother'.¹ Wackenroder's impassioned appeal for a renaissance of Christian art, so moribund in his period as in our own, has lost nothing of its relevance today. In this article, I propose to