

Peace Protesting

Extracts from a longer poem based on the 'Querela Pacis' of Erasmus.

Kim Taplin

That destroying peace is contrary to reason

He wishes an excellent thing who wishes health
but she who wills that you shall live in peace
wishes you utmost joy.
Though I'm the wellspring of their happiness
they're working for my death:
you have to pity them.

If I'm the mother of all
good things,
if nothing thrives without me
nothing is clean or whole
or pleasant to people;

and if War's the father of all evil
rotting what nature makes wrecking what man
turning sweet bitter—
who'll believe they're human?
Who'll believe they're sane
when they spend study work worry risk
so much
to get rid of me and gain

that?

No matter how they try to wrap it up
men are in love with War.

The right response to wickedness is anger
but these aren't evil people: they are mad.
And worst of all they don't know they're possessed
when knowing's the first essential for a cure.

You could excuse 'dumb' animals:
men are meant to have something more.

. . .

That it is inhuman

Words
are for connecting how
come love's called 'humanity'
when only men have speech
and only men lack love?

Tears
are the token that human-
kind have touchable hearts
if anything clouds
the clearness of friendship,
the sign to re-
turn to love.

I am serviceable as well as sweet:
therefore gifts differ
and different nations
have different goods
from the earth.

Nature even fires men into love of the unborn:

Midwives ease them into life:

A hidden flame of love brings them together:

But they break
these natural bonds
because bloodlust is stronger.

They leave no corner as a place for peace.

. . .

Lastly I give you these straightforward words

God is not mocked. So do not pray for peace

while you continue to prepare for War.

Ignore or take away what hinders her

Make sacrifices for the sake of her

It is a great part of peace
from the heart to will peace

Gentleness breeds gentleness

This is the way of love, the way
that pleases God
and makes for joy.

I've said my say.

Altruism's Evolution

Michael J. Reiss

What can recent theories in evolutionary biology about the problem of altruism contribute to a Christian perspective on the nature of humanity?

Altruism is considered a 'problem' because Darwin's theory of natural selection¹ leads us to expect all organisms, including humans, to be selfish. According to the theory of natural selection those traits which we expect to see in the natural world are the ones which have conferred on their bearers the greatest reproductive success. As altruism means the giving of aid, a preliminary reading of Darwinism suggests that altruism poses a challenge to the whole theory of adaptation by natural selection. Sociobiology has a great deal to say about the evolution of altruism in non-humans. How far does the study of altruism in non-humans help us to understand altruism in us?

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