

21. Dan Barber, *The Third Plate* (New York: Penguin, 2014): 380.
22. Charles Goodman, "Ethics in Indian and Tibetan Buddhism," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2014ed.), ed. Edward N. Zalta. <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2014/entries/ethics-indian-buddhism/>.
23. H. L. Seneviratne, "Essence of Food and the Essence of Experience," in *The Eternal Food*, ed. R. S. Khare (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 186–187.

MATTHEW C. HALTEMAN

Compassionate Eating as Care of Creation¹

Through careful interpretive analysis, the piece argues that the Christian cosmic vision reveals the wrongness of industrial animal agriculture and that taking up more intentional eating practices is a morally significant spiritual discipline for Christians. It also testifies to our claim in the introduction that religious food ethics have practical advantages over purely secular ethics insofar as the latter usually tries to begin from a neutral perspective that has very little power to compel a person, whereas religious food ethics hooks into one's deepest commitments.

INTRODUCTION: DISCOVERING THE MORAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF EATING

Compassionate stewardship of the animal kingdom is one of the primary responsibilities accorded to human beings in many religious creation

narratives. But the question of how best to respect and to honor the creatures under human care is one that religious people too often neglect to ask. This omission is especially unfortunate given the compelling evidence of fallenness in the social and commercial practices that presently govern human relationships to animals. The most troubling of these practices is industrial farm animal production—an industry whose methods Pope

Matthew C. Halteman, "Compassionate Eating as Care of Creation," from the eponymous *Compassionate Eating as Care of Creation* (Humane Society of the United States, 2008, 2010).

Benedict XVI has described as the “degrading of living creatures to a commodity.”²

Within the growing circle of religious people who are aware of the methods and implications of industrial agriculture, there is increasing consensus that the plight of farmed animals is a serious moral concern. But for the great majority, the question of what goes on in concentrated animal feeding operations (or CAFOs) and slaughterhouses may seem too distant from everyday religious concerns to merit significant attention. Given the gravity of the human problems and environmental crises currently looming large, an honest person of faith can hardly be faulted for asking: “Don’t we have more important things to worry about than what’s for dinner?”

But if daily food choices may at first seem far removed from the most pressing concerns of religious people, a closer look at these dietary decisions reveals that they have troubling consequences not just for billions of animals, but for the food, commerce, and education systems of developing countries, the dignity of those employed in industrial farms and slaughterhouses, the integrity of our rural communities, the health of an increasingly obese and diseased human population, the accessibility of the healthcare systems that treat these ills, the sustainability of the earth’s natural resources, and even the hastening of global climate change. As this evidence of the unintended consequences of industrial animal farming continues to mount, it is becoming increasingly clear that, far from being a trivial matter of personal preference, eating is an activity that people of faith have good reason to regard as deeply morally and spiritually significant.

If the goal, after all, is to become increasingly mindful of the role humanity is called to serve in the flourishing of the world as a whole—a goal widely shared among the cosmic visions of many world religions—then it makes perfect sense for religious people to seek to become much more intentional about the daily activity that connects them perhaps more directly than any other to the whole of creation: eating! The simple question of what to eat can prompt us daily to live out our religious vocations of service to the world—to bear witness to the marginalization of the poor, the exploitation of the oppressed, the

suffering of the innocent, and the degradation of the natural world, and to participate in the reconciliation of these ills through intentional acts of love, justice, mercy, and good stewardship. Indeed, if it is the renewal rather than the degradation of creation that we profess to serve, we must address ourselves with more imagination, conviction, and honesty to the moral and spiritual significance of eating.

My aim here is to clarify this general idea that eating more intentionally can be a compelling discipline for living out one’s faith by developing a case study of how this strategy might apply within my own spiritual tradition, Christianity. But if I speak from within a specific tradition, many of the guiding insights I explore—for instance, that religious visions of reality can provide strong inspiration for ethical living, that human beings and animals share an ontological bond as fellow creatures, that authentic dominion is displayed in compassion rather than tyranny, and that courageous moral imagination can excavate new epiphanies from ancient texts—are insights that resonate deeply with the thought and practice of many other religions.³ I submit these reflections, then, without any pretense that Christianity has a corner on food ethical wisdom, in the spirit of promoting interfaith dialogue on matters of shared religious interest and in hope that any reader concerned with ethical eating, religious or otherwise, might find value in a case study that positions Christ-followers as potential fellow travelers on this path.

IMAGINATION: ENVISIONING THE PEACEABLE KINGDOM

One of the perennial temptations that Christians have faced throughout the history of the church is that of living as if the good news of the Gospel of Jesus—God’s promise to redeem and transform all of creation—is relevant only to human beings. This oversight is particularly troubling, given the clarity of the scriptural record both on God’s original intentions for the created order and on God’s promise to

regenerate it from its currently fallen state. Whether we interpret the relevant passages literally or figuratively, our creation and redemption narratives make it abundantly clear that God's highest aspiration for creation is the institution of a cosmic harmony in which human beings created in God's image promote the flourishing of the whole of God's world to God's glory.

As the narrative goes, in fact, the first dignity God bestows upon human beings—our very first opportunity to exercise the love, power, and creativity of the divine image within us—is the charge to care for the natural world and the animal creatures with whom we share it. As the drama unfolds, however, human disobedience disrupts this harmony, leading to a downward spiral of selfishness and alienation that estranges us from God, from ourselves, and from the creatures entrusted to our care. Nevertheless, God resolves to redeem the created order by becoming incarnate in Jesus Christ, the “new Adam” who not only defeats human sin through his death and resurrection, but will one day return to usher in and reign over a “peaceable kingdom” in which the harmony of creation is so fully restored that the scriptures describe it with images of children playing amidst venomous snakes, leopards and lambs lying down together, and lions eating straw. An exhilarating vision, to be sure!

For some help discerning the implications of this vision for Christian attitudes and actions toward our fellow creatures, I'll draw on an insightful prayer by the Baptist theologian Walter Rauschenbusch on the kinship of humans and animals as fellow creatures of God. Prays Rauschenbusch in “For the World,”

O God, we thank thee for this universe, our great home; for its vastness and its riches and for the manifoldness of the life which teems upon it and of which we are a part. [. . .] Enlarge within us the sense of fellowship with all the living things, our little brothers, to whom thou hast given the earth as their home in common with us. We remember with shame that in the past we have exercised the high dominion of man with ruthless cruelty so that the voice of the earth, which should have gone up to thee in song, has been a groan of travail. May we realize that they live not for us alone but for themselves and for thee, and that they love the

sweetness of life even as we, and serve thee in their place better than we in ours.⁴

There are four insights here that can aid us in understanding the ideal of “living toward the peaceable kingdom.” The first insight is that the entirety of creation belongs to God. While few Christians would contest this statement in principle, the ways in which we treat creation in practice suggest that either we don't really mean what we say, or perhaps more likely, our sense of what God's ownership of creation should mean for our daily lives has been dulled by our immersion in consumer culture—a culture which promotes the idea that anything we desire can be rightfully ours for a price. By keeping our attention focused completely on the short-term benefits that *we* enjoy through the use of creation as a “resource,” consumer culture blinds us to the costs of our consumption for other human beings, animals, and the earth, seducing us into living as if creation were ours to dispense with as we please. But the world belongs to God. And the upshot of this insight for our purposes is that living toward the peaceable kingdom must begin with a renewed awareness of whose will it is the ultimate fulfillment of creation to serve—God's, not our own.

Rauschenbusch is well aware, of course, that coming to terms with this insight will not be an easy task for fallen human beings. Presumably this is why he petitions God for help in the very next line, praying for a more expansive “sense of fellowship with all living things” through which we may reawaken to our humble station as creatures, indeed as kin to the animals with whom we share the earth as our God-given home. This second insight that we too are creatures and that our fellow creatures enjoy a mandate to call the earth their home and to flourish here among us fits hand in glove with the first insight. For the more we come to accept our standing as creatures among other creatures, the better we are able to see our well-being as linked to the well-being of the whole—one creation whose ultimate purpose is to serve the glory of God. The upshot of this second insight, then, is that living toward the peaceable kingdom transforms our conceptions of human flourishing in view of God's call to seek what is best

for creation as a whole—a whole of which human beings are but one integral part.

Before anyone starts to worry that this second insight blurs the line between humans and animals or otherwise diminishes human beings in some way, let us turn our attention to the third insight, which is that God intended this all-species kinship to be facilitated through the “high dominion” of human beings created specially in God’s image. Far from a demotion in rank, this call to seek what is best for the whole of creation elevates us to a station much higher than most of us have dared to imagine, much less sought to fulfill: it is a call to bring our own highest aspirations for the cosmos into line with God’s, a call to exercise the love, power, and creativity of God’s image within us toward the end of enabling the total flourishing of God’s world. The upshot of this third insight, in summary, is that living toward the peaceable kingdom elevates humankind by realizing our unique potential to exemplify God’s image through the loving and merciful treatment of all God’s creatures.

Lest we forget, this once-and-future peaceable kingdom is for now just an ardent hope. Sadly, the fault of creation’s languishing in the meanwhile falls squarely on us, its “groans of travail” a testimony to our selfishness and disobedience. And so Rauschenbusch’s prayer is, perhaps above all else, a prayer of repentance, a reminder—and here is the fourth insight—that God’s call to high dominion is fundamentally incompatible with cruelty to animals, indifference to their suffering, and the conceit that they are here for us to do with as we please. These, we confess, are not acts befitting our dominion, but acts of tyranny, betrayals of God and our fellow creatures for which shame is our just yield. Rauschenbusch well knows, nonetheless, that the end of genuine repentance is not shame but rebirth, and thus he closes the prayer with the hope that our approach to dominion may be transformed through a realization of the inherent dignity of animals, creatures whose lives are not ultimately measured by their usefulness to us, but by their value to God and to themselves. The upshot of this fourth insight, finally, is that living toward the peaceable kingdom challenges us to repent of our self-serving treatment of animals as

mere objects so that we may become more mindful of their inherent dignity as creatures of God deemed worthy in God’s sight.

In view of these four insights, it should be clear that the ideal of living toward the peaceable kingdom is nothing less than an inkling of a new world order. It is an invitation to reconsider, in a dazzling new light, our relationships to God, other human beings, fellow creatures, the Earth, and ourselves. It is a call to imagine what creation might be like if we were to live today as though the kingdom of God has already arrived, grounding our present attitudes and actions toward all of God’s creatures in the hope of honoring the dignity that will be theirs when God’s redemptive work is complete.

CONVICTION: PRACTICING COMPASSIONATE EATING AS A SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE

My guiding suggestion is that compassionate eating is a compelling way to turn the lofty aspirations of this vision of the peaceable kingdom into concrete convictions practiced on a daily basis. In developing this suggestion, I should clarify, first, why the activity of eating is a particularly fruitful starting point for taking up the call to creation care. The main insight here is disarmingly simple: thinking through the ethics of eating forces us to be mindful of the impact of our consumer habits on every link in the great chain of being.

Virtually every meal offers ample food for thought about the world and our place within it. A traditional breakfast of eggs and bacon raises the question of what life is like for the chickens and pigs who are used to produce the food. The drive-thru “value meal” at lunchtime prompts our suspicion that some people somewhere are getting less than they deserve so that we can save a buck or two. The tomato salad at dinner gives us pause to consider the environmental costs of trucking produce thousands of miles so that we can eat “fresh”

vegetables anytime of the year. In short, raising questions about the way we eat leads us directly to deeper questions about our relation to the whole—questions that aspiring stewards of creation should be asking.

But if eating is an *enlightening* starting point as an activity that can illuminate our daily connectedness to the rest of creation, it is also an *empowering* starting point as an activity over which many of us have a significant degree of personal control. Relatively few of us can decide overnight to become full-time activists, ecologists, creation-friendly farmers, or even hybrid car owners. By contrast, a great many of us *are* able to change our eating habits in ways that can have transformative effects in our own lives and the world at large. Moreover, because eating is often a communal activity, the convictions of a few can inspire a great many, as friends and family, teachers and students, pastors and congregations begin to see that eating more intentionally is something they too can find morally and spiritually invigorating—as well as delicious, nutritious, and cost-effective.

In suggesting that compassionate eating can be a Christian spiritual discipline, my contention is that the repetitive daily practice of remembering and taking care to reduce the hidden costs of our food choices may serve to supplant thoughtless, damaging patterns of consumption with more intentional, compassionate habits. Practicing this discipline is an act of repentance because it reminds us, each time we eat, that all of us make decisions every day that contribute to the unnecessary suffering of other creatures and the degradation of creation. But compassionate eating is also an act of redemption because the daily activity of seeking out less cruel, more socially and ecologically responsible choices—even though it can never fully extricate us from the web of fallen institutions and practices in which we are always already entangled—nevertheless serves to propel us in the right direction. Limited though our power is, the seemingly insignificant practices of eating less meat, supporting less intensive farming methods, or adopting a greener diet have a way—like mustard seeds—of giving rise to greater things.

HONESTY: FACING THE TRUE COST OF FOOD

Having envisioned the ideal of the peaceable kingdom and developed a concrete strategy for living out the convictions inspired by it, we are now in a better position to get honest about the true cost of food. My focus here will be on the cost of our dietary choices for other animals, but I could just as easily canvas the many human and environmental costs of industrial animal agriculture.⁵ It is crucial to remember, too, that in reality these divisions are artificial, and that all of these problems ultimately spring from the same root: human fallenness. As creatures made in the image of God and dignified with the high calling to care for creation, we are the ones to whom God has entrusted the wellbeing of the animal kingdom and the natural world, and so the degradation of these on our watch because of our poor choices is ultimately evidence of our own decadence. While it is natural for each of us to find different aspects of this same basic problem more and less compelling (some of us are moved most deeply by the plight of the global poor, others by the suffering of animals or the degradation of the natural world), we would do best to cultivate a holistic sensitivity to all of the above, acknowledging that the flourishing of the whole is our ultimate aspiration.

As we strive to cultivate this holistic outlook, the need is paramount for an open spirit that does not retreat into denial or defensiveness in the face of these problems. For though our sacred texts provide general guidelines as to what a life of authentic Christian discipleship should look like, they do not directly address the question of how we should respond to the specific forms of alienation, suffering, and decline that have arisen in the wake of industrial agriculture over the past sixty years. Indeed, those who look to the Bible for an unobstructed path to the one true Christian diet usually end up perplexed. The bookends of Eden and the peaceable kingdom might seem to show that God's ideal for human beings is a plant-based diet. But the giving of animals to Noah for food and Jesus eating fish complicate the picture,

suggesting that eating animals is permissible, at least in some circumstances. The strict dietary laws of the Hebrew Bible seem to show that reservations about unrestrained omnivorism have a divine precedent, but Paul enjoins us not to let dietary differences inhibit fellowship. A diet of vegetables emboldens Daniel in the lion's den, yet Paul curiously appears to associate vegetarianism with weak faith. Evidence of God's love and care for animals abounds throughout the scriptural record, but the record also includes animal sacrifice, at least until the Passover lamb gives way to the last supper—an event memorialized in the sacrament of a simple vegetarian meal.

The debate that ensues from these tensions has ancient roots in both Judaism and Christianity, and the biblical interpretation involved in discerning their contemporary significance traverses controversial theological and philosophical terrain.⁶ When we combine the complexity of the biblical record with the knowledge that taking a stand on these issues requires sacrificing some of the conveniences to which we've grown accustomed (say, having access to unlimited quantities of inexpensive animal products), we may find ourselves tempted to exploit the Bible's lack of specific directives on these matters for our own selfish purposes. In such moments of weakness, we must remember St. Paul's injunction, in the absence of obvious, uncontroversial scriptural directives, to follow the Spirit where it leads and to know it by its fruits: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. As we contemplate the consequences of the way we eat, we must consider whether these are the fruits of our daily choices. If, after honest discernment, the answer to this question is "no," then we must ready ourselves to take steps toward doing better.

As we consider the consequences of our daily choices, finally, we must take great care to remember that we are dealing here with the fallenness of the agricultural system at large—a system in which we are all involved at some level. As such, when the temptation arises to assign blame, we must strenuously resist the urge to scapegoat people who work in the industry—be they agribusiness people or workers on industrial farms—as “the real culprits” who bear the brunt of the responsibility. Farmers, after

all, are just one link in a long supply chain and they are generally at the mercy of competitive markets that must answer to shareholders who demand high returns and consumers who demand low prices. If anything, the buck stops with those of us who have the power to demand positive changes or to patronize new and better markets. In short, we should humbly discern the planks in our own eyes before attending to specks in the eyes of others.

What, then, are some of the hidden costs to animals of our dependence on industrial agriculture? Other readings in this volume provide more comprehensive coverage of the gory details, but the short story is that the vast majority of animals used for food are raised in confinement systems that cause them acute and chronic suffering, that systematically frustrate their species-appropriate interests, and that nearly always result in their deaths. Roughly nine billion animals are slaughtered annually for food in the U.S. alone (not including billions of fish) so that Americans can consume over 200 pounds of meat per person per year—almost twice the global average. At the same time as we exploit, kill, and eat this historically unprecedented number of animals, we know more than ever before about their complex cognitive, emotional, and social lives, not just from the work of scientists and animal ethicists, but from our daily experience with the companion animals who live in almost 70% of our households.

Although Christians haven't been particularly well attuned to these hidden moral costs in the past, the time has come to be wary as serpents. By any defensible moral standard of welfare, a great many of the billions of animals raised and slaughtered for food every year by the industrial agricultural complex are enduring lives unbefitting creatures of God. If we ignore these animals' suffering, we do so at the peril of turning our backs on the scriptural record of God's original intentions for creation and God's plan for redeeming it. As Anglican theologian Andrew Linzey has observed, the redemptive power of Christ's gospel is for every creature. “To stand for Jesus,” Linzey argues, “is to stand for a ministry of reconciliation to the whole of creation [. . .], to stand for active compassion for the weak [against exploitation by the powerful], to stand for animals as God's creatures, against

all purely humanistic accounts of animals as things, commodities, resources, here for us.”⁷

In failing to be moved by the suffering of animals in the industrial system, moreover, we must also deny the validity of both our own experience and contemporary scientific accounts of the kinds of beings these animals are. Just like the cats and dogs we cherish as our companions, the chickens, turkeys, pigs, cattle, sheep, laying hens, and dairy cows we use for food are unique individuals—sentient beings who are fully capable of feeling pain and experiencing psychological trauma. The structure of their bodies is significantly similar to our own, their nervous systems transmit pain in the same ways, and they manifest similar types of behavior when in pain or under stress. They form lasting bonds with members of their own species, and they experience significant trauma when these bonds are broken. Like us, they seek out pleasure and fulfillment, avoid pain and discomfort, and fight for their lives when faced with the threat of imminent death.

Note that none of this is to say that their suffering is on a moral or psychological par with human suffering. But please notice, too, that it doesn’t need to be on a par with human suffering in order to count as something bad, even as something terribly evil—something that God-appointed stewards of creation should take great care to avoid inflicting or supporting without strong reasons for doing so. Though we could argue indefinitely over what constitutes a good reason to inflict this kind of suffering on animals, I hope that many of us can agree that the overproduction of inexpensive comfort food for comparatively affluent people at the expense of poorer people and our collective health is not a particularly attractive candidate.

ONWARD TOWARD THE PEACEABLE KINGDOM: WISDOM FOR THE JOURNEY

My final task is to highlight some of the unique advantages of this approach and offer some concluding

advice on how to put these advantages to work as we take up the discipline of compassionate eating.

The first advantage of our approach is that it provides an *accessible, distinctively Christian framework* for coming to appreciate the moral and spiritual significance of some urgent contemporary issues that many Christians may otherwise find alienating or off-putting. Many Christians, for instance, are suspicious that “animal compassion” demotes human interests, or that “environmentalism” worships nature. Within this framework, however, such Christians can see the merits of deep concern for animals and the environment as perfectly consistent with our fundamental commitment to a theocentric universe in which human beings have been dignified with a special calling. Once attuned to this consistency, we can engage the causes of animal compassion and environmentalism not as “outside threats,” but as productive challenges that can provoke our discovery of invigorating new possibilities for discipleship within our own tradition.

A second advantage of our approach is that it is *ecumenical*—it is inclusive of the interests of a wide variety of people, including different types of Christians, people of other faith traditions, and even some non-religious people. Christians of a conservative stripe can appreciate our strategy’s emphasis on the sovereignty of God, the authority of scripture, and the importance of personal responsibility to the moral and spiritual life. Christians of a more progressive stripe may resonate with its emphasis on social justice, its sensitivity to the importance of engaging culture and questioning the status quo, and its call to make the imitation of Jesus a more salient feature of Christianity’s contemporary witness. People of other faith traditions may find something useful in our strategy’s emphases on revisiting the metaphysical vision of their tradition with fresh eyes for the purpose of inspiring more compassionate habits, and on the usefulness of spiritual disciplines for entrenching those habits (an approach to seeking authenticity that has been employed for millennia by pilgrims from virtually every spiritual heritage). Finally, non-religious people with a passion for the human, animal, and environmental concerns addressed here can perhaps see in our strategy an

opportunity to make allies of people they once viewed as adversaries.

A third advantage of our approach is its *holism*. Rather than emphasizing the interests of just one aspect of the created order at the expense of others, the focus of our strategy is squarely on the flourishing of the whole. By highlighting the intimate connections among the different interests represented in creation and by recognizing that the degradation of any one of them has repercussions for the well-being of the others, we end up in a better position both to discern what moral and spiritual flourishing means for us and to negotiate conflicts of interest with the principles of compassion, justice, and sustainability in mind.

The fourth and most significant advantage of our approach is that the discipline of compassionate eating has its moral and spiritual sights set on *liberation and transformation rather than legalism and conformation*. Compassionate eating, as we have described it, begins not with a code of laws to which we are obliged to conform, but with the vision of an ideal toward which we are called to strive. Instead of saying “This activity is bad; don’t do it!”, our approach says “Practicing this discipline is liberating; take up the call and experience transformation!”. The transformation we have in mind here, recall, is not a “once-and-for-all” arrival at a perfected state, but rather a disciplined process of ongoing striving that proceeds in full view of our fallen limitations, challenging us, nonetheless, to shoot ever higher as progress is achieved.

The goal of compassionate eating, in summary, is not some this-worldly utopia, nor is our disposition toward those who disagree with us one of separatist judgment. The two-fold aim, rather, is this: (1) to live as faithfully as we can toward the peaceable kingdom in which the harmony among human beings, animals and the natural world will be restored; and (2) to commit ourselves in the meanwhile to bringing pressure to bear on the institutions of the fallen world (of which we remain a part) in the hopes of raising the world’s consciousness and advancing whatever improvements are possible under the specific fallen conditions in which we find ourselves. Promoting a “one-size-fits-all” legalism is a sure-fire way to

achieve irrelevance. If this witness really matters to us, if we really believe in its transformative power, we must adapt it to the particular communities we serve, grounding our words and deeds in intimate knowledge of and respect for the cultural and socio-economic circumstances of the people with whom we live and work.

At the end of the day, it is the faithfulness of our discipleship rather than its impact on the world that matters most. Being a witness, after all, sometimes means being a martyr, and there will surely be times when the different choices we feel called to make will be met with indifference, cynicism or even contempt by the world at large, indeed perhaps even by our own friends or family. We must persevere, holding out hope that the many individual and social goods of compassionate eating—dare I say fruits of the spirit—will flourish.

NOTES

1. This reading is an abridged, revised version of Matthew C. Halteman, *Compassionate Eating as Care of Creation*, Washington, D.C.: Humane Society of the United States Faith Outreach, 2008. I am grateful to HSUS Faith Outreach for their encouragement to republish the piece here, and to *Interpretation* for permission to repurpose a passage from my “Knowing the Standard American Diet by Its Fruits: Is Unrestrained Omnivorism Spiritually Beneficial?”, *Interpretation*, 67 (4), 383–395.

2. Since the original publication of this piece, Pope Francis has upped the ante in bringing Catholic concern for animals to public attention with his 2015 encyclical *Laudato Si’: On Care for Our Common Home*. This encyclical is available in its entirety at http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html, as accessed on August 21, 2015.

3. Those interested in more direct engagements with the traditions of Buddhism, Daoism, Hinduism, indigenous religions, Islam, Judaism, Wicca, and others can find a wealth of resources in two recent anthologies: *A Communion of Subjects: Animals in Religion, Science, & Ethics*, Paul Waldau and Kimberly Patton, eds., New York: Columbia University Press, 2006; and *Call to Compassion: Religious Perspectives on Animal Advocacy*, Lisa Kemmerer and Anthony J. Nocella II, eds., New York: Lantern Books, 2011. Lisa Kemmerer’s *Animals*

and *World Religions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) is another excellent resource.

4. Walter Rauschenbusch, “For This World,” in *For God and the People: Prayers of the Social Awakening*, New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1910, 47–48.

5. The original version of this piece addresses the human and environmental fallout as well. See Halteman 2008.

6. On Judaism, see Roberta Kalechofky, *Judaism and Animal Rights: Classical and Contemporary Responses* (Boston: Micah Books, 1992). On Christianity, see Andrew Linzey, *Animal Theology* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994); and *A Faith Embracing All Creatures* (Alexis-Baker and York, eds.; Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2012).

7. Andrew Linzey, *Animal Gospel*, 11–18.

QUESTIONS

1. Halteman suggests that facing the fallout of our collective eating habits requires honesty, conviction, and imagination. But he intentionally frontloads the discussion of imagination, claiming that doing so is strategically important. Why does he believe that the discussion of imagination should come first? Can you think of any instances in your own experience where an expansion of your imagination has resulted in an increased sense of moral curiosity or responsibility?
2. The Christian cosmic vision of the “peaceable kingdom” that Halteman describes is clearly an ideal that is difficult or impossible to actualize in the real world. As such, it may seem hopelessly “pie in the sky” to some people. Is that a problem for Halteman’s view? In your opinion, are spiritual or moral ideals better or worse to the degree that they are realizable in the here and now? If so, why? If not, why not? How might an unrealizable ideal be morally edifying and even practically useful?
3. What do you think of the idea of intentional eating practices functioning as a spiritual discipline? Could this idea work outside of a religious context, or does it require a robust cosmic vision in order to work?
4. On Halteman’s account, an honest look at the consequences of our collective eating habits confronts us with serious moral and practical problems for human beings, animals, and the environment. Up against problems this huge, one might worry that a single individual’s eating practices don’t make any difference. Still, Halteman seems to think that a commitment to compassionate eating is important, even if its impact on the world is negligible. Drawing on the chapter introduction’s accounts of symbolism, virtue, and authenticity, help Halteman defend his view against this worry. Now criticize Halteman’s view on utilitarian grounds. Consider the Singer and Korsgaard readings in Chapter 7, “Industrial Animal Agriculture.” What, if anything, would their objections be?