The year was 1970. It was the year of the Kent State shootings, Simon and Garfunkel’s “Bridge Over Troubled Water,” Apollo 13, the disbanding of the Beatles, the X-rated movie Midnight Cowboy winning the Best Picture Oscar, the drug-related deaths of Jimi Hendrix and Janis Joplin, as well as the death of Scopes Monkey Trial defendant John T. Scopes. That year also marked the first Earth Day on April 22 (see “1970,” 2000). By July, the Environmental Protection Agency was formed. Various pieces of federal legislation designed to protect the environment quickly followed, including the Clean Air Act (1970), the Clean Water Act (1972), and the Endangered Species Act (1973) (see “Major Environmental Laws,” 2003). Since 1970, it is safe to say, the American way of life has been altered drastically. The environmentally insensitive citizen now possesses heightened consciousness about littering, recycling, global warming, and “going organic.” But things have gotten out of hand.

It was one thing for young people who embraced this perspective to march in the streets in the 1960s and promote their offbeat, fanatical ideas. But now that they have moved into powerful political positions, their ideas permeate policy and are willing to go. A 400-page United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization report has identified rapidly growing herds of cattle as the greatest threat to the environment (Lean, 2006). We are told that the 1.5 billion cattle on Earth are responsible for 18% of the greenhouse gases that cause global warming—more than cars, planes, and all other forms of transportation combined. More than a third of the greenhouse gas, methane (which warms the world 20 times faster than carbon dioxide), is emitted by cows and their manure. And it is not just methane, since cattle also produce more than 100 other polluting gases, including more than two-thirds of the world’s emissions of ammonia—one of the main causes of acid rain (Lean, 2006). That’s right, gaseous emissions by cows damage the planet more than emissions from cars. Environmentalists have conspired to unleash a flood of environmental propaganda and eco-myths. First it was the “deadly” ozone-depleting hairspray aerosols. Then it was the evil internal combustion engine. They have inundated the public with their alarmist claims that global pollution, ozone depletion, and environmental contamination due to technological progress and American affluence mean that life on Earth is facing inevitable and imminent extinction. They insist that humans are inflicting widespread damage on the environment, destroying the forests, and causing the extinction of animal and plant species. Friends of the Earth International insists: “[T]he Earth is a creation to be honored and respected as our Mother” (see “Friends of the Earth...,” 2007, emp. added).

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warming ("Flatulent Kangaroos...", 2007).

But it doesn’t stop there. Scientists from Austria and Germany recently reported that, though we humans are but one of the millions of species on Earth, we use up almost one-fourth of the sun’s energy captured by plants—the most of any species. More than half of the use is due to the harvesting of crops and other plants (Leung, 2007). You read that right. It is bad enough that we humans are soaking up more than our fair share of the Sun’s rays simply by being outdoors; but we are exploiting poor, defenseless green plants by greedily harvesting and consuming their bounty, thereby stealing from them the benefit they derived from the Sun.

To top such nonsense off, while it is common for environmentalists to blame mankind as the prime perpetrator of environmental destruction, now one environmentalist insists that, more specifically, children are significant culprits in the human assault on the natural order. Parents, we are told, should limit their offspring to no more than two children in order to reduce carbon dioxide output. The report published by the environmentalist group, Optimum Population Trust, insists that the greatest thing one could do to help the future of the planet would be to have one less child (Templeton, 2007).

Let’s get this straight. Cows cause global warming, so we need to reduce the cow population. If we kill cows, we will upset the animal rights people. If we eat cows, we will offend the vegetarians. If we allow the present population of cows to live to old age and die naturally, we could arrest the growth of the cow population by performing partial birth abortions on all cows that get pregnant. But that, too, likely would upset animal rights people (who probably would have no problem doing the same to pre-born humans—especially since kids contribute to the CO2 problem). Since harvesting crops and other green plants is stealing solar energy, we need to cease consuming plants—to the further dismay of the vegetarians. Any of this making sense to you?

ASSUMPTIONS OF ENVIRONMENTALISM

Radical environmentalists and animal rights activists share many of the same philosophical presuppositions held by atheists, evolutionists, Buddhists, Hindus, New Age mystics, and other forms of humanism, animism, and paganism from antiquity to the present. Their perspective is embodied in pantheism. To them, the material realm is all that exists. There are no metaphysical realities. The Universe is here because of accidental, non-purposive happenstances. “Deity” resides in all natural phenomena—from rocks and dirt, to plants, animals, and humans. “God” is not the personal, Supreme Being of the Bible, Who is self-existent and transcendent of the Universe. Rather “god” is an impersonal force embedded in nature, in the physical realm, and in all life forms (cf. “The Force” in the Star Wars series).

The fundamental fallacy of the modern environmental movement is this inherent denial of supernaturalism and metaphysical reality. Rather than acknowledging that the entire Universe was created miraculously by the transcendent God of the Bible, Who both prepared and perpetuates the Earth for human habitation (Genesis 1:1-2:19; 8:22; Hebrews 11:3), the environmental movement posits the absence of supernatural origins and the necessity of an eternal Universe. Hence, the physical environment must be protected and preserved by humans in order for life to continue. The future of the Earth is viewed as dependent on mankind. If man damages the fragile environment, he is hastening its demise.

Renowned Cornell University astronomer Carl Sagan held this view: “I believe we have an obligation to fight for life on Earth—not just for ourselves, but for all those, humans and others, who came before us, and to whom we are beholden, and for all those who, if we are wise enough, will come after” (1997, p. 75, emphasis added). He also insisted that “[o]ur capacity to cause harm is great” (p. 97). In other words, the future of the planet—and all life on it—lies completely in the hands of humanity. Are we humans really so arrogant as to think that the future of the planet rests with us? Are we really so foolish as to think that the digestive tract of cows are defective—the result of mindless evolution rather than the all-knowing Creator—and that it falls to us to correct it?

If environmentalists believe that human beings are the product of the chance, mechanistic forces of nature working over millions of years through non-intelligent, evolutionary accidents, one can understand why they might think that we must preserve the planet at all costs—even at the expense of humans. To them, human beings are simply one more rung on the evolutionary ladder, with each prior life form being of comparable value. From this perspective, the environment in which evolution occurs is far more important than any one species that may happen to arise within that environment. The comparative worth of one species is based upon how large a danger that spe-
cies poses to other species. Since humans have greater capability to harm the environment and to destroy lesser species, humans constitute the greatest threat to the well-being of the planet. To the environmentalist, humans are the natural enemy of nature.

Sagan also stated: “There is no cause more urgent, no dedication more fitting than to protect the future of our species... No social convention, no political system, no economic hypothesis, no religious dogma is more important” (1997, p. 75, emp. added). Such statements betray a purely materialistic outlook on life. Religious and spiritual concerns are secondary—or altogether nonexistent. The “number one concern,” according to Sagan and the environmentalists, is the preservation of the physical realm. Though Sagan and his fellow evolutionists disavow any allegiance to religion—Christian or otherwise—the dedication and devotion to the environment that they enjoin bears a striking resemblance to the devotion advocated by those who profess religious belief. The only difference is the object of the religious devotion. While manifesting hostility toward the Christian religion, it is apparent that environmentalists have their own religion: the worship of nature and the environment. This explains why Sagan would write: “The Earth is a tiny and fragile world. It needs to be cherished” (1980, p. 103, emp. added). To say that the Earth needs to be “cherished,” i.e., loved, suggests distorted sensibilities that are unaided by divine insight. God has instructed humans to love Him, each other, His law, and truth. But He never has told us to love rocks, dirt, plants, and animals—or to hug trees.

To summarize, several assumptions inherent in radical environmentalism: the Creator depicted in the Bible does not exist; the Universe is eternal; the created order has no planned, overriding purpose; man is the ultimate offending culprit in his ability to destroy the planet; and the survival of the planet’s features (plants, animals, atmosphere, etc.) depends on man—not on any higher power.

THE BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

In stark contrast, the Bible affirms two crucial principles that should shape our understanding of the environment. First, God created the Earth for a specific purpose: to provide human beings with the appropriate environment in which to decide their eternal destiny. God created humans to be free moral agents, to experience earthly life as their one and only probationary period, with their fate in eternity being determined by their response to God during this earthly life. Hence, the Earth is as good (for the purpose God had in creating it) as any possible world, in that it was created to be a “vale of soul-making” for human beings (Warren, 1972, p. 19; cf. Genesis 1:31; Psalm 65:9; 104:24; Ecclesiastes 12:13).

God created the planet to be inhabited (Isaiah 45:18). He declared His intention that human beings were to rule and have dominion over the Earth’s resources. Referring to humans, He stated: “[L]et them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth” (Genesis 1:26, emp. added). He instructed humans to “fill the earth and subdue it” (Genesis 1:28, emp. added). The Hebrew term for “subdue” (kABB) means to bring into submission by force (Oswalt, 1980, 1:430). The psalmist echoed these very directives when he praised God by saying, “You [God] have made him [man] to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet” (Psalm 8:6, emp. added). God stressed human domination in even stronger terms after the Flood: “[T]he fear of you [humans] and the dread of you shall be on every beast of the earth, on every bird of the air, on all that moves on the earth, and on all the fish of the sea. They are given into your hand. Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs” (Genesis 9:2-3, emp. added). God obviously intended for humans to make use of Earth’s natural resources, including animals and plants, in order to live, survive, develop, and progress—all in preparation for eternity.

Second, not only did God initially set up the environment to fulfill its divinely designated purpose, placing within it all necessary variables for sustaining it until He decides to terminate the physical realm, but He also continues to sustain and maintain it. The Bible has a great deal to say about the role that Jesus played at the Creation (e.g., John 1:3; Hebrews 1:2). He continues to have a relationship with the physical Universe by ensuring that it remains intact and functional. Paul referred to the “one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live” (1 Corinthians 8:6, emp. added). Paul also stated: “For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth... All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist” (Colossians 1:16-17, emp. added). The psalmist insisted that when God spoke the physical Universe into existence, the constituent elements of the created order “stood fast” and were established.” God having “made a decree” with them (33:9, 148:5-6, emp. added). The Hebrews writer claimed that Jesus is “upholding all things by the word of His power” (1:3, emp. added). Peter said that “the heavens and the earth which now exist are kept in store by the same word” (2 Peter 3:7, emp. added). The terms in these verses connote the idea of preserving, governing, regulating, and superintending the created order (Nicoll, 1900, 4:251-252). In other words, deity continues to maintain the order, harmony, and well-being of the whole creation—the vast Universe as well as planet Earth (Barnes, 2005 reprint, p. 27). We can be assured: the environment will remain intact and suitable for life as long as God intends. He is the great Sustainer.

ENVIRONMENTALISM’S INCONSISTENCIES

The environmentalist viewpoint is fraught with self-contradiction. We are being told that due to human interference, global warming and the “greenhouse effect” are occurring, and that the Earth’s temperature is increasing (e.g., Sagan, 1997, pp. 105ff.). A recent National Geographic article sounds the typical alarmist cry:

The planet is heating up—and fast. Glaciers are melting, sea levels are rising, cloud forests are drying, and wildlife is scrambling to keep pace. It’s becoming clear that humans have caused most of the past century’s warming by releasing heat-trapping gases as we power our modern lives. Called greenhouse gases, their levels are higher now than in the last 650,000 years... What will we do to slow this warming? How will we cope with the changes we’ve already set into motion? While we struggle to figure it all out, the face of the Earth as we know it... hangs in the balance ("What Is...?" n.d., emp. added).

Yet we also have been terrorized with the idea that our actions are “lowering the surface temperature of our planet” (Sagan, 1980, p. 103). Ironically, a 1974 TIME magazine article reported a three-
decade-long cooling of atmospheric temperatures and other "weather aberrations" that "may be the harbinger of another ice age" ("Another Ice Age?"). Insisting that "telltale signs are everywhere," as expected, one of the culprits responsible for the threat was identified as man, since "dust and other particles released into the atmosphere as a result of farming and fuel burning may be blocking more and more sunlight from reaching and heating the surface of the earth" ("Another Ice Age?"). The 1974 article concluded: "Whatever the cause of the cooling trend, its effects could be extremely serious, if not catastrophic. Scientists figure that only a 1% decrease in the amount of sunlight hitting the earth’s surface could tip the climate balance, and cool the planet enough to send it sliding down the road to another ice age within only a few hundreds years" ("Another Ice Age?", emp. added). So which is it? Ice age or global warming? Since yesterday’s science is today's superstition, how wary ought we to be regarding the bold claims of today's "science"?

Nature vs. Itself

The absurdity of the environmentalists' claim—that humans are harsh and insensitive in their treatment of the environment—becomes especially apparent, even whimsical, when one simply observes nature’s treatment of itself. For example, the Katmai National Park is home to the world’s largest grizzly bears, commonly referred to as Alaskan Brown Bears. Because of their rich salmon diet, these bears grow to over 1,000 pounds in weight, making them the world’s largest land predators. Philip Greenspun gave the following eyewitness report of the bears’ eating ritual in the Brooks River:

Dominant bears occupy prime positions on top of the part of the falls where salmon jump every few seconds. When the salmon are running well, every five minutes a bear will catch a fish in his teeth and hold it firmly enough that blood begins to flow as the fish flops around. If there are plenty of salmon, the bear goes after only the fatty skin, brain, and roe, removing these parts during a gruesome minute or so. The salmon may remain alive for much or all of its consumption. Why do you think they call them animals? (1993).

Notice the carnage, the waste, the brutality, the selfish competition between bears, and the flagrant insensitivity to both the salmon and the environment. But this one example is typical of the phenomena inherent throughout the animal kingdom.

The planet, itself, is equally destructive. The largest volcanic eruption in recorded history occurred in 1815 in Tambora, Indonesia, killing an estimated 92,000 people, thousands of species of wildlife, and spewing (as far as 800 miles) 150 times more ash than the 1980 eruption of Mt. St. Helens ("Tambora, Sumbawa...," n.d.). Hot, pyroclastic flows poured into the ocean, scalding sea life and causing additional explosions. Man and animal suffered cataclysmic devastation—due to starvation, disease, and hunger—earning the designation the "Year without a Summer." Daily minimum temperatures were abnormally low in the Northern Hemisphere from late spring to early autumn. Famine was widespread because of crop failures ("Tambora, Sumbawa..."). The renowned volcano Krakatau (frequently misstated as Krakaroa) caused more than 36,000 fatalities, as devastating tsunamis inundated the coastlines of Sumatra and Java ("Krakatau, Sunda...," n.d.). These are only two of hundreds, perhaps thousands, of volcanic eruptions that have unleashed massive environmental destruction through the centuries.

Consider the damage inflicted on the environment by the earthquake that killed 830,000 people in Shensi, China in 1556 ("Most Destructive Known...," 2007). Only three years ago (December 26, 2004) the earthquake that generated the great Indian Ocean tsunami is estimated to have released the energy of 23,000 Hiroshima-type atomic bombs ("The Deadliest Tsunami...," 2005). More than a quarter million people were killed and millions more in 11 countries were displaced from their homes in South Asia and East Africa ("Most Destructive Known..."). The violent movement of sections of the Earth’s crust (the tectonic plates) created a rupture which the U.S. Geological Survey estimates was more than 600 miles long, displacing the seafloor above the rupture by perhaps 10 yards horizontally and several yards vertically. The displacement of such an enormous amount of water sent powerful shock waves in every direction, moving trillions of tons of rock along hundreds of miles, causing the planet to shudder, destroying thousands of miles of coastline and submerging entire islands permanently ("The Deadliest Tsunami...," 2005). Here was catastrophic environmental damage to plant, animal, marine, and human life.

The natural positioning of the Huang He (Yellow) River in China has caused it to overflow its banks many times in history, resulting in massive environmental damage ("The World's Worst Floods," n.d.). The human death toll of one such occurrence in 1931 was estimated to be from 1 to 3.7 million. Another in 1887 killed between 900,000 and two million ("The World's Worst Floods"). The impact on plant and animal life was enormous. Hurricanes are no less destructive to the environment. On November 13, 1970, East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) experienced the deadliest hurricane on record, flooding low lying areas and killing at least half a million people—with some estimates rising as high as one million ("The Ten Worst...," n.d.).

On March 18, 1925, the deadliest tornado in U.S. history began in southeastern Missouri, crossed through southern Illinois, and then turned to southwestern Indiana, killing 625 people and injuring more than 2,000 others. Property damage was assessed at $16.5 million—$1.7 billion in today’s dollars. The tornado left a 219 mile track—the longest ever recorded ("The Deadliest U.S. Tornado...," n.d.). Once again, havoc was wreaked on plant and animal life.

Volcanoes, hurricanes, tornados, floods, earthquakes, tsunamis—the list goes on and on. The powerful energy, awesome force, and mind-boggling destruction that nature has inflicted on itself and Earth’s inhabitants has been ongoing—a perpetual pattern of catastrophe. Yet, as God planned, life goes on—until the day He decides to call the human population to account before His judgment seat.

Humans vs. Nature

Have humans tampered with nature and caused unnecessary harm to the environment? Certainly. Instances are legion. In 1876, the introduction of Kudzu, a fast-growing vine from Japan, ultimately led to the destruction of valuable forests by blocking sunlight from trees. The vine, which can grow 60 feet each year, and has blanketed the South,
is virtually impervious to herbicides. Yet, many positive benefits have emerged, including remarkable soil erosion control, a nutritious food source for Angora goats, the creation of products such as baskets, paper, jelly, syrup, and hay bales, and even progress on the development of new medicines (see “The Amazing Story...,” 2002). In 1859, Thomas Austin brought 24 rabbits from England to Australia, where they multiplied uncontrollably, causing considerable ecological ramifications (see Kellett, 2006; “Environmental Damage...,” 2001). Many other non-native plants and animals have been introduced into non-indigenous habitats, with a variety of consequences (see “Non-Native Species,” 2002).

No one knows how many plant and animal species have gone extinct since the beginning of Creation. No doubt, the number would be staggering. The obliteration of the dinosaur population alone would account for the eradication of large numbers. It is estimated that, just in the past 2,000 years, more than a hundred kinds of birds and more than a hundred kinds of mammals have disappeared from the Earth (see “Extinct and Near-Extinct...,” 1966). Included are the Dodo Bird of the Indian Ocean island of Mauritius, the Tasmanian Tiger Wolf of mainland Australia, and New Zealand’s giant, flightless bird, the Moa (see “Endangered Species,” 2003; “Extinct Animals,” 2001). These estimates do not include the extinction of species of reptiles, fish, and insects. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service maintains the Threatened and Endangered Species System (TESS) for both plants and animals. Presently, within the United States alone, 388 animal species and 598 plant species are listed as “endangered” (see “Threatened...,” 2003).

While humans sometimes are blamed for causing certain species to diminish, no one knows in every case of animal or plant extinction whether humans or nature’s own agents were responsible. One fact is clear: the extinction of plants and animals through the centuries has not upset the realm of nature and the environment to the extent that the human race has been endangered or threatened with extinction itself—we’re still here! (Interestingly, many new species of both plants and animals have come into existence by humans implementing ingenious breeding procedures.)

On March 24, 1899, the oil tanker Exxon Valdez ran aground on a reef in Prince William Sound, Alaska, spilling an estimated 11 million gallons of oil, which impacted 1,300 miles of shoreline. Exxon claims to have spent $2.1 billion on a cleanup effort that included 10,000 workers, about 1,000 boats, and 100 airplanes and helicopters. Though the reparative response to the crisis was massive, entailing exorbitant expenditures, “many believe that wave action from winter storms did more to clean the beaches than all of the human effort involved” (see “Frequently Asked Questions...,” n.d.). In fact, human efforts had to be adjusted when it was determined that spraying hot water on the oil-laden beaches using high-pressure hoses was cooking bacteria and other microscopic organisms, killing both plants and animals, thereby slowing the recovery that might otherwise have been achieved by nature itself (see Piper, 1993, pp. 61ff.). In 1992, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) studied the diffusion of the oil and concluded that “the great majority of the oil either evaporated, dispersed into the water column or degraded naturally” (“Linger...,” 2003). In fact, years ago the National Marine Fisheries Service reported that “the vast majority of the spill area now appears to have recovered” (“NMFS Office...,” 2002). Though touted by environmentalists at the time as an ecological disaster of catastrophic proportions, the Valdez spill does not even rank in the top 50 internationally.

Similarly, the release of oil into the Pacific Ocean by damaged and sunken battleships and aircraft carriers during the great naval battles of World War II was considerable. Nazi U-boats disrupted Allied activities in the Atlantic Ocean by sinking large numbers of tanker ships, causing large quantities of oil and hazardous substances to be spilled, creating slicks and coating Caribbean beaches. No cleanup crews, with their hard hats and bright yellow HAZMAT suits blasting coastlines with high-pressure hoses and deterrent guns, were mobilized to rectify the mess. Yet the Caribbean beaches today essentially are pristine. What happened to all that oil—with no environmentalists to come to the rescue?

REALITY CHECK

Salmon-grabbing bears, forest-gobbling vines, grassland-grubbing rabbits, oil-glutting humans—destruction by animals, destruction by plants, destruction by weather and nature’s own inanimate forces, destruction by man. Where will it all end? Should we not view our world and the environment as being in a state of crisis? Please consider carefully: God created the Earth to be self-sustaining until it has served its purpose. It is self-healing. It is resilient and restorative. It actually rejuvenates itself. The fact is that the greenhouse effect is a natural phenomenon God set into place. God designed gases in the atmosphere, like carbon dioxide and water vapor, to remain in balance and warm the Earth, creating a stable climate for the support of plant, animal, and human life. Without these gases, Earth would be 40° to 60° colder—essentially a frigid desert (cf. Climate Change..., 1990, p. xxxvii). [NOTE: Have we forgotten what we learned in our elementary school science class—that the CO2 expelled by animals and humans is necessary for green plants to produce oxygen? Far from being an indication of man’s need to “regulate” the release of carbon dioxide, such
environmental symbiosis points to divine design."

The Earth is not “fragile” when it comes to human interference. Humans cannot destroy the Earth (let alone the Universe). Humans cannot eliminate the ozone layer. Humans cannot cause permanent, life-threatening global warming. Human ability to pollute, contaminate, and destroy the environment cannot begin to compare with the destructive forces of nature itself: volcanoes, tornados, hurricanes, drought, typhoons, earthquakes, and floods. The 1991 volcanic eruption of Mt. Pinatubo in the Philippines introduced 20 to 30 megatons of sulfur dioxide and aerosols into the Earth’s atmosphere, with those materials completely encircling the Earth in some three months (Sagan, 1997, p. 107). Satellite data collected indicated that, as a result, “the ozone levels had depleted by about 15 percent” (Rickman, 1997). In fact, as a direct result of the large amounts of stratospheric sulfate particles from the Mount Pinatubo eruption, “record low global ozone levels were recorded in 1992 and 1993” (“Environmental Indicators...,” n.d., emp. added). NASA concluded: “Stratospheric aerosols such as those produced by major volcanic eruptions are thought to be important catalysts in the chemical processes leading to the observed ozone losses” (“NASA’s Ozone Studies,” n.d.; cf. “Incomplete Recovery....” 2006). Humans cannot begin to compete with nature’s impact on itself. We have an inflated sense of our own importance if we think that we determine whether the world goes on after we are gone.

The Ultimate Environmental Damage

The evidence indicates that God, Himself, has inflicted vengeance upon wicked civilizations in the past—to the point of wreaking complete destruction and devastation on the land itself. The reader is urged to read the following passages from the Bible: Genesis 13:10; 19:24-25; Deuteronomy 29:22-24; Psalm 107:33-34; Isaiah 34:8-15; Jeremiah 19:8; Ezekiel 30:7; Zephaniah 2:13-14. God has not chosen to reveal to us all of His dealings with the civilizations of history. We likely would know nothing about the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah if Abraham’s nephew had not moved there (Genesis 13:12; 19). Could humans possibly inflict as much damage on the Earth as God did when He flooded the entire planet to a depth higher than the highest mountains of that day (Genesis 7:19-20)? The history of humanity and planet Earth has been one of catastrophe—not evolutionary uniformitarianism or gradualism. Yet the Earth is still here, the environment is intact, and life continues!

Make no mistake. The Bible certainly teaches the principle of stewardship and wisdom in the use of resources allotted by God (Matthew 25:14-30; 1 Corinthians 4:2). God, Himself, provides care for His nonhuman creatures (Job 38:41; Psalm 147:9; Matthew 10:29). He included animals in His injunction to the Israelites to rest one day per week (Exodus 20:10; cf. Leviticus 22:27-28; Deuteronomy 22:6-7,10). He instructed the Israelites to allow their farmland to lie uncultivated every seventh year (Leviticus 25:1-7). We ought not to be wasteful, greedy, cruel, or reckless in our handling of Earth’s resources. However, from a biblical perspective, the environment must not take precedence or preference over humans. A balanced and proper perspective realizes that the environment is purely physical and temporary. Plants, animals, air, water, and the rest of “mother nature” are not human, and are not to be regarded as such. Animals, like the rest of the created order, render divinely mandated services to humans as sources of food and clothing, as well as transportation and other work-related performance (e.g., Genesis 3:21; Proverbs 26:3; Mark 1:6; 11:7; 1 Timothy 4:3-5).

People who think that humans are the enemies of Earth, and invariably destructive to the environment, who think that animals deserve to be protected and preserved more than people, who think that humans are above other life forms due to an unfortunate Darwinian accident—since humans are carnivorous, wasteful, and harmful to the lesser species—have an incorrect view of reality and a devalued view of human life. They feel that humans possess no inherent value and worth that surpasses the rest of the created order (cf. Matthew 10:31; Luke 12:24). But this passion to preserve the Earth and animal life is essentially the same idolatry that has plagued humanity throughout most of history. In fact, this propensity sounds distinctly familiar in light of Paul’s summary of the long-standing human rejection of the Creator:

“Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds, and four-footed beasts and creeping things. Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen” (Romans 1:22-25, emp. added).

Our nation’s forefathers—and most Americans until about 50 years ago—would be shocked and appalled that right now in America, billions of dollars are being spent frivolously serving the creature!

CONCLUSION

The environmentalist possesses enormous arrogance if he thinks he can control the forces of nature by his paltry tinkering with the created order—as if he even had the knowledge or wisdom, let alone power, to do so. Ultimately, this feeble, faltering faux manifests willful ignorance and a lack of faith in the Creator. The environmentalists need a healthy dose of spiritual reality—the same one Job received when he thought it necessary to question God’s unfathomable superintendence of the Universe:

Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? Now gird up your loins like a man, and I will ask you, and you instruct Me! Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding, who sets its measurements, since you know?... You know, for you were born then, and the number of your days is great!... Will the faultfinder contend with the Almighty? Let him who reproves God answer it.... Then I will also confess to you, that your own right hand can save you (Job 38:2-5,21; 40:2,14, emp. added).

If there is no God and evolution is true, then humans are no more valuable than rocks, cockroaches—and, yes, cows. So if we really want to get serious about saving the planet, simply kill all the cows, crops, kids, and adults. When humans eliminate God from their thinking and jettison the biblical worldview, insanity begins to sound sensible. There’s the real “inconvenient truth.”

The vast majority of the decline of the environment that we see is due to the normal operations of the laws of thermodynamics which mandate depletion, breakdown, dissolution, and the ultimate demise of the Earth and the Universe (see Miller, 2007, 27[4]:25-31). That is how God set it up! The material, physical realm was intended to be temporary—
by divine design. Quoting the psalmist, the writer of Hebrews explained:

You, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. They will perish, but You remain; and they will all grow old like a garment; like a cloak You will fold them up (1:10-12, emp. added).

In the meantime, God will see to it that our environment remains intact until it has served the purpose for which He created it. Then, He Himself, will bring not only the Earth, but the entire Universe, to its grand and climactic conclusion by means of cosmic meltdown and dissolution (2 Peter 3:7,10-12). Rather than devoting one's energies and resources to preserving the temporal environment and saving “Mother Earth,” we would do better to devote ourselves to saving our souls by cultivating the necessary spiritual attributes for eternal life with God: “Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth [i.e., the non-physical realm of heaven—DM] in which righteousness dwells” (2 Peter 3:13).

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