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## Theological Aspects of Ecology

In this paper, based on that recently given at the VI Symposium on Ecology, Dr. Cook, assuming the validity of the Christian position, attempts to outline and clarify some of the ecological implications of Christianity.

"Eco-crisis", "Eco-catastrophe", "Eco-politics" and a host of freshly coined words suggest that the obvious title for this paper ought to be "Theo-ecology" or "Eco-theology". Such a lurid title would be entirely in keeping with the tone of much of the current ecological debate, especially at the fringes. Some commentators write of a new form of Armageddon — a battle for the salvation of life itself. They prophesy a Doomsday, catalogue cosmic catastrophes, and portray a purely secular apocalyptic based on a vivid account of a future ruined by technology.

In the past the *eschaton*, the culmination of history, has usually been presented from the theological angle. But today, perhaps, we are beginning to see a link, though still a tenuous one, between the modern study of ecology and the older study of theology. Both historically and in order of importance, however, theology takes priority, as the organisers of this Symposium have realised since they arranged for this paper to be presented first.

The more one listens to the ecological debate, the more confusing it becomes. Scientists, economists and politicians disagree among and between themselves. While there are many important differences among those who are professionally interested in ecology, this must not obscure a wide measure of agreement concerning the existence of the problem now facing mankind. Differences, though important, often arise from different ways of looking at the same things. In particular there are often fundamental differences in the assumptions made about man, nature, values and society.

Technologists are often basically optimistic. They believe that given time, effort and finance, technology can solve its own problems and set its house in order. Many scientists on the other hand are avowedly pessimistic. Things have gone too far, the disease is too far advanced, the treatment too palliative, they say.

The area of debate is conducted at the level of how a solution is to be found, if indeed it *can* be found. For the Christian, the need is not so much to find out how problems can be solved, as to understand why they matter at all. What we do is always deeply influenced by why we are doing it. Our task, then, is to clarify the presuppositions and assumptions which underlie the environmental debate and to seek to expound Christian categories as a basis for action. Definitions and descriptions of ecology and the environmental crisis must be left to those more competent. The theologian may not be able to say everything, but this must not deter him from saying *something*.

In this paper I propose, (1) to comment on the nature and content of the ecological crisis; (2) to discuss the current widespread view which blames Christianity for our present ecological predicament; (3) to outline the Christian position with reference to creation and the doctrine of man and, finally (4) taking one ecological argument by way of illustration, to compare Christian with non-Christian approaches to ecology.

### 1. *The Ecological Crisis*

Environmental problems are not new as a glance at the parliamentary legislation of the nineteenth century will readily prove. But the unique factors facing us today are (1) The concatenation of the problems facing us and their severity. There are too many people occupying too much space, consuming too much of the earth's resources and that too rapidly. It may be fairly said that we are running out of world: our planet is all too finite. (2) Environmental problems are now universal. We are all involved, whether we realise it or not, a fact which has led to the appropriation by ecologists of Eldridge Cleaver's aphorism. "If you are not part of the solution, then it must be that you are part of the problem." (3) The almost incredible level of disagreement, even among experts, is also a unique feature of today. Scientists disagree over the long and short-term effects of what man does, the adequacy of technical achievements and the possibility of future discoveries. All too often Voltaire seems to have captured the situation: "We put drugs of which we know little into bodies of which we know less, to cure diseases of which we know nothing at all."

A feeling that mankind has been, or will shortly be, overtaken by catastrophe is now astonishingly widespread. It has gained a focus in the model of a space-ship Earth surrounded by a hostile environment and thrown back on its own resources to secure the continuance of the well-being, indeed the life, of its voyagers. If six people are trying to live in a spaceship designed for only three, then all six are in danger. The environmental issue is not

simply one of quality of life: it reduces to a question of survival.

A cautionary note will not be out of place here. The danger of concentrating on the symptoms rather than the causes of the disease is that we soon find ourselves treating the symptoms rather than the disease itself. Has the ecological crisis been correctly diagnosed at the level of causes rather than symptoms? we may ask. We need to answer this question before we can formulate a call for action.

Action based on a knowledge of ecology may be based on selfishness or on principle. It can be argued that technology is harmful because it encourages man to use up non-renewable resources. This is quite different from arguing that because a certain ecological attitude is right in principle, we ought to act in a particular way. Selfishness may hide behind an apparent moral concern for ecology, while necessity, rather than principle, may be the true motive for action.

Returning to our model, the space ship Earth is divided into first and third class compartments. First-class passengers have the best of food and material comforts, while third class travellers lack even the basics of life. We need to ask whether the concern about ecology shown by first-class passengers hides a subtle conspiracy to prevent the third-class passengers from attaining the standard of living of their more fortunate brother astronauts. Environmentalists, in their enthusiasm for their just cause, have no right to be blind to the social problems of poverty and malnutrition.

Words acquire an evaluative flavour. 'Ecology' is essentially concerned with the balance achieved by living things and systems, but the fact is that it has now become an emotive concept which tends to endear it to all.

In much of our thinking on moral issues the descriptive and the evaluative become tangled together. Man looks at nature through coloured spectacles: his presuppositions influence both what he expects nature to be like and his subsequent reactions. What people do about their ecology, depends upon what they think about themselves, their society, economics, technology and religion.

## 2. *Is Christianity to Blame?*

A recurrent theme in the discussion of the background of the ecological crisis is that of the role and influence of Christianity. In particular, the relation between Christianity and technology has been the subject of much debate. The case against Christianity is simple. In Genesis, man was commanded to be fruitful and multiply.

This has led to a population crisis which threatens to destroy not only our quality of life, but life itself. Man was further commanded by God to subdue the earth and to have dominion over nature, which is interpreted to mean that nature exists only to serve man, its master, and has no value apart from man. Man being above nature has an unqualified right of dominion over it. This doctrine, we are told, is none other than a charter for man to exploit nature without limit: its impact being seen most clearly in modern technology. In this area man forces nature to meet his ever-growing demands. So the current pollution and resources crisis is the result of Christian based, technological exploitation and abuse. The Bible gave to man the perfect excuse to behave as he wished in technological pursuits: the blame rests fairly and squarely on Christianity.

A further aspect of the alleged insidious influence of Christianity is the impact of the Protestant Work Ethic which teaches that it is morally right to strive and to succeed. Success is a sign of God's blessing and approval. Material blessing reveals spiritual achievement. As a result, economic systems have been geared to growth and development along the lines of capitalistic philosophy. More equals better. Now there is no more. There is not even enough. Accordingly Christianity must take the blame for the over-use of precious and limited resources, which mortgages not only the future, but also the present.<sup>1</sup>

This attack on Christianity can be examined at two levels. Firstly, it is desirable to examine the validity of the argument in a wider context than simply the Bible - or rather, a few isolated texts in the Bible. Secondly, we need to examine again the biblical picture of man and his relation to nature.

Firstly, then, it needs to be said that the above argument indicting Christianity is deceptively simple and in danger of being simplistic. The relationship between religion and the applications of science is more complex than suggested. The historical and cultural development of technology may be ascribed to many factors rather than to one simple cause. We must exercise care when we use terms such as 'science', 'technology' and 'religion', for these general headings cover a multitude of different approaches and connotations. The nature of cause and effect in history is difficult to define. The same is true of the relation between culture and religion. The critic implies that the influence of Christianity on scientific culture has been one-way traffic. It is as likely that culture perverts religion as the reverse.

There is something faintly amusing about the recent criticism of Christianity when we contrast it with a different, though equally stringent attack. T.S. Derr expresses this aptly.

Once Christian Theology was blamed by the humanists for robbing man of his autonomous rationality and creative powers by subjecting him to the rule of an omnipotent God. But now we are told Christianity has all along been too anthropocentric and has fostered man's pride where he should have humbled himself before the awesome power of the universe. Once Christian theology was called the enemy of science, a backward-looking, static world-view that fought the theories of Galileo and Darwin and resisted free enquiry and social and technical innovation. But now we are told Christianity has all along been promoting the scientific and technological mentality, heedless of the eternal holiness and ageless rhythms of the natural world.<sup>2</sup>

If we accept the validity of the new attack on Christianity, we may well come round full circle, in position, opting for the very obscurantism and blind rejection of modern science and technology, which humanists once held as the major charge against the Church.

Even if it be granted that the anti-Christian argument outlined above is more correct than the old picture of Christianity as the enemy of science, it may be questioned whether the new attack can be sustained. Ecological mismanagement is not a feature of Christian countries only. Many examples cited in ecological writings illustrate the universal and historical aspects of the crisis in terms of grazing, de-forestation, and the like. Japan, though deeply imbued with the nature worship of Shintoism, has an industrial pollution problem the envy of none. It is not only the case that there are ecological problems where Christian influence is of little significance, but also that technology has developed in cultures other than Christian. The history of China, Greece, Rome and the Islamic nations reveals a solid body of technological expertise independent of Christianity. Christianity itself in any relationship with technology has been far from monochrome in its impact. The Eastern Orthodox stress on mysticism encouraged few major scientific or technological developments. Accordingly Christianity does not always lead to technological abuse. Technology is not entirely based on Christianity as is suggested.

It is worth noting that in this modern criticism of Christianity there is, at least implicitly, a criticism of science and technology. It is science and technology which first drew our attention to ecological problems and it is doubtful if we can hope to solve these problems without their aid. Their assistance is certainly necessary, even if it is not sufficient. Without scientific expertise, we would not even know about dangerous levels of mercury in fish, or how to measure the lack of protein in a diet.

A puzzling feature of this attack on Christianity is that it is so hard to identify the butt of the criticism. Blame usually leads

to reformation, correction, punishment and change. It is difficult to see how we can undo what has been done — if it has been done. How are we to judge whether what was done was accidental or the result of negligence or ignorance? And if we can do so, what follows? Emphasis on some kind of witch-hunt obscures the more serious issues and the need for action. The subject is too serious for recriminations; nevertheless the critique does have the positive value of driving us back to consider the basics.

A second and different level of response is to consider whether the criticism is fair to Christianity. The Bible tells man to exercise control over nature but that is not the same as domination. Christianity makes no claim that man has an unqualified right of dominion over nature, only that he has the right of dominion and even this is severely qualified. We may admit that all too often Christians themselves have misinterpreted what they believe, with the result that the environment has been abused. This is not, however, to level the charge of error against the Christian faith, which, as we shall shortly see, engenders a most wholesome ecological approach. There is all too often a gap between Christian theory and practice.

Returning to the Protestant Work Ethic, one point needs to be stressed. Though it is true that worldly success has sometimes been interpreted as a sign of divine election, it is also the case that one entire book of the Bible, the book of Job, is written to show the inadequacy of such a view. And even if the view were true, there is a marked hiatus between an admonition extolling the virtues of sobriety and hard work and an identification of this way of life with greed, selfishness, irresponsible capitalism and the spoilation of the environment. Informed discussion and good evidence would be required to bridge this gap, but neither seem to be forthcoming.

### 3. *Ecology is a Category of Creation*

The interest shown by Christians in ecology and environmental issues arises in part, of course, from their shared concern with the tremendous problems now confronting mankind, but still more from their belief in God as Creator. For it is primarily this belief which, for the Christian, makes ecology an issue.

"In the beginning, God..." sets the context for the creation. God is there before its beginning and both the priority of God over creation and the dependence of creation on God is expressed in the very first verse of the Bible. The biblical view is that the natural realm is a created entirety; has value in itself because it is created, is part of history, and is of concern to the Christian.

*The natural realm is created.* God created the heavens, the earth, animal life, and man. God made them all. The natural realm is therefore dependent as to its origin and source on the Person of God. This is why it matters whether or not creation is *ex nihilo*. God's creation of everything out of nothing means that matter has no existence independent of God and that it is dependent on Him. It also has purpose and meaning. To ask why there is a world, is to invite the reply, "Because God made it". To ask why God made it is to fall into the nonsense of extrapolating from human to divine purpose. This creation is not the work of a watchmaker who simply sets the watch in motion and then leaves it. Rather God's creative activity is involved not only in the initial act of creation, but also in the ongoing action of sustaining the world. The Bible suggests that God is so involved in natural processes that without His sustaining power nothing would continue to be as it is. God is in ultimate control of the natural realm. This is what gives sense to the doctrine of Providence. Furthermore, He has Himself become part of the natural process. The impact of the Incarnation is to make God one with His created order in a surprising way. "The Word became flesh", means that God is now even more intimately involved with His creation.

*The natural realm has value.* At this point Christians will part company with those ecologists who appear to desire a return to primitivism, mysticism and animism, or to imply not only that nature has value in itself, but that it is in some sense divine. The Christian affirms that God alone, and most certainly not nature, is worthy of worship. The value which the natural realm possesses is derived from God. The cosmological arguments, for all their shortcomings, were clear on this point. It is not the details of design in the world which matter so much as the Designer. Nature exists not for its own sake or for man's sake, but for God's sake. Nevertheless, though its value is derived, it has value in itself. In pronouncing that what He had created was good, God testified to the value of created things. The value was present before man was created and its value does not depend on man. For the Christian this is important, for at the level of creation all things are equal. It is not possible to be more or less created. Man and the natural realm are equal in origin though not in purpose. The rider is crucial. If they were equal in purpose, there would be little difference between them. The Women's Liberation debate may clarify the point. Men and women are certainly equal in origin, but they are very different in purpose. We wouldn't have it any other way. This does not entail that man owns woman. She has worth in herself. Equally in the case of the natural realm, man does not own the natural realm, which has its own endowed value, independent of man.

*The Natural Realm is Part of History.* The Bible views history, not as a cyclic process as non-Christian religions do, but as a linear development. History has a beginning, a middle and an end.

Nature has a part to play in relation to all three. In the beginning, history begins with the creation of a perfect natural order. The created realm is good. In the Garden of Eden, the relationship between animals, plants and man is one of harmony and unity before God. There was no ecological crisis then. This perfect paradise was shattered by the Fall. It is depicted as cosmic in its results. Far more than man's relationship with his Creator is broken. The earth is cursed because of man's sin. The relation of man and the natural realm is now clear in relation to history. Man's action and inaction affect the natural realm in the historical process. A paraphrase makes the point. "For all creation is waiting patiently and hopefully for that future day when God will resurrect his children. For on that day thorns and thistles, sin, death and decay — the things that overcame the world against its will at God's command — will all disappear, and the world around us will share in the glorious freedom from sin which God's children enjoy. For we know that even the things of nature, like animals and plants, suffer in sickness and death as they await this great event." (Rom. 8: 19-23, *The Living Bible*)

In one sense the Fall is a kind of *uncreation*<sup>3</sup>. The harmonious order between man and nature begins to disintegrate. It is as if part of God's judgment on man's sin results in an undoing of the created order. The account of Genesis Ch. 3 does not stand alone. The Flood narrative again stresses that when man does evil, nature is affected, and it is righteous man in the form of Noah who has to ensure the survival of the animal world. One further passage illustrates this idea of uncreation. In the early chapters of Jeremiah in the midst of God's warning of punishment on account of His people's disobedience, there is a picture of the cataclysmic effects of God's judgment.

I saw the earth — lo, chaos primeval!  
 The heavens — their light was gone!  
 I saw the mountains — and lo, they were quaking,  
 And all the hills rocked to and fro.  
 I looked — and behold, no human was there,  
 And the birds of the skies had all flown.  
 I looked — and behold, the tilled land was desert,  
 Its cities all lying in ruins —  
 Before Yahweh,  
 Before his fierce anger.  
 Ah, this is what Yahweh has said:  
 A waste shall the whole land be  
 (Though I'll make no full end)  
 For this let the earth lament,  
 And the heavens above don mourning;  
 For I've spoken and not relented,  
 I've purposed and will not turn back.<sup>4</sup>

Man's sin affects the natural order and it is possible to interpret our present crisis as the fruit of man's broken relationships not only with the natural realm, but also with his Creator. At the present time in history, the relationship between man and his environment has never come under closer scrutiny. This scrutiny reinforces the biblical point that man and the natural realm are bound together in history.

The togetherness in history has final fruition in the picture of the end of the ages. Catastrophes, earthquakes, and cosmic disturbances are all hallmarks of the "Parousia" of Christ. The end of history culminates in a return to a perfect harmony. (*Is.* 11; *Rev.* 21). Man will be in harmony with the animal and natural kingdom. Nature will fulfil the Creator's intention, the redemption of mankind involving the redemption of the world. This redemption involves renewal of heaven and earth. There will be no ecological crisis at the end. The natural realm plays its part in history — in the beginning, the middle and the end.

*Concern for the Natural Realm is part of Christianity.* Man's dominion does not imply a licence to exploit but a duty to respect, protect and nurture the natural realm. As it was in the beginning, so it will be in the end. We who live, as it were in the middle of history, must strive to conform to that perfect harmony depicted in Genesis, Isaiah and Revelation.

Concern for the natural realm is part and parcel of the OT laws concerning land. In Leviticus 25 there is the clear understanding that the land belongs ultimately to God. The seventh year is to be kept as "a sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a sabbath for the Lord" (*Lev.* 25:4). Man's responsibility to, and concern for the natural realm rest on his relationship to God who commands him to be concerned. Such thoughts are often to be found in the OT (eg. *Ps.* chs. 8, 19, 50; *Is.* chs. 24, 25) but it is to the NT we now turn. Jesus often uses pictures derived from nature to express God's concern for man who is worth more than birds and flowers. His words imply worth, if lesser worth, in sparrows and "lillies of the field". If Jesus was concerned with these, Christians ought to be concerned with them too.

In particular Christians need to give more thought to a proper expression of their concern and stewardship for the natural realm in their attitudes and life-style. Indeed, some have gone so far as to suggest that the Christian community ought to be a pilot-plant, revealing by the working of the proto-type, the purpose of God for the created order.<sup>1</sup> Christianity is certainly concerned with the natural realm.

*Christian Anthropology — Man's Unity with Nature.* Since man is himself part of the subject he studies under the heading of ecology

he needs to learn all he can about his own nature. For the Christian this means learning what the Bible teaches about man. There are two main ideas involved in the biblical view: man is united with nature, yet he is different from it.

Links between man and nature are obvious in the common biological and chemical make-up which man shares with the animal world. He is dust and to dust he must return. He is part of the world, being dependent on photosynthesis by plants for the energy requirements of his body, both as regards the food he eats and the air he breathes. With nature too he is affected by the Fall and awaits the final redemption.

But man's unity with nature does not imply an identity. Some ecologists adopt a Buddhist-type of approach which sees man and nature as basically one.<sup>1</sup> This view tends to glorify, romanticise and even to deify nature. Unacceptable conclusions follow: if nature is beyond detraction it must be accepted warts and all. But it is not always benevolent and a view which encourages its uncritical acceptance must quickly degenerate into a fatalism which accepts what ever happens as good and right. Furthermore it reduces man to the level of grass, though there does appear to be a difference between man thinking he is the same as grass, and grass thinking that man is the same as grass.

*Man differs from Nature.* Though man is part of his own environment, he is distinguishable from it. In thought he can disengage from his surroundings, can ask and answer ecological questions and act accordingly. He is the conscious guardian of the natural environment. Between man and his environment there is a basic, qualitative distinction. To say this is not to be arrogant, but rather to state the obvious.

In the creation story man is distinguished from nature in several ways. He is the climax of God's work: only when he is included in the now completed creative process, is creation pronounced to be very good. Man is made in the image of God. In this lies the most important difference between man and the rest of creation. It makes him a person, for God is personal. He is not made in the image of God because of how he behaves, but because of the decision of God to make him God-like. Therefore his function in nature is unique. Accordingly God gives him an injunction: he is told to multiply, to subdue the earth and to have dominion over the animal realm.

In fulfilling this commission man has been guilty of abuse. He has too often become parasitical on nature and deified himself. But in exercising dominion, is it necessary for man to be aggressive? Part of the problem is that the words 'dominion' and 'subdue' *can* be suggestive of aggressiveness. Yet they have other connotations too, eg. the allusion may be to the rule of a king over a people or a

master over a servant. Dominion need not imply domination; certainly it does not imply extermination. A balance is possible between creatureliness and dominion. The biblical picture is of the shepherd-king who cares for and protects his flock. This is the model for man. One expression of this role is seen in the naming of the animals. Control over the name implies control over the named object, but man is to give the name which, though it implies power, is a loving, gentle act almost paralleled by our use of private nicknames for those we love.

The pre-lapsarian situation ought not to be the main focus of attention in understanding man's difference from the rest of creation. It is rather to the Flood narrative attention must be drawn. It is in the renewal of a covenant with man that God describes the situation of our fallen world. In Genesis we find the beginnings of fear and dread on the part of animals towards man. Animal flesh is now, for the first time, at man's disposal as a food supply. After the Flood, there is a clear and violent separation of man from the animal world.

The Bible now pictures man as a rebel. He is selfish, self-centred, and sinful. Through the Fall he becomes a tyrant over nature. The ecological crisis is one fruit of that sin. It is to be doubted whether man can ever totally overcome the results of his sin and disobedience in relation to the natural realm, until he is totally redeemed. If so, it is only proximate cures we can hope for rather than absolute ones. For the Christian this may result in questions as to how best to use his energy and time. Should he first seek to change men recognising that it is the changed man who has the potential for God-like relationships with creation? Or, should he seek to alleviate the situation by other means which would involve a realistic assessment of man's nature and hence the recognition that man's attitude to his environment will only be changed by appeal to selfish motives?

When the difference between man and nature has been overstressed, Christians have tended to emphasise too strongly the distinction between the spiritual and the material, the soul and the body. Gnostic dualism based on a Platonic dichotomy leads to a semi-Christian schizophrenia, with which it is impossible to live and which is a travesty of the purpose of God. It is important to note that the final difference between man and nature is not so much in status as in function. Man is called to be a manager, trustee, steward, or vice-regent. On God's mandate, he is delegated responsibility for the created order. As a steward, he is entitled to live from the estate, but that does not mean he owns it. It is held in trust for his Lord, to Whom he is answerable; he will be called to give an account of his stewardship. Yet this is no mere business relationship, but one of love in which man is seen as a co-worker with God. This work is not to be characterized by a

"laissez-faire" attitude. A good manager is involved in research and development for his master, remembering that the shepherd-king is his model and that the sheep matter. In the parable of the talents in Matthew, it is the developer who is rewarded and not the conservationist. This is no charter for exploitation, for the gain was in no way selfish, but all part of fulfillment of stewardship. The conservationist made no attempt to put his resources to their proper use and so reaped the unpleasant consequences.

#### 4. *Non-Christian Approaches to Ecology*

Finally let us examine one of the commonest of all arguments for ecological concern - the argument that if we use up Earth's natural resources now, future generations will be aggrieved. Various reactions to this argument will help to illuminate the Christian approach, if only by way of contrast.

It is commonly assumed that we are under obligation to future inhabitants of our planet. What is the basis of this obligation?

In many ways the problem is hopelessly complex. We have little sure knowledge of the demands that life will make on future generations. We cannot simply extrapolate from our own situation without suspecting that we may be as far from the mark as a man of 1800 describing 1984. Yet it is obvious that men of the future have rights of some kind, for there are trusts left for children's children, who are as yet still twinkles in their fathers' eyes. We are not absolved from responsibility for the future simply because we shall not be there to face those who will suffer as a result of what we do now. The bomb left in a Belfast pub may kill no one I know, but, if I placed it there, I am responsible. Is there however, any basis for this sense of obligation towards far distant descendants?

Probably most Christians would argue along the following lines.<sup>1b</sup> If we are servants of Christ, we are answerable to Him. Responsibility for actions extends as far as the foreseeable consequences. Believing in the family of God and in the communion of saints, we assume that we are intimately bound not only with all those saints and martyrs who have gone before, but with those yet to come. Our love and concern must be extended to them also.

However, priorities cannot be ignored: legitimate claims of a future generation must be balanced against the claims of those alive today. Christians will remember that the harm we do today is tangible, whereas that which may be done to a distant progeny is highly problematical. Where interests conflict the present generation must be given the benefit of the doubt. Long-term ecological concerns must be balanced against social, political and economic justice.

Three non-Christian approaches spring to mind: those of the materialist, the Buddhist and the humanist. A true materialist must have difficulty in even framing the problem. If there is only matter, there can be no value judgment other than the utilitarian. No account needs to be taken of future generations, for these are non-existent. If anything matters, it is reality here and now, not mere possibilities.

The Buddhist may appear to be in a stronger position since for him nature is a unity and everything is on the way to perfection. However, the Buddhist idea of perfection is only very loosely linked with the intrinsic value of generations to come. Buddhists seek salvation by freedom from earthly bondage. Nirvana seems a far cry from the paradise of wilderness sought by many who enlist Buddhism in their cause.<sup>5</sup>

The humanist is the most anthropocentric of all men. The only basis for his action must be selfishness in the sense of for-man-alone. Nothing else can be of equal worth. If there is no life after death, then it is hard to understand how concern for posterity can be a motivating force here and now. There is certainly no biological reason for the husbanding of assets in the long term, though there may be emotional ones.

The Christian recognises the importance of the present but takes account of the future also. He refuses to withdraw from reality into the make-believe world of mysticism and primitivism: he feels responsibility for nature at large, realising to the full that man is not the only creature that God created or that matters. In thinking of future generations he is mindful of the Creator of all, past, present and future, to whom every knee will bow and every tongue confess.

- 1 Lynn White, *The Historical Roots of our Ecological Crisis*, AAAS Lecture, Dec. 1966.
- 2 Der, T.S., "Ecology and Human Liberation", *World Student Christian Federation* 1973,3 (1). Ref. (b), Chap.5.
- 3 A tape by C. Napier on the theme of ecology introduced me to this idea. See also D. Clines, this JOURNAL 1973, 100 (2), 128 (p.137).
- 4 Bright, J., *Jeremiah*, N.Y. 1965, pp.30-31.
- 5 Dorling, "Wilderness and Plenty", *Reith Lectures*, BBC, 1969.