



Your Living Environment

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THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT -- IS IT BEST?

The initial shockwave of the ecological revolution has rolled over most of the literate world. A new wave of thinkers has sprung up in its wake -- the naturalists. To this special breed of social critic and philosopher, technology is tantamount to sin. Only the natural, the undisturbed, the untouched is acceptable. Indicative of this new mentality is the furor presently raging over industry's plan to stretch hundreds of miles of oil pipeline across the untouched wilderness of Alaska.

Industry stands firm. Development must not be thwarted, nor progress impeded. The naturalists, casting themselves as valiant defenders of our dying national heritage, have zealously attacked the developers as greedy, grasping, soulless exploiters!

Thus the "Preservationist" versus "Developer" battle rages, and not only about pipelines. Cattle breeding, orchard culture, land management and even egg production have inspired contention.

Who is right? Both sides have certain merits, but are the naturalists correct every time they condemn man for tampering with his environment? How does God view our insatiable desire to change the land in which we live? How natural should our approach be to agriculture and environment? This Research News should help you to better understand MAN'S PROPER ROLE IN HIS NATURAL ENVIRONMENT.

MAN -- The Spoiler!

The point cannot be too strongly made that man has managed to besmirch, pollute, desecrate and destroy nearly everything he has touched. Indeed, total mismanagement of our environment has been a dominant theme throughout all of history. A solution must be found to this suicidal course of action. But does that solution lie in leaving our surroundings in their most natural state?

NO, IT DECIDEDLY DOES NOT!! Mismanagement must be replaced, not with no-management, but with correct, law-abiding management!

How "Natural" Was The Garden of Eden?

Have you ever wondered why God did not create the earth as one huge garden for Adam and his descendants? Gen. 2:8 tells us that God planted a garden eastward IN Eden. Therefore the rest of Eden must have differed noticeably from the garden.

The land of Nod, (to which Cain was sent in Gen. 4:16) must also have been noticeably different from either the garden of God, or Eden. Why did they differ? And how? And for what reason? God must have had a purpose for it.

Gen. 2:15 reveals that one of Adam's most important jobs was the management of his environment, (dressing and keeping the garden in which he lived). Yes, the garden of Eden needed careful and regular management by Adam and his family to maintain its fullest beauty and productivity. God created the garden dependent upon human effort to maintain it at maximum potential. This means that a properly managed section of God's earth must be superior to any "natural" area!

Could it be that Eden and Nod were inferior to the garden in beauty and productivity, (inferior, not in created potential, but in development of that potential)? Was the garden of God to be the prototype, the model after which the rest of Eden, Nod and the remainder of the earth were to be fashioned? Did God, by planting the garden for Adam not act as the first landscape-developer and at the same time provide mankind with an example of a model environment?

Our Creator must have realised that Adam and his descendants would need many opportunities to develop their God-given managerial and creative abilities. Would not the task of shaping, fashioning and developing the whole earth to its fullest potential be the ideal fulfillment of this human need? That was "job-enrichment" par excellence!

Gen. 1:28 underlines environmental development as our God-given occupation. The all-wise Creator commanded man to have dominion over the earth. He told man to "subdue" it. The Hebrew actually implies -- "conquering". The garden of Eden showed Adam how the earth was to be subdued and conquered. But Adam rebelled and lost access to God's model environment. Thus he rejected both the physical example and the spiritual mind to follow it.

The establishment of a physical example of God's right way is a common tool of our Creator. Is not this a basic purpose of Ambassador College? Students spend four years in the Ambassador atmosphere, in constant association with God's standards of environment, including food, dress, recreation, thought, speaking

etc. After four years in God's "garden of education" they graduate -- to carry the Ambassador way into all parts of the earth!

Likewise must it have been intended with the garden of Eden - to "graduate" sons of Adam to carry God's style of environmental development to all parts of the globe.

Man CAN Improve The "Natural"

Have you ever seen a precious diamond in the rough? Few people would even recognise a rough diamond, let alone wear one! Yet the Bible speaks of diamonds and precious stones as items of supreme beauty. But they do not take on this beauty until after the hand of the jeweller has cut, polished and set them. The jeweller however, does not create this potential for beauty, he merely develops it to the best of his ability.

The same is true of fruit. An apple seedling allowed to develop without human guidance will become a dense mass of branches and foliage with fruit that will be small and unattractive. Regularly pruned and dunged, the result would be very different. Every leaf of a properly managed tree receives the maximum amount of sunlight and every piece of fruit receives a correct balance of soil nutrients. This results in an abundance of large, tasty fruit -- year after year. Thus a managed fruit tree is far superior to a natural one.

Poultry are another example. A hen will normally lay about 20 eggs and then stop and hatch them out. However, if the eggs are gathered each day she will produce some 200 eggs in a year, and without undue stress. Again this demonstrates how a few simple actions by man can develop natural capacity to a high degree.

CATTLE UNDER "NATURAL" CONDITIONS!

Over 600 years ago the owner of a large Scottish estate on the English border enclosed a portion of his property with a seven mile long stone wall. By chance, or choice, this wall surrounded a herd of wild white cattle -- descendants of wild cattle that reportedly roamed northern England during Caesar's reign. For 600 years this particular herd has been isolated in their huge enclosure. They remained outside the domain of man, mating among themselves and feeding from the natural grasses of the partially timbered estate.

How do these natural cattle compare with their modern counterparts, such as the Angus, Hereford and Shorthorn? Most unfavourably! A personal inspection of this famous Chillingham herd some three years ago was most revealing. These cattle are so vicious that they will allow no human to touch or handle them. Even the Ranger was most careful to stay within easy reach of protective fences! The average cow calves only every third year instead of annually. The cattle are small, with carcasses that rate extremely low for production of valuable meat. Though tasty, their meat is not superior to that from a regular grass-fed beast. Milk pro-

duction is very poor and though these animals are extremely hardy, their longevity does not surpass that of other breeds. The degeneration of these cattle is largely explained by some of the environmental deterioration that can be seen at Rothamsted.

The Rothamsted Experiment

Located only ten miles north of Bricket Wood is The Rothamsted Experimental Station, (the oldest agricultural research station in the world). A long-term experiment there, called the "Broadbalk Wilderness", proves how land can rapidly lose its productivity through lack of human management.

"At the harvest of 1882 a half acre strip of the standing wheat crop on land unmanured for many years was enclosed by a fence at the end of the Broadbalk field and was not cultivated. The wheat was left to compete with weeds, and after only four years, the few stunted plants found were barely recognisable as cultivated wheat. Since then, the weeds have completely taken possession. One-half of the area has been left untouched; it is now, (88 years later) woodland of mature trees over sixty feet high, and the leading species are hawthorn, oak, ash and sycamore. The ground is covered with ivy....dog's mercury, violet and blackberry...

"The other half has been cleared of bushes annually to allow the open-ground vegetation to develop...

"In 1957 the grubbed section was divided into two parts. The northern part...was left unchanged, and the remainder was mown several times each growing season and the produce removed with the idea of encouraging the grasses. This management was continued for three years... Starting in March, 1960, sheep were put in to graze whenever the growth was sufficient. By 1962, perennial rye-grass and white clover (the two pasture species that dominate the most productive pastures in England) had appeared and they are still increasing..." (Rothamsted Report, 1965)

God Desires Land To Be INHABITED

While informing the Israelites that He would drive out the Canaanites for them, God added this most enlightening point: "I will not drive them out from before you in one year; lest the land become desolate, and the beast of the field multiply against you.

"By little and little will I drive them from before you, until you be increased and inherit the land". (Ex. 23:29,30)

God obviously felt that even Canaanite rule over His Promised Land was more acceptable than no people there at all!

Had the Israelites remained faithful, He would undoubtedly have given them further instructions toward developing the land to its fullest potential -- without polluting the environment. Unfortunately, such was not to be the case.

Needed -- A New Garden Of Eden

Today, some 3,500 years later, we are still in trouble because of failure to manage our environment. 1970 was declared to be European Conservation Year. Throughout the past eleven months, world leaders, dignitaries, and scientists have held a continual round of conferences and discussions -- attempting to define man's proper role in his environment.

Sadly enough, none thought to seek the Bible for guidance. And equally sad, the year is now over, with the world very little closer to any lasting solutions.

What is badly needed is a working model of a properly-developed environment based on an understanding of God's Law. If this was available, mankind might see some light in the deepening darkness settling over our ecological problems. World leaders might begin to believe that it is possible for man to live prosperously without destroying his surroundings.

European Conservation Year produced no such plan or model! But Ambassador College is doing so. Bricket Wood and Texas campuses are already moving in this direction. Years of planning and work are involved -- but, as our new booklet "Environmental Research" shows, the initial steps have already been taken.

Through its two-campus Agriculture Programme, Ambassador College is now laying the foundations for a new prototype Garden of Eden!