Chapter 10 – Direct effects of the Fall on nature

> *[The] link between Christ and creation means that following and living in Christ includes living in harmony with his creation. Christ's role in creation demands that we become its keepers and not its destroyers; the true Christian is someone who treats creation with reverence and respect. Creation is something that we are commanded to hold in trust as God's gift to us.*
>
> **Sir Ghillean Prance, FRS**[1]

Damning Creation with praise

This chapter is intended to round off this section about the evidence from the "scientific" world, which I have taken very broadly in this context to cover the world of direct observation, at all levels from that of everyday experience to that of scientific theories like Darwinian evolution.

In the first section, I sought to show that the Bible's position is that the natural Creation remains God's servant, and has not become corrupted or evil because of human sin. The second section was about the witness of scholars of Scripture and theology down the years, suggesting that until recent centuries the same positive view of nature overwhelmingly predominated. The third section, up until this point, has been intended to show that what we see in the natural state of things is consistent with such a "good" creation.

You will remember from Chapter 1 that this good creation is nevertheless used by God in ways that may cause us harm, and that this is not a sign of its corruption but of its continued obedience to him. Rather, it is a sign of *our* corruption that such judgements should need to occur.

In this chapter, though, I want to point out the one sense in which our sin *has* positively damaged the natural Creation. This, however is not in the "spiritual" way envisaged in the "traditional view", in which by some indeterminate means, through the action of God, or Satan, or maybe nature itself, human sin made it change to become "evil". Rather our sin has damaged the innocent natural world by our rather obvious irresponsible abuse of it.

You may also remember from the examination of Romans 8 in Chapter 3 that Paul introduces the idea that our sin has kept us from the proper exercise of our God-given role of ruling and subduing the earth, and so delayed the "completion" of Creation into incorruptibility that has now begun through the resurrection of Jesus as the "firstfruits" of the New Creation (1 Cor. 15.20-28; 2 Cor. 5.17; Jas. 1.18). This is primarily a kind of "negative" damage, in the sense of our not finishing the job we were created to perform in the world.

But I mentioned in the historical survey of views of Romans 8 that Martin Luther appears to introduce an idea of nature being damaged by man's misuse of it. In the relevant passage of his

[1] Prance, Sir Ghillean, *Go to the Ant* (Glasgow, Wild Goose, 2014*) p.103.*

Lectures on Romans his primary thought seems to be about the putting of nature to idolatrous use by over-valuing it – a spiritual desecration, as it were. But he also hints that part of this misuse is the converse – the failure to value nature for what it actually is:

> *Because man does not judge and evaluate it rightly and because he enjoys it in a wrong way, he regards it more highly than fact and truth allow, inasmuch as man… presumes to possess this peace and satisfaction in created things. It is to this vanity, therefore (*ie *to this wrong enjoyment), that the creature is subjected, just as grass is in itself something good and not something worthless; indeed, it is good, necessary and useful for cattle, but to man it is worthless and useless as food, yet if it were used as human food, it would be regarded and valued more highly than its nature allows.*[2]

Now Luther seems to be implying in this illustration both that the grass is (in reality) devalued and abused by being put to absurd use, and also that because of its over-valuation (that is, being wrongly taken as suitable for food by humans) it becomes physically harmful instead of useful. That may be a rather convoluted way of putting things, but does actually seem applicable to many instances where human beings have harmed nature.

Luther, in the idea of "spiritual abuse" of nature, seems to be thinking in the same broad area as the biblical idea of the land itself being polluted by bloodshed or by other human sin, which I looked at in Chapter 3. If we consider the natural order as being created to glorify God through being what it is, in the role God has assigned to it, then for it to be put to a perverted human use is an offence against the creature itself.

For example, to train a creature such as a dog – or in modern times a dolphin – to carry explosives to destroy a military checkpoint or a warship is to coerce it not only into destroying itself, but into breaking the prohibition against killing humans that God gave to the animals in Genesis 9. The same could be said of those wild beasts that were forced into killing Christians (and others) in the circus games in the ancient Roman Empire, sometimes clearly unwillingly[3].

"I will demand an accounting from every animal," God says in that Genesis passage. Whilst that is unlikely to mean beasts are resurrected at the last judgement and asked to bark or roar out their case for the defence, even that would certainly be a more appropriately biblical form of anthropomorphism than either the common motif of theistic evolutionists about Creation possessing some analogy of free-will, or the idea that sometimes goes with it (for example in R J Russell[4]) that God will need to make restitution to the beasts for the sufferings they undergo in the course of their natural way of life.

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[2] Luther, Martin, *Lectures on Romans* (Philadelphia, Westminster, 1961), *p.238.*

[3] Ignatius, *To the Romans* 8.2: "How I look forward to the real lions that have been got ready for me! All I pray is that I may find them swift. I am going to make overtures to them, so that, unlike some other wretches whom they have been too spiritless to touch, they may devour me with all speed. And if they are still reluctant, I shall use force to them."

[4] Russell, Robert J, *Cosmology from Alpha to Omega* (Minneapolis, Fortress, 2008) *p.266*: "The challenge of evolution leads to the following criteria which eschatology must meet. First, it must include not only humanity and all the history of life on earth, but more than that: not only every species but even and most importantly the individual creatures of every species. For creatures suffer, not species, and thus creatures individually – one by one – must be the focus of any genuine Christian eschatology… and not as somehow included merely

When considered in the light of a sacrilegious misrepresentation of the character and purposes of nature, then in spiritual terms the portrayal of animals as implacably red in tooth and claw in documentaries, or even in popular science or in academic theological studies, bears the same relationship to training them to kill humans that lust has to adultery in Jesus's teaching. The abuse, in other words, is mental rather than physical. Chris Palmer's term "nature porn", cited in Chapter 9, is a rather apposite description, and doesn't only apply to ratings-orientated documentary films.

The evils of pornography include not only the inciting of lust (with demonstrable effects on personal attitudes to others), but the demeaning and objectification of women. If it is wrong to misrepresent what human beings actually are, in God's eyes, in their sexuality, is it not a similar wrong to nature to make it what it is not? Luther seems to have seen more than he realized in this respect.

Just as it is unlikely that the Genesis 9 talk of creatures being held to account for shedding the blood of mankind refers to a court scene with talking animals, it is equally unlikely that the creatures will, on the last day, literally cry out their offence at their natures being misrepresented by man, rather than appreciated and enhanced. I doubt also that Abel's blood literally cried out from the ground, and have already suggested in Chapter 3 that the "groaning" of creation in Romans 8 is a literary personification rather than a literal statement.

But surely the point is that nevertheless Creation has a defender and spokesman in its Creator, Jesus Christ the *Logos* of God, just as do the poor and unheard amongst humankind. If the creatures cannot speak on their own behalf at the Judgement, then the Judge will.

The long history of trashing the planet

The idea of damage to the environment was probably not really appreciated in Luther's time, but that is not to say such damage had not occurred before, on a large scale, or that it had not been noticed. It is commonplace to blame Palaeolithic hunting for the extinction of large mammals like the mammoth, but the evidence for that is seldom compelling. What is more evident is the damage that has occurred in historic (*ie* unequivocally post-Fall) times.

In a 1980 essay, Anne and Paul Ehrlich describe several such early ill-effects of human intervention. They begin with the desertification of Mesopotamia from the inevitable silting up of the irrigation channels used to increase agricultural production. They go on to say how Plato, in 360BC, recorded the historical deforestation and soil erosion of his own Greek state of Attica:

> *And, just as happens in small islands, what now remains compared with what then existed is like the skeleton of a sick man, all the fat and soft earth having wasted away, and only the bare framework of the land being left. But at that epoch the country was unimpaired, and for its mountains it had high arable hills, and in place of the "moorlands," as they are now called, it contained plains full of rich soil; and it had much forestland in its mountains, of which there are visible signs even to this day; for there are some mountains which now have nothing but food for bees, but they had trees no very long time ago, and the rafters from those felled there to roof the largest buildings are still sound*.[5]

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through human redemption." Such a theodicy makes many unwarranted assumptions, and so presents a host of problems not only theologically, but philosophically and biologically.

[5] Plato, *Critias.*

It's not clear from Plato's text that the Ehrlichs are correct when they suggest he was aware of the human origin of the degradation: he seems mainly (if you read the original text) to blame earthquakes. But they appear right to suggest that deliberate deforestation itself was the biggest cause:

> *The Greeks inherited a land covered by rich stands of oaks, pines, and other trees with thick, drought-resistant leaves . . . called a "sclerophyllous forest," in the jargon of plant ecologists. But, as the Greek population expanded, it progressively destroyed the forests for firewood, charcoal (needed in firing pottery and other industrial processes), and lumber. The great trees were often burned by accident, too . . . or as part of a military operation, or simply to create more open pastureland*.[6]

Now, maybe most of those uses for timber seems legitimate to us, and the "unsustainability" merely the result of an understandable lack of knowledge. We should, though, remember that God's true wisdom was the very thing first forfeited by the Fall, and so such ignorance is, in fact, culpable.

In any case keeping warm and making pots was not the most destructive activity of the Greeks. When I was on holiday in Attic Greece some years ago, my guide, like the Ehrlichs, said that the bare limestone hills resulted from ancient deforestation, but suggested that the greatest depredation of trees came at the time when Greece acquired the maritime military power that gave it world domination in the fifth century. The iconic Greek ship called a *trireme* was first designed in the seventh century BC, and apart from the tons of timber needed for the 120 foot hull *each one* of its 170 oars was made from a single fir tree:

> *[I]mmense quantities of suitable timber were required. It is probably impossible to estimate the weight of a trireme or the amount of timber needed, but as they were turned out almost in hundreds it needs little imagination to realize that there must have been plenty of forests from which the necessary timber could be obtained. Mount Ida in Phrygia was famous for its pines, but the mainland and islands of Greece must have contained vast areas of forest. The demands of the Peloponnesian War alone must have caused considerable deforestation. How many pine trees were needed for the oars of a fleet? …At Aigospotami there were 380 ships in the two sides together. If each vessel had its full complement of oars, this means … a total of 76,000 oars! (76,000 men!) What acreage of pines would be needed to supply the necessary trees?*[7]

Given that Plato wrote just 45 years after that battle, the last major engagement of the Peloponnesian War, then in describing the denudation of the soil of Attica he was actually writing, at least in part, about the ill-effects of Athens' war effort on its own well-being – ill-effects that persist 2,400 years later, and which no doubt are even a contributory factor to Greece's parlous economic state now.

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[6] Ehrlich A, and Ehrlich P. *Ecoscience: The Greeks and Romans Did It, Too!* (1980), http://www.motherearthnews.com/nature-and-environment/greeks-and-romans-zmaz80mjzraw.aspx (accessed 06/01/2016).

[7] Horn, Theodore, *The Fall of Athens: Selections from the Hellenica of Xenophon* (London, Macmillan, 1962) https://cliojournal.wikispaces.com/Greek+warships (accessed 06/1/2016).

Translating this example into Luther's mindset regarding Romans 8, we can suggest that trees, intended by God as good both in their natural situation and for housing, firewood and charcoal for pottery, became overvalued by men as a means to inflict violence on other men. The trees therefore became instruments for evil rather than good, and were also irreversibly destroyed, together with the now unstable soil in which they had grown.

The Ehrlichs go on to show how the Romans, both ruthlessly exploitative and lacking any real environmental concern, extended deforestation empire-wide, and furthermore caused the extinction of large animals in many countries, in many cases for thoroughly evil reasons:

> *Huge numbers of beasts were pitted against each other (and against human beings) in lethal combats. Titus, for example, had some 9,000 wild animals slaughtered during the three months' dedication of the Colosseum, and Trajan's conquest of Dacia (modern Romania) was celebrated by games in which 11,000 beasts were killed. When one considers that tens or even hundreds of lions, leopards, rhinos, buffalos, and so on must have died—or been killed—in transport or captivity for every one that lived to entertain the citizens, the probable scale of the Roman impact on wildlife staggers the imagination*.[8]

When you consider that the present population of lions in the whole of Africa is some thirty thousand, and maybe twenty-five thousand rhinos, those figures are sobering. Perhaps we need fewer reminders about the environmental degradations closer to our own time, given the laudable concern for ecological issues over recent decades, sadly in the face of even more thorough destruction of our natural world than in many millennia before. Loss of trees in Greece has given way to the wholesale felling of continental rain-forests with worldwide effects. Destruction of large game species in Upper Egypt by the Romans scarcely compares to the wanton extermination of bison, wolves or passenger pigeons across nineteenth century America and the threatened or actual extinction of major species nowadays, through African or Indian poaching and habitat destruction. Localised soil erosion has now (arguably, admittedly) given way to global climate change endangering whole nations.

Herman Melville, writing in 1851 about the industrial-scale commercial whaling of his time (mainly for lamp oil from their blubber – a hugely wasteful pursuit which wasted the rest of the carcase), knew of the collapse of bison populations and its cause. He also knew of the increasing difficulties whalers were experiencing in finding their quarry. Yet he assumed, against the fears of the more prescient "philosophers of the forecastle" he mocked, that whales were immune from extinction[9]. But in his day, whaling voyages were long and extremely hazardous, and the odds were at least a little more evenly balanced in the whales' favour. The invention of motorised factory ships and explosive harpoons increased the rate of killing dramatically, but not for generations was there any willingness to see the devastating effects on nature of such progress. Whaling was becoming less commercially viable anyway by the time it was banned in 1982, but several species came perilously close to extinction and are still endangered.

These are familiar stories, though probably they are still not sufficiently appreciated by most Christians as being a central component of the heinousness of human sin, involving as they do the

[8] Ehrlich, *op. cit.*
[9] Melville, Herman, *Moby Dick, ch.105.*

desecration of the "cosmic temple" of God's earthly Creation and the abandonment of our own creation ordinance to maintain it on God's behalf. This blindness is decidedly odd when so many believers are willing to blame many of the features of that Creation itself, in all its God-given wonder (even "glory" in Paul's words in 1 Cor. 15), on sin.

All of the same human vices that caused the ancient environmental problems have contributed to our present ones. As amongst the ancient Greeks valuable natural resources are still used to create weapons which, in turn, destroy more natural resources as well as human lives. That happens on the large scale of nuclear weapons, and on the smaller, but much more destructive, scale of cheap, mass-produced landmines.

Like the Romans we tend to see the world only in terms of its utility for us, and greedily exploit it for the sake of profit or convenience. We consider ourselves far-sighted if we can budget for resources like oil lasting another century or two. Even my own recorded family history is twice as long as that – it is myopic to think ahead no farther.

In this profligacy we differ markedly from nature itself. The soil of the earth had been renewed without human care for billions of years before it was entrusted to us. The Mesopotamians, Greeks and Romans managed to undo that conservation work in centuries. Later, American deep ploughing created the Dust Bowl in just a century of farming the prairies, and more recently the adoption of intensive agriculture worldwide has continued the process in China, Russia, Africa, Central America and elsewhere, in even less than that time. In fact the United Nations reports that:

> *SOLAW [State of the World's Land and Water Resources for Food and Agriculture] provides for the first time ever a global assessment of the state of the planet's land resources. Fully one quarter are highly degraded. Another 8 percent are moderately degraded, 36 percent are stable or slightly degraded and 10 percent are ranked as "improving." The remaining shares of the earth's land surface are either bare (around 18 percent) or covered by inland water bodies (around 2%). (These figures include all land types, not just farmland.)*[10]

We saw in the last chapter how carnivores tend to take out the old, weak and socially marginalised herbivores, in this way maintaining healthy ecosystems. It is interesting to compare this to human hunting: the idea of "conservation" a century ago was to rid the environment of "evil" carnivores altogether (before proceeding to hunt the herbivores). Even now the hunter's aim is often to bag the trophy specimen – the dominant lion, or the 17-point stag: in other words the individuals most important to the success of the breeding population. Perhaps that had some point when hunting involved the courage of single-handed combat, but now that the killing is done at a distance with a hi-tech rifle, trophy-hunting is a particularly pathetic activity, whether in US forests or on Scottish Estates – or even by Maltese "traditionalists" who decimate the migrating songbirds annually in a pointless shooting spree.

But the scientific management of the land pays no more real attention to the ecology than private individuals. It seems hard to credit that a policy of creating genetically resistant patented monocultures, and then blitzing everything else that lives with glycophosphates, owes anything

[10] *Scarcity and degradation of land and water: growing threat to food security* (FAO, 2011) http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/95153/icode/ (accessed 06/01/2016).

whatsoever to the science of ecology. The dangers of losing genetic diversity have, after all, been known for at least two generations (during which time commercial farming has single-mindedly increased the loss of varieties).

We have historically exhibited, in our management of nature, a most misguided knowledge of what is good, and what is evil. Some might call such Promethean wisdom crass ignorance.

The health risks of Bacon

But we also have a longstanding, though ambiguous, *intellectual* basis for such self-centredness, though it is often blamed on the Genesis 1 creation ordinance regarding mankind's rule of Creation. There are undoubtedly current streams of popular Christianity, especially in the West, that take the idea of human domination of the world as a tenet of faith without any real consideration of how the Fall affects it, or what it meant in the first place. It's sometimes hard for an outsider to understand the gung-ho insistence of some American Christians that fossil fuels are there for us to squander as we please, with no thought for current pollution or future depletion. But no doubt it's equally hard for rural Indian Christians to understand why British believers really feel the need to drive large four-wheel drive off-roaders on flat roads in towns, and fly across continents to sit by a hotel pool in Goa, spreading jet-engine exhaust across the local people who cannot afford such things.

Such a conscious attachment of the Divine Right of Man to Exploit is, whatever may be said in its defence, radically out of kilter with historic Christian teaching, and seems rather to be an offshoot of an attitude that arose in early modern intellectual circles in Europe, and which is expressed in the Baconian concept of science.

In the section on historical theology (Chapter 6), I referred briefly to Cameron Wybrow's book, *The Bible, Baconianism, and Mastery over Nature.* In this he makes out a detailed case for how natural philosophers like Francis Bacon (1561-1626) co-opted the language of Genesis to justify a completely non-biblical and actually quite new approach to studying the world, based on a strong sense of human domination over all things. Because this proceeded from a radical *desacralization* of nature, that had come to regard it as an entirely inert and passive work of God, it then became legitimate to plunder it for any resources or secrets it held which might benefit man.

Before this, although Christianity clearly perceived nature to be the work only of God and subordinate to his will, there was some sense that it possessed an organic unity, analogous to a living being rather than a mere object. But the early modern scientific trend towards atomism paved the way for an entirely mechanistic view of Creation as mere matter. Because that idea is central to our worldview, we forget how recent, local, and aberrant it is.

The ruthless attitude to animal experiments we saw in the last chapter is one graphic instance of this, as perhaps is this extract from Bacon himself on the supposed resilience of nature in general under any kind of experimentation:

> *But if any skilled minister of nature shall apply force to matter, and by design torture and vex it, in order to its annihilation, it, on the contrary, being brought under this necessity, changes and transforms itself into a strange variety of shapes and appearances; for nothing but the power of the Creator can annihilate, or truly destroy it; so that at length... it in some degree restores itself, if the force be continued. And that method of binding, torturing, or detaining,*

> *will prove the most effectual and expeditious, which makes use of manacles and fetters; that is, lays hold and works upon matter in the extremest degrees*.[11]

So the victim *likes* it, really (Wybrow draws attention to the prevalence of rather troubling analogies to rape and torture in some of this early scientific literature). Since that time, there have really been two broadly different ways of doing science: the first involves primarily a respectful observation of nature, in order to understand its ways. But the second, which one might call the Baconian stream, is a largely utilitarian effort to manipulate nature to make it do useful new things for us, with an optimistic expectation that those new things will ultimately do good.

Obviously enough the second of these has a greater capacity to cause the kind of damage to Creation that I have been discussing, whether that damage come through ignorance of the unforeseen effects of one's science (such as the over-use of fertilizers, insecticides or antibiotics), greed (such as allowing unnecessary industrial pollution in order to provide greater profit) or malice (such as the hydrogen bomb, nerve gases, defoliation agents and a host of other such products of progress in the science of killing).

Underlying all of these is an unstated assumption that the world is merely a machine-like arrangement of interchangeable parts, which may legitimately be dismantled and put back together in any order we choose. On this understanding the job of creation was badly bodged in the first place, sad to relate. But Bob (Bacon) the Builder[12] says, *"Can we fix it? Yes we can!"*

Only such a mind-set could make it even *conceivable* to manufacture animal-human chimaeras in accredited western universities. Yet the United States' NIH (like other agencies elsewhere) has had to step carefully back and forth between ambitious research applications from powerful scientific lobbies, and ethical objections. As of September 2015, it has decided not to fund such research – but only pending *"a deliberative process to evaluate the state of the science in this area, the ethical issues that should be considered, and the relevant animal welfare concerns associated with these types of studies."*[13] The research continues in any case with funds from elsewhere, and one wonders what new ethical considerations can be brought to the table at this late stage, since the sanctitity of human life from conception was negotiated away long since.

But in all cases, it's interesting how the same unquenchable optimism exhibited in the Bacon quote above seems to be maintained: "Well, maybe the last three centuries' progress is threatening the whole planet, but *this* century's progress is bound to put it right again." Indeed, it seems to be a characteristic of the scientific community seldom to acknowledge the role of science in *creating* massive problems at all, but only to wave flags for its role in their solution – or at least, its role in the brave *efforts* to solve them against the unscientific forces of ignorance.

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[11] Bacon, Francis, *Proteus, or* Matter, quoted in Wybrow C, *The Bible, Baconianism, and Mastery over Nature*, (New York: Peter Lang 1991) *p.180.*

[12] *Bob the Builder* is a British children's TV show. His Baconian optimism is usually, fortunately, restricted to vernacular architecture and things people have broken, rather than God.

[13] *NIH Research Involving Introduction of Human Pluripotent Cells into Non-Human Vertebrate Animal Pre-Gastrulation Embryos* (Notice Number: NOT-OD-15-158, September 23, 2015) https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-15-158.html accessed 06/01/2016.

By way of example, consider the causes of the increased production of greenhouse gases implicated in climate change. There are two major factors. The first is increased industrialisation, the direct result of the Enlightenment science project to tame the uncouth world for rational mankind, whose ill-effects are now somehow blamed on politicians and consumers.

The second is the unprecedented exponential increase in the world's population over the last century from 1.5bn to 7bn, which according to a classic article in *Nature* is mostly to be attributed to the work of chemists Fritz Haber and Carl Bosch[14]. The Haber-Bosch process of nitrogen fixation was developed to enable the mass production of high explosives in World War 1, a questionable and world-changingly costly project in itself. But it also led directly to the production of artificial fertilizers and that was, it is argued, by far the biggest cause of the population growth of the twentieth century.

The process itself is highly dependent on fossil fuels, thus contributing directly to climate change. Nanotechnologist Prof Richard Jones pointed out in a BBC radio discussion that that there is no current fix for this vicious circle – higher population requires more artificial fertilizer, and so more fossil fuel dependence – not to mention more soil degradation from humus depletion, as we saw above.

And yet this science-initiated problem is seldom brought to public attention, and instead the blame is laid at the feet of Catholics in the developing world opposing the almost certainly inadequate Baconian "fixes" of artificial birth control and abortion. It does appear, nevertheless, that the population is beginning to level off as economic development leads to *voluntary* limitation of family size.

But it may not solve the problems. This very week saw the publication of a paper by a multidisciplinary team of 22 authors in *Science*[15], endorsing the thesis that, since the 1950s, the world has entered a new geological age as a result of human activity. As the abstract says:

> *The appearance of manufactured materials in sediments, including aluminum, plastics, and concrete, coincides with global spikes in fallout radionuclides and particulates from fossil fuel combustion. Carbon, nitrogen, and phosphorus cycles have been substantially modified over the past century. Rates of sea-level rise and the extent of human perturbation of the climate system exceed Late Holocene changes. Biotic changes include species invasions worldwide and accelerating rates of extinction. These combined signals render the Anthropocene stratigraphically distinct from the Holocene and earlier epochs.*

The word "scientist" was coined by William Whewell only in 1834, marking (at least symbolically) the much-celebrated blossoming of the scientific age. If one looks at the specific factors mentioned in the *Science* abstract, *every single one* – from nuclear fallout to pollution by non-biodegradable hydrocarbons, is the fruit of little more than a century of that professional scientific enterprise. It all seems more than ironic when you consider the gall of those like the late New Atheist particle physicist Victor J Stenger, who wrote:

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[14] Smil, Vaclav, *Detonator of the population explosion* (Nature 400, 415, 29 July 1999).
[15] Waters C N, *et al., The Anthropocene is functionally and stratigraphically distinct from the Holocene* (*Science Vol. 351 no. 6269*, 8 January 2016).

Science flies you to the moon. Religion flies you into buildings.[16]

Why has that become so much quoted, rather than "Science flips you into a new geological age"? The latter is, after all, the more important, if uncongenial, truth.[17]

One could multiply instances of the way mankind had damaged, and still damages, God's natural Creation, and apportion specific responsibility in each case. But there would be few, if any, of us who could claim to be innocent, for the world is not damaged because people are scientists, politicians, soldiers, industrialists, jihadists, Catholics, air-passengers or anything else, but because they are sinners exiled from God's wisdom by sin, and believers instead in their own wisdom.

The next question is, what difference does it make to realise that Creation is an innocent damaged by our violation, rather than a monster, red in tooth and claw, fanatically bent on violence against us? What implications for Christian faith does belief in a good, rather than a fallen, Creation have?

[16] Stenger, Victor J, *The New Atheism: Taking a Stand for Science and Reason* (Prometheus, 2009), *p.59.*

[17] Incidentally, it's more accurate to say that "religion gets you to the moon", if you consider that nearly every landmark scientist involved was a believer: Bede (discoverer of gravitational effect of tides, Catholic), Copernicus (heliocentrism, Catholic), Tycho Brahe (planetary motions, Lutheran), Galileo Galilei (heliocentrism, Catholic), Johannes Kepler (elliptical orbits, Lutheran), Isaac Newton (gravitational laws, Arian), Wernher von Braun (NASA rocket scientist, Evangelical) and Sir Bernard Lovell (radio-astronomy, Anglican/Methodist).