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Whatever Happened to Eden? (Book Review)

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cannot be compartmentalized to the mechanical or the spiritual since Scripture clearly shows that the whole man (mind, body, and soul) falls into sin and experiences redemption.

I believe the main contribution of Jones' *Our Fragile Brains* is to tackle many difficult and potentially controversial issues not only from a Christian perspective but from a scientific background. Many Christian writers in discussing issues on the brain have had limited understanding of brain function or current research.

Whatever happened to Eden? by John R. Sheaffer and Raymond H. Brand, 1980, Tyndale. \$4.95.
Reviewed by Delmar Vander Zee, Professor of Biology.

Whatever happened to Eden? is a book about the state of the planet as seen by two Christian professionals, one an environmental consultant and the other a college professor, both interested in providing some insight into how to manage the planet.

The book is very readable, easy to understand; it is not highly technical. No doubt it is intended for and is appropriate for a wide, reading public. Its style holds the interest of the reader and has an end section of notes and bibliography for further reading.

The opening pages reveal the authors' Christian predisposition and desire to effect better stewardship. They rightly see the relationship between consumerism, material and energy shortages, and pollution, and therefore are compelled to write a later chapter on life-style. Here two eras are sharply contrasted. One is a statement of current concerns: "Who's going to win the game? Where do I park my car? How do I lose a few pounds?" The other derives from an ethic of earlier times: "Use it up, wear it out, make do or do without." The life-style theme is picked up again in the last chapter where the authors present a brief outline for a sustainable society/community, based on awareness of the following basic creation—environmental facts. First, the life support system of the planet is a single system with many interactions. Second, there is a limit to resources, and third, these resources must be managed by recycling and using non-centralized energy sources, for example, solar.

The authors recognize the deficiencies in other popular writings on the environmental scene. For example, they rightfully point out that Lynn White not only misinterprets the biblical concept of dominion but also lacks a sense of history when he blames environmental deterioration on Western Christianity. Furthermore, the authors expose the essential shallowness and basic selfishness of Garrit Hardin's "life-boat ethics."

Although not a treatise on the economics of proper environmental stewardship, the book presents some ideas worth noting. In advocating developing solar energy the authors point out that the economic accountability would appear to be much better for solar, and much poorer for current forms of energy if *all* the true costs were considered, such as subsidies currently en-

Because of his solid background in both neuroscience and Christian thought, Jones is able to tackle these issues head on and avoids the vague generalities that so often accompany a Christian approach to brain function. The book is, therefore, essential reading for any scientist, philosopher, or scholar who desires to have a more integrated approach to a difficult topic. It may not be the final word on the subject, but few will dispute that it is an excellent starting point.

joyed by fossil or nuclear sources and their material and social costs. (In other words, who pays the bill for acid rain?)

Some models of more stewardly ways of dealing with resources are presented in the chapter "New Horizons" in which the authors cite projects that have been carried out successfully.

The book does not explore deeply the philosophical and theological aspects and implications of a deteriorating life-support system, although the fourth chapter, "The Human Community," speaks to this best. The question posed in the title is never explicitly answered. The problem of sin and its consequent separation and brokenness is never mentioned. The status of humankind is regarded highly in the book, perhaps too highly as evident in this quote: "The authors of this book believe God created the earth for *mankind* to manage and *enjoy*, and that the essential principles for managing the global enterprise are given in the Judeo-Christian scriptures. Ignorance and disregard of these principles have dangerously threatened *human* survival." (emphases mine, DVZ) This and other passages imply that if we don't care for the planet our health will ultimately suffer and *therefore* we ought. . . . These consequences may be true but are only part of the picture. The biblically expressed doxological purpose of the creation as presented in the Psalms seems to be missing, and there is little argument for preserving and caring for otherkind (a term denoting creatures other than humans) except in the context of serving humankind. The servant-hood aspect of man's place in creation is missing as a common theme in the book. (This is presented very well in Wilkinson's *Earthkeeping*, Eerdmans, 1981.)

In several places the authors argue for a return to efficiency whereas a better choice of words would be thrift, recycling, and doing with less. Efficiency, after all, has been one of the false gods of our materialistic culture.

Overall the book has many good things to say and is one of many books that demonstrate a growing desire on the part of Christians to address the problems plaguing the planet.