



An American Trilogy: Death, Slavery, and Dominion on the Banks of the Cape Fear River

Steven M. Wise

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Death domination and oppression are an old story in North Carolina. Queen Elizabeth authorized Sir Walter Raleigh to colonize the Carolinas in 1584. That began a series of events that have soaked the land with blood and sorrow: the displacement of the indigenous inhabitants via violence and disease the brutal era of chattel slavery and the present epoch of massive abattoirs dispatching 38000 hogs a day.

Wise has lectured for years on animal rights and has taught at Harvard Law School. He is the author of *Though the Heavens May Fall: The Landmark Trial that led to the End of Human Slavery*; *Rattling the Cage: Toward Legal Rights for Animals*; and *Drawing the Line: Science and the Case for Animal Rights*. He finds the philosophical basis for exploitation in interpretations of the Bible. For example Moses curse of his son Ham to be the servant of servants was believed to give Christians permission to enslave both Africans and Native Americans.

Furthermore Genesis 1:26-28 was interpreted to mean that humankind had dominion over the earth and everything that swam flew or crawled on its surface. Without that theoretical claim Wise argues that the extermination of the American Indians black slavery and extreme animal exploitation described vividly in his chapters on the workings of the pork slaughterhouses and industrial farms would never have occurred. "Unlike Americas Indians who recognized reciprocity in the relationship between human and nonhuman animals the English saw only domination with many having little regard for the suffering of any animal." Recent statements among some Christian sects have reinvented the idea of "dominion" into one of "stewardship" of Gods earth and creatures.

The bulk of the book concentrates on the pork industry as it is practiced in North Carolina and around the country. Wise traces the land in Bladen County shot through by the Cape Fear River and home to the worlds largest slaughterhouse. The systematic abuse of hogs as they are bred killed and eviscerated is widespread and documented by many sources throughout the book. Disturbing and enraging Wises book exposes both the facts and the ideological underpinnings of the brutal world of modern meat production.

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