



April 16th. 2011

A letter I received this week reminded me that true vigilance must first be inward. As much as I am drawn to preachers who sound loud and clear warnings about those who would lead God's people astray, I really need first to hear the kind of preaching which stirs me to search my own heart, and do it often and deeply.

When the apostle Paul wrote to Timothy that he must "take heed unto himself" (1 Timothy 4:16), he also called upon all who preach to practice this inward watchfulness. Where must we shine the searchlight of truth first? Upon our own beliefs! Where shall we search for error? Among our own doctrines! Where shall I mount a guard against heresy? Upon the parapets of the castle of my own heart! Oh how I would always say to my brethren, "I have my doubts about me!"

J.O. Fraser, the missionary to China whom Isobel Kuhn mentions again and again, was once asked, "What is the greatest problem you face in China?" His reply? "Myself!"

The context of Paul's words to Timothy, (Take heed unto thyself...) includes all of the exhortations and admonitions of the epistle. So what is on this checklist for preachers? In just this one chapter, Timothy is alerted to the ever present dangers of demonic doctrines (vv. 1-5), of old wives' tales (v. 7), of letting physical health (and exercise) crowd out godliness (v. 8), of the need for exemplary conduct in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, and in purity (v. 12), of neglecting reading, exhorting, and doctrine (v. 13), of the right use of his spiritual gift (v. 14), and of thoughtful diligence in ministry so that others are benefited (v. 15).

"Take heed to thyself" is one of those commands of God that we preachers neglect. Some neglect it because they subscribe to the view that reproof is no longer a part of Christian ministry (Oh? Does their Bible no longer contain 1 Tim. 3:16?) Others would divert our attention away from their failings by pointing out the failings of others.

I must warn you, that if your vigilance is first inward, and you persist in baring your heart before God, you will soon find yourself dealing with the sins in your own home before you look over your neighbour's fence. And your church will be of more concern to you than another pastor's. And your denomination before someone else's.

Heads Up! to our own sins!

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Will Ye Plead For Baal? -

To this point I have not written anything about the events of September 11. I believe there is one point of view that has not been expressed in anything I have either heard or read. Were the attacks of that infamous day in any way due to the judgment of God? You are probably aware that men like Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson have made comments about this. It is the response to their statements that has persuaded me pursue this consideration. The week of the tragedy, an ABC television team asked permission to come by and ask me some questions about this issue. They began by bringing up Dr. Falwell's statement.

My response was that no one has found in the Bible any direct prophecy that that was fulfilled by those cowardly terrorist attacks. On the other hand, I told them that such things are clearly a fulfillment of the curse placed by God upon the earth at the time of the fall of man. In one of a number of exchanges that I had with other theologians, a good friend who saw nothing of judgement in the events said to me, "I suppose, then, that every shark attack, murder, and terrorist attack is due to the judgment of God. My response was a question. "Had Adam not fallen, would there ever have been any shark or terrorist attacks?" It is hard for me to see how anyone can disagree that 9/11 was at least the general judgement of God.

In the same way, I wonder if this judgement was, in part, because we have failed to take the Gospel to the Arab world with the same intensity with which we have taken it to South America and Africa. I also suggest that it does indeed have to do with the fact that America has mocked God with its wickedness so that the great majority of this nation is like those the Psalmist spoke of: "The fool hath said in his heart, (there is) NO GOD." - Psalm 53:1. Is anyone so morally dull as to not at least ask if God would actually be willing to ignore the brutal murder of millions of babies in the womb or turn a deaf ear to the alarming rise of sodomy in this nation. By the way, I do also believe, in that general sense, that the plague of AIDS represents the judgement of God on those who either practice sodomy themselves or give open, or silent, approval.

Now that I have hit the wasp's nest with a stick, let me get on to the real issue. I refer to the rather violent and unkind responses by those who took Falwell and Robertson to task. The issue here is not what we know about eschatology, or judgement, and the fine lines we like to draw; the real issue is about God. It is about His perfect love, truth, and holiness. It is not about our knowledge of judgements recorded in the Bible, but what we know about God.

In Judges 6:31, Joash, Gideon's father, confronts the religious men of the town. They were angry that Gideon and his ten companions had attacked the prevailing view of God. He had been direct and confrontational; instead of being silent, he waded right into the issue. He actually DID something about the attitude people had about God. Baal worship was an attack on God and deserved a response. Thankfully, his father stood on the right side of judgement with the question, "Will ye plead for Baal?"

Today, in our country, there are plenty of Baal worshipers. We also have those who follow the religion of Molek, in which the violent deaths of innocent children was a part of their belief system. None of this should surprise any of us. The warning of Paul to young Pastor Timothy in II Timothy 3 notes that this is what we should expect. The thing that causes my sorrow is that there are those in evangelicalism and fundamentalism who ignore the presence of such evil. Even more shocking is the stance of the group which defends these evils and tells us we should be silent, or polite, about such obvious sinfulness.

It does not matter how we ignore, or defend, the things that offend God. Defending evil and belittling the holy judgement of God may be done under the pretense of scholarship, but even that is a sorry commentary on fundamentalism. I ask, why "will ye plead for Baal?"

It seems to me that our friends have asked the wrong question; and if you ask the wrong question, you are going to get the wrong answer. The answer to the question about judgement can be found in the very character of God; in fact, the issue is about God and not about man. It has nothing to do with how men feel may or think. The record of Scripture is overwhelming - God is holy, and he judges all sin. Not every disastrous event is intended as a judgement on a certain person, or persons; that is elementary. If you focus on God and take a look at September 11, 2001, it is impossible to miss seeing the presence, purpose, and judgement of God. If, on the other hand, you focus on man, you will produce the kind of humanistic rhetoric that has been floating around for the past few months.

By Clay Nuttall

Therapy for the Funny Bone -

TEACHER: Maria, go to the map and find North America.

MARIA: Here it is.

TEACHER: Correct. Now class, who discovered America ?

CLASS: Maria.

TEACHER: Glenn, how do you spell 'crocodile?'

GLENN: K-R-O-K-O-D-I-A-L'

TEACHER: No, that's wrong

GLENN: Maybe it is wrong, but you asked me how I spell it.

TEACHER: Winnie, name one important thing we have today that we didn't have ten years ago.

WINNIE: Me!

TEACHER: Glen, why do you always get so dirty?

GLEN: Well, I'm a lot closer to the ground than you are.

TEACHER: George Washington not only chopped down his father's cherry tree, but also admitted it.

Now, Louie, do you know why his father didn't punish him?

LOUIS: Because George still had the axe in his hand ?

TEACHER: Clyde , your composition on 'My Dog' is exactly the same as your brother's.. Did you copy his?

CLYDE : No, sir. It's just the same dog.

TEACHER: Harold, what do you call a person who keeps on talking when people are no longer interested?

HAROLD: A teacher ?

My neighbour is about three fries short of a Happy Meal. The other day I saw him digging a hole in his backyard and went over to see what he was up to. He told me his dog died and so he was digging a hole to bury him. I asked him why he dug three holes instead of one. He replied, "The first two weren't deep enough."

Curiouser and Curiouser Links-

* (Guess who got the anti-aircraft missiles from Libya's army?)

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/breaking-news/al-qaeda-snatched-missiles-in-libya/story-fn3dxity-1226028543204>

* A really neat inspirational video clip of a kids soccer club - <http://www.flixxy.com/panyee-football-club.htm>

* The end of religion? - <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-12811197>

* North Korea's development of an EMP weapon - <http://abcnews.go.com/International/electronic-warfare-north-korea-nears-completion-electromagnetic-pulse/story?id=13081667>

* **Ex-gays made huge impression at Maryland "gay marriage" public hearing** http://www.massresistance.org/docs/gen/11a/maryland_0208/update_0302/ex-gays.html

Dawkins' and Attenborough's Fairy Tales -

Biologist Michael Behe observes:

“Some evolutionary biologists--like Richard Dawkins--have fertile imaginations. Given a starting point, they almost always can spin a story to get to any biological structure you wish” (Darwin’s Black Box).

Consider, for example, the following account of how fish supposedly evolved:

“The corals arrived and began to build reefs, and the segmented animals developed into forms that soon would leave the sea and establish a bridgehead on land. Important changes also took place among the proto-fish. The slits in the sides of their throats, which had originated as filtering mechanisms, were walled with thin blood vessels so that they also served as gills. Now the pillars of flesh between them were stiffened with bony rods and the first pair of these bones, slowly over the millennia, gradually hinged forward. Muscles developed around them so that the front ends of the rods could be moved up and down. The creatures had acquired jaws. The bony scales in the skin which covered them grew larger and sharper and became teeth. No longer were the backboned creatures of the sea lowly sifters of mud and strainers of water. Now they could bite. Flaps of skin grew out of either side of the lower part of the body, helping to guide them through the water. These eventually became fins. Now they could swim. And so, for the first time, vertebrate hunters began to propel themselves with skill and accuracy through the waters of the sea” (David Attenborough, Life on Earth, based on a BBC-TV series, 1979, p. 112). Read more at <http://www.wayoflife.org/files/category-evolution.html>

Quotable Notes and Notable Quotes -

Today’s debate about global warming is essentially a debate about freedom. The environmentalists would like to mastermind each and every possible (and impossible) aspect of our lives.” - Vaclav Klaus -Blue Planet in Green Shackles

Terribly Twisted Texts -

Several years ago I read the biography of an evangelical Anglican evangelist, John Chapman. It is called "Chappo", and well worth reading. One striking passage describes his dealings with Cliff Barrows, who was the advance man for Billy Graham's ecumenical crusades. Barrows was working with the Sydney Anglicans to get the publicity machinery up and running before a crusade in Sydney. He wanted Rev. 3:20 ("Behold, I stand at the door and knock...") used in the ads, and John Chapman objected, calling to Barrows' attention that the verse has nothing to do with Jesus seeking entry into a sinner's heart, but instead, is a call to believers in the Laodicean church to welcome the Saviour for personal fellowship. Barrows' reply gives an excellent example of a twisted text. He said, "I know that, but you wouldn't believe how much God has used that verse to save the lost." So God blesses the intentional misuse of Scripture? Here is a clear example of the approach of New evangelicals to the Holy Scriptures.

I invite readers to send me examples of twisted texts you hear preached.

The True Perspective on a Carbon Tax (ETS) -

Let's put this into a bit of perspective for laymen!

ETS is another tax. It is equal to putting up the GST to 12.5% which would be unacceptable and produce an outcry.

Read the following analogy and you will realize the insignificance of carbon dioxide as a weather controller.

Here's a practical way to understand the PM's Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme.

Imagine 1 kilometer of atmosphere and we want to get rid of the carbon pollution in it created by human activity. Let's go for a walk along it.

The first 770 meters are Nitrogen.

The next 210 meters are Oxygen.

That's 980 meters of the 1 kilometer. 20 meters to go.

The next 10 meters are water vapor. 10 meters left.

9 meters are argon. Just 1 more meter.

A few gases make up the first bit of that last meter..

The last 38 centimeters of the kilometer - that's carbon dioxide. A bit over one foot.

97% of that is produced by Mother Nature. It's natural.

Out of our journey of one kilometer, there are just 12 millimeters left. Just over a centimeter - about half an inch. That's the amount of carbon dioxide that global human activity puts into the atmosphere.

And of those 12 millimeters Australia puts in .18 of a millimeter. Less than the thickness of a hair. Out of a kilometer! As a hair is to a kilometer - so is Australia's contribution to what the PM calls

Carbon Pollution.

Imagine Brisbane's new Gateway Bridge , ready to be opened by the PM. It's been polished, painted and scrubbed by an army of workers till its 1 kilometer length is surgically clean. Except that the PM says we have a huge problem, the bridge is polluted - there's a human hair on the roadway. We'd laugh ourselves silly. There are plenty of real pollution problems to worry about. (And the greatest pollution problem of all, the sinful hearts of men, no one wants to know about! - Ed.)

It's hard to imagine that Australia's contribution to carbon dioxide in the world's atmosphere is one of the more pressing ones.

I can't believe that a new tax on everything is the only way to blow that pesky hair away!

Fingerprints of Our Creator -

THE FASTEST FLOWER IN THE FOREST (Friday Church News Notes, March 18, 2011,

- The following is from Creation Moments, February 4, 2011: "The peace and serenity of North America's spruce forests is occasionally broken by little other than the rustle of a deer passing by. At least that's what most people think. In truth, there are things going on which would cause us profound wonder. The bunchberry dogwood flower stands only about one-tenth of an inch tall. Scientists knew that the flowers opened explosively. The flowers do this to propel their pollen further. The scientists decided to find out precisely how fast the flowers really opened. So they decided to tape a flower opening with a high speed camera that is capable of taking 1,000 pictures a second. But the camera proved to be too slow. It was only with a camera that takes 10,000 pictures a second that they could clearly see what was going on. They saw that the petals opened, and in a separate action, the stamens unfold so fast that they catapult pollen into the air. All of this happens in four tenths of a thousandth of a second. That's more than a hundred times faster than a chameleon's tongue captures lunch. The stamens unfold so fast that they subject the pollen to 2,400 times the force of gravity. There are no limits to the wonders God can conceive and create. His greatest wonder is His mercy which resulted in forgiveness and salvation."

THE AMAZING HUMMINGBIRD (Friday Church News Notes, April 15, 2011, www.wayoflife.org fons@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The 300 species of hummingbirds vary in size from the giant hummingbird, with a length of about eight inches (20 cm.), to the bee hummingbird, with a length of about two inches (5 cm.). The hummingbird's wings beat a figure eight pattern which allows it to hover and fly backwards (by moving the wings in a circular path over its head), sideways, and even upside down. It can beat its wings up to 200 cycles per second and can reach speeds of 50 miles per hour. The wing muscles necessary to drive this flight system represent up to 40% of the bird's total body weight. Its long, thin beak is designed to feed on the nectar of flowers; its tongue has two furrows that it uses to store the nectar. The tongue can go in and out at a rate of 13 times per second, and is stored by being curled up at the back of the bird's head. Its tongue is also fringed so it can sweep insects from inside flowers. "It cannot survive on nectar alone, but also needs protein from eating insects. Without its special tongue it could never catch these" (A Closer Look at the Evidence, July 14). One type of hummingbird is the fastest diving bird on earth. "A peregrine falcon diving toward its prey reaches a relative speed of 200 body-lengths per second. This is close to the 207 body-lengths that the space shuttle travels as it enters our atmosphere. Thus, the peregrine falcon was thought to easily be the fastest dare-devil bird on Earth. Scientists have now discovered that a little pink male hummingbird called Anna's Hummingbird is the real Top Gun among the birds. As part of its mating ritual, a male hummingbird will try to impress a female with his speed and acrobatics. First, the male will fly up to about 90 feet above the ground.

Then, he begins a power dive. As he nears the female, he pulls up, ascending again. During that near-miss pull-up he experiences more than nine times the force of gravity. His relative speed during descent is 385 body-lengths per second. That's almost twice the peregrine falcon's relative speed; it's faster than the space shuttle entering the Earth's atmosphere and is more than twice the relative speed of a jet fighter running with afterburners"

(<http://www.creationmoments.com/radio/transcript.php?t=2889>). One type of hummingbird can fly 500 miles nonstop over the Gulf of Mexico.

Poems that Preach -

Worry never climbed a hill.
Worry never paid a bill.
Worry never dried a tear.
Worry never calmed a fear.
Worry never darned a heel.
Worry never cooked a meal.
Worry never led a horse to water.
Worry never done a thing you'd think it oughta - Anon

Why it is called "Track"

"Well, Ben, how did you like the "tract"
I gave to you one day?"
The country pastor asked his man
That kept the weeds away.

"Oh, Massa, it was jes for me,
It sure done me some good;
I couldn' think why dey called 'em "track",
But now I'm sure I could."

"For when I read dat little book,
It track me ever'where;
It track me down the cellar steps,
It track me up the stair.

It track me out to de barn,
'Nen to de house it come;
It track me all 'roun' de farm;
At last' it track me home.

It track me 'till I 'fessed my sins;
Took what I stole right back;
It has done tracked me to de Lord!
God bless you for dat track.

I jes 'bout wore it out,
But did you want it back?
It's trackin' Mandy now, an' I know
Jes why you call it "track!"

Anon

Eddy-Torial -

So What Do We Call It When a Body Becomes a Business? -

My friend Hughie Seaborn sent me this the other day. It originally came from an Episcopalian priest named Sam Pascoe. He was sacked by his bishop for an "inappropriate relationship" with a female parishioner, and later reinstated by an Ugandan Anglican bishop. The most interesting statement in Pascoe's quote below is not what he says, but what the young student asks. It really is no surprise to us, then, to read the Scriptures in the Old and New Testaments that describe unfaithfulness to God as being spiritual adultery and harlotry.

Pragmatism has become one of the driving motivations for churches around the world. Finney was the major innovator of pragmatism in the early 1800's when he devised means by which he could get "results" without depending on the Spirit of God to work in the hearts of his hearers. He became the patron saint of every modern pragmatic preacher from Billy Graham to Jack Hyles (and all of Hyles' clones!), and is responsible for the export of American Evangelical Pragmatism to the four corners of the earth. I say "Evangelical" and not "Fundamental" on purpose. Fundamentalism in its truest sense, cannot embrace pragmatism, simply because it is not biblical. Oh, a pragmatist may claim to be a fundamentalist, but if he does, he cannot claim to be a biblical fundamentalist. "Biblical" and "Pragmatic" are mutually exclusive terms.

When the "body becomes a business" what should it be called?

Here is the quote from Pascoe,

"Christianity started in Palestine as a fellowship; it moved to Greece and became a philosophy; it moved to Italy and became an institution; it moved to Europe and became a culture; finally it came to America and became an enterprise."

"Some of the students (he was teaching) were only 18 or 19 years old - and I wanted them to appreciate the importance of the last line, so I clarified it by adding, "An enterprise. That's a business." After a few moments the youngest student in the class, raised her hand. She asked such a simple question, "**A business? But isn't it supposed to be a body?**" I could not envision where this line of questioning was going, and the only response I could think of was, "Yes." She continued, "**But when a body becomes a business, isn't that prostitution?**"

How is it that babes can perceive what the ancients cannot?

Bro. Buddy