



"I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved." Hab. 2:1

September 23, 2011

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Feature Article - Why Reproofs Are So Important - Part 1

The giving and receiving or reproofs are two very important measures of Christian maturity. If you will tell me how a pastor or a church member reproves others, and then tell me how the reprovor responds to the reproofs he receives, then I will tell you many things about his walk with the Lord.

In my lifetime I must have seen probably a thousand examples of reproofs badly given and maybe a dozen that were rightly given. Surprisingly, very, very, very few of those I saw reproofed responded graciously to their reprover, whether they were rightly given or not.

Most Christians have experienced what it is to be reviled or railed upon, and we identify these as being unbiblical reproofs. Admittedly, the reviler MAY have even had his facts right, but then destroyed the effectiveness of his reproof by an ungracious attitude.

So let us consider one of the Modern Myths About Reproving Others -

Myth #1 - Reproving others is unspiritual, unloving and unkind - (Those who say this tend to believe that God is love alone, and that He never rebukes, judges or punishes sinners.)

The Myth answered biblically -

1. God Himself lovingly confronted Adam and Eve in the garden when they sinned, and then provided a sacrifice to cover their nakedness. (Gen. 3:9-24)
2. The Lord Jesus Christ reproved Peter for obstructing the purposes of God in the crucifixion of Christ. (Matt. 16:21-28)
3. The risen and glorified Son of God rebukes and chastens all those He loves in His churches. (Rev. 3:19)
4. The Holy Spirit's work as Comforter includes Him reproving the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. (John 16:7-11)
5. John the Baptist reproved Herod for his adulterous marriage of Herodias. (Matt. 14:3,4)
6. The Spirit filled apostles reproved and rebuked error wherever they found it.
 - In Acts 2:36,37,38, Peter reproved the Jews for their crucifixion of their Messiah and called on them to repent of their unbelief and be baptised.
 - In Acts 5:1-10 Peter reproved Ananias and Saphira for lying to God.
 - In Acts 7:2 - 60 Stephen reproved the Jews for rejecting Christ and resisting the Holy Ghost.
 - In Acts 8:20-24 Peter rebuked Simon Magos for supposing that the gift of God could be bought with money.
 - In Acts 13:9-12 Paul, filled with the Spirit of God, rebukes Elymas the sorcerer, and calls upon God to strike him blind.
 - In Acts 14:11-18 Paul and Barnabas rebuke the people and priests for their idolatry when they attempted to worship the apostles.
 - In Acts 15:1,2 Paul and Barnabas rebuked the Judaisers for preaching the false gospel of circumcision for salvation.
 - In Acts 16:16-18 Paul rebuked the spirit of divination in the damsel, and commanded it to come out of her.
 - And in Gal. 2:11-17 we read that Paul reproved Peter for his hypocrisy and fear of man,
"But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews? We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the

law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid." (Gal. 2:11-17)

I wonder if you, the reader, ever felt that Paul sinned against Peter when he withstood him publicly? You know, the Roman Catholic Church believes Paul erred and Peter was right (after all, they think he was the first, and infallible Pope). They wrongly suppose that this was the point of divergence where Pauline and Petrine theology parted. So, do you mind me asking, was Paul right or wrong? If he was right, then we have another biblical example of reproof being spiritual, loving and kind. (We will consider several other lessons from this text in later issues of Heads Up!)

The Scriptural evidence is very strong that reproof is God's way of bringing men under conviction of sin, so that they see their need to repent and trust in Christ. Or if they are already saved, they will see that God's reproofs will turn them from their backslidings and bring them back to the Lord.

These days many, many Christians have drunk deeply at the wells of man's "wisdom," and no longer see the importance of giving and receiving reproofs.

A young man who was newly converted to Christ, received a phone call one day from his pastor. Graciously and kindly, his pastor asked about a conversation the lad had held with a visitor at church recently. He patiently probed and queried what had been said until he had the facts in hand and then he reproofed the baby Christian. He explained to him that he was wrong in the arrogant and bombastic ear-bashing he had given their guest. He told him that he had driven away the visitor by his angry words, and that an apology was required, and that it needed to be done today! The young man admitted his error and apologised to the pastor, and agreed to go immediately to the offended person and ask his forgiveness. And he did it, and the breach was repaired and the visitor returned to the church and attended there as long as he lived in the area.

How do I know this is true? I was the young man who reproofed wrongly, was reproofed rightly, and repented.

Biblical reproofs are very important!

Buddy Smith

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Blinded Minds -

Jersey [Channel Islands, UK]

Post Refuses to Deliver "Offensive" Bible CD

Christian Institute - Thu, 15 Sep 2011

Postal workers in Jersey refused to deliver audio recordings of St Mark's Gospel after deeming it "offensive material". Several churches clubbed together to pay for 45,000 CDs to be produced to mark the 400th anniversary of the King James Bible.

A copy of the recording was due to be delivered to every household on the Channel Island of Jersey. But church leaders were left reeling after Jersey Post claimed that the CDs could offend people and refused to deliver them.

Revd Liz Hunter (?) of St Helier Methodist Centre said: "Initially Jersey Post seemed quite positive about helping us deliver the CDs. But then a couple of weeks ago somebody from their marketing department phoned to say they would be unable to deliver them on the grounds that they could be deemed offensive".

"They said there were guidelines about mass material that is sent out across the island and that religious recordings could offend people."

However Kevin Keen, the Chief Executive of Jersey Post, has since admitted they got it wrong. Mr Keen said: "This decision was made on the basis of our terms and conditions which states that we have the right to refuse to distribute something that falls under the category of 'promotional material which could cause offence'.

"Clearly this was interpreted in the wrong way. I have spoken to the person involved and have written to all of my colleagues asking that they come to me if there is any doubt in their mind in the future." The Mark's Gospel recordings are now being delivered by volunteers.

These outrages continue...In April it has emerged that an American church's advert telling people about an Easter service had been banned from cinemas and branded "too controversial" because it mentioned the name of Jesus.

Compass Bible Church in California produced a short, mild cinema ad to invite people to its Easter event. But the ad, which mentioned the name of Jesus twice, was banned from appearing on cinema screens by an advertising agency.

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Senior Citizens Didn't Do It! -

I would like to point out that it was NOT senior citizens who took:

- The melody out of music,
- The pride out of appearance,
- The courtesy out of driving,
- The romance out of love,
- The commitment out of marriage,
- The responsibility out of parenthood,
- The togetherness out of the family,
- The learning out of education,

- The service out of patriotism,
- The Golden Rule from rulers,
- The nativity scene out of cities,
- The civility out of behaviour,
- The refinement out of language,
- The dedication out of employment,
- The prudence out of spending,
- The ambition out of achievement, or,
- God out of government and school.

It was not the elderly, but young people who did all these things. What we tend to forget is that these things were not changed in a week or a month. They were altered over the period of a generation or two. Young people were inevitably the agents of change and now they are grown old and wish they hadn't started the ball rolling downhill when they were young!!! Not many of us old people realise that it was we who sowed the seeds of so much of the dreadful decline in morality and manners. It was our early compromises that brought us to this present situation.

(Have you thought about THAT? - Ed.)

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Notable Quotes and Quotable Notes -

- "The Faith you mention has doubtless its use in the World. I do not desire to see it diminished, nor would I endeavour to lessen it in any Man. But I wish it were more productive of good Works, than I have generally seen it: I mean real good Works, Works of Kindness, Charity, Mercy, and Publick Spirit; not Holiday-keeping, Sermon-Reading or Hearing; performing Church Ceremonies, or making long Prayers, filled with Flatteries and Compliments, despis'd even by wise Men, and much less capable of pleasing the Deity. The worship of God is a Duty; the hearing and reading of Sermons may be useful; but, if Men rest in Hearing and Praying, as too many do, it is as if a Tree should Value itself on being water'd and putting forth Leaves, tho' it never produc'd any Fruit." (from a Letter to Joseph Huey (written on 6 June 1753 by *Benjamin Franklin*
- "Discernment is not a matter of simply telling the difference between right and wrong; rather, it is telling the difference between right and almost right." – *Charles Spurgeon*
- "Ah, brethren, this is the mark of every true shepherd whom Christ sends – he comes in by the door, that is, the blood of Christ. He speaks of sin, because he has seen its greatness; he speaks of pardon, because he has been forgiven; of blood, because he has felt its power. 'He that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.' No other qualification will do. All the learning at colleges will never make a minister. All the eloquence in the world will never make a minister." - *Robert Murray M'cheyne*
- *Spurgeon* once spoke of Christ's redemption on the cross in this manner; "it seemed as if Hell were put into His cup; He seized it, and, At one tremendous draught of love, He drank damnation dry."

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Therapy For the Funny Bone -

- My neighbour knocked on my door at 2:30 this morning, can you believe that? 2:30am? (Luckily for him I was still up playing my Bagpipes.)
- My daughter asked me for a pet spider for her birthday, so I went to our local pet shop and found out they were \$70. "Blow this," I thought, "I can get one cheaper off the web."
- Statistically, 6 out of 7 dwarves are not happy.
- (And for the Irish) Paddy says, "Mick, I'm thinking of buying a Labrador. "Really," says Mick "have you seen how many of their owners go blind"

From The Witness Stand In Court –

Attorney: Do you recall the time that you examined the body?

Doctor: The autopsy started around 8:30 PM

Attorney: And Mr. Denton was dead at the time?

Doctor: If not, he was by the time I finished.

Attorney: Doctor , how many of your autopsies have you performed on dead people?

Doctor: All of them.. The live ones put up too much of a fight.

Attorney: How was your first marriage terminated?

Witness: By death..

Attorney: And by whose death was it terminated?

Witness: Take a guess.

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When A Sinner Died! -

(contributed by evangelist Warren Roy)

Years ago back around the fall of 1978 when I was a sinner and under heavy Holy Ghost conviction I remember finding a tract called, "Sentenced to Die" by the late Dr. Oliver B. Greene. Being under conviction at the time I decided to read it. While there are lots of

things that Dr. Greene said in that tract that I no longer remember and that I never did write down, I did write the following incident down that he told. This incident stood out with me! While I got saved later on I will say that the tract did speak to me when I was lost about the reality of Hell. Especially this story. Here it is in Dr. Greene's words.

"I could give you many true stories of the deaths of sinners, but here I will give you only one----ONE I KNOW WELL, BECAUSE I WAS THERE.

The man I am going to tell you about lived in our community. I knew him from childhood; everybody for miles around knew him----HE WAS RICH----HIS LIFE WAS ROTTEN!!!!!! He was a bootlegger, a thief, and a liar. I doubt if he had a real true friend in the neighborhood! He lived to a ripe old age, but HE DIED----as recorded in Luke 16 concerning Lazarus and the Rich Man. This man was sick for several weeks before he died. He grew worse and worse, weaker and weaker, as the days and weeks went by----and then I heard that the end was near.

I felt compelled to witness to him one time before he died. (He knew me well----he knew that I drank and lived a miserable life before I was saved.) So I went to see him. He was little more than skin and bones----not much more than a skeleton lying there on the bed breathing. I tried to be kind, loving, and compassionate as I talked with the dying man----BUT TO NO AVAIL. While I was witnessing to him, he called for water. The attendant gave him water with a quill, for the man was too weak to raise his hand and take the glass. He took two or three small swallows of water as the attendant held the glass and the quill for him. His arm was down at his side as he tried to put his hand upon his chest, but he was too weak to lift his arm and hand from the bed. The attendant had to lift his arm and place his hand upon his chest. He closed his eyes and began to breathe much harder.

I deemed it wise to leave; but before doing so, I prayed aloud for him. I prayed for him to receive Jesus----but he gave no indication he even heard.

THE NEXT NIGHT HE DIED!

Keep in mind, dear friend----when I talked with him, he could not lift his arm from the bed; he could not lift his arm from the bed; he could not lift his arm from the bed; he could not hold a small quill to receive water; he was so weak he could not keep his eyes open----BUT----TWENTY-FOUR HOURS LATER, WHEN HE DIED, IT TOOK FOUR BIG, STRONG, ROBUST MEN TO HOLD HIM ON THE BED TO KEEP HIM FROM LITERALLY JUMPING OUT OF BED TO DIE ON THE FLOOR!!!!!!

WHY? Where did such SUPER STRENGTH come from in his last moments?

There is only one answer----

Demons were literally tearing his spirit from his body to drag it off into hell, and in his weakened condition. HE FOUGHT WITH ALL THE MIGHT HE COULD MUSTER TO KEEP THE DEMONS FROM TAKING HIM AWAY TO THE PIT!

WHY DO I SAY THIS?

For at least ten or fifteen minutes he begged the men holding him on the bed to pull him further up in the bed; he cried over and over----

'MY FEET ARE ON FIRE!!!! MY FEET ARE ON FIRE!!!! Won't you please pull my feet up out of the fire!!!!!!'

HIS DYING WORDS WERE----'WON'T YOU PLEASE PULL MY FEET OUT OF THE FIRE!!!!!!'

Leave the high-powered painkillers out of dying sinners and let them die in their right mind.....!!!!!!"

Once again that was taken from an old tract of the late Dr. Oliver B. Greene "Sentenced to Die!"

Sinner friend, if you read this today it is no coincidence that you did. I believe the LORD has ordained it for you to read this horrible and true incident of a sinner dying without God!

He is pleading with you to repent of your sins (Luke 13:1-5; and Acts 17:30) and to receive Jesus as your Savior and LORD today. Jesus warned of Hell in Luke 16:19-31 and other portions. Jesus is now warning you today that Hell is a real place! And He is calling you today to repent of your sins and turn to Him now!

God loves you so much that He sent His Only Begotten Son Jesus into the world to die for your sins. As the Bible says, John 3:16 - "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life."

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Rats In The Beer Vats -

The Tract That Made The Brewers Mad

"The beer business is a queer business. There is death connected with it anyway you take it. Do the beer guzzlers know that every year thousands of rats leap into the beer vats, die and rot there. That fine flavor in your favorite beer may be only the essence of dead rats. You have all heard the term, "The Brewery Rats." Rats are the pests of the brewery. They can smell a brewery farther than a buzzard can smell a carcass. They come in great droves. The brewery can poison them, trap them, or kill them in other ways, but they still come. It is difficult to make a rat proof brewery. Here is what The American Independent says about rats in the beer vats:

"It will be a matter of special interest, now that beer is back, to know that rats are crazy about malt when it is fermenting. They will even climb a ladder to get near the malt in the beer vat. In the days before the coming of Prohibition the brewers had hard work to keep rats out of their vats. Climbing to the top of the vat a hungry rat, crazy to get at the fermenting malt, would lean down toward the beer and presently would fall in. He would go

to the bottom and drown, and under the foam on top of the beer could not be seen. Some of the brewers used to keep a paddle with which to fish out the dead rats in the early morning. Often it was impossible to see the rat and he would lie there until the third day when he would gradually swell and rise above the bottom of the vat, so that it was now easier to get the paddle under the dead rat and lift him out of the beer. Of course some vats would be drained off without a single rat in them, while in other vats there would be several rats. Some months ago a bootleg vat in Pennsylvania was raided and it was decided to clean it out to see what it really contained, and in this big vat they found sixty-nine dead rats.

"Many persons have wondered why beer has a bitter and acid taste. May not this peculiar taste come from the flavor of the rats that have lost their lives through their fondness for fermenting malt?

"Persons who are thinking of cultivating a taste for beer would do well to make sure that all rats have been destroyed in the vicinity of the brewery they intend to patronize. Be sure that there is no rat taste in the beer you drink. (But of course, if the poison has been taken out, it is not real beer.- Ed)"

"But we have got to drink beer, rat essence and all, to balance the budget. Soak the nation's flag in the filthy slop to raise revenue to meet the extravagance of a beer administration. Drink beer morning noon and night. Drink it with your meals. Drink it between your meals. Drink more beer. Just keep drinking beer. Drink it until your stomach rebels against its deadly poison and you puke all over the sidewalk or the bottom of your car, or the floor of your home or wherever you may be. Drink it until your kidneys are rotten. Until your nerves are shot. Until your brain is on fire and tremens drives you to the asylum. Drink it until in your madness you see the flashing tongues of snakes or the hideous faces of dead rats leering from the foam. For beer is filled with the souls of dead rats that have drowned in the brewery vats."

(From an old tract we obtained forty years ago It described conditions in the beer industry just after Prohibition was repealed in the USA. We had the owner of a nightclub attending our services for a few months while he wrestled with his need to be saved. We showed him this tract and he liked it so much (!!!) that he took it back to the nightclub one night and laid it on the bar for the drunks to read (!!!!!). One old Irishman at the bar told him it was really true, and that he had seen something similar when he'd worked in a distillery in Ireland. He recounted how they fermented apple cider and brewed it into a high alcohol content. They had no laboratory apparatus for determining how strong, or what proof it was so they trapped a rat, and then hung it up by its neck over the vat where the cider was fermenting, and left its tail hanging down into the cider. And he said, that when the cider was strong enough to eat all the hair, and the skin and flesh off the tail, so that all that was left was the boney tail, they knew it was strong enough alcohol to sell to drunkards. - Ed.)

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Cartoons for Wise Men -

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Links In The Media Chain -

- For the musically inclined - <http://wimp.com/mozartharp/>
- *International Space Station flyover - <http://wimp.com/flyingover/>
- Hand made calliope - http://www.youtube.com/user/calliopeguy#p/u/0/DkPo_T5RzTA
- Smoke rings from a volcano - <http://wimp.com/mountetna/>

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Sermon Fodder -

(There are many illustrations of the death that came by sin. The Black Plague was devastating to Europe in the 14th century, but nowhere near as ruinous as sin is. Every person in history, bar one, has the fatal germ of rebellion against God in him that will damn his soul to Hell forever, except he repent and believe in Jesus Christ. The Black Plague was terrible, but not as dangerous as sin. - Ed)

Extinct Black Death Bacteria Identified

August 30, 2011

The Black Death is estimated to have killed 30 to 50 million Europeans or about a third of Europe's population between 1347 to 1351, after spreading there from China and the Middle East, making it one of the worst pandemics in human history. Based on a DNA analysis study, scientists have concluded the pandemic was caused by a now-extinct strain of *Yersinia pestis*, the bacterium that causes bubonic plague. There are still 2,000 cases of bubonic plague worldwide each year, but it spreads slowly via flea bites. The quick spread of the Black Death suggested that disease was airborne. To settle the question, the researchers analyzed DNA from 109 human skeletons at the East Smithfield mass grave site in London, England, where Black Death victims were known to be buried.

CBC News (Canada)

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Acts 8 (2011 version) -

“Lord, are you sure about this? You're asking me to leave my big church in town and go to the boondocks? I dunno if I can do it, Lord. I know, I know, I said I'd go where you want me to go, and I'd say what you want me to say, but this is asking a bit much.

“You know if I move I'd be stepping down from a VERY successful ministry. Why, Brian McClaren and Rob Bell are going to be here in a month for our Emergent Church Growth Seminar. And you know we've got Darlene and the Hillsong Praise and Worship Team coming, too. I can't just up and leave, Lord. What would they think?

“We just got our Ministry's new website up and running, Lord, and already it's getting over 10 000 hits a day. It's been nominated for the Website of the Month Award. Who would go to the Awards Dinner to receive the prize if I shoot through?

“And, Lord, you wouldn't want me to go someplace out in the boonies to serve you if there's not a good Internet Service Provider there, would you? How am I going to keep up with the sports scores? I hear they don't even have Broadband most places out there in the bush.

“You know, Lord, the little wife has a really good hairdresser here. I might have marriage problems if we have to shift way out there. The climate out there is murder on a woman's hair. (She's been a bit touchy lately, Lord, so I need to sort of walk softly for a bit.)

“And the kids. Lord, they'll kill me if I take them away from the games arcade in the shopping mall. They're at that delicate stage right now, Lord. What if there's no phone coverage out there for them to Tweet and Twitter on? I just forked out a bundle of money to buy them each an iPhone.

“I don't mean to be a problem, Lord, but my golf game is going really well, and I'd hate to miss seeing the football finals. You know how much trouble I had getting those tickets.

“So, if you don't mind, Lord, I think I'll pass on this one. I'm sure you'll find somebody else.”

The 4wd pickup slowed as it neared the river crossing. The driver braked to a halt near a fireplace and a long plume of dust drifted downwind. He stepped down, stretched, and beat the dust off his clothes. The sun, a ball of red fire, hovered on the horizon for a few moments, and then dropped out of sight.

Sleeping bag rolled out, and dishes washed in the river, the traveler turned up the gas lantern, hung it on a low branch, and went to the truck to find something to read before turning in. He fossicked around on the parcel shelf until he dug out a small paper bag.

He turned up the lantern, and settled back against the trunk of the tree to read. His posture betrayed his curiosity as he bent to peer at the words. He read a few words from the first page, nodded to himself, and began flipping through the pages, finally settling on a spot about halfway through.

He read aloud, slowly, seeking to understand each word. “He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He

was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? For he was cut off out of the land of the living...”

He read the words again, and gazed into the fire for a long spell, and said, “I wish I knew what this is all about...”

The road lay empty and quiet, and no one passed by.

Buddy Smith

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What Does the Government Do With a Dead Horse? -

1. Buy a stronger whip.
2. Change riders.
3. Appoint a committee to study the horse.
4. Arrange to visit other countries to see how their governments ride dead horses.
5. Lower the standards so that dead horses can be included in the next race for office.
6. Reclassify the dead horse as "living-impaired".
7. Hire outside contractors (on large salaries) to ride the dead horse.
8. Harness several dead horses together to increase speed.
9. Provide additional funding and/or training to increase the dead horse's performance.
10. Do a productivity study to see if lighter riders would improve the dead horse's performance.
11. Declare that as the dead horse does not have to be fed, it is less costly, carries lower overhead and therefore contributes substantially more to the bottom line of the economy than do some other horses.
12. Rewrite the expected performance requirements for all horses.
13. Promote the dead horse to a supervisory position.

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The True Cost Of This Tax Will Freeze You -

from Andrew Bolt's blog

**Herald Sun newspaper, Melbourne
Saturday, August 20, 11 (12:03 am)**

Reader B warns:

There has been nothing mentioned in the media about the “Carbon Tax’s” effect on refrigerant, so I feel compelled to inform you as a refrigeration wholesaler, that the impact of this useless tax will be massive. In a nutshell, the price of refrigerant, which keeps all of Australia’s food fresh, will rise a minimum of 300% at the wholesale level. This is based on

each refrigerants GWP (Global Warming Potential) multiplied by the carbon tax per tonne. eg. R404a has a GWP of 3862, which multiplied by \$23/tonne equals \$88/kg TAX.

Consider this...The average supermarket has approximately 250kg of R404a in it to run all its fridges and freezers. So, after July 1 2012, the tax alone on the main supermarket gas, R404a, will equate to around \$22000.00 for just 250kg, not including the cost of the gas itself, if they have a breakdown and lose their gas. Refrigerant leaks are a common problem in the trade.

Every new installation or breakdown will be affected. These costs will have to be passed on, or many businesses will simply have to close. The impact will be huge!

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Poems That Preach -

What About the Devil?

*Men don't believe in a devil now
As their fathers used to do;
They've forced the door of the broadest creed
To let his majesty through;
There isn't a print of his cloven foot
Or a fiery dart from his bow
To be found in the earth or the air today,
For the world has voted so.*

*They say he doesn't go round about
As a roaring lion now,
But whom shall we hold responsible
For the everlasting row
To be held in home and church and state
To the earth's remotest bound,
If the devil by a unanimous vote
Is nowhere to be found?*

*Who is mixing the fatal draught
That palsies heart and brain,
And loads the bier of each passing year
With ten hundred thousand slain?*

*Who blights the bloom of the land today
With the fiery breath of hell,
If the devil isn't and never was?
Won't somebody rise and tell?*

*Who dogs the steps of the toiling saint,
And digs the pits for his feet?
Who sows the tares in the fields of time
Wherever God sows His wheat?
The devil was voted not to be,
And of course the thing is true,
But who is doing the kind of work
The devil used to do?*

*Won't somebody step to the front forthwith,
And make his bow and show
How the frauds and crimes of a single day
Spring up? We want to know.
The devil was fairly voted out,
And of course the devil's gone,
But simple people want to know
Who carries the business on.*

Selected

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Eddy-Torial -

(Every once in a while I come across a reference to The Downgrade Controversy that Charles Spurgeon confronted among the Baptist Union churches of the late 19th century. When he, the pastor of the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London, exposed their modernism and compromise he separated from it. His church was the largest church in the Union, so his withdrawal from the Union provoked much criticism from pastors within the Union and without. Doing some research on the Downgrade Controversy recently brought to light the following quotes. What is amazing to me is how similar the Baptist Union of the 19th century is to many of the fellowships of Independent Baptists in the early 21st century. Not only do they share many of the same doctrinal errors, but they even slumber on (and snore in harmony?) with such contentment. Who was it that said, "If we do not correct the mistakes of the past, we are bound to repeat them?" - Buddy Smith)

Quotes from essays written by Charles Spurgeon regarding the Downgrade Controversy

That error is causing the destruction of faith and of the churches. (third essay)

The case is mournful. Certain ministers are making infidels. Avowed atheists are not a tenth as dangerous as those preachers who scatter doubt and stab at faith. A plain man told us the other day that two ministers had derided him because he thought we should pray for rain. A gracious woman bemoaned in my presence that a precious promise in Isaiah which had comforted her had been declared by her minister to be uninspired. It is a common thing to hear working-men excuse their wickedness by the statement that there is no hell, "the parson says so." But we need not prolong our mention of painful facts. Germany was made unbelieving by her preachers, and England is following in her track. Attendance at places of worship is declining, and reverence for holy things is vanishing; and we solemnly believe this to be largely attributable to the scepticism which has flashed from the pulpit and spread among the people. Possibly the men who uttered the doubt never intended it to go so far; but none the less they have done the ill, and cannot undo it. Their own observation ought to teach them better. Have these advanced thinkers filled their own chapels? Have they, after all, prospered through discarding the old methods? Possibly, in a few cases genius and tact have carried these gentry over the destructive results of their ministry; but in many cases their pretty new theology has scattered their congregations. In meeting-houses holding a thousand, or twelve hundred, or fifteen hundred, places once packed to the ceiling with ardent hearers, how small are the numbers now! We would mention instances, but we forbear. The places which the gospel filled the new nonsense has emptied, and will keep empty.

Instead of disproving the doctrinal and practical problems we pointed out, critics have attacked us personally and been upset that we are making a fuss in bringing this up. (fourth essay)

We could multiply this painful evidence, but there is no need, since the charge is not denied. It is ridiculed; it is treated as a matter of no consequence, but it is not seriously met. Is this what we have come to? Is there no doctrine left which is to be maintained? Is there no revelation? Or is that revelation a nose of wax to be shaped by the finger of fashion? Are the sceptics so much to the fore that no man will open his mouth against them? Are all the orthodox afraid of the ridicule of the "cultured"? We cannot believe it. The private knowledge which we possess will not allow of so unhappy a conclusion; yet Christian people are now so tame that they shrink from expressing themselves. The house is being robbed, its very walls are being digged down, but the good people who are in bed are too fond of the warmth, and too much afraid of getting broken heads, to go downstairs and meet the burglars; they are even half vexed that a certain noisy fellow will spring his rattle, or cry, "Thieves!"

You can't believe opposites. If you support the truth you have to denounce error. (fourth essay)

A chasm is opening between the men who believe their Bibles and the men who are prepared for an advance upon Scripture. Inspiration and speculation cannot long abide in peace. Compromise there can be none. We cannot believe in the atonement and deny it; we cannot hold the doctrine of the fall and yet talk of the evolution of spiritual life from human nature; we cannot recognise the punishment of the impenitent and yet indulge the "larger hope." One way or the other we must go. Decision is the virtue of the hour.

Others may be able to remain in the Baptist Union and fellowship with those who do not believe and teach fundamental points of doctrine. They say that a minority who don't believe should not drive the majority out. To us such compromise is not possible. There can be no real fellowship with those who deny the fundamentals of the Christian faith. To pretend to fellowship with them would be treason.

One thing is clear to us: we cannot be expected to meet in any Union which comprehends those whose teaching is upon fundamental points exactly the reverse of that which we hold dear. Those who can do so will, no doubt, have weighty reasons with which to justify their action, and we will not sit in judgment upon those reasons: they may judge that a minority should not drive them out. To us it appears that there are many things upon which compromise is possible, but there are others in which it would be an act of treason to pretend to fellowship. With deep regret we abstain from assembling with those whom we dearly love and heartily respect, since it would involve us in a confederacy with those with whom we can have no communion in the Lord. Garibaldi complained that, by the cession of Nice to France, he had been made a foreigner in his native land; and our heart is burdened with a like sorrow; but those who banish us may yet be of another mind, and enable us to return.

Charles Spurgeon

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