



## **Random Thoughts, Vol. 3**

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If this “Random Thoughts” column is new to you, then here is a quick introduction. Below is a collection of my own observations, thoughts, and insights which may or may not prove to be a blessing to others. Each of these is not long enough to warrant an entire article on its own, but begged to be written down nonetheless.

### **On The Goodness of God**

Stephen Charnock, writing on the goodness of God in ***The Existence and Attributes of God, Vol. 2***, said, *“Though upon the fall of Adam, we have lost the pleasant habitation of paradise, and the creatures made for our use are fallen from their original excellency and sweetness; yet He hath not left the world utterly incommodious for us, buy yet stores it with things not only for the preservation, but delight of those that make their whole lives invectives against this good God. . . . The world is yet a kind of paradise to the veriest beasts among mankind; the earth affords its riches, the heavens its showers, and the sun its light, to those that injure and blaspheme Him. . . . God distributes His blessings where He might shoot His thunders; and darts His light on those who deserve an eternal darkness; and presents the good things of the earth to those that merit the miseries of hell; . . . and by those good things He supports multitudes of wicked men, not one or two, but the whole shoal of them in the world; . . .”*<sup>1</sup>

Is not the depth of the goodness of God evident that He provides blessing not only to the righteous, to His children, but to agnostics, unbelievers, atheists and all those who hate and blaspheme His holy name?! He causes the rain to fall on the just and the unjust and that

<sup>1</sup> Stephen Charnock, *The Existence and Attributes of God, Vol. 2*, pg. 299-300 (Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1986).

kindness and goodness of God should lead them to repentance.

Yet men who should be moved to honor and love God because of His unbounded goodness to them do not repent. Even though God is injured and abhorred by them, God does not stop His bounty toward them. Charnock adds, *“The ingratitude of men stops not the current of His bounty, nor tires his liberal hand; howsoever unprofitable and injurious men are to Him, He is liberal to them; and His goodness is the more admirable, by how much the more the unthankfulness of men is provoking: He sometimes affords to the worst a greater portion of these earthly goods; they often swim in wealth, when others pine away their lives in poverty. And the silk-worm yields its bowels to make purple for tyrants, while the oppressed scarce have from the sheep wool enough to cover their nakedness; and though He furnish men with those good things, upon no other account than what princes do, when they nourish criminals in a prison till the time of their execution, it is a mark of His goodness.”*<sup>2</sup>

Wow!

### **A Pro Cat Prejudice?**

Because I have made cat jokes before, I do have to begin with a bit of a disclaimer. I have never eaten cat meat. As much as I might joke about not liking cats, I do pet cats, enjoy playing with cats, and generally like them. ***I don't eat them.*** Truth be told, I have a hard time choking down any exotic type meats whatsoever. Now I understand that a hot dog contains all kinds of “exotic meats,” most of which I would never even consider eating on their own, but I trick my mind and stomach into eating

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. 300.

a hot dog by convincing myself that the FDA would never approve something if it weren't "O.K." That is an assumption that is insane in itself, but it works for getting a hot dog past my lips. Then I put some steak sauce on it which further aids in deceiving my taste buds. With all that said, let me just assure you that I am not an exotic meat connoisseur. Pork, beef, chicken, turkey, and some standard fish pretty much satisfy my desire for meat. I remember trying to eat a piece of rabbit meat one time and had the most difficult time getting the thing down my gullet. So *cat* would not be an easy thing, even if I wanted to - which I don't.

I offer that disclaimer because I want to comment on an event which garnered international interest and caught my attention. It was reported on the TimesOnline UK website.<sup>3</sup>

According to the story, "A top Italian food writer has been suspended indefinitely from the country's version of the television programme [sic] *Ready Steady Cook* for recommending stewed cat to viewers as a 'succulent dish.'<sup>4</sup>

The public broadcasting network dropped Beppe Bigazzi from its program after the switchboard was inundated with complaints from viewers and animal rights activists groups. What caused the outrage?

Bigazzi said that *casserole of cat* was a famous dish in his home region of Valdarno, Tuscany. "I've eaten it myself and it's a lot better than many other animals. Better than chicken, rabbit, or pigeon." He then went on to say that for optimum flavor the meat should be "soaked in spring water for three days" before being stewed.<sup>5</sup>

The Italian Deputy Health Minister called on the producers of the show to be investigated for criminal offenses involving incitement to mistreat animals.

Now, I can't comment on whether cat meat is better than others. I don't know. For my purposes here, I don't care. This whole brouhaha raises a question that didn't seem to be addressed by anyone surrounding the controversy: "**Are cats better than others?**" I didn't ask "Is cat meat better than others?" but, "Are cats better than others?" That is the question. The issue is not whether cat meat tastes better than others, but why are cats a protected class of animals? Are they in some way more deserving of special protections afforded under law than

other animals?

Imagine if that same food writer had commented on the superior qualities of elk, caribou, or turkey. He could have talked all day long about tuna casserole or beef stroganoff. Why the outrage over cat casserole? Are cats more valuable than beef or tuna fish? How does talking about cat casserole incite violence and cruelty to animals, but talking about tuna casserole is O.K.?

Perhaps the issue is just that we pet cats, we feed cats, we give cats names and we let them lick our faces. We don't bother doing that for our chickens or our fish. We have selected cats to be companions and so the thought of eating them, for many, is equivalent to eating Uncle Joe or Grandma, or even one of the kids.

Now I love dogs. Pretty much any dog. I have a fond affection to dogs and get **way too attached** to them. That is one reason I don't own one. Had the food writer mentioned a dog casserole and given some food tips on how to prepare dog meat, I wouldn't have responded like this. I would have said, "Wow. That's disgusting. I can't believe someone would want to eat dog meat when there is so much beef and pork available."

Though I like dogs, I don't think they have more inherent value than other animals. They are just animals. If I can countenance the killing of a chicken or a pig for my culinary enjoyment, how could I consistently begrudge someone else the use of dog or cat for their culinary enjoyment? On what grounds?

I might be able to say that I prefer beef to dog, but I can't object to eating dog meat on theological or moral grounds, for it is really no different than eating any other animal. It is only my affection for the type of animal which makes it different and it is only different in my mind and not in reality.

So, should cats be a protected class? Perhaps we are not far from having "hate crimes" legislation for cats - special penalties assigned to those who eat cats since they could only be motivated by hatred toward that protected class of animals.

It is already taboo to even mention a cat casserole on the air, since that mention in itself could incite violence against the protected class. It is O.K. to speak against cows, but not cats. Why is that so?

May I suggest that the thinking we see playing out here is the same inconsistent thinking that we see played out for special protected people groups in our own society. Gays and lesbians are afforded special protections under law through hate crimes legislation. You can't say

3 [http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/life\\_and\\_style/food\\_and\\_drink/article/7029058.ece](http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/life_and_style/food_and_drink/article/7029058.ece).

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

anything about the morality of homosexuality lest you be guilty of "hate speech" which would only incite violence. You can chide, deride, and castigate all day long Christians of virtually any stripe, but speak a word against Islam or Muhammad and you just might be inciting violence against someone we need to "protect."

I can't help but come to the conclusion that it just isn't really about cats vs. cows or Christians vs. Muslims. What really motivates many people is silencing the speech and actions of any who disagree with them. That is never a healthy way for a society to turn. When a society turns its back on God, and refuses to be guided by His truth, then it is those in power that will determine which people, uh, I mean animals are most valuable and deserve to be protected.

The moral of the story: fire up the grill and enjoy the meat of your choosing! Nuff said.

### Without Wax?

Occasionally, I get asked about my signature line, "without wax," and what that means. I had an uncle ask me if it had something to do with me no longer waxing my legs. Ha. Ha. Ha.

During New Testament times, vendors in the marketplaces would advertise their clay pots as *sine cera*, meaning "without wax." In those days, unscrupulous vendors, after firing a clay pot, bowl, etc, would fill in the cracks with wax and then paint over them to hide the defects. They would then charge the same for a defective product as they would for a quality product because they hid the defects with wax. If a pot was marked as "sine cera" it was "without wax." What you saw was what you got.

A careful buyer would hold the pot up to the sunlight and examine the pot. The cracks, when examined under the sun, would allow light through and thus reveal the pot to be an inferior product whose defects had been covered so as to deceive the buyer.

If something was labeled as *sine cera* (without wax) then the vendor was claiming that if examined under the light, there would be no defects revealed that were not readily evident to the unaided eye. For something to be "without wax" meant it was without any gloss to cover up defects. What you saw was what you got. It was genuine or *sincere*.

To be sincere, is to be genuine, forthright, to not try to cover up the "defects" to make an impression that is

"insincere." So, "without wax" simply means "sincerely" or "sincere."

### Which Came First?

Which came first: the false teacher or the itching ears? I give some thought to this nearly every time I come across your average Christian television station with its seemingly endless supply of prosperity preachers who bilk millions out of the untaught and undiscerning. I cannot help but feel pity for the poor, desperate, person caught in the emotional slough of work righteousness constantly pumped at them by these charlatans who make merchandise of the unsuspecting.

But is "pity" the appropriate response? In some cases I think it is. I am sure that there is the rare example of some well meaning person who really thinks that what is represented by Joel Osteen, Benny Hinn and Kenneth Copeland is authentic biblical Christianity. However, those rare examples aside, I have come to the conclusion that more often than not, those who follow false teachers are being given exactly what they want.

If it is true that "no man seeks after God" (**Rom. 3:11**) and "men love darkness rather than light" (**John 3:19-21**), then those who follow false teaching are getting the very things they love and hunger for: idols and darkness. Could there possibly be such a flood of false teachers if there were not itching ears willing to listen to and embrace them? False teachers offer their people moral darkness masquerading as light, greed baptized in Christian lingo, and idolatry impersonating true worship. They are readily received by these followers because the followers are greedy idolaters who love darkness.

Paul warned in **2 Timothy 4:1-5** that the time would come when men "will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires." So which came first, the false teacher or the itching ears? I think it was the itching ears. First came the listener who would not tolerate sound doctrine. Second, came the act of heaping up teachers who would tell them what they wanted to know.

First came the desire to be told lies. Second came the liars who tell lies to those hungry for lies. The itching ears came first. They got exactly what they wanted: deception. They believed the lie because they would not believe the truth so as to be saved (**2 Thess. 2:10**).

### The Evolutionist's Dilemma

If you are an evolutionist, should you be a vegetarian or a meat eater?<sup>6</sup>

Evolution teaches that man is nothing more than a hairless monkey. According to their view, the only thing that separates us from all other animals is the degree to which we have advanced. There is nothing inherent in man that makes him different from the other animals. As Ingrid Newkirk, President of PETA said, "A rat is a pig is a dog is a boy."<sup>7</sup> In other words, animals are equal to mankind in significance, stature, and value.

If that is true, then how could an evolutionist justify killing and eating a creature which is its equal in every way? Would he kill and eat another human? I presume he would not. If not, why not? If he won't eat a human, then why would he eat a cow, a pig, or a chicken? Are they not our equals? If they are, then what right do we have to execute and exploit them for our own use?

It seems to me that an evolutionist's willingness to eat a chicken and not a fellow man shows that intuitively he **knows** there is a great moral difference between the two actions. His actions betray his true belief that man and pigs are not at all equal.

*On the other hand*, evolution also teaches that only the fit should survive. The way of nature is to eliminate the inferior, the weak, the disabled, the lesser species. According to evolution, our position at the top of the food chain was acquired through our struggle to survive and being more "fit" than the other species. Death and disease have brought us to our evolutionary destiny. Extinction is nature's way of ridding itself of lesser species.

So why should we work to preserve any species? Should we not seek the extermination of animals which might some day supplant us from our perch atop nature's ladder? Why are we morally obligated to suddenly treat other species with respect and kindness? Now that we are at the top of the evolutionary mountain, why should we abandon the very process that has brought us here.<sup>8</sup>

6 My thoughts on this were prompted by an article I read in *Smart Money* magazine (March 2010) by Anne Kadet titled, "A Carnivore's Dilemma." The article had nothing to do with evolution. The article is about people who are meat eaters, but when given the opportunity could not bring themselves to kill and process their own meat. This was the "dilemma" that the article addressed, but I thought of an entirely different dilemma that would be faced by an evolutionist.

7 *Vogue*, September, 1989 as referenced at <http://www.boundless.org/features/a0000874.html>.

8 Notice all the moral terms in that paragraph; words like "should" and

"Kill or be killed" is the evolutionary law. If I am interested in advancing the evolution of my own species, it seems I should subjugate, abuse, kill, and exterminate as many other species as I can. After all, isn't "survival of the fittest" the law of nature? If a pig cannot be fit enough to fight back and survive in the struggle for life, then it seems he is best suited for my grill.

So, on the one hand it seems that I should not eat my fellow creatures because they are my equals. On the other hand, it seems like I should eat those creatures because they are my competitors in the long death-filled struggle to survive. What to do. . . what to do?

The Biblical worldview offers us a balanced approach to the issue. Man (and all animals) were created as vegetarians (**Genesis 1:29-31**). The fall of man and the curse on creation brought death. After the flood, man was allowed to eat meat (**Genesis 9:1-9**). We can eat meat and use animals for food, but we must do so in a way that is not intended to be cruel (**Proverbs 12:10**). There is a vast difference between butchering, hunting, or using an animal, and wholesale, senseless slaughter.

Every time I put a piece of meat on the grill, it should remind me that death is now part of this cursed creation. It was not created by death or for death. Death is an intruder. The animal on the grill in front of me is evidence of the devastating consequences of sin. Someday the curse of death will be removed and all of creation will experience its full and final redemption (**Romans 8:18-27**).

So, Mr. Evolutionist, do you eat meat? Why, or why not?

### Time And Man

"In his moving book *A Severe Mercy*, Sheldon Vanauken writes of the fact that human beings consider time precious, yet never wholly satisfying, whereas animals seem unaware of it, untroubled by it, and act as if time was their natural environment. He goes on: 'Not only are we harried by time, we seem unable, despite a thousand generations, ever to get used to it. We are always amazed at it - how fast it goes, how slowly it goes. Where, we cry, has time gone? We aren't adapted to it,

"obligated." How can an evolutionist argue that we have an "obligation" to do anything? They cannot appeal to any moral law unless they are willing to acknowledge a Moral Law-Giver. The evolutionist has no grounding for his moral system and cannot legitimately argue that we have any obligation to treat anyone with kindness, much less other species.

not at home in it. If that is so, *it may appear as proof, or at least a powerful suggestion, that eternity exists and is our home.*"<sup>9</sup>

Speaking of men, **Ecclesiastes 3:11** says that "God has put eternity in their hearts." The restlessness that man experiences in relation to time is testimony that deep in our being, we know that we are more than merely temporal animals. We have been created for eternity and all men will live forever in one of two eternal places.

Atheists try to console themselves by believing that after life is nothingness, a cessation of consciousness and life - no ultimate end, no continued existence. They know better and they suppress the truth in unrighteousness (**Romans 1:18ff**). Their awareness of time and anxiousness over its passing is a living proof that they are more than animals and they long to live forever!

Without Wax -



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9 John Blanchard, *Does God Believe In Atheists?* (Darlington: Evangelical Press, 2000), 178.