



ZWTF

Zapping You Whenever Thoughts Flow

Volume 8, Issue 1

Our response to spiritual blindness.

The examples of our Lord, Paul and others teach us how to handle the spiritually blind.



I have been asked to comment upon a *Bible Student's Notebook* editorial from April 2017, titled, "Our Response to Spiritual Blindness," by our brother Clyde Pilkington. I am happy to do so. For the sake of effective evangelism, it is important that I do so. I will re-print the entirety of the editorial, and then comment.

Our Response to Blindness, by Clyde Pilkington

The world is filled with blindness: relatives, friends, neighbors, coworkers. As impairing as physical blindness can be, this is not the one to which I refer. Instead, I speak of one far worse: spiritual blindness. Most go through life groping in the darkness. Only those granted the spiritual eyes to see have any divine light.

It is not hard to see the effects of such a condition all around us. The blinded condition is as divinely ordained as is sight, for,

Who appointed a mouth for man, or Who appointed him to be dumb, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I Jehovah? (Exodus 4:11-12).

Listen as John's Gospel (12:37-40) describes the true condition of unbelief.

But though He had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him: that the saying of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke, "Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" Therefore they could not believe, because that Isaiah said again, "He has blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; lest they should be seeing with their eyes, and should be understanding with their heart, and be converted."

Those who "believed not" simply "could not believe, because" God had "blinded their eyes," "lest they should be seeing." The reason for their blindness is certain; it is divine. Without the imposition of divine spiritual blindness, all of those of Jesus' day would have believed. Israel's Messiah "had done so many miracles before them," it took an act of God to prevent them from seeing Who He really was.

There is no need to be frustrated or irritated at the divine work of blindness among our fellow man. Faith

will not belittle, make fun of, or mock them. The blind merely play their part in the divine drama. Be careful that we do not fall into a carnal mindset: being demeaning, condescending, insulting, disrespectful and sarcastic toward those who are blind. All such reactions are childish and irresponsible.

Our response toward blindness is compassion, kindness, tenderheartedness, empathy and graciousness regarding their handicap. It has been thrust upon them, as equally as has been our sight. For who makes you to be different from another?

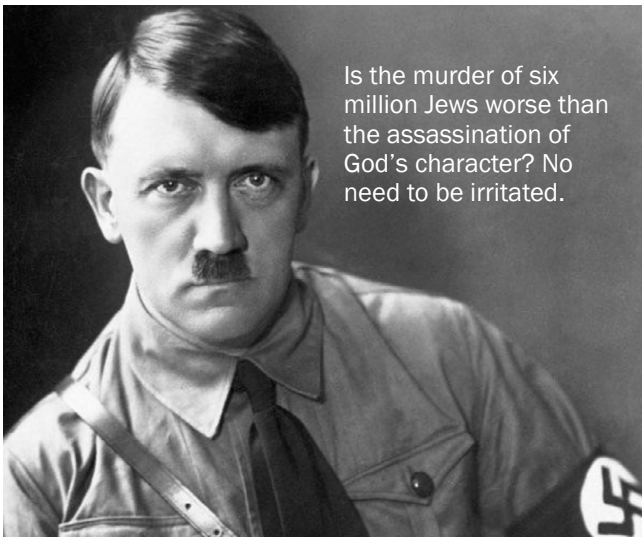
What do you have that you didn't receive? Now, if you received it, why are you proud, as if you hadn't received it? (I Corinthians 4:7).

By the grace of God I am what I am: and His grace which was bestowed on me was not in vain (I Corinthians 15:10).

WHAT DOES NEED HAVE TO DO WITH IT?

Not one of my readers will disagree that there are spiritually blind people in the world and that God makes them that way. Clyde spends the first three-fourths of this article telling us something that we already know, namely, that God is responsible for both spiritual blindness and spiritual illumination. But what does this have to do with our reaction to either thing? Nothing whatsoever.

Clyde tells us that “there is no need to be frustrated or irritated at the divine work of blindness among our fellow man.” What does need have to do with it? I can prove to you with a couple dozen verses from Scripture that God was the ultimate cause of World War II. Now,



Is the murder of six million Jews worse than the assassination of God's character? No need to be irritated.

I know that I don't *need* to be frustrated or irritated that Hitler killed six million Jews, but my visceral, human reaction to such an atrocity transcends any consideration of necessary duty or obligation—or the lack thereof.

There are two sides to this coin. The same man telling us that there is no need to be frustrated or irritated at spiritual blindness ought to also say—for consistency's sake—that “there is no need” to rejoice at spiritual illumination. Isn't God behind both things? Clyde seems to be suggesting that God's sovereign control of His creation ought to somehow render us emotionless. We know there is no *need* for either rejoicing or frustration in the face of either blessing or curse, but may we do it anyway? The sovereignty of God is what it is, but so is the human constitution *given* us by God. What is this but a call for monk-like stoicism in the face of divine inevitability? Some would call it *fatalism*.

THE APOSTLE PAUL EXASPERATED

In Acts 16:16-18, Paul confronts a demon-possessed woman in the city of Philippi. Let's check in on the state of Paul's monk-like stoicism in the face of divine sovereignty—

Now it occurred, at our going to prayer, a certain maid, having a python spirit, meets us, who afforded a vast income to her masters, divining. She, following after Paul and us, cried, saying, “These men are slaves of God most high, who are announcing to you a way of salvation!” Now this she did on many days. Now Paul, *being exasperated* and turning about, said to the spirit, “I am charging you, in the name of Jesus Christ, to be coming out from her!” And it came out the same hour.

Oops! Paul forgot to read Clyde's editorial. If he had, he would have not become exasperated at the antics of a poor demon-possessed maid who was only doing what God pre-ordained her to do, and merely—as Clyde says—“playing [her] part in the divine drama.” Instead, Paul became exasperated.

The word “exasperated” here in the *Concordant Literal New Testament* is a translation of the Greek word *diaponeomai*, whose English elements are THROUGH-MISERY. This lady was making Paul miserable and he couldn't take it anymore, so he cast the demon out of her. Was there really a need for such a carnal reaction? Didn't Paul realize that the python spirit, like the maid, was merely playing its part in the divine drama? As such, why didn't Paul leave



“Merely playing [her] part in the divine drama.”

both the maid and the python spirit alone? If he hadn't become so exasperated, we may guess that the apostle would have done just that. But no. Paul, ignoring Clyde's editorial and becoming exasperated—even though there was no need for it), casts the spirit from the maid.

If anyone would have understood that both the maid and the python spirit had no choice in the matter of their spiritual blindness, it would have been our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God. And yet—wonder of wonders—the spirit of Jesus Christ, apparently in full support of Paul's unneeded exasperation (“exasperation” being a synonym for “irritation,” by the way), cast out the demon at Paul's behest.

This was so disrespectful of Jesus and Paul to both the maid and the python spirit. After all, it wasn't their fault. Why weren't Jesus and Paul more gracious toward the spiritual handicap?

JESUS IRRITATED AT JERUSALEM

We find neither the word “irritated” nor “exasperated” in the following context, but is there any reader on board who cannot discern our Lord's frustration as He laments over Jerusalem in Matthew 23:37-38—

Jerusalem! Jerusalem! who art killing the prophets and pelting with stones those who have been dispatched to her! How many times do I want to assemble your children in the manner a hen is assembling her brood under her wings—and you will not! Lo! left is your house to you desolate.

Why is Jesus becoming so emotional? Doesn't He realize that His Father is the One Who hardened Israel and that Israel is merely playing her part in the divine drama? Of course He does. But our Lord, as a human being, reacts to monumental unbelief with monumental anguish. “How many times!” He says. “How many times do I want to assemble you? *Yet you will not.*” Why even lament or point out that Israel will not come, since God is the One making her unable to do so? Instead of “Yet you will not,” Why didn't Jesus just say, “Yet God will not let you?” Why the hand-wringing over a divinely appointed blindness? Clyde would have put his arm around our Lord's shoulder and quietly counseled him, saying, “There is no need to be frustrated or irritated at the divine work of blindness among our fellow man.”

Then there is this: “Lo! Left is your house to you desolate.” This is a mean—and, really, unfair—thing to do to a nation that can't help being blind. It seems so nonsensically retributive toward a people helpless against their own fate: *God made you blind, so here's what I'm going to do because of your blindness.* Clyde would never have countenanced such a childish reaction. Where was Jesus' empathy and graciousness in the face of this inevitable spiritual handicap?

The answer to all of these questions is that Jesus is not a fatalist. Fatalism deactivates, diminishes and idles us in the service of our God. Fatalism puts us to sleep at the wheel of duty. Fatalism scolds us for having normal human reactions to normal human events. Fatalism tells us the lie that there is no need to be either frustrated at an evil or elated at a good. Why? Because God is in complete control of both the evil and the good. If this comes across to you as illogical, that's because it is.

PAUL AT MAXIMUM IRRITATION

Our carnal and disrespectful apostle hits maximum irritation level on the island of Cyprus with a poor innocent man who was merely playing his part in the divine drama: Bar-Jesus. Here are the sad details, in Acts 13:6-12—

Now, passing through the whole island up to Paphos, they found a certain man, a magician, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Bar-Jesus, who was with the proconsul Sergius Paul, an intelligent man. He, calling to him Barnabas and Saul, seeks to hear the word of God. Now Elymas, the “Magician” (for thus is his name construed), withstood them, seeking to pervert the proconsul from the faith. Now Saul, who is also Paul, being filled with holy spirit, looking intently at him, said, “O, full of all guile and all knavery, son of the Adversary, enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord? And now, lo! the hand of the Lord is on you, and you shall be blind, not observing the sun until the appointed time.” Now instantly there falls on him a fog and darkness, and, going about, he sought someone to lead him by the hand. Then the proconsul, perceiving what has occurred, believes, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord.

Had Paul read Clyde’s editorial, he would not have reacted this way to a poor spiritually-stupid Jew helpless against his God-inspired handicap. We can only wonder that the holy spirit seems complicit in this childish display of irritation. Apparently, the holy spirit hadn’t read Clyde’s editorial either. Had either the holy spirit or Paul read Clyde’s editorial, the reaction to the divinely blinded Bar-Jesus would have been less along the lines of “full of all guile and all knavery, son of the Adversary, enemy of all righteousness,” and more along the lines of—

My dear Jewish magician, Barnabas and I are the way we are by the grace of God. And you are the way *you* are, *also* by the grace of God. You are merely playing your part in the divine drama. Therefore, how could we possibly be frustrated or irritated at you?

Your spiritual blindness has been thrust upon you by God just as our spiritual sight has been thrust upon us. Just because you are keeping the proconsul from hearing our words due to your duplicitous knavery, this should in no way incite any frustration on our part. In fact, we owe you nothing but compassion, kindness, tenderheartedness, empathy and graciousness.

I *want* to call you a son of the Adversary and an enemy of all righteousness, but I know that there but for the grace of God go I. I want to *physically* blind you, but heck, I was once an enemy of all righteousness myself and God blinded *me* and I didn’t like it very much, so I would never put you through anything as terrible as what I went through. God was so mean to me, Bar-Jesus! He was the one who made me how I was, so who was He to blind me for being what He made me? And so, I understand your plight.

I am so filled with the spirit right now that I feel like a daisy blowing in the wind. I feel like a freshly-powdered baby floating up to the clouds in a pink hot air balloon. There isn’t an ounce of irritation or frustration in me right now—praise the Lord. Therefore, go in peace, my friend. And please, slap Sergius Paulus in the face on your way out and tell him, “Sorry that you never got to hear the truth and become a member of the body of Christ, due to my loud-mouthed interference. But at least these two body of Christ members over here never became frustrated or irritated. *Such good boys.*”



Bar-Jesus leaves the Cyprian encounter happy and blessed.

THE FINE ART OF BELITTLEMENT AND MOCKERY

“There is no need to be frustrated or irritated at the divine work of blindness among our fellow man. Faith will not belittle, make fun of, or mock them. The blind merely play their part in the divine drama.”

In a classic case of belittlement, Paul actually uses the word “little” to describe those who are always learning yet never able to come to the truth; i.e. the spiritually blind. He compounds the insult by associating such people with the gender most known for emotional rather than logical thinking. 2 Timothy 3:6-7—

For of these are those who are slipping into homes and are *leading into captivity little women*, heaped with sins, being led by various lusts and gratifications, always learning and yet not at any time able to come into a realization of the truth.

In Philippians 3:2-3, Paul invents a new term of mockery and derision that also positively bubbles with belittlement—

Beware of curs, beware of evil workers. Beware of the *maimcision*, for we are the circumcision who are offering divine service in the spirit of God, and are glorying in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in flesh.

Ignore for the moment that Paul has just called a large group of divinely-blinded Israelites “curs” (“dogs”), for this would not fall under the category of mockery, derision and belittlement, but rather insult. I wish to focus on the word “maimcision,” which drips not only with belittlement, but sarcasm. It is Paul’s one-word, bombshell way of saying that the Jewish Circumcisionists, seeking to obey the letter rather than the spirit of the law, are accomplishing no more than maiming themselves.

Clyde cannot be very happy with this verse and, had he read an early draft of Philippians, would surely have excised the entire passage. “Faith will not belittle, make fun of, or mock these Jews,” Clyde would have said to Paul. “There is no need for this. Why not be more respectful and less condescending?”

Clyde would have had his hands full with Paul, to be sure, especially in his letter to Titus. Here is Paul in Titus 1:10-14—

For many are insubordinate, vain praters and imposters, especially those of the Circumcision, who must be gagged, who are subverting whole households, teaching what they must not, on behalf of sordid gain. One of them, their own prophet, said: “Cretans are ever liars, evil wild beasts, idle bellies.” This testimony is true. For which cause be exposing them severely, that they may be sound in the faith, not heeding Jewish myths and precepts of men who are turning from the truth.

Clyde’s editorial correction might have said—

Really, Paul? They must be *gagged*? I suggest using the word “stopped” here, if you must say anything. It is far less offensive. “Idle bellies” is most inappropriate, as it will appear to Titus that you are making fun of the Circumcisionists. Is not ours an evangel of grace and of *not* making fun of people? I suggest substituting “helpless, divinely-hardened Jews” for “evil wild beasts.” Also, why the need to call them “liars?” I suggest the word “misguided,” as it is far more tenderhearted and less caustic. You seem irritated here, Paul. And I fear that this passage will come across as demeaning, condescending, insulting, disrespectful and sarcastic, though admittedly not nearly as sarcastic as “maimcision,” which I notice you left in the Philippian letter against my wishes, ignoring my plea for empathy regarding the Jewish handicap.



But the world champion belittler has to be the prophet Elijah on Mt. Carmel as he mocks the prophets of Baal who, despite their intercessory gymnastics, could not rouse their favorite false god into action. 1 Kings 18:26-27—

And they took the bull that was given them, and they prepared it and called upon the name of Baal from morning until noon, saying, “O Baal, answer us!” But there was no voice, and no one answered. And they limped around the altar that they had made. And at noon *Elijah mocked them*, saying, “Cry aloud, for he is a god. Either he is musing, or he is relieving himself, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and must be awakened” (*English Standard Version*).

THE CARNAL MINDSET OF THE CHILDISH, IRRESPONSIBLE JESUS

“Be careful that we do not fall into a carnal mindset: being demeaning, condescending, insulting, disrespectful and sarcastic toward those who are blind. All such reactions are childish and irresponsible.”



Jesus said many harsh things concerning the Pharisees, in the presence of the Pharisees. The following is from an article inelegantly titled, “Harsh Words, Put Downs, and Divisive Things that Jesus Said,” by the News Division of *Pulpit and Pen*—

One of the biggest criticisms leveled against polemicists is that our words are un-Christlike, degrading, and divisive towards our brothers and sisters. The argument states that Jesus would never say “mean things” or act this way, but only ever responded in love and lifted people up. Below is a list of verses in which Jesus actually said harsh things in a polemical context. Further, we must remember that Jesus’ words, no matter how harsh they may sound, never return void and always accomplish their purpose (Isaiah 55:11)—

- ▶ “Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.” —Matthew 10:34
- ▶ “Woe to you, blind guides, who say, ‘If anyone

swears by the temple, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.’ You blind fools! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that has made the gold sacred?” —Matthew 23:16-17

- ▶ And the Lord said to him, “Now you Pharisees cleanse the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness.” —Luke 11:39

- ▶ “And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” —Matthew 25:30

- ▶ “Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea.” —Mark 9:42

- ▶ “But you have not known him. I know him. If I were to say that I do not know him, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and I keep his word.” —John 8:55

- ▶ “You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to the judging of Gehenna?” —Matthew 23:33

- ▶ “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people’s bones and all uncleanness.” —Matthew 23:27

- ▶ “You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.” —John 8:44

- ▶ “You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, ‘This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far away from Me.’ ‘But in vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.’” —Matthew 15:7-9

- ▶ “But as for these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slaughter them before me.” —Luke 19:28

- ▶ “Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you.” —Matthew 7:6

- ▶ “Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division.” —Luke 12:51

- ▶ “And will cut him in pieces and put him with the hypocrites. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” —Matthew 24:51

- ▶ “Woe to those who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep.” —Luke 6:25

- ▶ “...but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.” —Luke 13:3,5

- ▶ “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from

me, you cursed, into the fire eonian prepared for the Adversary and his messengers.” –Matthew 25:41

* * *

I want to concentrate now on just one of these “mean things” that Jesus said to the Pharisees, namely calling them the “blind guides of the blind.” Matthew 15:14—

Leave them! Blind guides are they of the blind! Now if the blind should be guiding the blind, both shall be falling into a pit.

You would be hard-pressed to find a more sarcastic, belittling accusation than this. It’s tragic, but also funny. Picture a blind man. Now picture the blind man latching onto another blind man and saying, “Follow me.” It’s absurd. It’s hyperbolic. It’s sarcastic. It’s satirical. And it’s aimed like a firehose into the Pharisaic face. Jesus Christ is making cruel fun of the leaders of Israel. He is making fun of them for their blindness, and He’s doing it publicly. Additionally, He’s doing it knowing full well that His Father is inspiring it and that the blind were unable to do and be otherwise. He is not only accusing divinely-inspired blind people of being blind, but He is mocking them for it.



This, to me, is beautiful. It is a picture of a Man engaged. It is picture of an honest man wearing His emotions *and* His truth on His sleeve. It is a picture of a Man passionate about truth, and vehement in its defense. Here is a man standing for truth in the midst of a lying system. This is a Man who cares so much for the spiritual welfare of the honest seekers around Him that He will severely (not kindly) expose the pretensions of their priests, if only to free them. And He will do it even if it costs Him His own life.

Because of this Man’s flint-hard stance and dagger-sharp words against Jerusalem’s leaders, many of the citizenry believed in Him. No man had ever spoken this way. No one dared. With wisdom from above, Jesus Christ realized that grace did not necessarily equal nice, and neither did truth equal timidity. Devoutness and determination, not decorousness, mattered to our Lord.

Jesus Christ is the furthest thing from a fatalist that you will ever find. Become imitators of Him.

CHECKING IT TWICE

Let’s list those things that Clyde Pilkington insists would indicate a carnal mindset toward spiritual blindness. Such a mindset would be, 1) demeaning toward the blind, 2) condescending, 3) insulting, 4) disrespectful and 5) sarcastic. Let’s also consider those things that, according to Clyde, no person of faith would ever exercise against the spiritually blind. “Faith will not belittle, make fun of, or mock them. The blind merely play their part in the divine drama.”

Let’s now test these things against this *one statement* of our Lord concerning the blind religious leaders of His day, and see how well Jesus Christ meets Clyde’s standards of spiritual civility and, yes, maturity.

Here, again, is Jesus’ statement:

“Blind guides are they of the blind.”

Let’s see how many of Clyde’s standards Jesus Christ steps on with this single statement—

- demeaning
- condescending
- insulting
- disrespectful
- sarcastic
- belittling
- making fun of
- mocking

Holy Moses—eight for eight.

Again, from Clyde—

“Be careful that we do not fall into a carnal mindset: being demeaning, condescending, insulting, disrespectful and sarcastic toward those who are blind. All such reactions are childish and irresponsible.”

According to Clyde Pilkington, Jesus Christ was carnal, childish and irresponsible.

I could not disagree more.

NOT EVEN CLOSE

Obviously, Clyde is way off base. Many more Scriptural examples could be given showing men of God becoming not only irritated, but incensed at spiritual blindness and antagonism, even while fully cognizant of its divine source. In fact, one would have to wonder about the spiritual acuity and awareness of one *not* incensed by such evils.

Let this be a warning against fatalism. Let it be a warning against an emotion-based rather than Scripture-based approach to evangelism. Let it be a warning against the wrapping of one's own particular personality trait in a robe of piety and idealizing it to others.

SATIRE

- noun.* 1. the use of irony, sarcasm, ridicule, or the like, in exposing, denouncing, or deriding vice, folly, etc.
2. a literary composition, in verse or prose, in which human folly and vice are held up to scorn, derision, or ridicule.
3. a literary genre comprising such compositions.

Jesus used satire when calling the blind Pharisees “blind leaders of the blind,” Paul used it when calling the Circumcisionists the “maimcision,” and Elijah used it when telling the prophets of Baal that maybe their god was too busy relieving himself to tend to their altar. I have used it continuously ever since starting my evangelistic work in 1993. In fact, I'm known for it.

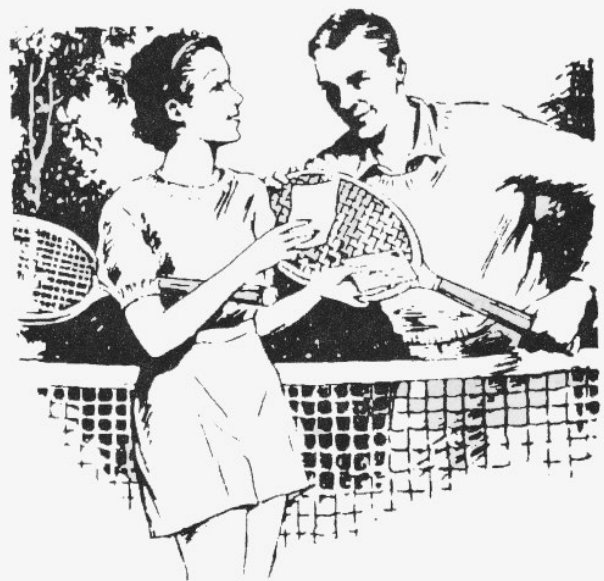
The purpose of all satire is not to make fun of people, but to expose vice and folly. In satire, human folly and vice are held up to scorn, derision or ridicule—for the sake of illumination. Men of God, even in the Bible, constantly employed it. Why? Because it is effective. There is no better way to expose the evils of humanity than to ridicule them with the exclamation point of satire.

I have made my own cartoons for years. These cartoons mock the evil hypocrisy of Christians. A picture is worth a thousand words. I

can either preach on the evils of Eternal Torment, or I can subject to mockery the insane mindset that believes in it. When I do this in the form of a cartoon or a satirical

barb, I damage the enemy more in one quick hit than in a 6,000-word essay beating around the bush as it strains for civility.

Here is a cartoon from *How to Quit Church Without Quitting God*—



“This new church tennis league is just great, isn't it, Ron? We haven't had to think once about Sarah being burned in hell for eternity.”

Bang! In this single cartoon, hypocritical and non-thinking Christians are exposed for being the frauds that they are. Am I belittling them? Most certainly. Demeaning them? Yes. Disrespecting them? I hope so. What sort of evangelist would I be if I *respected* the doctrine of Eternal Torment and those espousing it?

Again, with satire, the end-game is not to belittle the blind followers of the blind, but to illuminate their folly to the sideline spectator in the hope that the spectator may more easily and quickly see the heresy of the Christian confession. Seeing it, they may then flee it.

Jesus never chided the Pharisees except in public.

Naturally, my satire is going to infuriate the Christian. That's a given. But for every one-hundred Christians who are infuriated by it, one blessed onlooker comes to a realization of the truth. That's the idea. *I have a heart for the honest seeker.* This is why I do it. I do it for the sake of the honest seeker who is intimidated by the doctrines of Christianity. My satire emboldens them to not fear it. I am the boy who exposes the naked emperor. I am Toto, pulling away the curtain from “the Great and Powerful Oz.” Because of the use of satire in my work—both in





print and in video—many have gone from fearing Christianity to ridiculing it—all in a single moment; all by the use of a single satirical sentence, cartoon, or demonstration. (After all, aren't I the guy who threw eggs at the Trinity? I am. That video has nearly 12,000 views and has convinced many that the Trinity is a false teaching that denies the death of Christ. *Link below.*) *This* is evangelism on a professional level.

Do you want to talk about demeaning, belittling, insulting and disrespecting? How about what the teachings of Free Will, Eternal Torment and the Trinity do to God? Does anyone ever think of *that*? Is Clyde telling us that we are to protect the feelings of the blind humans who trash the Name of our great God, so that they can *go on* demeaning, belittling, insulting and trashing Him? Just who are we trying to protect here? Who are we seeking to spare? Clyde is sheltering the wrong side. He's protecting the Christians and making fair game of God. Where is the man's righteous indignation? From reading this editorial, it seems as though it is hibernating behind a well-meaning sheen of "nice."

I noticed in Scripture years ago that any time a man of God exposed and rebuked the blind in no uncertain terms and with no uncertain satire, great revival of faith followed. Paul knew what he was talking about when he told Timothy that the first order of business for an evangelist is to expose error (2 Timothy 4:2). Who can be exposed for error *except* a blind person? The more shocking, the better—the better for the person considering truth but held back from it by the error—such as Sergius Paulus in Acts 13, being hindered by the magician/Jew Bar-Jesus. We need more belittlement of error, not less. We must think of more effective, concise ways of making fun of it, not fewer.

I'm on it.

May you be emboldened by the example of Paul, our Lord, Elijah, and even your old friend Martin Zender. Do not be afraid. The time is short and we don't have time to sugar-coat our exposure of spiritual error until our points become lost in a babble of apology and Hallmark-style sentiment.

I'm not quite as bold yet as Jesus and Paul to belittle people to their faces, but that is what I want to be when I grow up. —MZ

