

Church of God, The Eternal

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The Nature of Illnesses and the True Source of Healing—Part I Legitimate Parents Bear the Authority to Make Decisions Concerning Their Children

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Dear Brethren:

We live in a world saturated with and obedient to myriad concepts which have come from the rebellious nature of Satan. This world, all of humanity, is his workshop. Of course, few people realize whom they really follow. They are deceived. They call that which influences them God, but Satan is really the god of this world, not the true Creator God.

Recently an example of this mind-set occurred regarding the subject of prayer and healing. In a Boston courtroom a judge condemned a young couple for "reckless and wanton" conduct because they resorted to prayer for their young son instead of to the medical profession. How did this judge come to such an opinion? Who says he is correct? Did he have the necessary authority to make such a judgment? Some premise, standard of judgment, must be employed before such conclusions can become definitive. What was his standard? And was his premise correct?

The entire courtroom was an emotionally charged arena. Even members of the jury were tearful. But they felt they had a duty to perform. What was the basis for that feeling? How did, or do they even now, know that the basis was a correct one? Can a state demand allegiance to concepts generated by men and codified into law? Can a state determine what is morally acceptable and what is not? Are not all laws of men just that—concepts legalized by men?

On the more mundane side of the issue is the fact fallible doctors have been wrong more often than not. Why should one man—regardless of station, rank, or position—determine what another man, or all of society put together, must conform to in health issues? Or of even greater concern is the fact mortal man has changed so often that what he practices today he may not even accept tomorrow. Is the fate of one man based on the whim of another?

Even the title of the editorial from which the above information comes, "Children Shouldn't Die for Parents' Beliefs," is misleading. Why? Because it generalizes the issue by putting all beliefs and prayers in the same category. It totally misses the point from a correct Biblical perspective. We shall see that later.

This editorialist understood the issue but not the answer. She saw it as a re-emergence of the age-old debate between religion and science. This is true. But she did not see from whom it came and the end result of blind acceptance of all that science and medicine offer. We are told, "we have to distinguish between prayer and penicillin." Few people would not know the natural difference. Then what is the implication of the above statement? That prayer does not work but penicillin does! That all who are "religious" and pray to God for healing are equally heard! And that the value of prayer is the same in "all cases" of those who make profession of believing and trusting God.

After attempting to treat both sides in the editorial fairly, she advances these conclusions: "Faith and reason may both have their place in healing, but not the same place. The state must remain neutral between religions, defending everyone's right to believe. But that doesn't mean it must remain neutral between `treatments' as if spiritual healing and science were equal options for curing a bowel obstruction." In other words, you are privileged to believe, but you cannot legally practice your beliefs. Such a conception is tantamount to idolizing the state and rendering effete religion and belief. This notion leaves many unanswered questions. It violates every principle of reason and logic. These will be explained in the following material.

God Is the Creator of All Things

To avoid the necessity of implicit obedience to God, man has concocted numerous atheistic beliefs which he has deceived himself into believing will render him immune to any authoritative order over his life. Perhaps the most notorious and glaringly abrasive is the concept of evolution—that man is the product of a long evolutionary process, not a manifestation of special, miraculous, and instantaneous creation. If, indeed, there is no God, then men legitimately can construct a society on the basis of their concepts. Those in power can impose their wills upon all others who willingly submit to them.

The problem: There is a Book which tells us that it is a fool who denies the existence of the true God (Ps. 53:1). If, then, there is a God, should we not expect that He might have instructions which relate to the existence of His creation?

First, this Book which speaks of God tells us that He is the Creator of all things. It is in the very introduction to that Book—the Bible (Gen. 1:1). The fact of His creation is recorded several times (Acts 14:15; Heb. 1:8–10; Col. 1:16–17). That creation was accomplished by the power of His Word (Ps. 33:4–9). Nothing exists in this universe outside of that which He created (John 1:3). And by virtue of being Creator, He is Lord of heaven and earth (Acts 17:24).

Second, since God is Spirit (John 4:24) it requires faith—not a blind "belief", but a spiritual ingredient added by God—to know, believe, and trust Him (Heb. 11:3). Few people have that faith. They trust and accept what they can see and handle. Only by certain experiences can men come to know God (compare Matt. 11:25–27 and Job 38).

Third, procreation is accomplished by the union of a male and a female. That, too, is by the design and creation of God (Gen. 1:27). This Creator God designed a way by which all creation would be regenerated. This regeneration process is itself a visible proof of a creative power which has been given in a limited manner to men. The big question is this: Did this Creator God merely create man and woman and then abdicate total responsibility? Or does He have something to say about the progeny of that designed union? We shall see.

Man's Creator Gave Instructions

And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die (Gen. 2:16–17).

The Apostle Paul expanded and emphasized this concept. He stated: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. 5:12). Death did not, and does not, result only from comparable sins to that committed by Adam and Eve (Rom. 5:14).

Death results from sin. There is no one who has not sinned. Can a doctor, regardless of his skill and instruments, remove sin? Of course not! Man's problem is first recognizing the cause of his ills and then understanding the avenue by which he can eliminate that cause.

Yes, God is man's Creator. He told His created subject what should and should not be done. But man rebelled. He thought he knew better than God what was acceptable.

His attitude has not changed to this day. He is still trying to find a way around the instruction and command of God. Many, many of our most prestigious professions are predicated on this very rebellion. How, then, can man properly judge matters such as those referred to at the outset of this letter? He cannot. The decisions will always be anti-God, contrary to basic Biblical principles.

Children Come From God

It is God who established the marriage relationship (Gen. 2:24). From that marriage union would come children. Is it a wonder God was most concerned with the state of that marriage union—the fact He was so emphatic that once a couple marries they are not free to divorce and remarry? God provided a means for the regeneration of human life and He did and does not intend that this union be violated. Children are potential sons and daughters of God in the Kingdom. It was the design of God that the natural parents teach, instruct, and correct their own children. Why? Because parents are responsible for the children they bring into life. No government, agency, or any other organization has ever been given the responsibility of caring for children born to a legitimate set of parents. The care system of children which we see in the world today is directly from ancient Babylon, a system right from the script of Satan, the Devil.

Though begotten and born by natural circumstances, children are a gift of God (Ps. 127:3; Gen. 33:5; 48:9). Those born under inappropriate circumstances have always been subject to the curses pronounced by God—man's maudlin sentimentality notwithstanding. Yet, billions of dollars have been and are being spent in a rebellious attempt to alter the judgment and penalty determined by God.

God Holds Parents Responsible for Training, Teaching, and Direction of Children

Our peoples have a historical past. That past, both bad and good, must be constantly rehearsed in the ears of our children and our grandchildren (Deut. 4:9–10). The purpose for this daily rehearsal is that the reality of our past may be remembered. The obligation for this teaching falls on the shoulders of parents—not any government of this world. Because men have turned from God and adopted a system derived from Babylon does not mean that they will avoid the consequence imposed by God for this rebellion. Both parents and governments involved in this rebellion will have to pay the price.

Faithfulness would have procured to ourselves both politically and healthwise great beneficence (Deut. 4:40). To have things go well with us certainly involves the matter of personal and national health. The preservation of life and favorable conditions uniquely relates to spiritual obedience (Deut. 6:24). In fact, inherently written into the natural circumstances of life are the laws which will produce either a favorable human existence (blessings) or the degeneration of health and many unfortunate conditions (curses) so rampantly evident today (Deut. 11:26–32).

The training of our children based on these past historical experiences is still a fundamental duty of parents (Eph. 6:1, 4; Col. 3:20–21). It is a duty abrogated by most parents and erroneously seized by the state to espouse contrary doctrine. The entire fabric of today's society is Babylonian—including the total gamut of education. What is the natural consequence of this failure?

Death Is a Curse

Death is the termination of life. It occurs at a specific moment. But what of the conditions in one's physical life which lead to that final state? If that final state is the ultimate curse pronounced by God for disobedience, then it naturally follows that the conditions which lead up to that time play an integral part in its fulfillment. That is, disease and ill-health are a part of the curse which was leveled against man for rebellion.

At the very beginning, when Eve was rehearsing the instructions of God to her enemy, Satan, she told him that there were conditions under which she and her husband would die. What was Satan's response? He emphatically stated, "Ye shall not surely die" (Gen. 3:4). Since that day human beings, in one way or another, have been denying the consequence of their action of rebellion. In a generalized sense the very premise of the medical profession is a part of that denial. Man still wants to do what he pleases and then attempts to circumvent the promised punishment—through the practice of the medical profession. It has never worked. Just take a look at the statistics. There is more disease, more suffering—a greater punishment now, in these days of "enlightenment," than at any other time in human history. Why? Could it be that with all the efforts of man he has not yet found the way out of his curse? At what cost will man finally learn and yield to the instructions of God? At best, one must admit man is a glutton for punishment.

Death is a certainty which we all must face. There is no means by which we can avoid it (Ps. 89:48). In fact Solomon was inspired to write: "But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death" (Prov. 8:36). If only the

cessation of life is the punishment promised by God, then how do we wrong our own souls? Obviously the death sentence involves a great deal more than just the cessation of life at the conclusion of man's human existence. Indeed, the miserable circumstances of degeneration, disease, pain, and suffering are an inherent part of the curse.

Even though it is appointed to men once to die, there is a way by which we can enhance our physical existence (Deut. 5:29). Death is a certainty; but do well and that human existence can be made pleasurable, productive, and rewarding. The consequence of sin—death—reigns in our mortal bodies (Rom. 5:12, 21). We are slaves to that taskmaster all the days of our lives. No man can escape that natural consequence. It is the price of rebellion. And there is no man who has not sinned (Rom. 6:23).

All the scientific advances in the world will not alter the curse which God pronounced upon man for defiance and rebellion. Further, though men seem to have made some advances against certain human diseases and conditions, the factors of death still reign in mortal flesh. By clever manipulation of the human condition, skilled men have only altered the course of death. They have not changed or shortened it. Only God, the Author of the death curse, can eliminate it (1 Cor. 15:26).

There is much more to the above subject. But due to the press of other duties and the trials which we sometimes are forced to undergo, we cannot take the time to complete this subject for this issue of the *Monthly Letter*. It has been decided to make the subject the content of not only the September issue but also that of the October issue. By putting the two together you will have a rather exhaustive explanation of the subject.

Much love to all. We do look forward to seeing as many of you brethren as possible during the Feast of Tabernacles. How refreshing to see the faces of the faithful and dedicated true servants—saints of God. Our prayers will be with you; we do earnestly covet your prayers for us. The times are becoming more troublesome. By that fact we know that the time is near, even at the door, as Jesus said.

With profound love to all,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Raymond C. Cole". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'R'.

Raymond C. Cole