

We Cannot Have It Both Ways

by Bill Crews

Many people are critical of God -- some even using it as their primary reason for rejecting His very existence -- for not (1) directly intervening to protect innocent children from serious birth defects, fatal injuries, or crippling diseases; (2) directly intervening to stop evil political rulers from oppressing and preying upon the weak and vulnerable; (3) directly intervening to spare “good” people the suffering brought on by disease and accidents; (4) directly intervening to keep evil people from harming innocent people; (5) directly intervening to keep earthquakes, storms, floods, and volcanic eruptions from taking human lives.

At the same time they do not want God (1) to take away their freedom to choose, (2) to take away their powers to reason, (3) to remove personal responsibility for one’s actions, or (4) to change the immutable laws of nature. Well, we can’t have it both ways. It would have to be one or the other, with all of the consequences that ensue.

The physical universe is regulated by immutable physical laws (which we call “the laws of nature”). We cannot change them, and God will not. We must learn them, accept them, and respect them. We can rely upon them and be blessed and benefitted by them. Or, we can remain ignorant of them, ignore them, defy them, and challenge them -- and suffer the consequences. We must not expect God to protect us from “the laws of nature,” while we ignore, or fail to respect, or even challenge and defy these laws.

Man is a free moral agent, able to learn, understand, and apply God’s spiritual laws (also immutable). Man is able to (and expected to, and will) choose between right and wrong, good and evil, truth and error, wisdom and folly. If he could not choose to do wrong, he could choose to do right either -- he would be but another animal and not a free moral agent. Each person is responsible for the choices he makes and will be held accountable by God -- to whom he must one day give answer. God will “balance the books,” mete out justice, right all uncorrected wrongs.

Each one is a part of a world of people; and anyone can carelessly risk or deliberately destroy his own life, or carelessly endanger or ruin his own health, or abuse and misuse his own body, or pollute and corrupt his own mind, or defile and lose his own soul. Each one can also mislead, or deceive, or pain, or grieve, or harm those around him - -physically, mentally, emotionally, morally, or spiritually. Or each one can do the opposite. Let us learn to respect, to cooperate with, to observe, and to be blessed and benefitted by the wonderful laws of God, both the physical and the spiritual.

Some passages for you to read: Acts 17:24-28; Psalm 19:1; Psalm 37; Psalm 73; Romans 1:18-32; Acts 14:15-17; Ecclesiastes 12:13-14.

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