

BIRTH CONTROL



BIRTH CONTROL advocates ask for tolerance of those who listen to them. Those of us who disagree with them must insist on the same tolerance to our expressed opinions and would ask that they reconsider

some of their statements and not class as imbeciles those who disagree with them for reasons as perfectly honest as are their own in the expression of opinion.

In Genesis XXXVIII-9, is mentioned the sin of Onanism, and him, Onan, the Lord slew. I cannot see any difference in the manner in which this sin is committed. It is a sin against nature and as such will be punished by nature; it is an abnormal act, as such dangerous to the physical economy of both parties concerned. I bring this up, not as a religious argument, but that I may thus illustrate my ideas regarding the breaking of one of nature's laws. You may call it a sin, a crime or the result of ignorance; we know that by over-indulging any appetite harm will result and we think the man a fool who will deliberately harm himself.

As early as 1857 an eminent physician in Boston startled the community by publishing two books, one entitled "Criminal Abortion, Why Not? A Book for Every Woman," and "Is It I? A Book for Every Man." Soon afterward a Protestant clergyman published a work entitled, "Serpents in a Dove's Nest." All these works told the same tale of woe regarding the increase of child-destroying crimes in New England.

We are shocked at the destruction of human life on the banks of the Ganges, but here foeticide and infanticide and contra-conception are extensively practiced under the most aggravating circumstances.

If the ideas of birth control advocates are legalized the same harm would result because of the innate strength of the sexual passion. Over-indulgence would of course follow in its wake.

Advocates of birth control state that the question concerns not only every man, woman and child, but the child not yet born. It certainly does. The child not yet born has an inalienable right to his existence.

Do they have any idea how many geniuses they may destroy by their methods? At the present time the American family of more than two children is the exception.

Looking over the New England towns it is found in many families the first generation had an average of eight to ten children; the next three generations averaged about seven to each family; the fifth generation less than three to each family. Present generations are not doing so well. I can go back in my own family to 1630.

There is a trinity responsible for this—first and foremost is disease; second, prevention of conception; and, third, abortion; with the first as a successor to the latter two, with or without the addition of venereal disease.

Fournier states: "There is not a vice more fatal to the conservation of man than masturbation."

According to my ideas whatever the method of contra-conception the guilty parties are all masturbators.

All history testifies that the true civilization of any race or country rises or falls with the restraints imposed on the passion of lust.

The greatness of Rome or Greece decayed when the laws of social purity declined.

Proponents of birth control present the same argument as those who profess to believe that war is right and proper and the best manner of settling international disputes. They speak for progress of the races. The author believes that birth control will lead up to legalization of murder at the beginning of life, as surely as war takes the mature and makes widows and orphans. Contra-conception takes the immature, creates sexual neurasthenics and legitimizes prostitution in the home.

What would be the natural result of such a course as birth control advocates advise? Use your common sense. We are all weak, frail mortals, our sexual sense is very strong. If the public knew that this sense could be gratified without the responsibilities of parenthood there would be a riot of sexual intoxication, leaving in its wake the evil results which follow over-indulgence of the sexual appetite.

Why not strain our educational efforts in the direction of, not sexual continence, but sex government, so live that the gratification of the instinct would be more difficult. It seems to me that the occupation of separate rooms by married people would, to a certain extent, solve this problem. There is the menstrual epoch, at which time everyone should feel that the occupation of separate rooms is at least hygienic. We medical men know that many married couples over-indulge and practice many methods

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of preventing conception. Their sexual life would certainly be prolonged, their sexual pleasure enhanced, their procreative ability improved, and their offspring would be healthier were they to limit indulgence in stated periods. That this could be carried out is shown in the practice among the Orthodox Jewish people, and many examples of continence outside of the Jewish faith. This may seem a dream but given the alternative of a la birth control we know that over-indulgence would be the rule rather than the exception.

Our forefathers raised large families and the mothers of those days were able and willing to do so and perform manifold household duties that at this day mothers do not see fit to perform. They must have the various excitements that modern civilization offers. Taking advantage of these, mere household duties must be neglected. Cannot we as educators rather put our efforts into the induction of people to return to simpler methods of living and all that makes home dear to us. The home is the bulwark of every land and insofar as we destroy the home our vaunted civilization is a failure.

The strong argument of advocates of birth control is the present economic conditions. I feel as strongly about them as they do. I feel the same way about the Subway sights. I would not be condemned to travel with city crowds, morning and night during the rush hour, for any amount of money, but how many of these people if offered the opportunity of moving to the country towns or smaller cities would go. Take a family of the lower class who procreate like animals and are accustomed to city life and transplant them to the country with good, clean surroundings and better modes of living, and rather than stay they will walk if no other way offers that they may get back to the city where they can hear the hurdy-gurdy and live in the vile flat houses of metropolitan life.

Such arguments are of the same class as eugenics and universal suffragism, they are all sexual revolutions which must be trodden under foot. I am a believer in eugenics insofar as I believe parents should have more power in the choice of participants in the matrimonial contract, and women should take all manner of interest in the education of the young and in the public schools, but thus far and no further should they go in the management of our government.

Medical men advocating birth control state that their methods positively have no effect in causing sterility. I disagree with them absolutely. It is not seldom but often that gynecologists see at their offices young married women

in whom over-indulgence and the use of chemical means of making possible this over-indulgence have developed a congestion of the organs of generation which renders a rest and treatment necessary. Again I say regulate, but do not destroy.

Contrary to the ideas of the birth control proponents, I find this a very pleasant world in which to live. We see, of course, much suffering which each one of us is trying to relieve to the best of his ability, but the moment we let down the bars as they advise, we make the world worse, not better.

I have great confidence in the integrity and virtue of womanhood, but it is nevertheless a fact that fear of pregnancy is a great influence.

They also bring in the subject of hereditary syphilis. The author has made an extended study of syphilis in pregnant women and wishes to state that it is perfectly possible for a woman with latent syphilis and an active Wassermann reaction if subjected to proper treatment to give birth to perfectly healthy children; not that I would advise syphilitics to marry and procreate, neither on the other hand would I advise their marriage and have the habit of contra-ception established, for their moral tone would thus be lowered and an inevitable result would be a lowering of the moral tone of all with whom they associate.

Do you wish this thing taught to your daughter? The physiology of sex, yes, but in my own family I prefer to do this myself. This cannot be handled in the public schools.

Do we, as a representative body of physicians, take the responsibility of advocating birth control? The author feels that birth control advocates strike a blow at the republic through their teachings.

I cannot do better than quote from a book on Medical Jurisprudence by the Rev. Charles Coppens, S. J.:

"It will result in self-abuse for both parties concerned. No man in his right senses but what will admit that self-abuse is a crime. Still it is not legislated against, no more is gluttony or private drunkenness.

"Shall man be allowed to make laws contrary to the basic principles of medical practice and thus be allowed to waste his choicest gifts in the indulgence of debasing pleasure? Are we to be allowed by legislation to make monsters of ourselves, moral blots upon the face of this beautiful earth?

"The advocates are counseling acts which are directly contrary to the underlying principles of Medical Jurisprudence.

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"The whole foundation of medical practice is based upon Medical Jurisprudence. Medical Jurisprudence is based upon ethics and laws higher than those made by man. Are we as a body of medical men ready to assume the responsibility of upsetting these laws? It studies the principles that underlie legal enactments and if there were no higher law there would be no such principle."

It is a question of subservience to the requirements of temporary expediency at the sacrifice of duty.

Medical men should be more conscientious in regard to the dictates of the higher law than any other class of men, save perhaps the clergy.

Shall we stultify ourselves and our profession? Shall we allow our conscience to become as rubber and let ourselves to be swayed by every wind of modern speculation? If we do, we can readily persuade ourselves that a measure is lawful because of its expediency.

Do not prostitute your profession to such vile usages. Some medical men, I am sorry to say, afraid of the ar-

guments of the forum and the trouble and notoriety thereby entailed will not defend their honest principles as zealously as will the propagandist of bold speculations and dangerous new theories, in the spreading of what is pernicious.

Weak convictions are not likely to be proof against violent and repeated temptations. If a physician is once convinced that there is no higher law and that he be nothing more than a rather curious lump of matter, which is to lose forever all consciousness in death, why indeed should he not get rid of any other lump of matter if it stands in the way of his present or prospective happiness?

It will be a sad day for the medical profession and for the world at large if ever the people countenance this advice. Society cannot do without the higher laws and these laws are the basis of medical practice.

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