

Birth Control, Abortion, and Sterilization

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According to the wording of this assignment, one could expect to cover all of the methods of birth control, all of the reasons for birth control, and accord the same treatment to abortion and sterilization likewise. However, in view of the fact that these subjects are to be aired at a pastoral conference, it seems reasonable to assume that we are to limit our study chiefly to the Scriptural attitude we should cultivate in this field and which we are to pass on to those whom we serve in our ministry.

Actually, all three of the topics in the title of this study are merely different aspects of the same subject: deliberate human intervention in, or control of, human birth.

When we speak of "birth control", we generally refer to any device, chemical, or technique which will prevent conception. It would seem superfluous use of time and paper to evaluate and describe what these all involve when addressing a group of pastors. From the mere physical or psychological standpoint there is a considerable difference of opinion among professionals on the subject. In our pastoral counseling our chief concern will be the ethical and moral issues involved.

To practice birth control or not, that is the question. When the Lord made man and woman He created them sexual, to complement each other, to complete each other, to desire each other, to mate in the sex act. Since He made them in His image, holy like Himself, their sex life also was perfectly pure. God brought Adam and Eve together and established the use of the sexual functions only in the sacred bond of marriage. "They shall be one flesh" (Gen. 2,24). His Word to them was, "Be fruitful and multiply" (Gen. 1,22,28). This is both a command and a promise of blessing upon the marriage relationship. Though man became corrupt through the fall into sin, and his sex life also became subject to sin's perverting influence, yet the marriage relationship as such remains a sacred and God-pleasing function to be exercised for man's welfare and happiness. "Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled" (Heb. 13,4).

Man is not just a biological specimen, then, nor merely the masterpiece of God's creation. He is a living soul, created for eternal life in the presence of God. When man fell for Satan's lies, God might merely have erased man from existence. But, He loved Adam and Eve and their descendants, all of whom inherited their sinful nature. God so loved that He redeemed them through His Son's sacrifice on the cross. Each human being, therefore, is a personal object of God's love, redeemed by the blood of Christ, and has everlasting life. His existence from the womb to the tomb is his God-given time of grace to lay hold on eternal life through faith in Christ. God gave man the unique gift of speech and the understanding of the same. So, man can talk with God and God with man. Man is to understand the will of God and has the responsible awareness that he is answerable to God concerning God's will. God has given to man a conscience which he is to use to compare what he has or has not done with the absolute will and standards of God—another quality which makes man unique among all created beings.

In approaching, and preparing ourselves for, the study before us, it is essential that we keep these basic facts in mind. The decisions that Christians make which affect life and death must be made in full recognition of God's word and will, and in complete awareness of their personal accountability to God. Christians must know, and be reminded of this if they have for the moment forgotten, that sex is a holy gift of God, that it is the fountain of all human life, and

is therefore also the beginning of eternal life. As God is a God of order, so also sex life is to be orderly, exercised only under God's order of matrimony for the orderly propagating of the human race. Love must, always accompany order. Neither love nor order can exist without the other. So, sex is God's gift to man by which man and woman are to express their love for each other in an orderly way in the bonds of marriage. Sexual activity outside of this holy state is therefore disorderly, and so cannot express love but only lust. Such a climate cannot then express love for God either, nor is accountability to Him being taken seriously.

Again, let me repeat, it is important to stress this when we counsel in these matters. For, a person cannot make a right decision in the question of whether or not to practice birth control with utter disregard in his heart for God's love and order, and without consideration of the corresponding love and order that Christian spouses are to cherish and express toward one another.

When Christians are confronted with the question of whether or not to practice birth control, it is so often the result of economic considerations, money problems in other words. "We can't afford more children." Or, "If we have more children, we can't give them all an equal education." Personal convenience is often another consideration brought to bear. Christians ought to weigh most prayerfully whether they are trying to make something right in God's sight by labeling it expedient or convenient. In such cases it sounds much more like a lack of trust in the goodness and mercy of the Lord, namely that if He chooses to bless me with another child, He will not provide the "daily bread" with which to bring up this child as I ought. "He that spared not His only Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Rom. 8,32). Will not the God who redeemed me also help me to be a Christian when it is difficult to be one, and to respect and submit to His will even when the going gets rough? "All things" in God's promise may not be made to include the latest car or TV, or a boat, a snowmobile, a fashionable home with all the gimmicks money can buy. It does mean all the things I may need in the process of carrying out His will for this life and to reach my ultimate mansion in heaven.

Prof. Martin J. Naumann writes in his fine booklet, *The Deadly ABC*: "The very fact that every child is potentially, as far as man can know, an heir of everlasting life, a part of God's church, should weigh heavily on the conscience of Christians, of Christian married people. Only to believing Christians can we speak of such responsibility. Only those who live by the Word of God can have an understanding of these things. Only Christians can come to God asking for forgiveness for any or all sins that they have committed, great and small. Only Christians can realize that to decide to have a child or not have a child is a matter of faith and trust in the heavenly Father, the Lord and Giver of life. The Christian Church will grow or shrink as families grow in faith. In our own days statistics witness to a correspondence between birth control and loss of membership as well as loss of interest in missions. How can a Christian who desires to bring people to Christ, refuse for one selfish reason or another to bring children into the world, into the church, and to everlasting life."(4)

Nearly every reason advanced for birth control is a selfish one. Besides the one mentioned above, there is for the unwed the desire to avoid the otherwise obvious consequences of their fornication. The sex education programs being pushed into our schools and colleges heavily stress the need for knowing how to prevent conception. The immoral act is of lesser concern, in fact no longer regarded as immoral, but mere fun, as long as you play it smart and don't get pregnant. Man's philosophy of education is not what is right and wholesome, but how can I get the most fun out of life with the least trouble, work, or pain?

We pastors and Christian parents must certainly be aware of this sinister attitude and propaganda of the so-called “new morality.”(18) We cannot expect to counteract or eliminate it from the scene by legislation or the group pressure of the organized churches. Our one and only weapon is the Word of God. This we must diligently lay upon the hearts and consciences of parents and children alike. Furthermore, whether we like it or not, in our homes and classrooms and from the pulpit we shall have to speak more explicitly on sexual matters than ever before, and do so knowledgeably, with measured and careful emphasis, and in love for the truth and for the souls involved. Forget about angry words and tongue lashings, and also the evasive answer. Nothing turns young people off faster! We shall have to learn, if we have not already done so, the language or vocabulary of sex, not the dirty four-letter words, but the correct terminology that lays everything the young people want to know and learn about sex clearly on the line, and do so reverently.(17)

Our youngsters know more about sexual matters than many of us did when we got married. A few weeks ago we had the second of two film strips on sex, “What You Do About Sex,” presented and discussed at our Luther League. Our vicar handled the showing and discussion that followed. After the meeting I took one of the Freshman boys home. On the way I asked him what he thought about the topic. His comment: “Oh, so-so, but I was looking for more information about birth control and abortion!” It isn’t the “bare facts” about the “birds and the bees” that seem to interest teenagers anymore. That’s all “old-hat.” What they want to hear, and have a right to hear, and must hear, is how to apply Scriptural principles to the confusing welter of propaganda spewed into their environment by the ungodly.

All the sex education outside the framework of God’s holy Word is not advancement but regression. The evidence is piling up all around us that the world’s efforts to teach sex is only resulting in greater abuse of this God-given gift. The terrifying spread of VD and the new strains resistant to penicillin, which has been successfully used to cure gonorrhea heretofore, is evidence enough that all the world can accomplish is educated devils.(19)

One of the reasons behind the big push for birth control is the fear of a “population explosion” or “the population bomb.” This latter term according to Dr. Paul Ehrlich who has recently written a book with this title, was first used in print in 1954.(2) In his book he makes a very convincing argument in favor of limiting the world’s population. He demands that no couple have more than two children. By the time you finish reading his book you lay it aside with a sigh and say, “My God, if this is all true, we had better start applying the brakes on human propagation at once!” Then, you begin to reflect, and read some writers who take the opposite view, and come to realize that Dr. Ehrlich’s arguments have lots of holes, to say nothing of nearly total absence of Christianity’s viewpoint.

Obviously, birth control is being practiced more and more, since birth rates are declining. According to the Washington Center for Metropolitan Studies as reported in Christian News, the birthrate in the past year has dropped about 12%. Figures from the 1970 census indicate that “the greatest decline in the number of children under the age of five in the 120 years for which these statistics have been kept in the U.S.—a drop of 15.5% from 1960 to 1970—coincides with “one of the largest recorded 10-year increases among young adults in the principal childbearing age range.” “The drop is almost exactly twice as great as during the depression decade of the 1930’s.” The study went on to say that though the over-all population is still rising, but much more slowly than earlier projected, the present trend, if continued would “bring stability or decline of the total population.” (8) and (9)

Back in 1934 the birth rate decline was more rapid than was anticipated by the experts, according to Dr. W. A. Maier in *For Better, Not For Worse*.⁽³⁾ Experts then, he writes, predicted a stationary population within two or three decades at somewhere between 135,000,000 and 145,000,000. The fact is we are now well over the 200,000,000 mark, even with a marked decrease in the birth rate. What might it be without birth control, and that added to the great strides in advancing life-expectancy from 61.1 years in 1934 to 70.2 in 1968?⁽⁶⁾

The trouble with all of these experts and their calculations is that they are trying to play God. They profess to be able to read the future precisely in terms of what will happen 50 or 100 years or more from now if we don't do as they say, or do what they tell us not to do. Here are some samples:

“The ratio of population to arable land and the supply of fossil fuels is an increasingly unfavorable one which is productive of famine. The time is come, we are told, to raise the question ‘What right have you to have a child?’” (5, p. 17)

“Only population control can keep any country's numbers right, or the quality of its citizens high. Sterilization may be drastic but necessary. Begin with mass sterilization of people on the lower level; sterilize far enough up the quality scale to make the quantity no greater than is appropriate for the long-run drag on food resources. Marriage should not be permitted without an IQ test, a passing grade of 90 or more being required for a marriage license.” (5, p. 17)

Another with opposite view: “Population is the nation's greatest resource, and great numbers mean great power. World power is passing from West to East for the largest nations lie in the East. Their size alone guarantees them a place that Western nations cannot rival. It is numbers plus state planned industrialization that equals greatness. This is materialism with a vengeance!”^(5, p. 17)

Those who so firmly assure us that we are in the midst of a population explosion are quite emotional in their wielding of this scare phrase. One would like to think that they have at least firm statistical ground on which to stand. One so-called expert admits, however: “The statistics are not exact, of course. There is no way of registering the daily births and deaths for much of Asia, Africa, and South America. But the experts are in close agreement about the figures.” Yes, this is supposed to be good science, when they can give detailed population statistics without registers of births and deaths! They agree with one another but not with reality! One pair of writers admits: “Population forecasting is essentially a matter of judgment.”^(5, p. 18)

Again, these experts make their forecasts without considering possible changes in the political, economic or social structure of our nation; assuming no all-out war, revolution, or nationwide natural disaster, epidemic, earthquake, etc. Remarkable indeed, when any one of these completely unpredictable events could and would have equally unpredictable effects on the population! It makes one chuckle a bit to read a remark by a writer in *The Scientific American*, September 1960, regarding world population figures: “One suspects that writers have been copying each other's guesses.”

Another factor that apparently has a depressing effect on the birth rate is the strain of crowded city living. Studies indicate that population density leads to a decline in fertility. So, the question in our minds becomes more insistent all the time: What really controls the birth rate? We would have to answer that God has His system of checks and balances with which man has little to do, and about which he knows less.

Dr. Ehrlich in analyzing his belief in “The Population Bomb”, exhibits great distress in regard to the over-population in India where “a million people sleep on the streets of Calcutta.”(2) His solution is drastic birth-control measures. He lightly brushes aside the religious problem of the “holy cow” which overpopulates the land and the rat population said to number 2,5 billion which eats more than 875 million bushels of grain annually, more than the United States could ship to them in a year. It is also a matter of record that another 25% of India’s grain is annually lost through poor handling and storage. Obviously, there are other solutions needed for India’s problems besides birth control.(5)

In our own country the pollution that is destroying our environment and the lag in conservation of our natural resources is not the result of over-population, nor are they going to be improved by birth-control. Whether men and nations use and develop the earth or abuse it and lay waste its resources is basically a moral question, not one of controlling the birth rate. As the moral fiber of a nation declines, so also does its ability to police itself and to wisely use its resources. Hence, the vicious downward cycle continues, and certain ruin lies in the offing. Selfish and murderous birth control is in itself a wanton waste of natural resources. To quote Congressman John Schmitz in *Christian News* (9) “We have a population decline—rather than explosion—which history shows to be one of the most characteristic elements in national decay and collapse. A nation which makes a crusade out of reducing its birth rate is working overtime to eliminate itself from the face of the earth.”

This same source quotes a highly competent scientist Colin Clark, a recognized British expert in agricultural economics: “The world’s present arable land, managed according to agricultural and forestry techniques now in use, would support 35 billion people at the highest present consumption level—more than 10 times the present world population.

Now, all of this is cited against the *Population Bomb* scare of Dr. Ehrlich and others. Much more could be said. Rousas J. Rushdoony in his book, *The Myth of Over-Population*, is a good place to start if you want to read more. The bibliography which he supplies will provide a vast resource of material. We do not, however, simply counteract the birth control propaganda with counter-statistics and arguments from history, useful though they may be. These are but a steppingstone back to the Bible which tells us with divine authority that “the earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof” (I Cor. 10,26). “While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night shall not cease” (Gen. 3,22).

I would like to quote from Dr. W. A. Maier’s book, *For Better, Not For Worse* (3) five fundamental facts, as he lists them, for couples to consider who are worried about the practical issues that touch on their family life and marital relations, and are troubled by the thought of unusually large families and the resulting inability to adequately provide for their children:

- 1) “The specter of a prodigal nature that spawns out children and that almost mechanically brings babies year after year in uninterrupted succession is not the picture of nature as it exerts its influences in the present affairs of our lives. There are bounds and limits to fertility which are regulated by subtle and sometimes indiscernible factors. Research has presented strong evidence that human fertility is lessened as prosperity, comfort, and intellectuality increase.”
- 2) “It dare not be overlooked that ‘children are an heritage of the Lord’, the gift of His rich and undeserved mercy...No child is born without the will and direction of God, and every child that is born into a Christian home is under all circumstances the embodiment of a rich and divine benediction.”

- 3) "It should be emphasized that there may be certain unobjectionable, if not infallible means that will help regulate the size of a family. The Church has never protested against the employment of those means which the course of nature itself seems to provide, unless their employment is a selfish attempt to evade the responsibilities of parenthood." (He probably is referring to the so-called rhythm method.)
- 4) "The Church also calls attention to the practice and development of continence, self-denial, and restraint. While this imposes a task of herculean struggle on those who spurn the spiritual forces of Christianity, those who take recourse to the power of effective prayer find a sustaining ally in the strength of their faith."
- 5) "Finally, the Church says that in the infrequent and exceptional conflicts between childbirth and maternal health the Christian conscience must seek pastoral advice and the counsel of a Christian physician."⁽³⁾

Now, all that has been written so far has not touched upon the question of whether there is a legitimate or God-pleasing motive for using some method of birth control. In passing we note from Dr. Maier's remarks that maternal health is certainly a legitimate motive. This we have always recognized, to the best of my knowledge. It is simply exercising Christian love and responsibility to guard the mother's health, also to the extent that she not bear any more children, if this be the verdict of competent medical authority. With a good conscience a Christian should be able to find a happy solution in this circumstance. It might be, according to one man I knew, complete abstinence henceforth. I have every reason to believe his confiding remark that he and his wife prayerfully resolved that they would not sleep together nor indulge in any more than a hug or kiss until she reached menopause. That was nearly 15 years of self-controlled continence! Not every man could do that.

A more realistic solution, where the mother's health is a valid consideration, would probably be the "pill," or some device to prevent conception. Perhaps the doctor would be the best one to help determine the method. Any method that does not cause harmful results would be acceptable, in my opinion. Whatever the solution in cases of this kind, the Christian will want to weigh the matter most conscientiously to make sure his motives are God-pleasing. Dr. Kirsten in *The Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, January 1968 writes under the theme (I trust you have all read it), "Birth Control As Ethical and Pastoral Problem,": "Where methods of birth control are used just so that the passions may be given free rein and that the marriage relation becomes 'legal' immorality, there marriage itself and the partners in it are being degraded."⁽¹⁾ He also voices a caution about contraceptives, (presumably he means chemicals such as the pill) because "disastrous results could follow of which we at present have not so much as an inkling." Into the setting of the above remarks I would prefer to place also the method of birth control gaining wide popularity today, especially among the men, which is sterilization. Done correctly, I understand that the operation's results are not irreversible either in man or woman, although obviously considerably more difficult than with other methods.

For a Christian it is not a matter of choice whether or not to have children. For us to arbitrarily limit the number of children we shall have, or to have no children, is defying God's plan for the continuation of the race and hindering His plan for the salvation of mankind. With every effort at evangelical handling of the matter, we pastors will want to make it clear that greed, lack of faith, and the gods of money and materialism and high living standards dare not be our motives for controlling births.

I believe it must be admitted, though, along with Dr. Kirsten, that "situations may develop in the lives of Christian couples when the size of the growing family and the earning

power of the parents create problems, when the increasing size of the family becomes a burden, and when the all too rapid succession of births threatens to overtax the physical capabilities of the parents, especially the mothers...Then, we must try to determine in a Christian responsible way what advice to give such a married couple in view both of the fact that their relations may well result in a continued succession of births and that certain limits are placed on their own capabilities.”(1) Here, then, Christian liberty and responsibility will have to prevail, and it will be up to the Christian couple involved to decide what to do in this particular case. Again, the Christian will most earnestly and prayerfully weigh the matter to determine that his motive is not a selfish one, but in keeping with Christian love and the sanctity of the marriage relationship. I believe it would be legalistic to condemn out of hand all planned parenthood. Assuming that I have taught the Christian principles involved, I will want to leave the matter in the hands of Him who examines the hearts of men and judges all things rightly.

When we consider the method of birth control known as abortion, another factor enters the picture besides that of merely keeping the population under control. We must be concerned here with the taking of a human life.

Abortion, as we define it for our present consideration, means simply the deliberate removal from the mother’s womb of an embryo or fetus—a child that has been conceived but has not yet reached full term and been born. We ought to add one more thought to be accurate: that abortion is the removal from the womb of a child that is not yet able to live on its own, and to do it in such a way that the child will die. A competent physician can do this with comparatively little risk to the mother. Incompetent and untrained people also perform abortions, often with fatal results for the mother. Competent or incompetent, those who perform these operations often prey on the fears and shame of some unwed mothers-to-be who try to get rid of the evidence of their acts of fornication or adultery, or on the selfish desires of married women who cry: “I’m not ready to have a child now,” or “My birth control method failed—I don’t want a child.”

The drive to liberalize present abortion laws is in essence an effort to legalize all abortions and to have abortion on demand. This matter was hotly debated in the last (1971) sessions of our Minnesota legislature, but no change in the laws concerning abortion resulted...yet. The pro-abortionists will keep trying, of that we may be sure. Our present Minnesota law allows an abortion only if it is a necessity in order to save the mother’s life. That is the way it ought to remain. With this exceptional case a Christian can agree. (It was pointed out in the discussion following the reading of this essay that Minnesota law also permits abortion of a child conceived by incest or rape. I do not believe that a Christian caught in this circumstance *must* have an abortion. The child is a human being; it had no choice of how it was conceived; a Christian does believe that the evil God permits to come into our lives will be turned into blessing; every effort can be made to give the child a Christian home with opportunity to gain salvation through Christ. If the emotional atmosphere can be overcome, and the grace of Christ be made to prevail, I see no reason why the child of incest or rape cannot be granted the same right to life as any other.)

But, even in those cases where the life of a mother is endangered by a pregnancy or birth the Christian mother will very seriously question whether she should sacrifice her child to save her own life. Christian parents will also in this situation pray to the Heavenly Father for help and guidance and strength to do His will. Dr. Helmut Thielicke in his book *The Ethics of Sex*, as quoted by Dr. Hans Kirsten (1), touches the spirit that all Christians will want to maintain: “The genesis of human life is a sacrosanct domain which dare not be invaded by human hands or ‘rationalized’, that is, subjected to utilitarian considerations.”

The question so fervently tossed about is whether a person has a right to get an abortion for reasons other than those stated above. The Women's Liberation Movement says loudly "yes:" The term "the therapeutic abortion" is here drawn into the discussion. Literally, it means an abortion for the purpose of healing the mother. What it means in practice is to get rid of the fetus or embryo, not only because the mother's life may be endangered, but because it will prevent the birth of a child which might be deformed; or, the mother would be inconvenienced to have a child; or, the unwed mother or her mother would be so embarrassed their nerves would be frayed and their future clouded; so, get rid of the unborn baby! Thus, the door swings open farther and farther as people ponder what they think is good for the mother or for the human race. Where does one stop? Gentlemen, this is murder!

In our Catechism we confess: "I believe that God has made me." This agrees with the Bible which says: "Hath not God created us?" (Mal. 2,10) "Thy hands have made and fashioned me." (Ps. 119,73) Of course, many more passages could be cited.

How has God created us? How fashioned us? In such a way that we were conceived and formed in our mother's womb when our parents mated. Job speaks of this in chapter 10: "Thine hands have made me and fashioned me together round about...Remember, I pray thee, that thou hast made me as the clay...Hast thou not poured me out as milk, and curdled me like cheese? Thou has clothed me with skin and flesh, and has fenced me with bones and sinews." The Holy Spirit moved the Psalmist to sing, "Thou has covered me in my mother's womb." (Ps. 139,13) Thus a human being exists before God from his earliest beginnings in his mother's womb, a creature of God, a marvelously complicated and living person. "Covered" means that God has woven us together in every part of our body to form what we are: His product. Only God is the producer from A to Z!

Against this blessed truth the ungodly and unbelievers of the world, the selfish and the adulterous deceivers say: As long as a child has not yet been born it is merely a part of the mother's body, especially in the first months; the mother has the right to do with it whatever she pleases. This is, of course, an outright lie on the very face of it, as any Christian should be able to recognize in the light of Scripture. Remember that the Bible calls Satan the "father of lies" (John 8,44). This lie then is also his product, the product of him whom the Bible also calls "a murderer from the beginning" (John 8,44).

This lie is grasped eagerly by those who seek to cover their sins of fornication or adultery in or out of wedlock. Of course, many today do not even try to cover their sins, but those that do try, often think abortion is the answer. Thus they heap one sin upon another. How can any right-thinking God-fearing Christian suppose that he or she can please God or promote his or her happiness by adding murder to adultery?

As for the possibility of bringing into the world a deformed child, who is in a position to say unequivocally that this is always bad? Our hearts go out to those who have such children. On the other hand we know of many cases where deformed children lived happy and productive lives, and also provided the opportunity for individuals and families and the church to develop their resources of love, patience, understanding and helpfulness, plus a keener appreciation of their own unimpaired health. Thus they made of themselves and those they care for more useful citizens of the nation and of God's Kingdom. Everyone knows the story of Helen Keller, to mention even one extreme case.

Now, laws may eventually open wide the door to abortion on demand. Christians, on the other hand, should never assume that because the law allows it, therefore it is okay and God-pleasing. Neither the legislative bodies or the courts of our land can be expected to determine the

standards by which a Christian is to live. God alone is our safe guide and His Word is our standard of morality.

Many doctors and nurses who have assisted in legal abortions are increasingly squeamish about its practice. According to *Christianity Today*, one general practitioner in Maryland summed it up this way: “Too many people are concerned more about the issues than the individual mother or the fetus”...Everyone who stumps for more legalized abortion should be made to view the actual operation itself even under the best operating room conditions. He might change his mind.”(12)

The guilt feelings that haunt a woman who has had an unnecessary abortion must not be overlooked either. By getting rid of an embarrassing or inconvenient problem—an unwanted fetus—another problem may be born, that of mental illness. Abortion is not as harmless and casual an event as many in the pro-abortion crowd insist. A psychological price is paid. For those with some measure of Christian upbringing it may be the haunting fear of what God must think, and what the punishment for sin is; for others it may be a drifting away from all human warmth and companionship, or a hardening of the mother instinct to the point that all children become detestable brats in their sight. One psychiatrist I read recently (12) stated: “Something happens on the deeper levels of a woman’s consciousness when she destroys a pregnancy. I know that as a psychiatrist.” Yes, the emotional price one often pays for deliberate sin is much worse than the sin one tried to cover up.

The Christian will always try to remember—and pastors should help them to remember—that the God who gave order to the universe and commandments to direct us in a wholesome and happy way of life, is also the God of our salvation through His Son, Jesus Christ. He is the God who offers forgiveness and reconciliation. When we fall, then we do not flee to the world for advice on how to escape the consequences of sin, or how to cover up our sins. Rather, we flee to Him who says, “If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (I John 1,8-9). Far better it is to bear the earthly consequences of embarrassment and shame, and try with God’s help to do better, and to care for our children, whatever the circumstances of their birth or conception, or the state of their health, in the full consciousness that “children are an heritage of the Lord,” His gift for us to nurture in His way, for His glory, and for the child’s eternal life with Christ in glory.

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