

## 7 THE PROBLEM OF ABORTION

Since the end of World War II abortion has become one of the most coveted solutions to Anglo-American-Canadian social and family problems, including that of illegitimate conceptions. It is estimated that in 1967 more than one million illegal abortions were performed in the United States compared to some eight hundred thousand legal (therapeutic) abortions. In Britain the number of illegal abortions was estimated at 100,000 in the same year. The cost in human life, sorrow, guilt complexes, neuroses, and national degeneration represented by these appalling figures is beyond human calculation and is known only to Almighty God himself.

By illegal abortion is usually meant those performed for reasons other than the termination of a pregnancy carried out by competent medical authorities to save the life of a prospective mother. In addition to this valid ground for abortion, which no reformational Christian need dispute, the "reformers" advocate changes in the present law to allow abortion (1) in the case of pregnancy resulting from rape and incest, (2) in the case of any pregnancy where the mother's health requires it for mental, physical, or social health reasons, (3) when physicians determine that the child will be born physically deformed or mentally defective.

Advocates of reform argue that the present law dates from the middle of the last century, that it has been conditioned by Victorian ethics which are no longer acceptable to modern people, and that social conditions are utterly different from those of one hundred years ago. Dorothy Kenyon, a former municipal court judge in New York, epitomizes this trend of thought in the statement: "For a state to force a woman to bear a child against her will is outrageous." A spokesman for many practicing obstetricians in California, Dr. Edmund W. Overstreet, declares, "We do not believe that violation of an archaic statute (the 1872 abortion law in California) is unprofessional conduct." Another obstetrician and gynecologist of the Board of Directors of the Association for the study of abortion law reform in New York asserts, "There should be no abortion laws at all. No law tells me I can amputate a leg or perform a Caesarean, and no law should govern whether I can perform an abortion." The American Medical Association and the American Law Institute have gone on record as favoring the liberalization of existing abortion laws.<sup>44</sup> In England David Steel in 1967 introduced his Medical Termination of Pregnancy Bill in the British House of Commons, which would legalize abortion for social as well as purely medical reasons.

Whatever these "reformers" in America and Britain may believe to the contrary, abortion for social rather than medical reasons is murder. God alone creates life and He commands men everywhere to respect and protect the sanctity of innocent human life, especially that of defenseless unborn babies. Every baby in the womb has the God-given right to be born. Once conception has taken place, and the human embryo begins to develop, the fetus has the "right to life." Termination of this life constitutes murder and is a direct violation of the great commandment, "Thou shalt not kill" (Exod. 20:13). The reformers try to get around this by arguing that the life of the baby begins only after birth and not at the moment of conception. In most American states, existing abortion laws affirm that individual life starts at conception, and therefore merits protection.

God's Word supports the belief of many outstanding gynecologists that the life of the child begins with conception and that the fertilized gametes are endowed with supernatural qualities. Thus the psalmist says, "Thou hast covered me in my mother's womb" (Ps. 139:13). Concerning the prophet Jeremiah, the Lord declares, "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations" (Jer. 1:5). And John the Baptist, before he was born, responded to the presence of the Lord by leaping in his mother's womb (Luke 1:41, 44).

God, the giver and source of all life thus regards the developing embryo as an individual person. Interference with this God-created life must be considered contrary to God's law for man.

Professor James Scott of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Leeds University, England, in a most disturbing speech opposing any liberalization of present abortion laws in England, concluded that although he did "not know when the soul entered the body, he did know that at an early stage babies experienced pain, and this made them one of the human community."<sup>45</sup> The Times of London reported that another great British obstetrician was also opposed to Steel's Bill on Abortion.

In terms which he admitted were deliberately shocking, Professor Ian Donald, Regius Professor of Midwifery, Glasgow University, described an abortion operation even under ideal conditions, because, he said, the public should know. There was a popular idea that in early pregnancy there was a sort of inanimate jelly which could be scooped out. But at 28 days the fetus was recognizable, with head, eyes, fingers and toes.

Abortion could be done by a miniature Caesarian operation. But you have a live baby and it kicks and goes on kicking, for a long time. You have to kill it.... you hide it from the nurses. ... it is a distressing sight! The baby could be removed by a process which dismembered it; or it could be pickled-slowly killed-by the injection of a concentrated solution of salt.

The criminal abortionist did not get rid of the pregnancy properly, but only interfered with it. Usually it had to be cleared up in a hospital. Even with an operation for abortion under ideal hospital conditions, a woman may never be the same again.<sup>46</sup>

Anyone who has seen the film, *The Doctor and Abortion*, and heard Dr. Donald's commentary upon it will never again be hoodwinked by the godless claim that the unborn baby is not very much alive inside the womb.

Not only are many leading gynecologists in America and Britain opposed to this pagan proposal to murder unborn babies, but also many psychiatrists. One such psychiatrist, Dr. Plattner, who works in Berne, Switzerland, told of an experience of his. A certain pregnant woman, who was trying to obtain his consent to an abortion, often referred to the child she had conceived in her womb as "a little collection of cells."

Such is the conception that a godless medical and apostate political and social science today gives us of the individual person - "a little collection of cells" in the case of an

unborn baby or for an adult person created in God's image "a big collection of cells." Instinctively this post-Christian woman appealed to such an apostate view of man, when she wished to devalue the little human life that was at stake and thus to justify her selfishness and sin.

One day Dr. Plattner had the idea of asking this woman the question: "What name would you give to this little collection of cells if it were born?" At once, he reports, the whole atmosphere of the consultation changed. The woman was silent; one felt that her baby, as soon as she gave him a personal name in her own mind, was ceasing to be a "little collection of cells," in order to become an individual person, however little and helpless. "It was staggering," concluded Dr. Plattner. "I felt as if I had been present at an act of creation." <sup>47</sup>

The Christian doctor or politician who puts himself inside the biblical view of man as a person created in God's holy image must inevitably become a doctor or politician of the personal. Such Christian men no longer "see" the unborn baby as a mere collection of cells to be burnt in a hospital furnace after being dismembered piece by piece simply to satisfy its mother's desire to get rid of it.

Such Christian doctors rightly refuse to carry out the apostate humanists' dirty work. Why indeed should the Congress and Parliament expect God-fearing men to act as public executioners in the name of the god of `scientific materialism? As Professor J. C. McClure Browne, of Hammersmith Hospital, London, England, stated in Cambridge University on February 21, 1967: "The only other form of legalized murder in this country has been hanging-which should be sure that the grounds for committing it are strong and compelling." <sup>48</sup>

It is only godless doctors and politicians who dare to execute defenseless unborn babies for social rather than strictly medical reasons. If the so-called reformers, better called "deformers," get their legislative way it will not be long before we are asked to legalize the execution of the old and the infirm on the pragmatic grounds that old people are no longer socially useful. After all, Nazi doctors did so in Germany in the name of the same terrible idol.

The acid test of any civilization is treatment of its very young and the very old. In no sphere of life did the Church of Jesus Christ bring about a greater revolution than in this sphere. The Shorter Cambridge Medieval History writes of this real liberalization of man's inhumanity to man:

The influence of Christian ethics may be traced in the humanitarian legislation, however ineffective and marred by desperately ferocious penalties, of the Christian Emperors.

Constantine abolished the cruel punishment of crucifixion.... It was Valentinian who punished the callous practice of exposing unwanted infants as murder. Constantine had done something to protect the slave from ill usage; to kill him was to be punished like the murder of a free-man. It was forbidden to break up the families of slaves or colony by sales. Sexual crimes, like rape, were threatened with punishment of such fierceness as to suggest that their prevalence

had far passed the danger point. Parental tyranny was limited; and by a law of Theodosius the conviction of the father was not to involve the complete ruin of his dependents.<sup>49</sup>

The early Christian Church in the fourth century of our era expressed itself unequivocally upon the evils of abortion and infanticide. In the Apostolic Constitution it is laid down, "Thou shalt not slay thy child by causing abortion, nor kill that which is begotten; for everything that is shaped and has received a soul from God, if it be slain, shall be avenged as being as being unjustly destroyed (Exodus 21:23)."

The advocates of relaxation of existing laws which go back to the fourth and fifth centuries now wish to return to the barbaric customs of ancient Rome and Greece. They would make social rather than medical factors, e.g., the size of the family, the economic position, and "the mother's total environment, actually or reasonably foreseeable," the decisive criterion of whether or not her pregnancy should be terminated.

Such social and economic advantages are clearly selfish and presuppose a materialistic and hedonistic view of life. Everything that makes life difficult is ipso facto bad, and that which makes life comfortable and pleasurable is good. Such hedonism is entirely incompatible with the Christian view of human nature and destiny. Arnold Toynbee bases his entire philosophy of history upon the thesis that civilizations have only grown in response to the challenge of difficult situations and environments.<sup>50</sup> Darius of the Persians was wont to say that "soft countries breed soft people." The Word of God likewise teaches that man's best is always achieved through the surrender and, if necessary, the sacrifice of his own interests for God's kingdom. Was it not through His death upon the cross that our dear Savior won the greatest victory over sin and Satan? Any nation which makes hedonism its end and purpose in life is on the way down and out.

It is claimed that easier abortion legislation would furnish an effective solution to the problem of the unwed mother and of illegitimacy. In reply it can be pointed out that the pro-abortionist seeks to remove the symptoms of evil without dealing with the prior and underlying causes. The real solution lies in a nationwide return to those biblical standards of morality, responsibility, and reformation of sinners by the blood of Jesus Christ, which made America and Britain strong and stable democracies in the past.

So far from increasing the sum of human happiness, liberalization of abortion laws will in fact create more problems than it solves. Many neurotic tendencies in women who have undergone this difficult operation find their origin in this untimely termination of a pregnancy. As a minister of the Gospel for over eighteen years the writer has heard enough confessions from women and girls, all of them heavily burdened with the emotions of guilt and remorse arising out of having undergone an abortion, not to affirm that no woman has recourse to abortion for purely selfish reasons with a clear conscience. His experience is borne out by Sweden, where abortion laws are very liberal, and yet which reports a severe rise in mental anguish for those mothers who have repressed their guilt feelings about having ended the precious little life within them.<sup>51</sup> Thus does the common grace of the living God work to restrain sin in women's hearts.

After legalizing abortions between 1929 and 1937 the Russian Government reversed its previous stand by rejecting legalized abortions. The growing numbers of abortions in Russia had resulted in infertility and repeated miscarriages. In Eastern Europe and Japan, where abortions for social reasons have long been practiced, the authorities are now considering tightening up the laws because of the growing danger to women's health in these nations.

Again, there are many doctors who conscientiously could not perform an abortion operation under any circumstances. What will be their position if the proposed legislation goes through? Are they to be forced out of the medical profession or made to conform? Or are they to become the victims of their patients' demands, which is an ever-increasing complaint from the medical profession as a whole?

It is claimed that the passage of such legislation will enable doctors to prevent deformed babies being born. But aborting a fetus because of the possibility of deformity, according to Professor Browne, would entail the destruction of three healthy babies for every abnormal infant born. He pointed out that "it would be far more logical and certainly more ethical to practice infanticide rather than kill three normal babies in the uterus for every one abnormal infant so destroyed."<sup>52</sup>

In any case, what right have the reformers to play at being God over the population in deciding who shall be born and who shall not be born? Who do they think they are in denying such children the right to be born? A woman in Germany in 1770, already having had six children, discovered she was again pregnant. She had contracted syphilis from her husband and there was danger that the next child would be born deformed. Thank God, Mrs. Beethoven proceeded to have her baby boy, Ludwig, who grew up to become one of the world's greatest composers. At the age of thirty the first signs of deafness appeared, thence onwards the malady to become progressive until at last the loss of hearing was complete, a disease traceable back to his mother's syphilis. Had Beethoven's mother been living today, she would no doubt have been advised to get rid of her baby.<sup>53</sup>

Many defective children draw out from their parents and families a love and affection which make their loss in later years often more poignant than that of normal children. We know that some defective children are very happy. Whatever else he may be, Christians believe that the deformed child is still created in God's image for God's own good reasons. To destroy such a person is to invite the Lord's terrible judgment upon society, as has already happened in Sweden and Japan, where social abortion today results in the killing and murder of millions of unborn babies.

Can it be denied that with the ever-increasing means of evading the consequences of adultery and fornication easier abortion will only encourage greater sexual license in the land? Even though America, Britain, and Canada may have become pluralistic societies, not even the scientific humanists have any right to murder unborn babies or any right to play at providence in deciding who shall be born or not born<sup>54</sup>