

## *The Spiritual Aspect of Birth Control*

**A** FEW WORDS, first, about the morality of birth control, for, ignorantly and unfortunately, the idea of birth control has been associated with immorality.

Theodore Roosevelt emphasized the important duty to one's country of keeping up the number of its population, and this duty he puts on the shoulders of those able to produce and care for sound, healthy, offspring. Obviously it is the duty of the race to humanity to keep the population regulated in a normal, healthy and progressive manner. When the wealthy, educated and ecclesiastical members of society neglect to reproduce the adequate number of offspring for the good of the society of which they form a part, they are immoral. They are neglecting a spiritual duty. They are putting selfish indulgence ahead of community welfare. Such people, in my opinion, are immoral and are practicing immoral birth control, no matter how religiously they are living up to all the conventions of society and the church.

On the other hand, the poor families who are breeding diseased offspring or more children than they can support in a healthy, normal, sanitary manner are immoral. Theirs is the immorality of ignorance—ignorance of the laws of birth control. Any institution encouraging such over-production of offspring is immoral.

The State itself is not free from blame regarding

*The two statements in this article first appeared in the February 1918 Rays. Currently, the subject of birth control is a controversial, if not polemical, issue. We include the first author's somewhat dated opinions with the balanced and instructive comments of the Rays' first editor, Max Heindel.*



Oil on canvas. Philippe de Champaigne (1602-1674). The Wallace Collection, London

### *The Annunciation*

*As this painting makes clear, conception and birth are as much spiritual events as material and mundane occurrences.*

these things. A State that allows its citizens already born to suffer privations and become exposed to unhealthful and criminal environments is immoral. A State that does not protect the rights of the helpless baby citizens is immoral, even brutal. Would it not increase and improve the population enormously if the State snatched every infant out of diseased and sordid environments and supplied it with everything a normal, healthy, growing baby citizen needed: nursing, education, comforts, recreation up to the time he or she could be self-supporting?

Thus, the State itself, the wealthy, the educated,

the unmarried ecclesiastics are all, generally speaking, shrinking from their duty to humanity in respect to producing, and rearing healthy, desirable citizens. They are all immoral and most of them are indulging in the immoral use of birth control.

Roosevelt calls the poorer and more unfortunate members of our population the "Submerged Tenth," perhaps because they are unable to rise above the depressing clouds of fear, ignorance and poverty settled about them. Workers for the welfare of humanity should ever be on the alert to send rays of light through these heavy clouds. Even Roosevelt admits that to this class, perhaps, birth control would be a benefit. Indeed, teaching these people the knowledge of the laws of birth control is not only advisable and moral, but necessary to the welfare of the race. A new-born babe has rights which defective parents would be unable to give him. And if we knew a little more about the laws of Causation and Rebirth, we could plainly see that children born into unfortunate environments would often be better had they not been born at all.

This brings us to the deeper spiritual aspect of the matter. It is a mistake to think that when parents give birth to a child they are creating a new soul. The soul, or spirit, of the newborn babe is a divine spark, divinely created. It is blasphemy to suppose that mere human beings could do anything so wonderful as give birth to spirit. Parents can only initiate the process whereby a child's body—its physical abode during this particular earth life—is produced. The parents could not even do this were not the seed atom supplied by the incoming soul itself. Actually the parents supply the soil in which, or out of which the seed atom develops into a human physical form. This seed atom is the unique possession of the incarnating Ego. It is entirely independent of the parents. But before the child can begin an earth life, its seed atom must take root and grow in the body of its mother. The mother, therefore, is the gate through which an individual enters a new life on earth.

When a mother refuses to help build a body for an individual desiring to enter earth life through her, she is depriving that individual of her assistance in the matter. She is by no means killing that individual, who may gain a body through the help

of some other mother. If a mother refuses admittance to an undesirable being, she is right in so doing and benefits humanity thereby. There are all classes of individuals clamoring to be received by a woman's body. It is for the mother to stand on guard lest the unworthy enter.

A mother can determine what sort of child she will give birth to. A woman whose thoughts are pure and noble and whose life is devoted to the upliftment of humanity would, by the law of attraction, draw to her a child with similar inclinations. The attitude of a mother's mind just prior to the reception of the seed atom is all important in determining what sort of child she will bring into the world. A fit of temper or violent passion at this sacred moment leaves the gateway unguarded and invites the wrong sort of entity to enter. Prospective mothers shoulder a tremendous responsibility, and the sooner they learn all there is to know about the laws of generation, the better it will be for humanity.

Before a human being is reborn into an earth life, he or she is permitted to choose certain parents. No one can choose an environment which is not deserved or previously earned in former lives. We are told that there are many highly evolved people who are unable to enter into earthly existence because no worthy parents will supply bodies for them. On the other hand, less evolved individuals are entering the bodies of ignorant women and then into lives of crime, disease, imprisonment or insanity. It is wrong to give birth to such children.

How can the afflicted woman in poverty and darkness guard against this? That she should be on guard is beyond question. She should be instructed regarding the laws of birth control. She should learn that she has absolute control over her own body irrespective of adverse conditions. She must know that no child can come through her portals of life without her consent. The laws of birth control prevent involuntary motherhood which, to the sensitive, is always immoral.

If guarding the gateway of life against undesirable intruders is a woman's duty, how much greater is it her duty and privilege to open the doorway to the child who will be a worthy and helpful member of society. The prospective mother, realizing her

sacred duty, will guard her every thought, word and deed prior to receiving the sacred seed atom which will eventually develop into the body of her child. By prayer she will strive to make her gift to humanity a blessed one. Willingly, joyously, and with protecting mother love, she will help the baby to grow and flourish. In this way motherhood fulfills the highest ideals of morality.

Until all women are in a position to realize the above ideal, it is well, for the good of humanity and themselves, that they learn to bar their gateways of life. Human progress is accelerated as man learns to control the forces of nature. They thus become his servants rather than his dark masters. It is the same with birth control. The proper use of this knowledge will always bless and benefit. It is always the abuse, not the proper use, of power that is immoral.

—Maude Durand Edgren

#### MAX HEINDEL'S REMARKS

The foregoing article on birth control has prompted us to add a few facts to Mrs. Edgren's illuminating remarks, so that our readers may understand this subject from the Cosmic viewpoint. In the first place we should remember that there are about sixty billions of spirits in our life wave, going through the cycle of life and death, living part of the time in the visible and part in the invisible worlds. At the present time there are only fifteen hundred millions of people in physical existence. This is about the lowest ebb and that usually happens at the end of an Age. During the million years or more since we came out of Atlantis the average has been fifty to sixty millions of people. It may also be stated that the Western people are the cream of this evolution and therefore it has fallen to our lot to grapple with the great problems which are always incidental to a transition stage.

Woman has been the arbiter of the world's destinies in past civilizations, while man has had his sway in others, as is now the case, and we are upon the eve of a transition to a new Age where woman will again wield the scepter of power and man will have to submit to her dictates. But before that comes to pass an era of equality will come. This is called the Aquarian Age by occultists, and we have begun to feel its effects since the middle of the last

century when the Sun by precession came within orb of the cusp of Aquarius. It is however, at the present time, still in ten degrees of Pisces. So at the slow rate of travel of the Equinox the Sun will not reach the last degree of Aquarius until about six hundred years have passed. But during that time there will of course be so many wonderful changes in our physical, moral and mental status that we are unable at the present time to conceive what we shall be like then.

We who are now in the body will be followed by groups of spirits still more evolved than we, who will bring about great reforms, and by the time the people on earth at the present time are reborn about four hundred years of the Aquarian Age will be past, so that the world will be well started on the line of development peculiar to that time, and the backward spirits who are born into that atmosphere of great intellectual attainment will thereby gain an immense uplift, on the same principle that an electric conductor which is brought into close proximity to a highly charged wire will automatically receive a charge of a lower voltage. Thus each class or group which rises helps also to raise those who are below it in the scale of evolution.

The matter of population, then, is not entirely governed by individuals or by man-made laws, but the Divine Hierarchs who guide our evolution arrange the matter as required for the highest good for all concerned and the number of the population is in their hands rather than in our own. This does not mean that we cannot or should not exercise birth control in some degree as suggested by those who are responsible for that movement. It is also true that one must help people where they are and not where they ought to be.

The Rosicrucian teachings have always emphasized the fact quoted by Mrs. Edgren that like attracts like, and therefore it is a duty upon the part of those who are well developed physically, morally and mentally to provide an environment for as many incoming spirits as their physical and financial circumstances will permit. This duty is still more binding upon those who are also spiritually developed, for a high spiritual entity cannot enter into physical existence through a vile parentage. But when a couple has reached the point where it is

deemed either dangerous to the health of the mother to bear more children, or where the financial burden would be above their means, *then they should live a life of continence*, not indulging the passionate nature, seeking by artificial means to bar the way for incoming Egos to take advantage of the opportunity for rebirth offered them by the sexual indulgence of such a couple.

This naturally requires considerable spiritual advancement and self-control. There are few who are capable of living such a life, and one might as well preach continence to a stone wall as to the average specimen of humanity. He cannot understand that it is necessary; he even believes that it would interfere with his health, for false statements about the necessity of exercising this natural function have led to many deplorable results. Even if he could be persuaded that he ought to deny himself for the good of his mate and the children he has already brought into the world, he would probably be utterly unable to restrain himself, particularly because people in such moderate circumstances can not usually afford to have separate sleeping quarters.

Therefore it may be necessary to teach these people birth control by scientific means. But we submit that though they are unable to understand the reason why continence should be practiced and unable to practice it because of lack of self-control, the spiritual teachings should be given repeatedly so that as the steady drop wears the stone, in time the coming generations will learn to depend upon their own will power to accomplish the object of keeping their lower nature in check. Without this educational feature looking towards a spiritual emancipation, information concerning physical methods of limiting the birth rate in families that are overburdened is dangerous in the extreme.

There is another phase of the matter which deserves elucidation. Mrs. Edgren says truly, "the attitude of the mother's mind just prior to the recep-

tion of the seed-atom is all-important in determining what sort of child she will bring into the world. A fit of temper or violent passion at this sacred moment leaves the gateway unguarded and invites the wrong sort of entity to enter."

Besides the people in the world we see, the whole atmosphere about us teems with different other entities who are attracted to beings of a like nature. Just as musicians congregate in music halls, sportsmen in yacht clubs and on race tracks, etc., so do

these entities gather around people of a nature similar to their own. As drunkards and gangsters gather around our physical saloons, as immoral men and women meet in so-called redlight districts, so also immoral spirits gather around a home where the passions of the lower nature are indulged perhaps many times during the day or night. There is a certain class of beings, male and female demons living in the ether, who were

called by the ancient alchemists *incubi* and *succubi*, which feed upon the passions of others. What chance has a prospective mother in such an environment of attracting a desirable spirit to take rebirth through her?

And although conception is almost never synchronous with the union of the parents but may take place at any moment within two weeks or more of that event, a mother surrounded by such influences in the home is never free from them. Some of the religions of some of the people we call savages require to this day that the generative act be performed in the temple, and that is what it ought to be. There is no more important act in life, and instead of being condemned as a shame it ought to be exalted to the dignity of a sacrament and performed under the holiest and most inspiring circumstances possible.

Were this done today, as in the so-called Golden Age, we should find an upliftment and an improvement in the conditions of the world as we would not deem possible to accomplish in centuries. □



Oil on canvas, lunette painting in the Rosicrucian Fellowship's Pro-Ecclasia by Mary Hansson