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**BIRTH-CONTROL
AND
SELF-CONTROL**

JOHN R. CLARK HALL

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BIRTH-CONTROL
AND
SELF-CONTROL

BY
JOHN R. CLARK HALL

LONDON
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CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE
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1923

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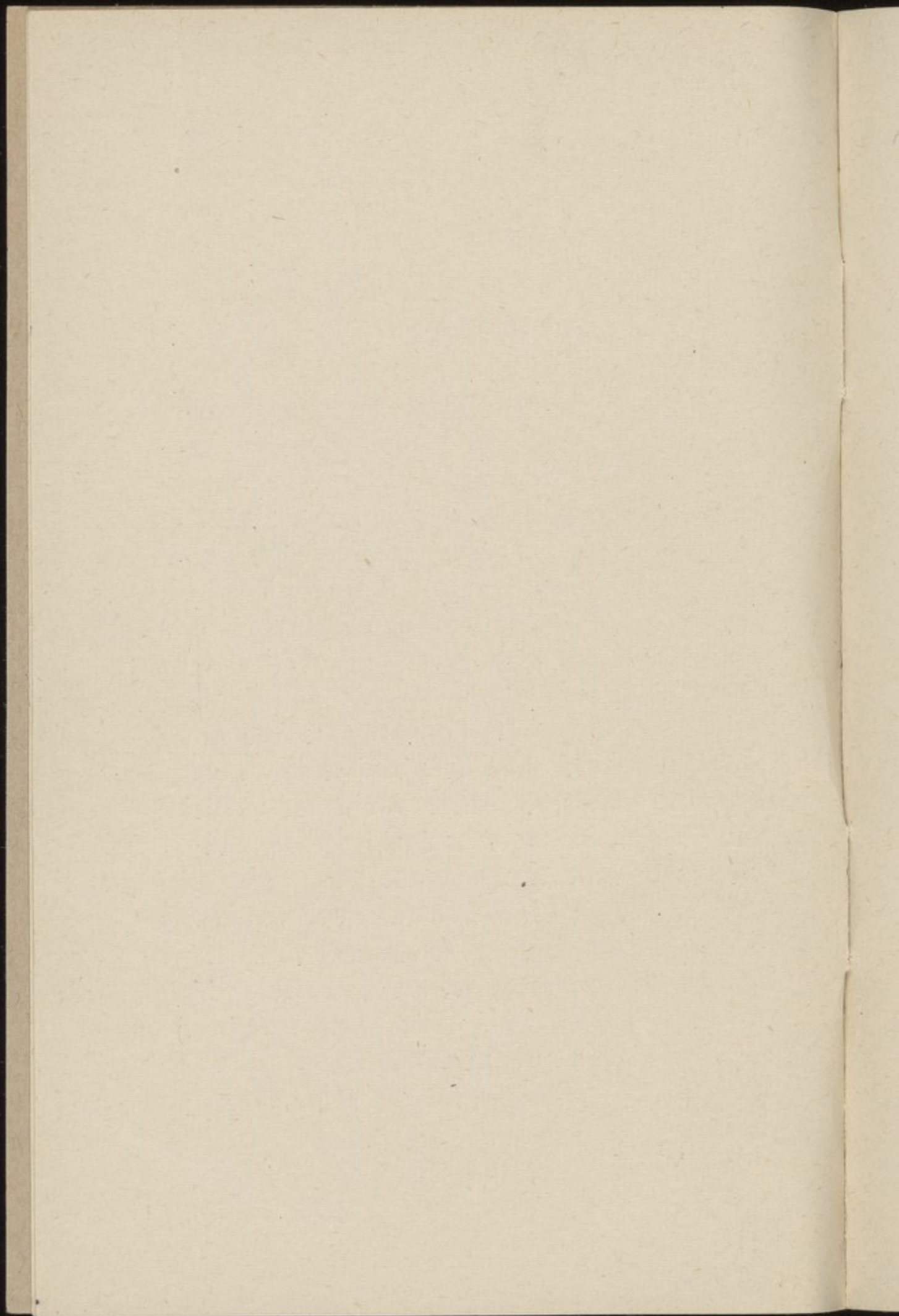
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PREFACE

THE writer of this little tractate, who is a member of the Industrial Christian Fellowship, was entrusted some time ago with the task of suggesting answers in their organ, the *Torch*, to questions put to the agents of the Fellowship at open-air meetings. One of the questions with which he was asked to deal was "What have you got to say about birth-control?" and he put it aside as one which could not be dealt with so shortly and summarily as the other questions which came before him. Eventually he found that the matter could not be dealt with in the limits of a single article, and as a series of articles would not have been suitable for the paper, the character of which has recently been altered somewhat so that it appeals to a wider circle, the alternative which presented itself was to publish the matter in the form in which it now appears.

J. R. C. H.

March, 1923.



BIRTH-CONTROL AND SELF-CONTROL

I

THE question of the control of conception by artificial means, commonly known as Birth-Control, which the fast-increasing population of some parts of the world has forced more and more to the front during the past half-century, has perhaps not been so sufficiently or openly dealt with by leaders of the Christian Church as it should have been. They have allowed some most pernicious doctrines to go unchallenged, from a natural dislike to discuss this very intimate and delicate subject in public. There are so many people whose minds may be compared to a sieve—who retain the impurities out of what is put into them, and let the good stuff go—that reticence may well have seemed the wiser, as it is certainly the more pleasant course; but there are others who honestly ask for guidance, and to these we must attempt an answer.

In the following pages much use has been made of the two Reports of the National Birth-Rate Commission, dated 1917 and 1920, and published by Chapman and Hall (referred to as "Report I" and "Report II," the evidence being

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distinguished as "Ev."), and to the Essays contained in the collection entitled *The Control of Parenthood*, edited by Sir James Marchant, and published by G. P. Putnam's Sons, London and New York, 1920. In the latter book the arguments for and against the use of artificial means of birth-restriction are stated very fairly by well-known writers * in much detail and from every point of view except the too common one of unmitigated sensualism. The references to it are by author and page. The speech delivered by Lord Dawson of Penn at the Church Congress in October, 1921, since published by Nisbet, with the title *Love—Marriage—Self-Control*, and the little book on *Conception Control*,† by Lady Barrett, the eminent gynæcologist, have also been laid under contribution.

It is not within the scope of the present booklet to deal with the rare cases in which abnormal physiological conditions bear a part. These are considered in the little book by Lady Barrett, to which reference has just been made, and their treatment must necessarily depend to a large extent upon the advice given by the physician or surgeon on pathological grounds. The ethics of morbidity may not always be the same as the ethics of health. A doctor is, for example, considered by the profession to be justified in sacrificing the life of an apparently viable child

* These are : Professors J. A. Thomson and Leonard Hill (biologists), Dean Inge, Mr. Harold Cox (Ed. *Edinburgh Review*), Dr. Mary Scharlieb, Sir Rider Haggard, Principal Garvie, Rev. Dr. F. B. Meyer, and Mrs. Marie Stopes, D.Sc.

† Published by John Murray, London, 1922.

in order to save the life of the mother,* while it would be criminal for him under other circumstances, or for the mother in any event, to destroy life. At the same time a patient, if he is in the full possession of his moral faculties, must not attempt to put upon his medical attendant the responsibility for an ethical decision. The latter might not be a Christian man at all, and whether he were or not, he would be pretty certain to say that ethics were not his business, and that patients must settle the moral question for themselves, with or without the help of their spiritual advisers.

It may be added that the exceptional cases would be still more rare if the Church were to discourage, or the State to prevent, the marriage of persons unfit for matrimony.

* I believe the Roman Catholic Church holds that he is not justified even in that case.

II

IT appears from the Reports—

- (1) that the Roman Catholic Church denounces officially and emphatically all mechanical or artificial means of preventing conception, the sacraments of the Church being refused to those who persist in using any such means ;
- (2) that the Anglican Bishops and the leaders of the Free Churches are decidedly of the opinion that these means should not be resorted to ;
- (3) that the Jewish religion also unreservedly forbids the use of contraceptives.

Now, as regards Roman Catholics, the authority of their Church is final and conclusive, and argument is unnecessary ; but Anglican churchmen do not as a rule consider themselves so tightly bound by ecclesiastical authority, and Nonconformists are still less disposed to brook interference with their private judgment. All Christians do, however, recognise the authority of Holy Scripture, and that will give us a sufficient indication of the will of God in this matter, if we draw near to Him with earnest prayer and a sincere desire to follow His guidance, at whatever sacrifice of material comfort or physical pleasure (John vii. 17).

We shall find that attempts to interfere with, or

violate the laws of nature are strongly deprecated and severely punished (Gen. xxxviii. 9, 10; Rom. i. 26, 27); that our members are members of Christ (1 Cor. vi. 15); that we are to glorify God in our bodies, and that they are temples of the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. iii. 16; vi. 19, 20). Hence we are to cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit (2 Cor. vii. 1) and possess ourselves of our members in sanctification and honour, and not in the passion of lust (1 Thess. iv. 4, 5). In this, as in all other respects, the highest ethical standard is put before us. We are to do everything to the glory of God (1 Cor. x. 31), seeking first His kingdom and righteousness, without anxiety for the possible consequences, which can confidently be left to Him (Matt. vi. 33, and Luke xii. 31).^{*} In such a scheme there is obviously no room for the use of contraceptives or other means of avoiding the natural results of our actions. They fall into their proper place as mean, unworthy and sinful practices, calculated to lower the self-respect and the mutual regard of any Christian married couple.

At the same time it must be admitted that, as Lord Dawson has observed, there has been an inclination on the part of the Christian Churches to lay too much stress on the procreation of children as the first aim and object of matrimony. The sexual instinct, as Dean Inge says, is far stronger than is necessary for the perpetuation

^{*} To the texts quoted it may be that Mark x. 8, 9 should be added. For, in view of the reference to "flesh," it seems not unlikely that our Lord had physical union in view quite as much as—perhaps more than—the religious ceremony of marriage, and that here we have a strong prohibition of any interference with the creative act.

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of the species (Inge, 66). It is a bodily appetite, like that for food and drink, but, unlike the latter, capable of being kept in abeyance for long periods during the unmarried life, without injury to the subject,* and its exercise is admittedly legitimate in the wedded state. The sanest view is that in that state it is to be regarded not merely as the means of producing offspring, but as a supreme physical expression of the love of a married couple for each other (what Lord Dawson calls "sex-love").† It is therefore lawful for them to indulge in it even when the birth of children is not primarily in view. But being also, like hunger and thirst, an animal passion, it is very liable to excess and degradation. There is always the greatest risk that we should sacrifice our higher nature to the cravings of our lower, the greatest need for vigilance and self-control, and the greatest reason for regarding with suspicion any doctrine which would tend to lessen that need. And, as Lady Barratt says in *Conception Control* (pp. 24, 25): "The use of contraceptives does not encourage self-control, yet the cultivation of self-control is a far higher gain to the individual and the nation than any apparent advantages obtained by its abandonment."

* Professor Muirhead, in the little pamphlet *Integer Vitæ*, quotes, on this point, amongst other weighty authorities, the unanimous pronouncement of the Medical Faculty of the University of Christiania to the effect that "The assertions recently made by various persons, and repeated in public journals and at public assemblies, that a moral course of life and sexual continence is injurious to health is entirely incorrect, according to our experience."

† It will not do to associate this physical expression too closely with the idea of love at its highest, for it becomes weaker or ceases entirely with old age.

Referring again to our Bibles, we find that certain general principles are laid down which are connected in a greater or less degree with our subject. Celibacy is not recommended except as a matter of prudence in times of persecution or as making it easier for a Christian to attend upon the Lord without distraction (1 Cor. vii. 26-35). On the other hand, marriage is encouraged, especially for those who find continency difficult (1 Cor. vii. 2 ; 1 Tim. iv. 3 ; v. 14) ; too severe repression of the natural impulses in the case of married people is deprecated, and the relation between the sexes is treated with unsurpassed loftiness and chivalry, both by St. Paul the bachelor and St. Peter the married man (1 Cor. vii. 3-6 ; 1 Thess. iv. 4-7 ; 1 Peter iii. 7). Lastly, if we abstain from marriage or, being married, from the marriage-act, it must be " for the kingdom of heaven's sake " (Matt. xix. 12).

Now, assuming it to be correct that a married couple need not always have for their conscious object the begetting of children when they perform the marriage-act, there would seem to be no harm in restricting it by mutual consent to those times when the birth of children is least likely to ensue, provided that there is a loyal acceptance of such risk as remains, and that continence is honestly observed during the intervening periods. This course involves a certain amount of self-sacrifice, and is not accompanied by violent interference with the laws of nature. It is sometimes urged that continence to the extent required is not possible for a couple sharing the same room, but that should not be the case where both parties have been careful to observe

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a high degree of purity and chastity before marriage, and who trust in God that He will not suffer them to be tempted above what they are able, but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that they may be able to endure it (1 Cor. x. 13).

At this point it may be useful to sound a warning note to women quite as much as to men, with respect to the pernicious effects of impure and unrestrained conversation in weakening the power of resistance to temptation. In mid-Victorian times "filthiness and foolish talking and jesting, which are not befitting" (Eph. v. 4) were common enough, as they are still, in assemblies frequented by men only—ladies being usually more engaged, if report speaks truly, in talking scandal of a somewhat different type; but now that smoke-room stories are no longer a special characteristic of circles reserved for men only one fears that the time is at hand—if it has not already arrived—when the common smoke-room will be a place of co-education in indecency. This freedom of speech on the part of both sexes is simply playing with fire, and is the worst possible introduction to the holy estate of matrimony, destructive as it is both of self-respect and of the mutual respect which ought always to exist between man and wife.

As regards the female sex, licence in this respect is particularly deplorable. It is the indication of a much lower moral standard on the part of woman than that which obtained not so many years ago. "The equal moral standard so long clamoured for [by women] is coming, but by levelling down, and not by levelling up."*

* Quoted from an article on "The Changing Moral

No one in these days will defend the idea of prudery, or claim that women should display a higher degree of morality than men. But their conditions are different ; it is their charm—and their danger—that they are so often extremists ; their range is greater, and they seem, in the aggregate, capable of higher and of lower things than men. Above all, it must be recollected that they represent the negative or defensive, as men represent the positive or attacking, side of the sexual system. They have more to give, and more to lose, than the men. We are, as it were, in the open country, while they have a fortress to defend. Hence the supreme need for caution and reserve and reticence on their part—in other words, for all the protective outworks of modesty. To throw these down would not mean the attainment of a larger liberty, but capitulation and enslavement to the forces of evil.

This does not mean that men as well as women have not another and supremely important fortress to defend. That fortress is the citadel of Mansoul, and the conflict is not between sex-conditions, but between the powers of good and evil. Eye-gate as well as Ear-gate lead into it, and it is probably through the former that the most deadly assaults are made upon it, so far as the male sex is concerned. Vigilance and prayerfulness are our only weapons of defence, and the grace of God alone can make these sufficient.

Standard," by Mrs. Neville Rolfe, in the *Nineteenth Century* for October, 1918.

III

ASSUMING, then, that it is thought prudent in any special case to aim at a small family rather than a large one, there are three courses open to Christian people, viz. :

1. To put off marriage to a later date than would otherwise be fixed. (This is the method proposed by Malthus.)

2. Lactation by the mother.

3. Restriction of the marriage-act to the extent already suggested.

All these involve inconvenience, and self-control or self-sacrifice, the first on the part of both the man and the woman, the second on the part of the woman, and the third on the part of both, but especially of the man. They are all highly unpopular in this pleasure-loving age, and lactation has, in particular, gone very largely out of fashion, much to the detriment of the race.

By means of the two last it is possible to "space out" births to an interval of about two years, which is "probably the correct rhythm of reproduction" (Dr. Mary Scharlieb, 118; *see also* Meyer, 142), but the objection has been raised that they are not always effective. No doubt there is a risk, but it is a comparatively small one, and if the main object of birth-control is, as is often asserted, to keep the population down for humanitarian reasons, that will be

attained in the mass, although individual couples who look at the matter only from the personal point of view may now and then be disappointed. One hopes that the men and women who would limit themselves to these three lawful practices would also be those who would look upon marriage as a glorious adventure, and be prepared to run at least a modest amount of risk in its pursuit. As Lord Dawson says, "Romance and deliberate self-control do not, to my mind, rhyme very well together" (*Love, etc.*, pp. 18, 19).

For Christian men and women, moreover, there is a higher consideration than romance and chivalry. It is for them to keep constantly in view that state of heart for which the most magnificent of all the Beatitudes is the reward—"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

IV

THE assumption which underlies a passage in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, that what is not natural must needs be wrong, is not peculiar to St. Paul, but is found in a good many non-Christian moralists, and cannot be defended as true without some reservation. To wear clothes, to cook food, to remain celibate, and to administer anæsthetics, for example, are not natural proceedings, and yet it cannot be contended that they are immoral. It would be more correct to lay down that what offends against our natural instincts is wrong. Thus the Commission considers that "To disregard instinctive repugnances in matters of sex-morality is exceedingly dangerous, and would lead logically to the toleration of acts which all decent people condemn" (Report I, p. 69). So also the Anglican Bishops: "[The use of contraceptives] is condemned . . . by healthy instinct in men and women. A society in which it is practiced will lose delicacy of feeling, and the refinement which is not the exclusive property of any particular class, but comes of keeping the natural instincts of modesty and reserve untarnished" (Report I, Ev. 386).

What is really objected to as unnatural in artificial control seems to be that it involves deliberate interference with one of the ordinary

processes of nature in healthy men and women by the severance of the part of the process which is pleasurable from that which involves responsibility and possible inconvenience or discomfort. One feels that, apart from all other considerations, conduct of this kind is essentially undignified and mean. "To use the power of [a] great creative impulse—that of sex—in a way which divorces it wholly from its end—creation on the physical as well as the spiritual plane—is immoral because it is 'unnatural.' " *

No doubt many things are done among civilised peoples which cannot be said to be natural, such as those which have been mentioned, but these are not open to the above objection. The great majority of them—such as tobacco-smoking and railway-travelling—have no specifically moral character, and others can be justified by Christian doctrine as being in line with the purposes of God. The alleviation of pain or suffering in the sick is one of these and is the justification for the use of anæsthetics, for instance. "In a sense we are always trying to outwit nature, believing that nature loves to be conquered; but there is another sense in which nature knows how to punish those who seek to evade her laws, and her penalties may be secret and incalculable" (Report I, 69).

Unless some such criterion is applied as that which we have suggested above, it is not easy to draw the ethical line with certainty. Why, for example, should the practices referred to in Romans i. 26, 27, be condemned, or even that of

* Maude Royden, *Sex and Common Sense*, Fifth Edition, p. 144.

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procuring abortion, if it can be effected without risk to the mother? Why should it be right to sacrifice the living spermatozoon, and not to sacrifice the living fœtus? Why may we not, in the interests of eugenics, kill off the most unfit, even when the post-fœtal stage has been reached?

V

AMONG the arguments put forward in favour of artificial control, probably the most important, and certainly the least selfish, is that based on the contention of Malthus, "that population ever tends to increase up to the means of subsistence, unless checked either by a prudential restriction of the birth-rate or by the positive evils which follow unlimited procreation ; . . . those evils include disease, pestilence, famine, racial warfare, infanticide and systematic abortion" (Harold Cox, p. 72). In opposition to this view, Sir Rider Haggard (pp. 165-189) urges that there is plenty of room within the British Empire for a very large expansion, and that, for our country at least, it is important that parenthood should not be restricted. He thinks this not merely in order that we may have a plentiful supply of "cannon-fodder," but because nations must either increase or decline, and "should the British Empire begin to decline, it will be a very terrible event, since its ultimate fall would mean the greatest loss that the known history of the world recalls." He raises, in fact, the cry of "race-suicide."

It is a fair answer to this that as the knowledge of artificial contraceptives spreads, one can rely on its application wherever the natural selfishness of man is not curbed by moral or religious

sanctions, so that the relative strength of the various races of mankind would not be materially altered. Professor Thomson, writing as a biologist, takes no alarmist view either of the rise or fall of the birth-rate (p. 12).

The case of France, where conception control has been very extensively in vogue for the last fifty years and is now being vigorously combated, is most instructive. No one who has been acquainted with the country during that period could honestly contend that there had been a marked improvement in the physique of the population, nor that contraceptive practices had made France the particular habitat of "married love." On the contrary, the suspicion must be very strong that those practices constitute one of the most powerful incentives to the irregular unions which are so notoriously frequent within its borders. But the special point we wish to make here is that what has aroused the concern of the French people, is the fact that in consequence of artificial checks the population is almost stationary and threatening to decline.* There has been no wide-spread discussion of the moral aspects of the question, so far as I know, but on patriotic grounds Malthus has been thrown to the winds, and both the State and local authorities are encouraging the birth of children by subsidies and other help out of the rates and taxes, besides offering special economic advantages to the parents of large families.† In Germany, Professor

* Professor St. André said at the recent International Congress for Reaffirming the World's Moral Ideals, that in about half the cantons of France the death-rate was higher than the birth-rate.

† See, as to this, the article by Miss Edith Sellers on

Unold, the author of a popular manual of ethics for youth, who is neither a militarist nor a Christian, warns his countrymen not to follow the example of France in the practice of birth-restriction.* His ground is similar to that of Sir R. Haggard—that the downfall of Germany would be a terrible loss to humanity at large.

Is not this pre-eminently a matter in which we should trust in God? The task is too big for us, and there is every reason to believe, as experience has already shown in the case of France, that we should make a mess of it.† Who knows what surprises may not be in store for us in the near future—whether science may not open up to us new and unexpected sources of food, or whether the present dispensation may not be completely done away with in the course of the next few years, as many serious students of prophecy think will be the case? Men who are not believers in Christianity are urging us, in dealing with the social problems of the day, to be influenced by ethical rather than by economical considerations. Let us follow this advice in dealing with the question now before us, the more so as it agrees with that given by the Founder of Christianity—that we should seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. Only thus shall we have the surest guarantee that all other needful things will be added to us and provided for our children.

“France and her falling Birth-rate,” in the *Contemporary Review* for December, 1922.

* *Aufgaben und Ziele des Menschenlebens*, p. 101.

† “Who shall dare to say that he is fit to disturb the strange gamble of human life?” *Blackwood's Magazine* for March, 1923, p. 420.

VI

THEN there is the question of the material well-being of the mother. It is urged that in her own interest she should be safeguarded from having too many children. Mr. Harold Cox says quite frankly that "Prospective parents do not worry their minds about the potential food-resources of the universe; they are content to note that by prudence in procreation they can secure for themselves and their children a larger life than would be attainable if the size of the family were unrestricted" (p. 70). A large family is said to be often a misery both to the children and the parents, in consequence of lack of means to provide the necessities and comforts of life — adequate housing, proper food, suitable education, and so forth. This applies specially of course to the lower middle and working classes, and leads us into the domain of eugenics as well as of economics.

It is a significant commentary on the sincerity of his plea, that the artificial restriction of births is most general amongst the well-to-do classes (Thomson, pp. 17, 18; Report I, Ev. 362, Stevenson; 383, Bishops; Report II, p. xlix.), and it is one which goes to confirm the suspicion that in the great majority of cases, whatever reasons may be alleged, the true motive for the practice is the desire for "danger-free self-

indulgence." Dr. Mary Scharlieb says, "The philosophy involved in the limitation of the birth-rate is purely materialistic; its real aim and object is to secure gratification without incurring responsibility" (Scharlieb, 114).

As regards those who are not well-to-do, the case may admittedly be hard, "but the difficulty of a moral obligation is not a reason for disregarding it" (Garvie, 163), and this points to the improvement of economic conditions as being the proper remedy, instead of reduction in the number of children in order to fit a defective and injurious state of society (Report II, p. li.). "Housing, wages and education, with all the other necessities of life, ought to be adapted to the population, and not the population to the economic considerations" (Scharlieb, p. 110). "I believe if facilities were provided whereby the woman could do her laundry with modern appliances outside her own home, if family meals were arranged in service rooms equivalent to the arrangements in service flats, and if there were crèche rooms where children might be left for an hour or two in safety while necessary work was done—we should find a greatly increased standard of comfort even in existing [working-class] homes, and a great improvement in dietary for the whole family. Such relief, added to teaching both to husband and wife as to the times of conception, would revolutionise the life of women more than any teaching of artificial birth-control, and would lift it up to a higher level instead of degrading it to the grossly physical" (*Conception Control*, p. 31).

Given tolerable economic conditions, there

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are great advantages about large families. God has blessed them, and it is the faulty economics of man which thwarts His purpose. They are "admirable schools of vigorous, dutiful and unselfish character" (Report I, Ev. Bishops, 384; see also Report II, p. xlix.), and "an only child is very often a spoiled child" (Garvie, 160), "a prig, or a neurotic" (Prof. Hill, 47). Moreover, those who have limited their families to two or three have in many cases bitterly regretted it. Such small families often grow up selfish and unfilial, whereas in the case of parents with a numerous offspring there is far more chance of finding at least one who is able and willing to be a solace and, if need be, a support to them in their old age. Further, the calculations of "prudent" parents may be, and often are, completely upset either by the occurrence of death—"How many of the upper classes have limited their sons to one, and lost their pride and hope in the war!" (Hill, 47)—or by the increasing sterility of the parents—"There are large numbers of married couples who would give anything to have children, but have postponed it until circumstances should seem quite desirable, and then, to their grief, no children are given to them. It is very unfair to teach people that they may safely postpone the natural tendency to bear children in youth and rely upon having them later in life." "As years go by the fertility of the mother becomes progressively less, so that if child-bearing is postponed till after thirty, in a certain number of families no children are born" (*Conception Control*, pp. 19, 34).

One very important thing remains to be said

in this connection. Below the rich who inhabit spacious mansions, below the middle-class residents in suburban villas, below the prosperous artisan and the rural labourer in their cottages, there is a vast mass of humanity for which the observance of any decent moral code is rendered well-nigh impossible by extreme poverty and especially by the shortage of house-room. We can recognise the good intentions of those eager souls who think that neo-Malthusianism offers a promising short-cut to material betterment, although we disagree with them most emphatically, and think that they are only making smoother the broad way which leads to spiritual destruction. But it is not enough for us merely to utter pious opinions as to the need for better conditions and then to fold our arms in complacent optimism. We are bound to take an active part in clearing away the obstructions which make the narrow way to everlasting life so very hard for many of our brothers and sisters to follow, and in giving them a better chance to walk along it if they wish to do so. It is for us to think out what the remedies should be and to press with all our might for their application. Otherwise we shall certainly lay ourselves open to the charge of hypocrisy and pharisaism.

VII

WE are told that birth-control has come to stay, and that its alternatives are the still more objectionable practices of abortion and infanticide. This is not the kind of argument which the moralist can accept as valid. The devil has also "come to stay" during the present dispensation. It is as if hard drinking were justified because it is a lesser evil than the drug habit. One has heard prostitution defended on the same principle and as being a more "natural" outlet for sexual passion than self-abuse.

Then, again, it is said that artificial control is needed in the interests of the overburdened mother, and that too frequent child-bearing "is at present the greatest of all natural sources of the dwarfing and stunting of humanity, sapping the resources of the race in every direction," and that "the coercion of enforced and miserable motherhood, with its consequent poison of the racial strain" is a thing not to be tolerated (Dr. Marie Stopes, pp. 195, 203). Dr. Stopes contends that the artificial restriction of conception, if procured by certain means advocated by her, would, by reason of the intervals between child-bearing being longer, result in the birth of finer, healthier and more beautiful children. The mother's health in general, and her capacity for

child-bearing in particular, would thus be maintained at a higher level ; and the children who are generated when both father and mother desire an increase in the family are bound to be better specimens than those produced by careless or unwilling parents. She emphasises very strongly the right of every woman to dispose of her own body, and is therefore of opinion that she " should be free to receive her husband's advances only when she is fully desirous of doing so " (Stopes, quoted by Scharlieb, pp. 103, 104).

To this Dr. Mary Scharlieb replies : " One may well admit the view that a woman should not be coerced into motherhood, nor indeed into sexual union, but surely the true freedom and safety of woman should be secured by the chivalry and reverent love of her husband ; and it is to be remembered that contraceptive methods, far from aiming at giving the mother full control over her own body, aim only at preventing conception, and by relieving the husband of all responsibility and fear of consequences, the use of them inevitably tends to make his demands greater " (p. 104), and " the limitation of the family is not really in the interest of overburdened mothers. It may relieve them of too frequently recurring child-bearing, and from the burden of too large a household ; but, on the other hand, by removing the chief check on the husband's desires and demands, it destroys the wife's protection from his too great insistence and persistence " (p. 94). And Dr. Thomson : " Perhaps the greatest danger is that the evasion of the responsibility of offspring may promote sexual intemperance " (p. 23).

In addition to this, it is affirmed by high authority that the use of contraceptives is morally and physically injurious. "The woman who uses preventives tends to lose her beauty early, becomes thin and neurotic" (Prof. Hill, 51). The practice tends "to many forms of damage to the moral, mental and bodily health * of those who use it. This is confirmed by testimony from the colonies and from foreign countries" (Report I, Ev. 383, Anglican Bishops' Mem.).

The effect on the man as well as the wife must also be considered, and as to this, Foerster (Professor of Biology and Sociology in the University of Leipzig, quoted at p. 95 of *The Control of Parenthood*) observes: "The situations which will necessarily arise from the man's sexuality being exclusively directed towards sensuous gratification, and being unaccustomed to control, will far surpass, in tragedy, sordidness, and poisonous consequences, anything which could possibly arise from the most unlimited child-bearing. The increase of man's subjection to passion and artificial sensuousness will be disastrous." And Mrs. Burgwin, a member of the late Royal Commission on Venereal Diseases, giving evidence before the Birth-rate Commission, says: "I do not believe that either the man or the woman can have the same conception of right and wrong, and of what human duty is, if they use this means" (Report I, Ev. 219). Finally, Dr. F. B. Meyer remarks that, "To those who obey her, Nature distributes her

* It is only fair to say that some medical men—Lord Dawson for one—would not agree as regards physical injury, provided that the method used had been advised by a physician.

rarest gifts with prodigal generosity, but she chastises with a whip of scorpions all who ruthlessly offend against her conventions. The falling of the womb, nervous depression, loss of memory, even the asylum, are among her penalties. But the sacrifice of modesty, of self-respect, of mutual respect, to say nothing of the clear upward gaze of the pure soul, are a still heavier infliction to all right-minded people " (p. 141).

VIII

SO we come back once more to the moral objection.

We have now to draw attention to another ethical consideration of the highest importance, and one which should appeal to the moral sense of all but the most degraded sensualists, whether they are Christians or not. It relates to the effect of artificial birth-control upon the unmarried, and is well expressed in the following words of Dr. Scharlieb. After referring to the hardship which may be inflicted on women, and the strengthening of sexual desires in husband and wife by means of contraceptives, she proceeds : " The injury that a general reception of contraceptive teaching would inflict upon the unmarried is even greater. A knowledge of the methods of preventing conception cannot but tend to break down the safeguards that are so badly needed by many unmarried men and women. The mere discussion of contraceptive methods is lowering to the moral sense and the innate reserve and purity of decently brought up young people." " If the methods . . . should become generalised, there is reason to fear that many thousands of young people who might otherwise have retained their virtue and who might have looked forward to honourable matrimony, will be injured both in body and soul. It is also probable that a very considerable proportion of unmarried people who indulge in promiscuous relations will

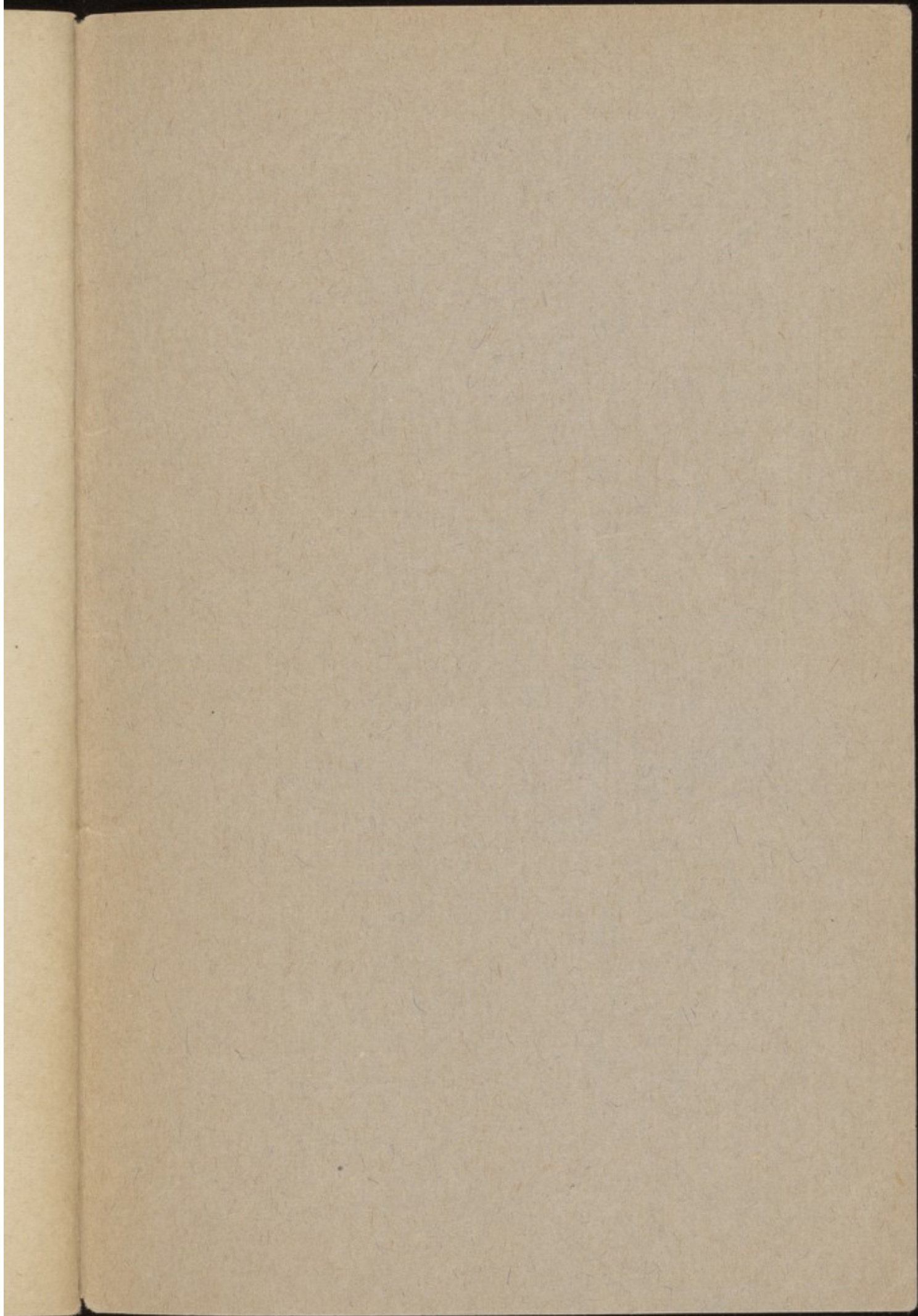
be in danger of venereal disease" (105, 106).^{*} And the Birth-rate Commission observes: "The more widely spread knowledge of the means of preventing conception by the unmarried not only involves the removal of the prudential restraint on licence in sexual relations, but may affect the birth-rate in the future in two ways: (1) marriage, with its responsibilities, may be avoided, since sexual gratification is being obtained without any social obligations being incurred, and (2) a practice begun before marriage may be continued after marriage" (Report I, 69, 70).

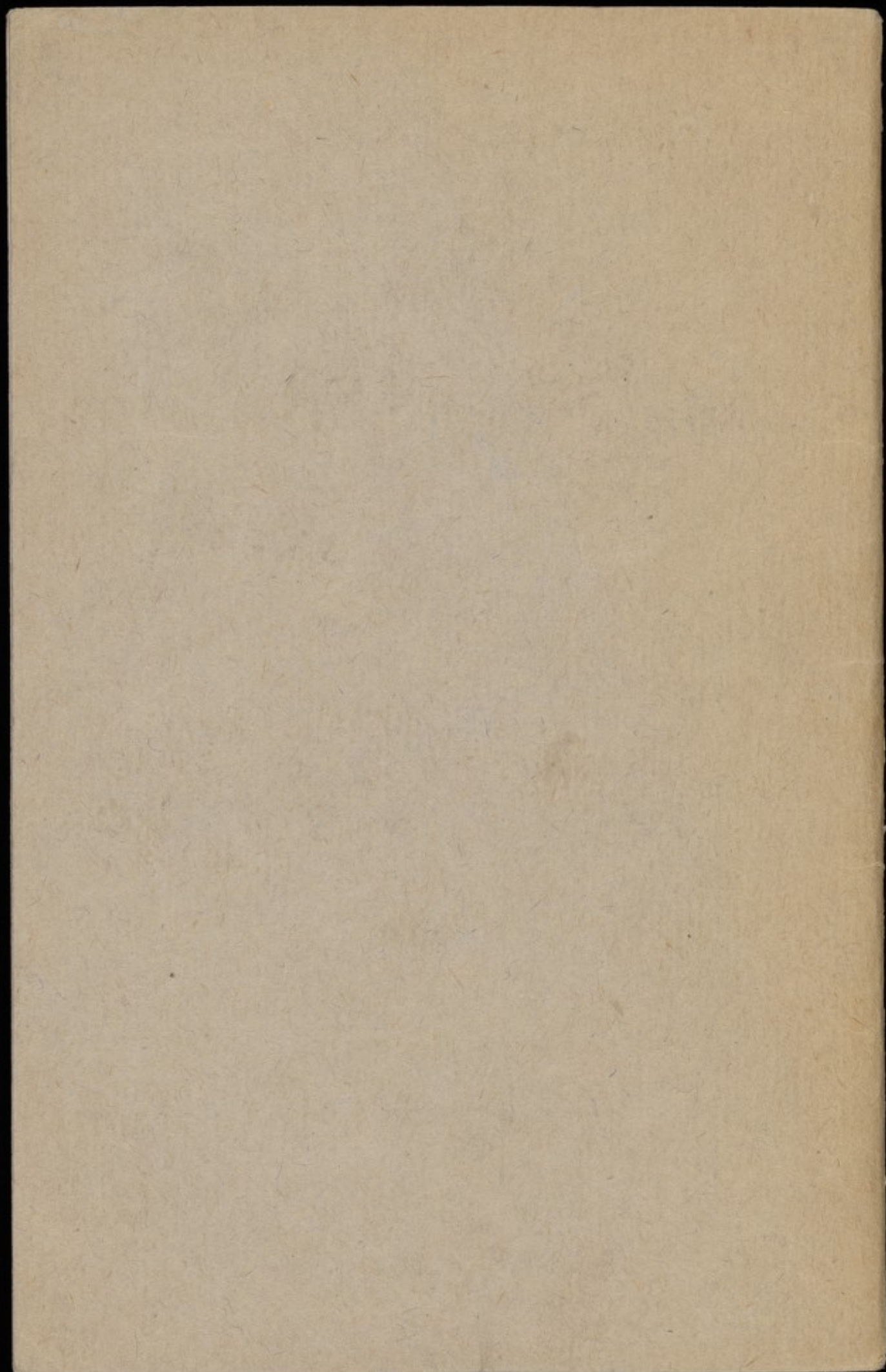
That is the opinion of a body of educated men and women, all of whom were chosen for expert knowledge of some kind. They evidently agree with the Biblical dictum that the heart of man is deceitful and desperately wicked. Hence it is that books and societies which advocate contraceptive measures are unnecessary, because they preach for the most part to the converted, and mischievous because even if (which is not admitted) they have any power of good, it is negligible compared with their vast influence for evil. An illustration will make this clear. There are shops in London and other large towns which are devoted to the sale of books dealing with the physical relations between the sexes, and of "rubber goods." They are so obviously intended to pander to the lust of concupiscence that shame usually deters people from entering them in the daytime. It is evident, however, that they must carry on a profitable trade after

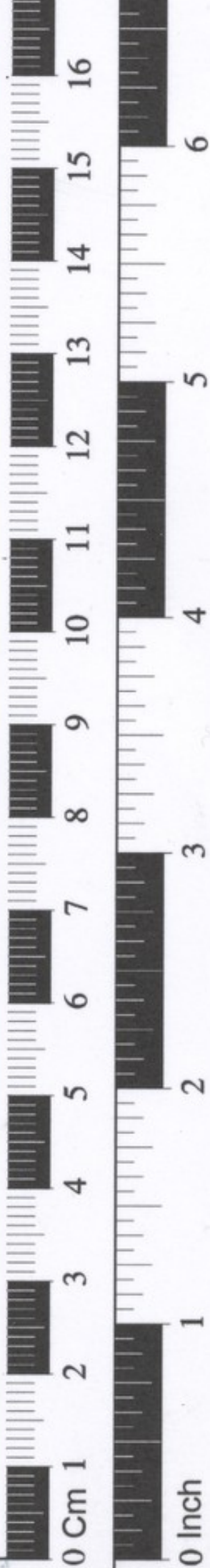
^{*} "Many people seem to think that contraceptives prevent venereal diseases at the same time that they prevent conception. But this is not so. The use of methods of prevention by women is no protection to them from infection" (*Conception Control*, p. 25).

dark and in other secret ways, or they would not be so numerous or so permanent. One cannot imagine the proprietor of any of these moral sinks asking a customer whether he is married or not, and yet, prominently exhibited in his window, one is pretty sure to find the birth-control literature and appliances which are supposed to be for the use of married persons only. One of the earliest publications suggesting artificial control was a pamphlet (published about 1877) with the extraordinarily grandiose title of *The Fruits of Philosophy*, and this was a conspicuous object on the showboards of these establishments. The solitary "fruit of philosophy" which it contained was the recommendation of certain chemical means of avoiding conception! More recently books have been issued from the pen of a writer whose professed aim is to bring about the emancipation of motherhood and universal happiness by certain methods, prominent among which is the use of a particular mechanical contrivance. These also are favourite exhibits in the shops in question, for although they may not have been written for the purpose of pandering to the animal passions of our race, the vendors know well enough that to the impure all things are impure.

By such pitiful means as these, purchasable so readily in such haunts of vice, is it suggested that Utopia will be reached, and that the people will be transformed and led into greater perfection of physical, mental and spiritual beauty! Let us be under no illusion. There is but one way to the true Utopia. It can only be attained by trust in the person and obedience to the will of the blessed Son of God!







Wellcome Collection

H-CONTROL AND F-CONTROL





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IV

otion which underlies a passage
st chapter of the Epistle to the
that is not natural must needs be

