

ostensibly served polemical and political purposes of the movement. And while this tactic may have served to win the ear of some who subsequently converted to prolife, the truth remained compromised: women who aborted their children were not duly charged with murder. They were denied, we might say, the biblical grieving process which involves a true confession. A true confession results in true forgiveness and reconciliation. It is understandable that we Christians are anxious to extend the grace of God to others. We want to share the good and pleasant news of peace with God. But that peace comes with true confession.

All women who cooperate in an abortion are guilty of taking a life. It is well argued that not all women who commit abortions are liable to the same degree that other murderers are. The idea of special circumstances which diminish the degree of liability is a biblical idea (e.g. Num. 15:25-30) which is also expressed in our own civil legal tradition. Mitigating circumstances of confusion and deceit may attenuate the degree of guilt—even as there have always been acknowledged “degrees of murder”—but the guilt of murder in some degree ought to be proclaimed without apology by those who would declare the truth.

Who can tell the damage of this compromise? Would an unequivocal proclamation of the truth—the culpability of the aborting women—have dissuaded some from the contemplated act? Would there have occurred more conversions following an awareness of sin?

#### CONTRACEPTION OR PRO-CONCEPTION?

A third false doctrine which many Christians have swallowed is contraception. Without exploring the various situations, we submit the attitude couples have toward that which God unequivocally calls a “gift” and a “blessing” to be the issue at hand. Let our consciences be educated concerning the blessing of children and the general command of God to procreate bountifully.

Christians are seduced by overpopulation propaganda. Malthusian fears of limits on the earth’s capacity to sustain a growing human population have justified the use of birth control

and abortion in the minds of many. Works such as *The Ultimate Resource*, by Julian Simon of the University of Maryland serve to rebut much of the overpopulation rhetoric, but the most crucial response ought to be a very simple one. God rules this planet and has equipped it for His creatures to inhabit. His people are to be fruitful and multiply and leave the question of space and resources on this earth to the One who made it and gave the command to “be fruitful and multiply.”

The number of people on the earth is irrelevant. The Almighty can withhold the sun or the rain so that the earth could not sustain even one man if He were angry enough. Likewise, He can sustain as many as it pleases Him to put on this earth or the sea or the moon. Wealth and poverty are not only products of human enterprise or sloth, or the quality of the government; they are the consequence of divine judgments and blessings. The job of His creatures is to obey His commands, which include bountiful procreation.

We acknowledge that many Christians believe that there may be situations—even divine callings—which necessitate contraception. But in our land, a great many Christians contracept for the same reasons that they and the heathen abort: selfish, hedonistic autonomy. There is no willingness to submit to God’s direction, to receive His gifts, to be under His rule. We want to control our own lives and so we are seduced by the false doctrine of “choice.” And many a pastor, recognizing that the seduced are also the shareholders in his church, inc., do not want to offend and lose contributions. So other business is preached. But preaching loses its sting because it is designed not to inject medicinal pain into the heart, but to sedate investors. Meanwhile, the abortifacient pill is an overlooked device of murder. (See Appendix C, *The New Abortionists*.)

#### CAPITAL PUNISHMENT, THE IMAGE OF GOD, AND THE PROLIFER

A fourth false doctrine which has taken root in the minds of Christians is the proposition that to be “prolife” one must be



opposed to capital punishment. Somehow we have taken this term which originally designated someone who is opposed to abortion and filled it with new meaning. The term is taken to mean that a "prolifer" holds to some absolutist view of human life or even all life! By this seduction proliferers are admonished to be anti-capital punishment, pacifist, anti-poverty (pro-government welfare), pro-gun control, animal rights supporters, or Socialists.

Rev. Matthew Trehwella is the pastor of a local church in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and the founder of Missionaries to the Preborn. He has said, "If prolife means anti-capital punishment, I'm not prolife." In truth we must guard the terms we use so that false doctrine does not become their definition. Our view of the sanctity of human life comes from the Scriptures which say that man was created in the *imago dei*—the "image of God." Those same Scriptures declare that because man is so celestially endowed, "Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed" (Gen. 9:6).

The rejection of capital punishment for murderers in our time betrays a failure to grasp the biblical doctrine of the sanctity of human life. God does not view human life as absolutely inviolable. Human beings who commit capital crimes merit capital punishment. A holy God punishes evildoers with everlasting destruction. He does not hold them in such esteem as to allow them to go unpunished. And those who slay innocent human life so offend Him that He mandates the forfeiture of their lives. Moreover, He commissions the civil authorities with the job of executing capital offenders. One of the jobs of the Church is to advocate that government do its divinely ordained duty. By advocating the death penalty for murderers, the Church accentuates the gravity of the crime of murder. When the Church neglects to articulate the propriety of the death penalty, it fails to testify to the truth. "I will also speak of your testimonies before Kings, and I shall not be ashamed. And I shall delight in your commandments, which I love," says the psalmist (119:46-47).

A thorough examination of the subject of capital punishment is beyond the scope of this book. However, it is necessary to digress

briefly to examine a particular case which is frequently adduced by those who would argue that the New Testament abrogates this civil law. I refer particularly to the record of Jesus' confrontation of the woman caught in adultery (Jn. 7:53-8:11). This popular text is included in the King James Version and the Vulgate, but it is included in modern versions only with notes informing the reader that the passage is absent in the oldest and best manuscripts.

Most textual critics declare that those popular and very literary verses—"He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her" and "Neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more"—do not belong in that canon which we call "Scripture." It is, they argue, not breathed out by God and not intended by the Holy Spirit to be "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Tim. 3:16).

The salient hermeneutical point to be made here is that no doctrine ought to be based upon unclear or doubtful texts. Opposition to the doctrine of capital punishment must not lean upon this story.

It is agreed by textual critics, however, that while this story was not included in John's account, it is historical; it is an event that occurred. Since it is something in the life of Christ that we know happened, we are induced to answer the questions it raises; Why didn't Jesus call for the death penalty according to the law? Was Jesus rejecting the old covenant ethic? Was he introducing a new system of justice?

No. Clearly the accusers of the woman were miscreants, looking for some means of trapping Jesus. Their patent perversion of justice in an effort to catch Jesus in an ethical problem is manifest in the conspicuous absence of the male offender. According to the law to which these scoundrels appealed, both offenders were to be brought forth for execution (Lev. 20:10 and Deut. 22:22). In their zeal to have Jesus pronounce the death penalty, these rogues call specifically for stoning, whereas the law prescribes stoning not for the case at hand, but for the case of a pair when the woman is "a virgin betrothed unto a husband" (Deut. 22:23f). Moreover, the law required two witnesses to convict someone of a capital crime



(Deut. 17:6). The law also warns: "Do not join the wicked in putting your hand, as an unjust witness, against anyone" (Ex. 23:1).

Jesus cannot be charged with rejecting the Mosaic law concerning capital punishment on the basis of this text. He cleverly avoided being made party to a perversion of justice by calling the alleged witnesses to come forth, cast the first stone, and do justice, if indeed they were not "unjust witnesses." Moreover the mission of Christ as the suffering servant did not at that time include His future role as judge (cf. Lk. 12:13,14; Jn. 12:47). It was not His mission to adjudicate the matter. But He did call upon those whose duty it was to administer true justice. Jesus did not reject capital punishment, and institute some kind of new justice system. He confirmed the law as did St. Paul (Rom. 3:31; Matt. 5:17).

We must defend the continuing propriety of capital punishment along with St. Paul (Rom. 13:4). We present three reasons relevant to the issues of this book following here, A through C:

A. Our definition of the term "prolife" says simply that we oppose the taking of innocent human life to which group preborn children belong. It does not mean that we oppose the terminating of guilty human life. It is, therefore, not inconsistent to be prolife and favor capital punishment

B. As advocates of true justice, we are advocates of biblical justice. That justice commands and prohibits various actions, but there is another aspect of true justice which cannot be ignored. Besides the demands of just law, there are sanctions against violators. Sanctions serve both to instruct and to deter transgressors. The gravity of a crime is expressed in the penalty the crime draws. Therefore, the advocacy of capital punishment for capital crimes is necessary for both communication of the truth and deterrence of criminal acts.

C. Christians advocate justice for the preborn on the basis of biblical principles found mostly in the older scriptures. Those same scriptures which uphold the sanctity of human life call for the execution of capital criminals. As our advocacy is derived

from Scripture, what scriptures shall we use? Shall only the newer scriptures be applied? What is the continuing relevance of the older scriptures?

These questions are asked ever more frequently by Christians as the legal order in our land continues to move further into post-Christian chaos. As we are led into political concerns through an initial concern with justice, the question comes to the fore: By what standard should government rule and administer justice?

We have no standard but the revelation given us. The advocacy of capital punishment accentuates the relevance of God's Word in the civil arena. It signals the role of the Author of life in human affairs and government. He who has endowed men with life, liberty, and property also ordained godly government with the authority to take life, liberty, and property. Rulers in this world have awesome, divine authority only because the Lord of Hosts has given it to them. And He who gave it to them may take it away (Ps. 82:6f.). Those rulers who possess authority are bidden to rule in accordance with God's law and execute capital offenders in accordance with His standard.

#### NONVIOLENCE: A "FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT"?

Lastly, we come to the fifth example of false doctrine which has infected the church and the anti-abortion movement. Christian activism has been equated with the adjectives "peaceful and non-violent." It may be arguable in a given situation that Christians ought to conduct themselves in a peaceful and nonviolent manner, but such behavior is not essential to true Christian piety.

In our land, anti-abortion activists have adopted a sit-in strategy of intervention which was inherited not from the Scriptures, but from the Civil Rights movement. The sit-in tactic served well the purposes of exposing racial prejudices in India (under the rule of the British) and the United States. Such peaceful opposition won success in countries with a collective Christian conscience. The same level of success may not be forthcoming in a pagan land where the people have had their consciences seared by two