

University of Notre Dame
Religious Bulletin
February 17, 1938.

My Dear Mr. Pringle:

In the March number of The Ladies' Home Journal, your attractive article on what the women of America think about birth control was read and examined with dispassionate interest. It jolts to find the hitherto decent and conservative Journal capitalizing on birth control. Yet the papers everywhere carried a full-page announcement of your article. What is worse, the Journal has, in effect, opened its columns to birth control propaganda, because under the guise of a scientific report your article really appears to be a clever advertisement favoring birth control. This will be shown.

Now you should know, Mr. Pringle, as a twentieth century American, that advertising, though it fool millions, proves nothing. It is merely a means of emphasis used as often to repeat falsehood as truth. And propaganda, even when accepted, never changes the nature of things. A bad mouthwash may sell successfully, after its superlative qualities have been proclaimed on the air. It still remains bad. And that goes, Mr. Pringle, for birth control, too.

You begin quite gently: "There are the facts of tomorrow, now taking shape... new ways of doing things... Tomorrow it will be in the headlines; it will be news. Even now there is a pulse beat which you can hear if you will listen very closely, throbbing, measured, rhythmic... The women of America believe in birth control." You write soft words, Mr. Pringle, but they cannot soften hard facts. When Onan indulged in birth control, God slew him and called what he did a "detestable thing."

You say these women "believe just as firmly in having children. There is no contradiction...." Now, really, Mr. Pringle, that is the cutest way of saying that they will have children when they want them, and then only, and that God doesn't count. Eh?

And you write, "A majority even among Catholic women -- 51 percent -- declared their belief in some remedy, without specification as to whether natural or artificial, for the problems which arise when children come too soon or too often, or into homes where poverty blocks their chance for health and happiness." Thank you, Mr. Pringle, for your implied compliment to Catholic women. But don't use their "without specification" as a blind for your article. For, speaking of health centers, you say: "Few of the states, moreover, actually prohibit proper instruction by recognized clinics or doctors." Proper gives you away.

And about that wife in Racine who voted for birth control because it would "limit the number of dependent on the state and city for relief", you added "Perhaps she has seen the figures and is aware that families on the public pay rolls had fifty per cent more children than non-relief families." Do you see straight, Mr. Pringle? If the well-to-do practiced social justice and divine charity, people---without specification as to the number of their children---would not be forced to seek relief. And another thing, why is it the well-to-do have fewer children than they can support?

Your picture is overdrawn, Mr. Pringle. Women of America are not fainthearted.... stalwart women of the Rockies (voting 84% for birth control)... few dodge responsibilities of motherhood... they don't want to live selfishly and safely... Listen to the reliable report of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company: "Voluntary limitation in the size of American families has been principally responsible for the heavy decline of 24.2 percent in this country's general rate of reproduction during the past ten years."

"So the schools of the United States, however birth-control knowledge may be spread, are in no danger of depopulation, nor need the manufacturers of high chairs, or nursing bottles prepare to shut down their plants." That's what you say, Mr. Pringle.

PRAYERS: (deceased) Matthew Collins; Sister Michael of the Holy Face (Cleveland). Ill, Robert Ronstadt (Bro); Geo. Haggerty (Dil). Five special intentions, one most spec. int.