

529 The Fruit of the Womb

We are clearly living in confused and confusing times, brought about by Man's old folly of edging God off His throne and then sitting on that throne himself. The resulting confusion is well demonstrated in matters of parenthood and child-rearing.

For a start, the desire to have children is still widespread, thankfully. If conception does not occur for couples in the normal way, then these days they can make use of IVF, surrogacy, or, for single women who desire motherhood without the bother of a male husband or partner, 'donorship'. In each of these cases Man has devised alternative methods of conception far removed from God's chosen method: on the one hand there is great joy for the couple who could not conceive normally; on the other hand, to what extent is this by-passing of God's created order morally permissible? What becomes, for example, of the unused embryos of an IVF couple who have not been implanted into the womb? (eg., Psalm 139.13-16).

Then – talk about confusion! – alongside this longing for conception is the massive, dreadful “abortion industry”, regarded now in the self-pleased West as being normal, sensible and morally acceptable. (We are not referring in this Reflection to the rare occasions where an abortion may perhaps be morally justified, which is a different debate in itself). In 2021, “there were 214,256 abortions for women resident in England and Wales, the highest number (for one year) since the Abortion Act was introduced” in 1967 (Source: BBC, from GOV.UK). An estimated 10 million unborn ones have been murdered in the womb in the UK since 1967: the reaction of Almighty God our Creator to these horrors is not hard to imagine (eg., Galatians 6.7a).

Furthermore, a “buffer zone” amendment is currently passing through Parliament which will make it illegal to gather in silent protest, prayer and concern, within 165 yards of an abortion clinic. How clearly we thus see the massive political influence wielded by the so-called “pro-choice” lobby. But even their “Pro-Choice” battle-cry is false and confusing: first, the now-pregnant woman has made her choice already, presumably to have intercourse without contraception, and here are the consequences; and second, the little one, a central player in this situation, has no choice at all as to his or her survival through to birth and life beyond.

Even a smattering of knowledge of God's Word shows that such a blasé, shoulder-shrugging acceptance of mass abortion places those

responsible for this vile practice firmly in line for God's righteous vengeance (egs., Deuteronomy 32.35 / Psalm 94.1 / Ezekiel 25.17 / Matthew 18.6 / Luke 21.22 / Romans 12.19 / Hebrews 10.30-31 / Jude 7).

Alongside this longing for children on the one hand, and this mass-murder of unborn children on the other, comes yet more confusion in terms of "child-care for the under 2s", a care which applies to those little ones who have avoided being aborted and have made it through to birth. Such child-care is trumpeted as being Essential and a Very Good Thing, so the shout goes up for the government to provide cheap, universal child-care for the under-2s.

But again we see how things have become entirely back to front. The emphasis in this child-care demand is on getting Mum back into work as soon as possible, with the baby being put into a child-care centre funded in part or in full by the tax payer. So now it is: "job, career, and money" to come first; and "rearing the newly-born by a full-time Mum" to come second. Is it just a coincidence that the number of young people with mental health problems is "rising fast" in the UK? Is this not due in part to the bulwarks of a stable society - faithful, life-long marriage and committed parenthood being practised as a priority - have been replaced by the glittering-but-cardboard bulwarks of career, status and wealth?

What a relief it is to turn instead to God's Word, where the birth of a child is longed for! - and where for some the undeserved stigma of barrenness is finally brought to an end. We think of Sarah (Genesis 21.1-3); of Rebekah (25.20-21); of Rachel (30.22-24; (35.16b-20)); of Ruth and Naomi, (Ruth 4.13-17); of Hannah (I Samuel 1.19-20, 26-28); of Elisabeth (Luke 1.7,13-17, 24-25,57); and of Mary herself (Luke 1.26-38; 2.5-7).

We read in I Timothy 6.17 that we are not to – "trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy", those "all things" including for many of us marriage, parenthood and blessed family life across the generations; and for those couples not able to bear children, abundant blessing can be given and received for all concerned through adoption and fostering, for which there is such need in these socially chaotic days.

"Lo, children [are] an heritage of the Lord: [and] the fruit of the womb is his reward" (Psalm 127.3 / see also Mark 10.13-16). By God's grace the path of repentance, confession and forgiveness of sins through Christ

remains open (I John 1.7b-9). Meanwhile may we be found faithful in upholding God's Word in a confused society which has so wilfully lost its way.

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