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EUTHANASIA*

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The subject of euthanasia is by no means a new one. It was well known to the ancients. The Spartans, a warlike people, exposed on mountainsides the young who were deformed and who could not grow up to become warriors, so that they would be destroyed either by exposure or by wild animals.

In 1925, there were five so-called mercy killings within the space of four months — two in France, one in England, and two in the United States. The doctors in these cases admit, to put it mildly, that they had "eased" the patients out of their suffering. These cases started a rapid fire of comment and the old question was raised as to whether it was proper (when death seemed preferable to life) for men to die either by their own choice or the choice of others. From time to time, the whole question has been fiercely debated, and in England "a campaign to establish the right of persons suffering from incurable diseases to die" was announced. The occasion of this campaign was the reputed confession by a British doctor of five so-called mercy slayings; and Lord Moynihan, a distinguished British surgeon, was alleged to have declared that he and other influential members of the medical profession would meet with some

clergymen to make plans to bring the question before the country.

The slogan of the British Medical Society is *Forsitan scintilla manet*, "The spark of life may remain." Lord Moynihan, however, is quoted as saying: "The right to die is gaining support throughout the country and we believe that we will find no opposition except from Roman Catholics, who are objecting for obvious reasons." He did not state the reasons but we presume that he means that the Catholic Church insists in what is an obvious philosophic, moral, and religious fact that human life in its beginning, through all its progress and to its end, belongs to God alone; that since God is the author of life, God alone has the right to determine when life shall end.

Let us see for a moment what life is. Life is a gift of God, transmitted through the instrumentality of parents. Science, with all its advances, can never hope to create life. Since life is a God-given gift and man does not create it, how then can man or any group of men dare to presume to say when life shall end. The theory that the medical profession or any other shall have the power to determine when a person must die has embraced an atheistic and materialistic liberalism which considers man only as an animal. The Catholic religion and all other

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faiths hold that man is a creature composed of body and soul. If this be not so, why profess any religion; and if the soul be something over which we have no dominion, why depend upon the love of God and the mercy of God to reward the soul for keeping His commandments and living a good life. As a matter of fact, the power to pass sentence upon the unborn, and under certain conditions to determine whether life shall begin or not, is in this state the *legal right* of doctors; it is, however, not a moral right. The law holds that where it is necessary, in order to save the life of a pregnant woman, a doctor performs an abortion, such abortion is not a criminal act. Some physicians are not satisfied with the restriction this places upon them by law. They want to liberalize the law, as they say, and gain further legal rights over unborn human life.

If a person who wishes to die, shall pass judgment upon himself by having that wish carried out by a doctor, that person assumes ownership and dominion over his life. There has arisen among the medical profession, a group which does not hesitate to commit abortions although at the time of the commission of the abortion, the mother is not in danger of death. This is an abuse of their right under the law. Who shall say that such an abuse would not spring into being were euthanasia legalized, and the doctor or board of doctors be themselves the sole determining

body as to when euthanasia should be administered.

Prior to the coming of Christ human life was held very cheaply. The pagans did not hesitate to commit suicide or to sacrifice the young. Lord Moynihan states this quite briefly, and goes so far as to say that "the pendulum in these matters is swinging back and we are again close to the ancient ways of thought." He is speaking truly, because at the present time we are weltering in a sea of pagan conduct and pagan thought.

The end of medical science is to save human life, not to stop it at its source, and not to end disease and suffering by slaying the patient. Doctors should hesitate to attempt by euthanasia to become the gravediggers of the nation or of humanity. Those who believe in God and who believe that God gave the commandments to Moses, cannot fail to keep in mind the fifth commandment, "Thou shalt not kill." Killing is justified only on one of the following grounds: in self-defense of one's own life or of one near and dear to self; by the state as protection against criminals; and, thirdly, in time of war for the crime of treason. Can anyone, under the circumstances, feel that by legislation the right to kill can be passed on to any group of persons? Let us take the question of insanity. We hear today of the scandals created by sanity experts and doctors for imprisoning in insane asylums, persons believed to be insane, and it

has been stated in the public press by a reporter who succeeded in having himself adjudged insane that there are hundreds of people in the insane asylums who should not be there. There is a great temptation on the part of those related to elderly persons of means to have them declared insane so that they may have control over the person and property of the allegedly insane. Would there not be great danger of having unscrupulous persons administer euthanasia to wealthy persons at the instigation of their heirs at law or next-of-kin, who seek thus to hasten the end of the wealthy persons, so that possession of their fortunes may be taken.

If we are to believe that life and liberty are sacred to the individual; and that the individual and not the state, is the one to be considered, euthanasia cannot make out a case for itself. Nor can its strongest adherents do so.

After the inauguration of the Nazi regime in Germany there was an organized attempt to revive the old German pagan philosophy, the ministry of justice announcing its plan to authorize euthanasia. It was to be so safeguarded that no life valuable to the state would be wantonly destroyed, and in that statement the secret of paganism is disclosed. A citizen is not for himself; he is not vested with rights antecedent to the state; is not a child of God, but is only the tool, the plaything, the instrument of the deified state.

The so-called "right" to commit

suicide (and this so-called "right" is forbidden by the law of this state) is closely allied with the right to euthanasia. Both concepts are due to materialistic philosophy which is incapable of rising to a view of man which transcends time and space. Human life, they hold, consists in mutual service, and when usefulness is over, it is the simplest of rights to choose the quick and easy death. We deny that this is the meaning of human life — usefulness to others. All this is cheap and tawdry. It masquerades under a maudlin sentimentality and lack of fortitude and fear of pain.

If God has exclusive right over human life, homicide in any form, and euthanasia — the taking of life, either through medical boards or otherwise—is a denial of that exclusive right of God's. There has recently sprung up what are called humanitarians. Their cry is to relieve the sufferings of the incurable. They cry that the suicide has a right to take his own life. They cry that the individual has a right to tamper with the very sources of life and that society has a right to protect itself by annihilation of the old and defenseless. This philosophy is grounded on cruel, fatalistic, cynical, and pagan aspects towards life; the same, which in Spartan days caused helpless infants to be set out on mountain tops to be food for vultures and wild beasts. It is that philosophy which enslaved whole nations, so that Greek and Roman patricians might live a

life of ease and rottenness and corruption. All these things emphasize the cheapened regard for human life. Pain is inflicted, if we believe in a God, at the will of God. We believe that pain can be offered by the sufferer as a penance for sins committed during one's lifetime, and that those who bear their pain with fortitude and courage are great contributors to our social organism. Many such people live for years in pain, many without complaint. All those who advocate euthanasia as an easy and pleasant death, willed by the sufferer, legalized by the state and induced by painless medical means, will be depriving the Lord of his right over human life. We hold that the state has no moral right to legalize euthanasia because the morality of the act, its goodness or badness, should not ultimately rest on governmental decree. It has been said that only a totalitarian state could have this power. This power is contrary to our own Declaration of Independence, which holds that basic human rights and basic morality are antecedent to human governments set up for the protection of life and morality. Are any so bold as to hold that the state is to determine morality?

To sum it up, the Catholic point of view teaches that the value of human life is founded on the fact that every individual belongs to the exclusive dominion of God and that for every individual Christ suffered and died. I suppose if euthanasia had been pos-

sible in the days of Christ, when He was dying on the cross, those who saw Him in His dreadful sufferings, would have been willing to relieve His agony by administering euthanasia. Life begins by a creative act of God, which produces a human being, through the cooperation and with the procreative activity of the parents. Life is thus a gift of God, for even doctors know that in many cases where families wish to beget, this gift of life is denied them.

The rule of reason forbids the destruction of human life as an invasion of God's exclusive dominion. This is borne out by the fifth commandment, "Thou shalt not kill."

Can any doctor state definitely when a person is incurable? Instances are on record where persons have been given up, and, strange to relate, have recovered. The advance of medicine is measured by its ability to cure hitherto allegedly incurable diseases.

Surely the end does not justify the means. Alleviation of suffering cannot justify the destruction of human life. Euthanasia, we hold, is a wilful tendency contrary to one's whole nature, and whether self-inflicted or inflicted by others at the request of the sufferer, is unnatural and illegal. Euthanasia is founded on a viewpoint that destruction of life is preferable to pain and suffering. If we inculcate this idea into the youthful mind, we engender a destructive fear of pain and suffering. Sol-

diers in time of war, will hesitate to undergo hardship; suffering people in various occupations, whose lives are mere drudgery, will seek euthanasia or commit suicide. Women frightened at the thought

of bearing children, may seek euthanasia. The fear and dread of pain are often worse than the actuality, hence life may be ended while hope of recovery is just around the corner.

REMARKS ON THE PSYCHONEUROSES

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"hystera," the womb. It was supposed that for some reason the womb migrated about the body, causing disturbance. According to Plato, "The matrix is an animal which loves to generate children. When it is cheated it gets mad. It runs about the body, upsetting things and occasioning various diseases until desire and love end its peregrinations." Hence, *Globus Hystericus*, what the laity understands by hysteria, that is when a woman has a tantrum, yells, stamps her feet or pulls her hair, of course is not in the true sense hysteria.

Hysteria is a conversion mechanism whereby psychic conflict is transferred to the somatic level. By conversion the complex is deprived of affect. This is the real object of conversion and hence valuable to the individual. Hysteria may be regarded as an infantile way of reacting. It represents the wish to obtain something.

Hysteria is rather a peculiar disorder. The first men described as having hysteria were probably

the Turks. They were followed by the Greeks. Recognition of hysteria then went around the Mediterranean basin. It was noted in the Latins, Italians, French and Spanish. Then it moved up through Europe. Only later was it seen in the Germans. It was rare among the Scandinavians. I have yet to see it in a Scotchman. You may know the reason. I have seen it in every other nationality and in most races.

Recently in a hospital, a patient suddenly developed what was regarded as a cerebral insult. He was described as having a left hemiplegia and being aphasic. When seen, he had an apparent hemiplegia and an aphonia. It was noted that he had been treated for an abscess of the epiglottis. Smears had been made; also a biopsy. He had heard discussions of his condition. Naturally he was greatly concerned. Evidently he had become cancer conscious. So while asleep, with his inhibitions in abeyance and his forecon-