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**A TABU ON TABU.
By Victor B. Neuburg.**

Both ingeniously and ingenuously Mr. A. J. Ellison, M.A., LL.B., has succeeded in raising almost all the points at issue between the Catholic and the Birth Controller. He is therefore worthy, in my judgment, of being answered at length, not, perhaps, so much for his own sake, as for that of the organisations that he represents.

First, let us have the brief pleasure of agreeing with him. Mr. Ellison is certainly neither a Tabu nor an Organised Church, for the reason that it is impossible for him to be either of those things. But that he is a *Tabu-man* and a representative of reactionary Organisations I shall try to prove.

It is difficult to write calmly and dispassionately when Mr. Ellison affirms that it "may prove very valuable" to invoke the assistance of the Church. It may! It *has* been "very valuable" to the priests and rulers of Europe since the dawn of Christianity. The blood-and-tear-stained history of two thousand years, broken hearts, racked bodies, torn limbs, disembowelled and charred corpses, are a proof of the value to poor, crucified humanity of the "assistance of the Church." Writing leisurely in smug comfort from the Oxford and Cambridge Club, Pall Mall, S.W.1, Mr. A. J. Ellison, M.A., LL.B., conveniently forgets the centuries-long agony of my hapless Semitic ancestors; the martyrdom of my spiritual kin from Hypatia to poor J. W. Gott, who died a year or two ago as a result of imprisonment for daring to laugh at Mr. Ellison's Gods. No! We think we shall give the valuable assistance of the Church a miss!

Mr. Ellison's alleged historic "facts" are answered in the Editorial Columns of the *New Generation* for July, so there is no need to refer to them here.

Mr. Ellison's second paragraph in reply to me is the one that "counts," however, and it is well worth dissecting in detail; for we have here to deal with a typical, representative, and ostensibly "educated" opponent.

This paragraph contains demonstrable errors in the proportion of one to a line. Mr. Ellison has not yet recovered from the effects of a mediæval University education. He thinks in *cliché*, his mind obsessed by the crude black-and-white, sheep-and-goats, God-and-man theology of the Middle Ages, this theology being the result of a theory of life (the Christian one) that was too poor intellectually to keep body and soul together.

A correspondent—one single correspondent—whose letter appears on page 72 of the June *New Generation*, although he accepts the theory of birth control, finds condoms unsatisfactory. Upon this single instance of a single method being unsuited to one individual, Mr. Ellison bases his statement that "birth control is selfish"! He might as well object to the practice of medicine because a certain patient is unable easily to swallow pills. Even if Mr. Ellison were logically and scientifically right (which he isn't), it would not prove birth control "selfish." It proves that varying methods are suitable to varying individuals, a fact that no birth controller denies.

Self-control, my dear Mr. Ellison, when used to prevent conception, is unquestionably selfish. Like the Christian ideal of celibacy, it tends to deprive certain of our fellow-beings of their natural sexual "dues." It is our super-annuated friend, Christian "virtue," or abstinence; that is, hunger hypocritically pretending to be spiritually superior to the need of food. Surely by now Humanity has agonised long enough upon the rack of this lying ideal of "virtue"; What virtue is there in suffering from preventable hunger? Where is the merit in causing hunger unnecessarily?

The fact is that Mr. Ellison's "God-in-the-skies" still regards sexual pleasure as in itself unclean and sinful. Disguise it as they may, the religious object to birth control because they hold that "God" prefers celibacy.

"Birth control is selfish," because it "puts the physical before the intellectual," according to Mr. Ellison. How can it be "selfish" to save women the anguish of bearing unwanted children, while aiding them to achieve full sexual satisfaction; to strive to prevent the wars, strikes, starvation and over-crowding that are the result of over-population; to try to give to every child born the rightful heritage of joy and welcome that is *only* to be conferred by a willing and glad pregnancy? Mr. Ellison calls this putting the physical before the intellectual! Mr. Ellison does not see, apparently, that the physical and the intellectual are one; have common roots in the brain; and are inextricably connected. It was well said by Wilde that "those who see any dif-

ference between soul and body have neither." The truth of Wilde's epigram, which I quote, perhaps incorrectly, from memory, lies in the fact—the *fact!* that all human pleasures and all human pains are both mental and physical. A single instance will suffice; the purely intellectual and spiritual pleasure of music is impossible without physical ears.

The highest ideal of human love is that it shall be mutual; otherwise it is not love, but lust. Hence the true lover does *not* place his own pleasure before his partner's, as Mr. Ellison suggests, for the reason that it is psychologically impossible to do so. As a Catholic, Mr. Ellison does not understand human love at all; to him, apparently, it is sublimated and tolerated lust, the next best thing to celibacy. And again, we modern lovers find why we are "up against" the low Catholic ideal. Right here and now let me say that the writer is a husband, a father, and a birth controller.

Mr. Ellison alleges that the birth controlling lover "sets" his "partner on a higher plane than Nature." But his partner is scarcely supernatural; she is herself part of Nature, so Mr. Ellison's statement is absurd. How one can "shut Nature out entirely" I do not know, for there can be nothing outside Nature. Nature is everything. Will Mr. Ellison be so kind as to tell us what is outside Nature, and where it may be found?

"The points of this philosophy are very strange" to Mr. Ellison, who, by implication, desires the birth of forced or unwanted children. "This philosophy" is certainly the antithesis of Paul's; but it is less grotesque than that gentleman's, and possibly more chivalrous!

So slipshod is Mr. Ellison in thought that he actually confuses the unborn with the unconceived, a fundamental and fatal error that shows that he has given no real thought to the subject. A child begins to exist, of course, from the very moment of conception, and has rights that are understood and recognised by the eugenicist; but the *unconceived* is the non-existent, unless Mr. Ellison can prove the existence of "souls" before conception, and this, I venture to opine, he will find no easy task. In any case, to all intents and purposes, a child does not begin to exist until it is conceived. The point missed by Mr. Ellison is that it is contraception that is the present issue, and not abortion.

I do not "ignore the husband's rights and wishes"; but as the wife has all the pains and distresses of child-bearing, in addition to the minor martyrdom of menstruation when she is not bearing, and the husband receives only pleasure, I think that in

matters affecting love the casting-vote should, upon every ethical consideration, go to the wife.

I am aware that this is the very antithesis of the Pauline-Christian teaching; but it is a point worth noting by all those who are striving to bring to birth a nobler and happier world. To the Good European this talk about the husband's "rights" is not merely old-fashioned, but effete. A word in Mr. Ellison's ear: There are *no* rights in love, but only privileges. It is here that we part company definitely and finally with the Christian Code. Herein lies the hope of a happy future for humanity.

What may be "the moral and more healthy methods" of solving the problem of the sexual relationship I do not profess to know; but I *do* know, as a husband and father, that the use of contraceptives seems to me preferable to onanism as one alternative, and a houseful of hungry and unwanted children as the other!

Incomplete coition, permissible birth control (copulation at the least desirable periods, and unsafe at that!), five or six births to a family (even the poorest eugenically and financially), greater unselfishness (in giving wives unwanted offspring), and harder work (when there is already too little work to go round), these are Mr. Ellison's alternatives to the practice of contraception.

I hope that Mr. Ellison will continue his crusade for the League of National Life, which, in due season, will become one of the most valuable assets the Birth Control movement could hope to possess.

I have written thus at length to show, once for all, the essential differences between the Catholic and the Humanistic standpoints.