

CHAPTER 2

THE THREE QUESTIONS

FIRST, SOME DEFINITIONS.

Define “Alive”

Alive means that this being is growing, developing, maturing, and replacing its own dying cells. It means not being dead.

Define “Human”

Human means one of the biological beings who belongs to the species *Homo Sapiens*. Such beings are unique from all other beings in that they have 46 human chromosomes in every cell. Such beings do not belong to the rabbit family, the carrot family, etc.

Define “Person”

Person is defined in at least a dozen different ways, according to the field or discipline in which you define it. In theology, it usually means when the soul is created. In law (in the U.S.), personhood begins at birth. Other countries have ruled that it begins at different ages. In medicine and natural science, person usually means when the being is alive and complete. In philosophy, it has multiple meanings and shades of meanings. We

strongly suggest that no one use this term without first defining precisely what you mean by it, for, unless you do, any discussion of personhood is foolish.

Define human life

This is the question that must first be considered, pondered, discussed and, finally, answered. It cannot be brushed aside or ignored. It must be faced and met honestly. Upon its answer hinges the entire abortion question, as all other considerations pale to insignificance when compared with it. In a sense, nothing else really matters. If what is growing within the mother is not human life, if it is just a piece of tissue — a glob of protoplasm — then it deserves little respect or consideration, and the primary concern should be the mother's physical and mental health, her social well-being, and, at times, even her convenience.

NOW THE THREE QUESTIONS

There are three questions that are basic to the entire abortion controversy:

The first is: "Is this human life?" As we will see, the answer clearly is Yes. That answer is a medical and scientific one, for we cannot impose a religious or philosophic belief in our nations through force of law.

The second question is: "Should we grant equal protection by law to all living humans in our nation?" or, "Should we allow discrimination against entire classes of living humans?"

The third question is about Choice and Women's Rights, as discussed in Chapter 27.

COMMENT

For two millennia in our Western culture, written into our constitutions, specifically protected by our laws, and deeply imprinted into the hearts of all men and women, there has existed the absolute value of honoring and protecting the right of each human to live. This has been an unalienable and unequivocal right. The only exception has been that of balancing a life for a life in certain situations or by due process of law.

- Never, in modern times — except by a small group of physicians in Hitler's Germany and by Stalin in Russia — has a price tag of economic or social usefulness been placed on an individual human life as the price of its continued existence.
- Never, in modern times — except by physicians in Hitler's Germany — has a certain physical perfection been required as a condition necessary for the continuation of that life.
- Never — since the law of paterfamilias in ancient Rome — has a major nation granted to a father or mother total dominion over the life or death of their child.
- Never, in modern times, has the state granted to one citizen the absolute legal right to have another killed in order to solve their own personal, social or economic problem.

And yet, if this is human life, the U.S. Supreme Court Decision in America and permissive abortion laws in other nations do all of the above. They represent a complete about-face, a total rejection of one of the core values of Western man, and an acceptance of a new ethic in which life has only a relative value. No longer will every human have a right to live simply because he or she exists.

A human will now be allowed to exist only if he measures up to certain standards of independence, physical perfection, or utilitarian usefulness to others. This is a momentous change that strikes at the root of Western civilization.

It makes no difference to vaguely assume that human life is more human post-born than pre-born. What is critical is to judge it to be — or not to be — human life. By a measure of “more” or “less” human, one can easily and logically justify infanticide and euthanasia. By the measure of economic and/or social usefulness, the ghastly atrocities of Hitlerian mass murders came to be.

One cannot help but be reminded of the anguished comment of a condemned Nazi judge who said to an American judge after the Nuremberg trials: “I never knew it would come to this.” The American judge answered simply: “It came to this the first time you condemned an innocent life.”

Ponder well the words of George Santayana: “Those who do not remember the past are condemned to relive it.”

Wm. Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*,
Simon & Schuster, 1959

Is this unborn being, growing within the mother, a human life? Does he or she have a right to live? Make this judgment with the utmost care, scientific precision, and honesty. Upon it may hinge much of the basic freedom of many human lives in the years to come.

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