

*Transcribed from "Family Limitation, 17th edition" 1928 in the Margaret Sanger Papers, Box 85, folder 6, the Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College, Northampton, MA.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

In cases of women suffering from Bright's disease, heart disease or tuberculosis; the physician usually warns the woman to guard herself against pregnancy. It is an established fact that two-thirds of the women who die from the above-named diseases do so because they have become pregnant. Therefore, it is imperative that physicians should not only warn women suffering from these diseases against pregnancy, but they should see that they are properly instructed in methods to prevent conception. Such responsibility on the part of physicians would reduce the maternal mortality of the world tremendously.

While the above-named diseases are not considered transmissible from the mother to the child, there are certain other diseases and conditions such as insanity, syphilis, idiocy, and feeble-mindedness which are passed to the next generation.

When either the man or the woman is afflicted with any one of these diseases, it is absolutely wrong to allow a child to be born. In such cases, the man or the woman should be sterilized. The patient should understand that such an operation does not deprive him or her of sexual desire or expression. It simply renders the patient incapable of having children. To conserve the lives of mothers and to prevent the birth of diseased or defective children are objects for which we need a sound educational program for birth control.

We hold that children should be

1. Conceived in love.
2. Born of the mother's conscious desire.
3. And only begotten under conditions which render possible the heritage of health.

We want parents to be conscious of the responsibility to the race in bringing children into the world. Instead of being a blind and haphazard consequence of uncontrolled instinct, parenthood must be made the responsible and self-directed means of human expression and regeneration.