

Among the earliest theological controversies were heated arguments as to Adam's course with regard to the umbilical cord of Cain and Abel, and again over the Scriptural record that "God created man in His own image, *male and female* created He them." The latter was the starting point for a very warm controversy upon the question of reproduction. Many writers conceived the earliest of our parents as hermaphrodites, and St. Thomas went so far as to say that in the state of innocence man was reproduced by faith alone, that the organs of generation were the indelible mark of his sin and folly. The necessity for the female in reproduction gave rise to the idea of the Ancients that Lilith was the first wife of Adam.

The first mention of a midwife, of which we have any record, is in Exodus i, xv. where we are told of Puah and Shiprah who received the command of Herod to kill off the male children born to the Hebrew women. It is suggested that this was to be accomplished by leaving the umbilical cord without ligature, but the origin of this belief I have been unable to find. It is interesting to know, in view of our experience now with Hebrew women, that the explanation given by these midwives for their failure to destroy the male children born, was, "that the Hebrews are not as the Egyptians, but are lively, and are delivered before the midwife comes to them."

In the Greek era we find four famous midwives, Elephantis, Olympia, Aspasia, and Laïs, the last named a celebrated courtizan, famous for her skill in inducing abortion. Also, we read of one Agnodice, who defied certain Athenian laws relating to the employment of midwives. She studied under Herophilus, then disguised herself as a man, and went about revealing her identity to those in labour. There was a consequent falling off in the practice of many of the accoucheurs, who thereupon accused Agnodice of being a "debauché and a corrupter," and said in fact that many women simulated illness in order to have her (him) called. Summoned before the Areopagus, Agnodice saved herself by revealing her identity, only to be met with more serious charges. This time, the suffragettes of Athens, interested in her behalf, rose in their might, and the obnoxious regulation of the Athenian court was withdrawn. This is a very good story, but is probably untrue, as we know that Phenarète, the mother of Socrates, was a midwife, that Cleopatra wrote a treatise on the diseases of women and described a pessary, and that Artemesia, Queen of Caria (B.C. 350) was also renowned as a midwife. It is questionable, therefore, whether the confinements of ancient Greece were not wholly supervised by midwives.

Certain beliefs and practices dating from a still earlier time lent much to the mystery and superstition surrounding conception, impreg-