

LETTERS TO MARGARET SAWYER

Sanger's belief that the ability to control pregnancy was women's most vital right?

Please tell me what to do to keep from having any more babies. I am only twenty-six years old and the mother of five children the oldest eight years and the others six, four and two, and I have four living. The last time I had a six month's miscarriage and I have been weak ever since. It happened this past August. My husband is gone to try and find work and I have to support my children myself. I have to work so hard until I feel like it would kill me to give birth to another. I am nervous. My back and side give me a lot of trouble. I am not able to give my children the attention that I desire. I take in washing to support my children, I suffered this last time from the time I got that way until I lost it and am yet weak in my back. Please! for my sake tell me what to do to keep from having another. I don't want another child. Five is enough for me.

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I don't care to bear any more children for the man I got he is most all the time drunk and not working and gone for days and nights and leave me alone most of the time. I'm sewing to support me and my baby that is two years old and one dead born so I know you don't blame me for not wanting any more children and he is always talking about leaving me he might as well for what he is doing but I am worried that I may get in wrong.

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I was married when I was seventeen and seven months. After nine months married I had a miscarriage at eight months. After fourteen months I had a baby boy and he is living and is now seven years old. After three years I had another boy. He was born with consumption in the bones and would shake his head one side and another but doctors did not know what that was. Now I have them nervous spells myself. All through my married life I have been working in factories. I took my children to the day nursery. Two months before the birth of my last child my husband deserted me with my children. He had left home eleven time before that but always came back, but that night his mother gave him money to get out of town. I was then married five years to him. After four years I could not get no trace of him I got the divorce. I had to work hard to keep my furniture and pay the rent as I did not want to go boarding. Now as I was twenty-six and as I had no one to depend on I married again. He is good young man of twenty-five and he is not a lazy gambler like the other, but even with that I fear having any more children as they will not be healthy. We were married a few months ago and neither of us had any money and he is only a laborer and makes twenty-five dollars a week, so you see I have struggled with the first husband and I wish I will not struggle with this one, so please if you can help me.

<sup>1</sup> From Margaret Sawyer, *Motherhood in Bondage* (New York: Brentano, 1928).