

A Pro-Life Sourcebook

Pro Life Answers to Pro Choice Arguments, by Randy Alcorn, Sisters, OR: Multnomah Books, 1992, 294 pages, paperback, \$9.95. (Available from General Birch Services Corp., P.O. Box 8040, Appleton, WI 54913. Add \$2.00 for postage and handling.)

The word "sophistry" is defined as the employment of arguments that are deceptive, so as deliberately to mislead the unwary, but that are, at the same time, specious — in other words, superficially attractive and reasonable. Clearly, it is this latter element which makes sophistic arguments so perilous, for that element comprises the bait that dangles almost irresistibly from a usually deadly hook. Otherwise intelligent people tend to focus their attention on the comfortable and self-exculpating words which cloak the fundamentally erroneous starting point. We see then that sophistry is rhetorical prestidigitation, something to command the attention of the mind while a deception is completed. Liberals, as we know, are adepts at sophistry, since their outlook is at odds with moral order and with human nature. Most typically, liberals encapsulate their sophistic subterfuge in catch-phrases which, repeated endlessly by politicians and media spokesmen, are soon accepted by the less thoughtful among the citizenry. Consider any issue of any importance whatever, and there exists a huge repertoire of transparent clichés created to mislead naïfs. Yet, few areas reveal the magnitude of liberal verbal trickery as much as does the subject of abortion.

Randy Alcorn's excellent new book demolishes, one by one, the sophistic arguments used by those who favor unrestricted abortion. This is a remarkable book on several scores. It is arranged in a format in which the chief slogans of the abortionists are answered with cogent, intelligent, and, in most cases, chastening replies.

Alcorn has arranged his book in five major sections. Part One contains arguments concerning "life, humanity, and personhood." This section has eight major pro-abortion contentions, following

which are the author's replies. Let us consider an example: "The unborn is an embryo or a fetus — just a simple blob of tissue, a product of conception — not a baby." Alcorn refutes this popular argument in a series of detailed responses. For instance, he notes that, historically, before any large-scale killing of human beings commences under totalitarian governments, it is common practice to justify such action through the use of

ously, must be mitigated by consideration for the rights of others.

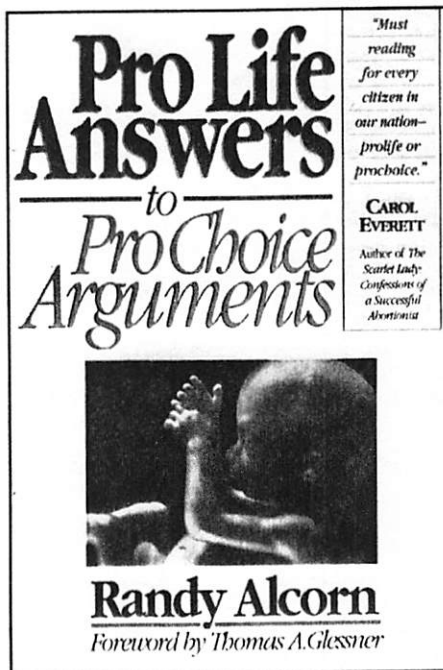
Part Three concerns the social aspects of abortion and lists seven pro-abortion arguments. Again, we will mention one of these. It is said that "restricting abortion would be unfair to the poor and minorities, who need it most." If this is true, the author says, then why are the rich and white, not the poor and minorities, the most committed to so-called abortion rights? Besides, he warns, how can it be unfair for one group to have less opportunity than another to commit such abominations?

Part Four concerns issues of health and safety. Is it true, for example, that before the legalization of abortion tens of thousands of women died from "back alley" abortions? The author answers that it is *not* true that "tens of thousands" died in such circumstances. However, he rightly insists that, regardless of numbers, the notion that we must legalize the killing of innocent human beings for the purpose of making that killing less hazardous is preposterous.

Citing particularly hard cases is a device of pro-abortionists, and so Part Five of Alcorn's book answers these. For instance: What if a woman's life is threatened by childbirth? What if an unborn baby is diagnosed as deformed? The author's responses to these and other similar questions are perceptive and marked by the common sense that our ancestors took for granted, but which is in very short supply today.

Pro Life Answers to Pro Choice Arguments is designed as a book for active use, and not only for informational reading. Thus, the author has taken pains to provide a detailed table of contents, a comprehensive index, notes to support his arguments throughout the text, and a listing of pro-life resources such as books, videos, organizations, adoption services, and much more. For activists, and for the education of both young and old, this book is essential. Sober, logical, and superbly organized, it is the best and most useful pro-life book that this reviewer has had the pleasure to read. ■

— FR. JAMES THORNTON



depersonalizing characterizations. By degrading the victim to a subhuman status, consciences are assuaged and reactions tempered. We mention only one of the author's answers; the others are equally compelling.

Part Two of *Pro Life Answers to Pro Choice Arguments* recounts the eight chief arguments used by pro-abortionists, centering on ideas such as fairness and so-called "rights." One of these constitutes a favorite defense of abortion: "Abortion is a decision between a woman and her doctor. It's no one else's business. Everyone has a constitutional right to privacy." In answer, Alcorn first writes that there is no "right to privacy" mentioned anywhere in the Constitution of the United States. Moreover, insofar as such a right exists apart from constitutional law, it is not absolute but, obvi-