

Homosexuality and the Western Christian tradition

Autor(en): **Bailey, Derrick Sherwin**

Objekttyp: **BookReview**

Zeitschrift: **Der Kreis : eine Monatsschrift = Le Cercle : revue mensuelle**

Band (Jahr): **23 (1955)**

Heft 6: **Moderne Kunst / L'art moderne / Modern art**

PDF erstellt am: **22.07.2024**

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«Never mind, sweet, I'll find them.»

Quickly she went through his pockets. No note, no slip of paper with a pencilled address. Willie felt much better. Charles was too gullible really. She gave him a swift kiss on the chin, «Dahling,» and turned to step out into the lobby.

«Two-oh-one, East Fifty Seventh Street, Suite 24-A, two o'clock tomorrow afternoon,» Charles repeated silently for the dozenth time. Yes, he had it for sure, he thought happily, taking Willie's arm. In the meantime, there should be at least another thousand or so in this present bag before he decided to get himself a new one.

Book-Review

Homosexuality and the Western Christian Tradition

By Derrick Sherwin Bailey.

Longmans, 15s.

Should the law concerning homosexual acts be changed? This question has recently been raised and it will undoubtedly give rise to a great deal of discussion in the near future. It will be approached from many different points of view. There are those, no doubt, who feel that the attitude of the Jews as presented in the Old Testament and the views current in medieval Europe are irrelevant to the modern issue. On the other hand there are certainly those who feel that the «Western Christian Tradition» cannot be lightly put aside.

It is to these that Dr. Bailey addresses his arguments. He has made a careful investigation of the Hebrew evidence, the laws of the Christian Emperors, the opinions of the leaders of the Church in the Middle Ages and the medieval and modern legislation of this country. He shows that the common imputation of homosexual practices as characterising the Cities of the Plain is a later accretion, and that the view that their destruction was due to that particular form of activity is unfounded. He also shows that though the Church has always regarded homosexual acts as sinful, they have not carried out the violent campaigns against them of which they are accused. In Dr. Bailey's view the disapproval of homosexual relations between males is compounded of three trends: a high regard for masculinity, which made it appear that homosexual activities were degrading and 'womanish', while no regard was paid to lesbianism which only concerned the less worthy sex; a desire to protect minors from assault; and a complete ignorance of the existence of the 'true invert'.

A more balanced evaluation of the sexes, and our greater psychological knowledge should make us think again. *While minors should be protected, as in heterosexual intercourse, consenting adults, it may be suggested, should be left to the dictates of their own consciences.* Dr. Bailey is the Central Lecturer of the Church of England Moral Welfare Council. His book is learned and at the same time eminently readable. He has made an outstanding contribution to this controversial subject.

From «The Listener», London, May 1955.