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[Book Review of] *A Christian View of Homosexuality* by John W. Drakeford

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cine, anthropology, sociology, economics, ecology, ethics and theology. Population pressures raise new questions, as Pope Paul VI observed (*H.V.* 1 and 3). To these new questions, new answers must be found. The author's solutions may not necessarily be acceptable to us, on moral/theological grounds, but the problem is one we all share together. The challenge to the Catholic medical searcher remains and intensifies. *Humanae Vitae* asserts the morality of, and the need for, responsible parenthood (9, 10, 21), and defines the *necessary* (11, 12, 14, 16), but not the *sufficient*, conditions of a moral and effective regulation of births. To develop these *sufficient* conditions is the pressing challenge to which three Popes have been calling us since 1951.

— Andre J. de Bethune, Ph.D.
Professor of Chemistry, Boston College

A Christian View of Homosexuality

John W. Drakeford

Broadman Press, 127 Ninth Ave., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, 1977. 140 pp., no price given.

John Drakeford is a licensed psychologist, professor of psychology and director of the marriage and family counseling center at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. If this book is representative of the 23 books which he has published, it is easy to understand why he is such a prolific writer. The present volume amounts to a lengthy article, a very readable article but one which — apparently by design — lacks depth. He does not take the argument about homosexuality any further, whether from a religious or scientific standpoint.

A Christian View of Homosexuality is the odyssey of "Jeff J.," a minister and family man who in Jekyll and Hyde fashion divided his time between church work and homosexual liaisons. The narrative form is interspersed with lengthy observations by the author. In the chapter titled "How Do People Become Homosexuals?" Drakeford begins by noting: "Homosexuality is the riddle of human sexual experiences" (p. 41). At the book's conclusion it is, not surprisingly, still a riddle, but it is a deviation which, in the writer's view, is often treatable.

The author's approach is fundamentally pastoral, and traditional Catholic teaching can grant it the *Imprimatur*: the biological difference between male and female is in God's design for the purpose of reproduction which is proper only within marriage; everything else is deviant behavior. Well, perhaps not everything. It is not clear that Drakeford would extend his view of abnormality to include masturbatory or contraceptive activity — both equally non-reproductive — but he does seem to endorse the notion that a certain amount of homosexual experimentation during adolescence is normal behavior (p. 43). How the grace of God, the sufficiency of which (2 Cor. 12:19) is referred to in the closing sentence of the book, is to function during the sexually turbulent period of adolescence is not explained.

Drakeford's understanding of biblical teaching regarding human sexual activity is a fundamentalist view and from this standpoint his reasoning is very vulnerable. Among other weak points, because of emphasis on certain Genesis passages, the title of the book is not fully intelligible. Nor does the author explain why the Old Testament is explicit in its condemnation of male homosexuality but is silent regarding female homosexuality. Apart from one passage in Romans (1:26, itself open to interpretation), he is content to note that "The Bible has little to say

about lesbianism" (p. 63). But then Drakeford is a psychologist, not an exegete. Unfortunately, in the chapter on the bible and homosexuality all exegetical reasoning is his own. The reasoning is no doubt shared by others but no biblical scholar is cited in support of any statement made.

As a religiously oriented psychologist, Drakeford is convinced that many homosexuals can be helped with professional assistance and, of course, the grace of God. Presupposed is strong motivation on the part of a homosexual to want to be helped. And Drakeford details a therapeutic approach, "Integrity Therapy," which is "no cure in the sense that one will be immediately and forever delivered from his homosexuality" but one that will provide "some techniques of handling his wayward sexual impulse and getting it under control" (p. 117). This should be most encouraging to anyone who, like Jeff J., could never afford the time or expense involved in psychoanalytic treatment (\$100,000, two to five sessions a week for two to five years) which in the end might be totally ineffective. (Even if this treatment were effective, and cost only half as much, ethically speaking it would amount to extraordinary means which no one is obligated to use!) Essentially, the therapy described is much the same as that involved in Alcoholics Anonymous.

A Christian View of Homosexuality is a moving account describing one man's attempt to resurrect himself, an account that is free of jargon and full of hope. Drakeford himself is passionate regarding the civil rights of homosexuals and in this he parts company with Anita Bryant whose own "Christian" view is questionable. The book's title, however, is misleading. On the one hand it purports to be *the* Christian view, while on the other hand, there is nothing that proves the approach to be specifically Christian; a devout non-Christian or a person of no religious persuasion could argue the same way, biblical passages notwithstanding.

— Dennis J. Doherty, Dr. theol.
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Bioethics

Thomas A. Shannon, Editor

Paulist Press, 1865 Broadway, New York, N. Y. 10023, 1976. 513 pp., \$9.95 (paper).

This collection of essays is subtitled, "Basic Writings on the key ethical questions that surround the major biological possibilities and problems." The problems are those posed by recent advances in medical scientific technology. Certain basic issues which have surfaced include the constitutive elements of personhood, the right of a person vs. the rights of society, personal integrity, consent, and distributive justice. Each article presents a specific ethical argument or position and forms a basic and important contribution to the discussion of a particular problem area. The issues covered are classed under seven headings: Abortion, Severely-Handicapped Children, Death and Dying, Research and Human Experimentation, Genetic Engineering and Genetic Policy, the Allocation of Scarce Resources, and Behavior Modification.

In a review as short as this, little more can be done than highlight some of the most crucial problems considered by the authors. In relation to the abortion issue, Gregory Baum makes it clear that Christians of good faith can be found on both sides of the issue. As an ecumenical theologian, he urges Catholics to respect the Protestant-Christian pro-abortion position as an attempt to deal in a Christian way with a difficult moral problem. Sissela Bok draws up some tentative guidelines of factors to be weighed by a person considering an abortion. Agonizing moral and