

the physical expression of friendship, a point on which Aelred seems to have been unusually unembarrassed, regarding holding hands in the monastery without suspicion, for instance. With regard to kissing, he simply and wisely says that the occasion for it should be determined externally rather than emotionally (which obviously is not to say that it must be devoid of emotion!).

TIME FOR CONSENT: A CHRISTIAN'S APPROACH TO HOMOSEXUALITY by Norman Pittenger. SCM Press Third edition, enlarged and revised, 1976. £1.80. 104 pp.

Christian homosexuals have traditionally been given the choice between a celibacy which they would not willingly have chosen and, at any rate in the case of Catholics, exclusion from the Eucharist. Dr Pittenger's book argues that a new Christian approach is urgently needed. He makes the point, which unfortunately still needs to be made, that people do not choose to go against their natural instincts and become homosexual in some spirit of decadent perversity, but that they *are* homosexual, for whatever reason. Dr Pittenger, I think rightly, doesn't regard the reason as being of any great importance; what matters is how the fact itself is to be dealt with. He argues that both of the traditional alternatives are deeply undesirable, and that homosexuality must be assimilated into Christian moral theology as a way of loving, not anathematized as a vice.

To begin with, it is undeniable, he says, that a "homosexual problem" exists. But whose problem is it? James Baldwin remarked that what used to be known as the Black Problem is in fact the White Problem, arising as it does from the fact that many whites refuse to regard blacks as fellow human beings. In the same way, Dr Pittenger sees the homosexual problem as that of "the prejudiced and condemnatory heterosexual." For homosexuals there is nothing problematic about their own natural feelings, only about society's attitude to them. As an example of this, Pittenger points out that most heterosexuals (and, I would add, most homosexuals) are very ready to despise men who look for sexual encounters in public lavatories,

Now that Dom Hoste has given us a good critical edition of the Latin text of this charming and important work, it is devoutly to be hoped that someone will give us a decent English version. Maybe we could even persuade Cistercian Publications to withdraw this ghastly travesty, and find a new version more worthy of their own high standards.

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without stopping to reflect that, as the author puts it, many men "may be driven to such expedients ... because society has made a different approach not only difficult but often impossible for them." In other words, it should be obvious that most people don't actually *prefer* to meet their sexual partners in these circumstances.

At this point I should say that I'm uneasy about two of Dr Pittenger's attitudes. First, he is very concerned to insist that most homosexuals are *ordinary* people, who don't frequent public lavatories, aren't effeminate, aren't detectable, and so on. I find this kind of pleading rather suspect. It reminds me of Terence O'Neill's reassuring Ulster loyalists that if Catholics are given good jobs and good houses they behave just as Protestants do. I can see no justification for the assumption that there is something inherently wrong and unacceptable about being effeminate, or that "masculine" attributes, as Dr Pittenger later implies, are somehow "natural" and not themselves inculcated by social conditioning. Secondly, he seems to regard acts of promiscuity as incompatible with the desire for a permanent relationship, and notices that this desire is strong and widespread among homosexuals. But surely it is reasonable to see promiscuous behaviour, in many cases, as the search for a permanent relationship which hasn't as yet been achieved.

At the same time, in what seems a contradictory way, Dr Pittenger recognises this when he quotes, approvingly, the judgement of a fictional priest that the man who rings the doorbell of a brothel is

seeking God, even if in the wrong way. Seeking God means seeking Love. Dr Pittenger's view is that "the genuinely integrating factor in human experience is the capacity to give love and to be loved. But as lovers we are frustrated, because we are liable to the distortion of sin. So what is sin? As the author says, it is not simply the transgression of law, but rather "our refusal to move on in becoming truly human"—which can also be seen as our refusal to follow natural law. Natural law, says Dr Pittenger, can and should be understood as that which tells us to avoid the evil and do the good. It is not something revealed to men *in spite* of their humanity, "as if such a law cut across all human insight and experience." For a homosexual, it is not natural to seek fulfilment in heterosexual love; on the contrary, he is committing an outrage against his own instincts.

But this does not entail moral anarchy. As well as having the right to fulfil themselves as human beings through their sexuality, homosexuals, like everybody else, have responsibilities. The last sections suggest an ethic for homosexuals. Dr Pittenger concludes that when homosexuals have recognised their sexuality as an integral and natural element in themselves, they should accept it and rejoice in it; that one's sexual behaviour should involve a considered and serious attitude towards

the other person; namely, that all sexual acts be subjected to "the control of love."

This is a thoughtful and humane book. Who is meant to read it? I think it is largely directed at heterosexual Christians who honestly want to understand the nature of homosexuality and of homosexual people. Most importantly, this must include all those who are called on to be counsellors, and more specifically, confessors. Then there are those who have "achieved gay consciousness", which properly means the shedding of guilt through awareness of the potential creative value of homosexuality, but is often bound up with a rejection of the need for any regulating force on human behaviour. People who in this way reject any "control of love" will dismiss the book as "liberal", irrelevant, etc, but it was not written for them. More to the point, it will incur great hostility among those who, under the impression that they are upholding Christian principles, deliver facile and self-righteous judgements on a subject they know nothing about. Dr Pittenger is well aware that from their point of view his book is highly controversial, even shocking. he says he has been "driven" to his conclusions, through blood, sweat and tears. I wonder how many of his opponents will feel able to claim the same.

MARTIN McQUIGG

ORIGIN AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FRANKFURT SCHOOL: A MARXIST PERSPECTIVE by Phil Slater. *Routledge and Kegan Paul*, £5.95

Bertolt Brecht once thought of writing a novel about a rich old man who set up an institute to enquire into the sources of evil and suffering in the world. The institute duly pursued its research, and reported back to its benefactor that the source of evil and suffering was himself. Brecht's story was intended to be a parable of the fate of what has become widely known, within Western Marxism, as the Frankfurt School. The term 'Frankfurt School' designates that small group of Marxist intellectuals who constituted the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research, established in 1923 and directed from 1930 onwards by the philosopher Max Horkheimer. Herbert Marcuse, Theodor

Adorno, Eric Fromm, Franz Neumann, Leo Lowenthal, Friedrich Pollock: what united these thinkers was a common antagonism to that species of positivism which passed as 'orthodox Marxist-Leninism', and a determination to oust it with a truly critical, dialectical theory of society by a return to Hegelian Marxism. Influenced by Lukacs and Korsch, hostile to Stalinism and Engelsian 'dialectical materialism', the Frankfurt School chalked up some major theoretical achievements—Neumann and Pollock's pioneering work on the political economy of fascism, Horkheimer's meditations on Marxist philosophy, the aesthetics of Adorno and Marcuse, Fromm's attempts