

versal testimony. They will rest with a pure conscience in the place of their repose, which is the unbegotten Spirit. And as these things happen, Sodom will be burned unjustly by a base nature. For the evil will not cease." Another such work, the *Gospel of the Egyptians*, declares: "The great Seth came and brought his seed. And it was sown in the aeons which had been brought forth, their number being the amount of Sodom. Some say that Sodom is the place of pasture of the great Seth, which is Gomorrah. But others say that the great Seth took his plant out of Gomorrah and planted it in the second place, to which he gave the name Sodom."

In the view of some scholars, Gnostic elements in Christianity helped to differentiate it from Rabbinic Judaism. Judaism developed in the following centuries, to a considerable degree, as a dialectical reaction to the spread of Pauline Christianity in the Roman Empire. What in Judaism had been concrete and national was in Gnosticism metamorphosed into the symbolic and cosmic. The legacy of Gnostic speculation framed the incarnation and death of Jesus as an event of universal import in which the whole of mankind was redeemed from the sin of Adam and offered the possibility of salvation; it also strengthened the ascetic, world-rejecting tendencies of primitive Christianity that led to a devaluation of sexuality and exaltation of virginity which remained foreign to Judaism in any form. In this way, Gnosticism reinforced ascetic Zoroastrian and Stoic motifs familiar to the Greco-Roman environment. As the upshot of this complex process, a radical denial of sexual expression which neither biblical Jewish law nor classical Greek philosophy had urged became for later Christian thinkers an ethical ideal, and one to which homosexual gratification was counterpoised as the ultimate moral evil.

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## GOD, HOMOSEXUALITY AS A DENIAL OF

In the debates on the Wolfenden Report and later proposals for decriminalization, some Christian clergy asserted that "homosexuality is a denial of God" because it is "an affront to the Creator who made them male and female" (cf. Genesis 1:27). The underlying assumption is that since God divided the human race into opposite sexes, any sexual dalliance with one's own gender frustrates his express purpose and command.

The critique of this argument can take various lines. First, there is good evidence from the early text of the Septuagint (the Greek Old Testament) and its daughter versions, as well as from some passages in Rabbinic literature, that the original reading of Genesis 1:27 was "And God created man; in the image of God he created him male-and-female," which is to say **androgynous**, since the Semitic languages have no formal way of compounding two nouns, and must express the relationship paratactically—by juxtaposing them. The verse in question would then be a mutilated fragment of an earlier Babylonian myth in which the future heterosexual pair is a male-female, an *androgynos*. Modern evolutionary theory recognizes that man is sprung from phylogenetic ancestors who were **hermaphroditic**, and from them, even with the later sexual dimorphism, he has inherited the archaic capacity for erotic response to members of both sexes.

But a more fundamental objection to this line of thinking noted at the outset lies in the very notion of purpose (or **teleology**). Economy and purpose itself are functions of a reflective consciousness that is aware of the scarcity of the resources at its disposal. An intelligence that had at its command infinite time, infinite space, infinite matter, and infinite energy could have no notion of economy, or even of purpose, because anything and everything would be possible, anywhere and anywhen. Man is forced to organize his activity on

economic principles because he lives in a world whose every resource is finite, and he must constantly reflect on how best to deploy his limited means to attain his desired ends.

The conventional Christian reply amounts to claiming that because homosexuality does not lead to reproduction, if tolerated it would lead to the biological death of mankind and thus frustrate the will of the Creator. Hence the positive injunction: "Be fruitful and multiply" (Genesis 1:28) which the homosexual implicitly violates by "wasting his semen," which is the formal evil represented by sodomy.

The rejoinder to this claim is that the finite character of the economic means at man's disposal—land, natural resources, capital and industrial plant, social and cultural infrastructure—itself imposes a limit upon his numbers, if distributive justice is to accord each member of the human family the irreducible minimum of worldly goods necessary for his existence. If one admits for the sake of argument that God created the planet Earth as a habitat for man, then by making its land mass and resources finite he has also implicitly set limits on the numbers which the human species could attain. Furthermore, macroevolution has severely limited the reproductive potential of heterosexuality by excluding superfetation. That is to say, once the human female has been impregnated she cannot conceive again until the end of the nine-month gestation period. Male and female have been allotted quite different roles in the reproductive process; theoretically the male can have hundreds or even thousands of offspring, the female can have only a handful, even if impregnated again and again during her child-bearing years. The principle holds true for the thoroughbred stallion and mare as much as it does for man and woman. Even the economic interest of the breeder cannot offset this reproductive disparity attendant upon sexual dimorphism.

The occurrence of homosexual activity in homo sapiens, therefore, implies nothing with reference to God or his supposed purposes. The 3 percent or so of the population that is exclusively homosexual insignificantly diminishes the birth rate of the nation—which is only one factor in the demographic picture. Even if a tenth of human sexual activity is homosexual, the other nine-tenths more than suffices to maintain any population in equilibrium with the economic resources at its command. Indeed, the task of the modern state is to synchronize its demographic movement with the evolution of its economy, so that not just a privileged few, but all its citizens can enjoy a rising standard of living. Family planning services will in the future have the role of guiding the citizenry in this direction.

Warren Johansson

### GOETHE, JOHANN WOLFGANG VON (1749–1832)

Greatest German writer. Born in Frankfurt am Main, he studied arts at Leipzig and law at Strasbourg. His tragedy *Götz von Berlichingen* (1773) and Romantic short novel *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774) began the literary movement known as *Sturm und Drang*, often said to be the start of Romanticism. Settling at Weimar under the patronage of the ducal heir and elected to the Privy Council, he became leader in that intellectual center, associating with Wieland, Herder, and later Schiller. His visit to Italy recorded in *Italianische Reise* and probably involving pederastic adventures inspired him anew as did his intimate friendship with Schiller. Even after he married in 1806 he continued his frequent love affairs with women. His autobiographical *Wilhelm Meister*, a Bildungsroman or novel of character formation, and the second part of *Faust* (in 1832), exalted his reputation further, although he was already first in German literature. The nonexhaustive Weimar