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ONE

July/August 1972

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Magazine



John Blackburn

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A Council of One Members (Friends of ONE) in or near Detroit

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Semester or single-session attendance

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2256 Venice Boulevard, Los Angeles - near Western Ave. Tel. 735-5252

ONE in NEW YORK

Founded June, 1954, ONE's earliest branch; reactivated Oct. 1964. Occasional meetings, by notice. P.O. Box 473, Madison Sq. Stn. NY 10010.

Where several ONE Members wish, arrangements may be made for single meetings, or Members' Councils, as in Mexico City, 1955; Kansas City during 1956 & 1966; St. Louis, 1966; Seattle, 1968; & Phoenix, 1969-1971. Some of these have resulted in independent homophile organizations. Interested members are invited to write L.A. for details.



Despite certain pious old sayings, which are mere whistlings in the dark, names really can hurt us. Slanderous group names - *Nigger, Savage Injun, Cocksucker* - stab at the very soul unless we desensitize ourselves, a costly operation at best.

Members of the comfortable majority need rarely be concerned with *identity* (fairly well packaged for them by their parents). But what those who *differ* are called, or what they choose to call themselves, tends considerably to shape their behavior, their goals and their self-respect. Therefore, last decade, when militant young *Blacks* rejected the term *Negro* as only a euphemism for *Nigger*, it hardly mattered that *Negro* and *Black* were etymologically similar. Etymology rarely determines meaning, and the right to choose *one's own name* is minimal for self-determination, and the key to finding one's own soul.

Last November, at a historic statewide Democratic conclave, opponents of a resolution on the Integrity of Gay Life Styles asked this writer why we weren't satisfied with *their* preferred name for us: *Homosexual*.

That name was laid on us in 1869 by an obscure German sexologist who was busy labelling different kinds of *sex perverts: coprophiliacs, necrophiliacs, sadists, pedophiles*, and as many subgrades of male or female *homosexuals* as he could box in. He gave "The Love That Dared Not Speak *Its Name*" a label fit for specimen bottles.

In 1969 the Christopher Street resistance marked the liberation of America's 20-year old Homophile Movement from heterosexual Authority, and put forward the name *Gay* as a banner for the "new consciousness" - which of course was not entirely new.

The word *Gay* like *Homophile*, had been around awhile, and once had trivial or evasive meanings - but it is *our* word, and we say, like Alice (Lewis Carroll was nobody's fool), that it means what we will decide it means. This oughtn't disturb lexicon purists, since dictionaries have ignored both *Gay* and *Homophile*. (They haven't even given us our fair share of the word *queer*.) We have only conflicting reports as to what *Gay* meant in 1920, and no idea if old Walt Whitman meant anything special when he wrote from Camden of missing New York's Gay crowd.

As we reject the notion that we are poor creatures who only happen to engage in certain sex acts, we are actually using this word and others in a worldwide effort to define ourselves.

Hets, rarely thinking of themselves as such, look at us as sex-defined, and think: "Poor dears! All they have in their narrow lives is sodomy and (sniff) fellatio, whereas we normal people have social responsibilities, religious, political and aesthetic interests, electric tooth brushes and doilies on our sofas: everything indeed that goes into making a rich and proper life!"

Gay and *Homophile* are not terms meant to deny the sexual part of our lives (we affirm sensuality as a positive good, not just instrumental to baby-making). But they do assert that *what we are* is something deeper than just how or whom we have sex with. Whether we are made or born, *Being Gay*, or *Being Homophile*, if you prefer the more conservative term, is at the core of our spirit, our emotionality, our aesthetic, our conscience.

We each grow up like foundlings in the home of strangers who try to shape us to "their way." Even when we individually go looking for "our own," many of us are still conditioned to the het rules, looking often for what amount to pseudo-heterosexual relationships. But when we *find ourselves*, whether that happens at age 6 or 60, we often find ourselves gasping: "This is what I really AM," or "... what was IN me all along!"

To become *Gay* is to declare ourselves free of the sexologists, to give up seeking our identity in their tests and charts. It is to wipe aside all considerations of "why the robin's breast is red" (do hets ask themselves what made *them* that way?) and to concentrate on trying out our wings.

Only *after* we free ourselves of heterosexual definitions and expectations can we begin to discover what it really means to be *Gay*.

Jim Kepner

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COVER DRAWING BY
John Blackburn



LAW REFORM in NORWAY

A fixed article of faith in many minds is that Scandinavia has been "gay paradise" for uncounted years back; that deeply grounded "European culture" (so truly sophisticated, you know) has made of these cool Nordic lands islands of calm tolerance in contrast with the repressions found in "Catholic" Southern Europe or Bible Belt America.

The chances for doing much to change anyone's fixed articles of faith are small indeed. Still, it does seem that a report just received from Norway's "Forbundet av 1948" concerning the steps toward social and legal reform in that country should prove of interest to readers. It will be noticed that only in 1972 has Norway been able to shake off the bonds of repressive legislation of the sort still in effect in many, but not all, parts of the U.S. An intensive campaign was needed such as it took in England a few years back, to spur the legislative bodies into modernizing the laws effecting homosexual behavior in Norway.

A truly progressive achievement there was a substantial grant from their national Health Department to support the "Forbundet" educational program. "Forbundet" now has a fulltime General Secretary, first homophile organization in Scandinavia to support such a person, and second in Europe. Oddly enough, whereas both ONE and the Mattachine Society (San Francisco) have maintained public offices and employees corresponding to the duties of General Secretary ever since the early 1950s it has been only recently that such a practice has been duplicated in other parts of the U.S. and in Europe. The increase of such facilities today gives encouraging testimony of the growth in substance and maturity of the Homophile Movement both here and abroad.

Two of ONE's European Tours (1967, 1970) have had the pleasure of visiting Norway and of receiving a warm reception by the members of "Forbundet av 1948," now numbering 2,000 men and women. The following press release has just been received from Oslo.

NORWAY NEWS:

THE ABOLITION OF THE PENAL CLAUSE OF 1902 EQUALITY BEFORE THE LAW FOR THE HOMOSEXUALS

10,000 kroner from the Health Department to the information-work.

Det Norske Forbundet of 1948 (The Norwegian Asso. of Homosexuals) 2000 members — first in Scandinavia (2 in Europe) to have General Secretary on full time job.

Oslo, 20th June 1972

MOVES TOWARD LAW REFORM

In 1967 there was in Norway a 40% chance of homosexuals being socially rejected on the grounds of "unnatural feelings," although 65% of those included in a survey did not look at sexual intercourse between grown ups of the same sex as a punishable offence. Thus the majority of those interviewed were willing to socially accept the homosexuals, also were in favour of doing away with the 1902 Penal Clause, they were nevertheless of the opinion that acceptance should be conditioned on the following:

1. Homosexuals should remain inconspicuous.
2. Homosexuals should not talk about their "deviation"
3. Homosexuals should renounce any form of sexual relations.

The attitude towards homosexuals was at the same time both neutral, as well as condemnatory. Homosexuality was looked upon as something which was of no concern to society — that is unless public interests were involved. As good manners called for silence on the subject of sexuality on the whole, the attitude towards homosexuality in particular, naturally enough was characterized by lack of knowledge, prejudices, religious influence and superstition.

No real kind of homosexual emancipation had yet reached Norway — due to the public moral climate itself, but also due to a total lack of initiative from the homosexuals themselves.

Even if "Det Norske Forbundet av 1948" had at that time existed for 17 years, only sporadic attempts had been made, to defend human rights to which homosexuals were entitled as members of Norwegian society. "DNF 48" had totally ignored the fact that no progress could be made — socially or legally — unless the organization agreed upon a policy, which once and for all put an end to isolation. It was quite obvious that anonymity and isolation — a kind of ghetto-existence rather fortified the feeling of homosexuals as being deviates, giving the public the impression that homosexuals are not normal.

The situation called for an alteration in the very homosexual mentality and 1967 was in fact to become the year of total change — the year when information and communication proclaimed the fight for human rights.

FURTHER PROGRESS IN 1970 According to §213 in the Norwegian Penal Clause of 1902, *male* homosexuality — regardless of age — was a criminal offence. The aim above all therefore, was to see to it that §213 was done away with, and that equality before the law was achieved.

Karen-Christine Friele (Kim Firele) took over the work as information-leader, after having been chairman of the board for 2 years. She concentrated on the information work only — and in the long run that was proven to be the right politics, in Norway anyway.

Work was carried out in every possible way — partly in cooperation with different organizations and individuals, to enlighten the public on the subject of homosexuality, and to obviate misunderstandings wherever they cropped up. By means of articles in the press (the press representing all political views and geographical parts of the country) lectures (to student organizations, different kind of other organizations, schools, social workers, doctors, priests, parents, nurses, discussions with representatives from the church, political organizations,) "Det Norske Forbundet av 1948" broke away from isolation, and managed to demolish many of the barriers which for so long had existed between society and homosexuals. The continuous work being done, to give the public an objective knowledge of homosexuality, as well as an opportunity to get to know the homosexuals in person, led to a marked change in the attitude.

In November 1970 DNF published the booklet "§213: An Evil or A Necessity?" Norwegian as well as foreign sources in medicine, religion, psychiatry, law etc., contributed to the booklet. In December 1970 a Governmental decision was made: The Penal Clause of 1902 would be abolished.

The Norwegian Parliament (Storting) discussed §213 in June 1971. A draft law, which intended to abolish the existing penal provision concerning homosexuality, was presented in September 1971.

The information work was intensified — and included a translation of the Dutch Speijer-Report. By the end of 1971 no one could feel quite sure however that all political parties would urge the draft law. The Penal Clause of 1902 would no doubt disappear into history — but would perhaps another "liberal" homosexual Penal Clause take its place? That was yet to be seen.

Lectures were given to several thousand students and all sorts of groups in 1971. The draft law was urged by Scandinavian as well as Dutch and German specialists. Most of the Norwegian press also supported the homosexuals in their demand for legal rights.

30 articles had been published by DNF in the press during 1971. A great number of interviews and 5 radio-programs were broadcast. Material was prepared for Parliament Members and for the Committee of Justice. Kim Friele talked to the Committee of Justice after having received a special invitation. Ministers, politicians, students and teachers participated in discussion-meetings arranged by DNF.

In February 1972 the Committee of Justice urged the abolition of §213, and in March *Odelstinget* (representing 2/3 of the Parliament) did the same.

The 14th April 1972 Norway became the first of the Scandinavian countries — the second in Europe — to abolish its Homosexual Penal Clause, and do away with legal discrimination of homosexuals.

From the Health Department the organization received 10,000 Norwegian kroner for the publishing of the brochure "Homofili." 10,000 copies are now being distributed to all Norwegian primary and high-schools, as well as to different institutions of education and to "the man in the street."

The abolition of §213, and the financial support given by the Health Department, very clearly shows the change in attitude towards homosexuality, which has taken place in Norway over the past few years.

"Det Norske Forbundet av 1948" is an organization of 2000 members today — of which some are heterosexuals. Membership is open to everybody who agrees in the policy of the DNF. The members meet several times a week for different kinds of activities. DNF has managed to keep the organization *a club*, in which means that the contact between the members and the Board is very close. Member-meetings once a month give each homosexual a chance to influence the work being done — and has contributed largely to the so-called "self-acceptance," which is so important. DNF has sub-organizations in Bergen, Trondheim, and Tromsø — and this is only the beginning.

About ½ million kroner goes "in and out" at Forbundet every year now, and has made it possible for DNF to have a General Secretary on full time job. The former information leader, Kim Friele, has taken over as General Secretary May 15th, 1971.

FOR THEIR PUBLIC RELATIONS TASKS

1. Information through the press, magazines, radio, organizations, institutions, schools, individuals etc., will be extended.

"DNF 48 — A Presentation" — a brochure telling about the work, activities, offers etc., will be published in 1972.

Lectures

Further initiative will be taken to give the public greater knowledge about homosexuality. DNF has made contact with the Norwegian Housewives Association. Such contact is of vital importance, as the attitude towards homosexuality begins at home.

Schools

The brochure "Homosexuality" will bring to the pupils objective information about homosexuality. As it is today, homosexuality is barely mentioned at all, and at least not in an impartial way — as schoolbooks dealing with the matter are far from up to date.

Lectures have been given to the students of the Norwegian School of Journalism. Future contact will be made — to see to it that permanent lectures are given.

Nansen-skolen is a school where subjects of humanistic and social character play the main part in the education. Contact has been made.

Schools educating social workers.

The students will go to work in hospitals, factories, social institutions, offices etc. DNF has managed to build up good cooperation with such schools in Oslo, Trondheim and Stavanger. Lectures have been given, and groups of students in all 3 cities have for the past 4 years written a test paper on homosexuality. This cooperation will continue.

II. Counseling service.

DNF has its own counseling staff. The members of The Committee of Justice have stressed the request for social, medical and practical advice — by asking the Ministry of Social Affairs to try to find ways to meet this need. The Committee has urged the Ministry of Social Affairs to appoint an inter-departmental committee, which together with the General Secretary of DNF can look into the whole problem of *the public attitude towards homosexuality*, as well as look into information-material still used in schools. DNF will have its first meeting with the chairman of the Social Committee some time in October 1972.

PASSING

STRANGER

clarkson crane

First a Mexican stopped to watch the thin, long nosed man painting carefully on the inside of the bar window, next two Filipinos, then a man carrying a brief case, finally a dreamy-looking boy in a red, zipper-fronted shirt that he wore tunic-like outside his jeans. Probably just a high school student, but he was like a medieval page adrift from another century. The loiterers stood before the window of the bar and followed the painter's brush, which glided over the inner side of the pane, up, down, then suddenly around, smearing flesh-tint between the black lines that formed the woman's body. Slender, with one arm raised and hips curved, she would soon be there on the glass—a hula dancer about a foot high, with something flimsy around her middle.

The painter, tensely occupied with his work, seemed admirably unaware of the spectators: behind the plate glass he had something of the superior indifference of fish in an aquarium. He applied the paint evenly, never glancing at his audience, the veins emerging on his brow when he leaned forward and vanishing when he straightened up. His blue eyes, aloof and impersonal, had contact with nothing save the figure; they widened and contracted; the pupils were tiny and black against the light: they were not like ordinary eyes, which usually reflect a little the mood of the person who sees them and who is seen. These eyes were slightly inhuman, like those of a busy insect. The painter was about forty-five; his hair was beginning to wear out, leaving the scalp partly visible.

Busses and automobiles moved along the street; the sky was gray, the sidewalk wet from earlier rain. The boy glanced at the sky, as though fearing the rain might begin again. Then his gaze, indolent and thoughtful, returned to the half-formed painting on the window.

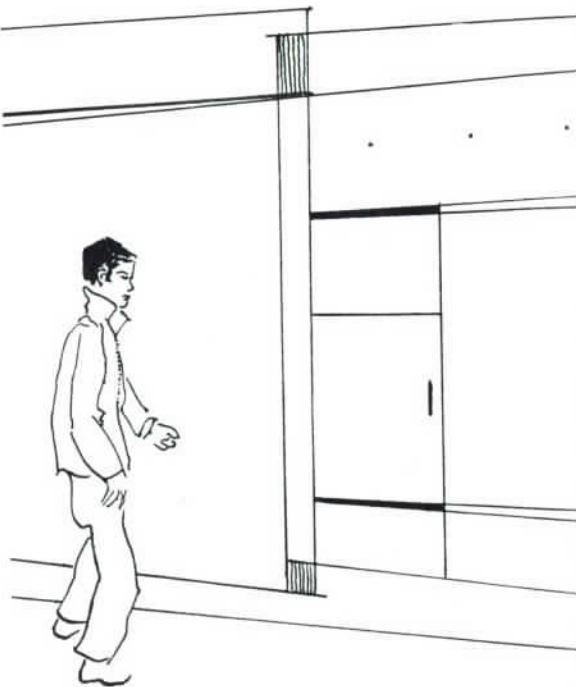
When he had first seen the painter behind the glass, the boy had been attracted by his quick, nervous movements; he had stopped and idly looked on. Gradually, he had become aware of the subject of the painting: the hula dancer and, above her, already completed on the upper third of the pane, a strip of tropical island with palm trees in the foreground. The careful, swift glide of the painter's hand, the caressing smear of the color, the emergence of the dancer's body, induced reverie in the boy. The street noises blended and withdrew, a warm feeling stole through him. With sleepy eyes, in an adolescent haze, the boy stood there, head lifted, face a bit sullen in repose, mouth slightly pouting. He was languorous and aloof in his red shirt among the others shabbily clad. The skin on his throat was soft, shadowed with little hollows where muscles played.

By this time the group of spectators had grown: a dozen men clustered on the wet sidewalk. Passersby would linger for a moment, then go on; in a car parked beside the curb a man sat with his arm across the steering wheel. Customers entered the bar. When they came out, they usually paused in the doorway to watch the painter.

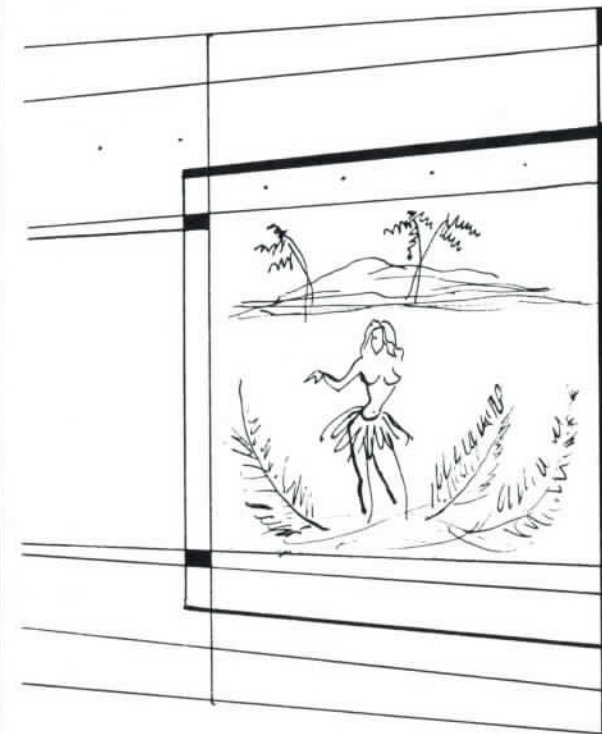
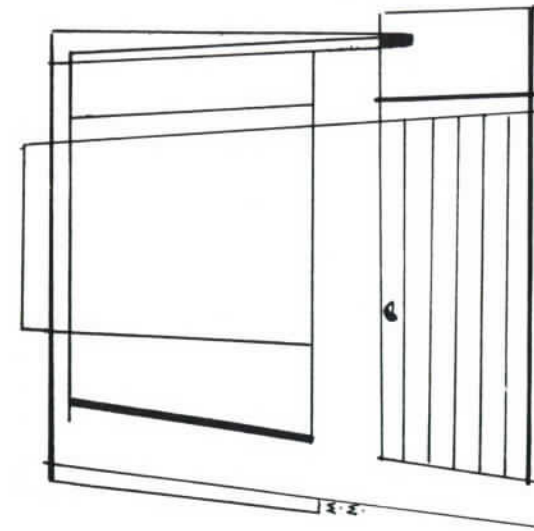
He had now filled in with flesh color the outline of the torso and was drawing his brush slowly around the hip. To steady his hand he used a rod with a cloth-wrapped ball at one end that rested against the glass. Whenever the brush passed over the black outline, he quickly removed the superfluous paint with a rag that he kept hanging over his left wrist. Once, with a little gesture of annoyance, he wiped away the entire buttocks and twirled a finer brush in black to renew the outline. Then, after an unwavering and commendable stroke, he leaned back to consider not without pleasure what he had done, glancing for the first time at the men outside.

Nearest of them all to the window was the red-shirted boy: the painter gazed for an instant directly into his face. The boy's forehead was contracted with somnolent concentration; the eyes were heavy and gentle; the complexion was smooth; on the upper lip and chin down was barely visible. Turning back to his work, the painter completed the outline; then, changing brushes, he applied a layer of flesh-tint, holding his head to one side and compressing his lips.

But his eyes no longer had the praiseworthy indifference, the untroubled tension, which had given them a few minutes before the appearance of exactitude and objectivity. The irises of pale blue darkened, as if the most subtle films had descended over them; the whites seemed delicately clouded. Once again his eyes strayed sidelong to the boy and lingered, and the skin beneath them, as far as the rise of the cheek bones, became slightly suffused, so that the imperfections were more evident—the tracery of tiny veins and wrinkles. His next stroke was inadequate: he had to draw the rag accurately between the black lines, breathing in deeply, his pointed nose close to the windowpane.



Recently deceased poet-novelist Clarkson Crane was one of the earliest writers of national repute to appear in ONE's pages.



The moisture in the air was thickening; particles of mist specked the glass and formed minutely on the boy's hair. Once, as though awakened, he looked again at the sky—gray clouds coursing from the south over the buildings—then toward the corner where a green bus was looming. The pavement was black and greasy with occasionally enough water on it to reflect the legs of pedestrians or the wheels of automobiles. He sidled between the Mexican and one of the Filipinos, hands in pockets, and contemplated the sidewalk, as though wondering if he should go. The sky sagged with imminent rain. Flags on buildings wavered sluggishly toward the north. Inside him the boy again felt warmth: he turned back into his reverie, edged through the group to the window with the green hills and the dancer. The painter, who had noticed with concern the possibility of his going, looked again into his face with eyes from which the trouble, perhaps the fear, was fading.

The hills along the top of the window were green, the sea beneath them blue; there were palm trees with long, curving leaves. For the first time the boy observed around the dancer's feet outlines of more palms, which eventually would enclose her legs in a kind of frame. The brush, laden with flesh-tint, advanced smoothly along one hip, down as far as the knee, then back—languorously, intimately. It would nearly pass beyond the black line; it would glide swiftly forward and the boy awaited the violation. But it did not occur, for the brush would halt with precision, as if triumphantly, and renew its fleshly stroking. The warmth inside him diffused; his eyelids drooped, his mouth loosened. The hills and the ocean with the sky above them expanded around him, serene and luminous. Somewhere in the serenity an ache of anticipation was becoming intolerable.

The painter worked rapidly, his eyes intent. They were perhaps a bit paler; they looked glazed and a trifle distended. The patches of color had withdrawn from the cheeks and left them undistinguished. They were the cheeks of a man whom years had inexorably drained—rather gray and flaccid, sagging unexpectedly here and there. The lines, one on either side of the nose and reaching the corners of the mouth, had deepened, so that the face, more than ever, had an air of tension. It was as if all the life in the painter had concentrated in his eyes and in his hands. His eyes were occupied with the window, but their field of vision had widened to include the boy. Every brush stroke went beyond itself and appealed to the boy. His whole being surged toward the boy.

Unfortunately, the figure was nearly done; it was obvious that a moment would arrive when the situation would change. Indeed, the two Filipinos had already drifted away from the group. With a swift sideways movement of the rag the painter obliterated the dancer's legs from the knees down, even a section of the palm leaves around them. The boy's face reflected the gesture. His attention deepened while the painter was drawing in the outlines again. The boy was so evidently absorbed that the painter was able to relax and to work more slowly. His brush crept over the glass and he appeared insolently at ease.

But it was impossible to compete with the rain, which began to fall imperceptibly at first, then in larger drops that smacked on the pavement. Soon one could hear the rustle of it above the noise of the busses. On the windshields of passing cars the wipers twitched back and forth. The lines running to the corners of the painter's mouth were deeper; once his hand, become suddenly less rigorous, allowed the brush to deviate; he had to clean away the color and begin again.

The boy glanced around and saw that he was almost the only one left now among the spectators. All had gone except the Mexican, who had crossed the sidewalk to the curb and was about to wander away. The rain brought back the street and the buildings, the whisper and drip-drip of the rain restored the aimless day, the damp on his face recalled him to himself. He stepped away from the window as far as the curb and loitered near the Mexican. Then he walked along the street toward the north, because the rain would be behind him, and he drew closer to the shop fronts, which really gave no shelter.

The painter watched him go—his red shirt and his blond hair. He saw him reach the corner and linger, again undecided. He watched him cross the street and drift on. Then he lost sight of him and did not see him again until he was so far away (just a red splotch in the rainy dullness) that seeing him was hardly worth the trouble. The melancholy of the rain filled the bar window. Behind the plate glass, his brush dangling, he studied the figure of the dancer. Suddenly, in a raging upward rush from the depths of lifelong defeat, desire struck him to blot her out with an angry sweep of his arm, to wipe every trace of her from the windowpane. But the moment passed. Accustomed to disappointment (even to resignation), he plunged a brush into color and resumed his painting.

the BLUE CHAMELEON

The wind in the trees turns them 'to crescents
Pointing to the unknown distance
Beyond my vision.

And the wind sighs and brings a song
Of Endless Drifting.

Galaxies of Time spin webs of Dreams.
The mirrored lake where I swam naked among the lily pads
Has been lost somewhere in the forgotten past.

The lightning is so beautiful and so deadly,
Just like so many things.

The Halls of the Castle attract me with their dark horror.
The silken webs of the spiders have closed the entrances;
And one must clear the way of cobwebs
To walk these ancient and lonely halls.
Here, sunlight filters through the shadows
Like misty shafts of gold in the darkness.

Once again, I can see the face of the dead Prince
Lying in his dark casket.

The soft curls of his hair like a raven's feather
Against the silken pillow --- red, like blood.
His face is so exquisite---- as tho' carved
From the timeless marble of centuries ago;
But I know that it isn't, and that it is already
Beginning to crumble into dust.

Yes, It is I who stands naked in the garden
Trying to catch the rain in my hands.
It is I who runs after the wind;
Chasing what I cannot even see.

They tell me that burning my candle at each end
Is my downfall;
But is it really so important to last a long time?

Some people are afraid of dying.
Others are afraid of living.
I am only afraid of neither living nor dying.

At times I have been great and no one knew it.
Does it matter?

And when the Harlequin says to me,
"Draw Death."
I will draw him a closed eye.

When I try to think of the words to explain to you
What I feel inside my heart,
I realize that there are no words.

The word beauty cannot be clearly defined;
And in the mortal mind of man,
God cannot be clearly defined.

Sometimes for me, the pages drift backward;
And I see that some words were written in smoke
And quickly vanished.

Others were carved into the heart with a Glass Dagger.
Some loves seem transitory, but they are not.
They are permanent.
They are fixed in Time ---forever.

I am what I am, and I am many things;
And I know this:
I did not create myself.

The moon, that dead world reflecting golden light
From the hidden Sun,
Glowed darkly in the black drapery of infinite space,
As I walked among the giant broken remnants
Of the idols, which cast heavy, impenetrable shadows
(concealing who knows what mysteries)
Over the abandoned landscape.

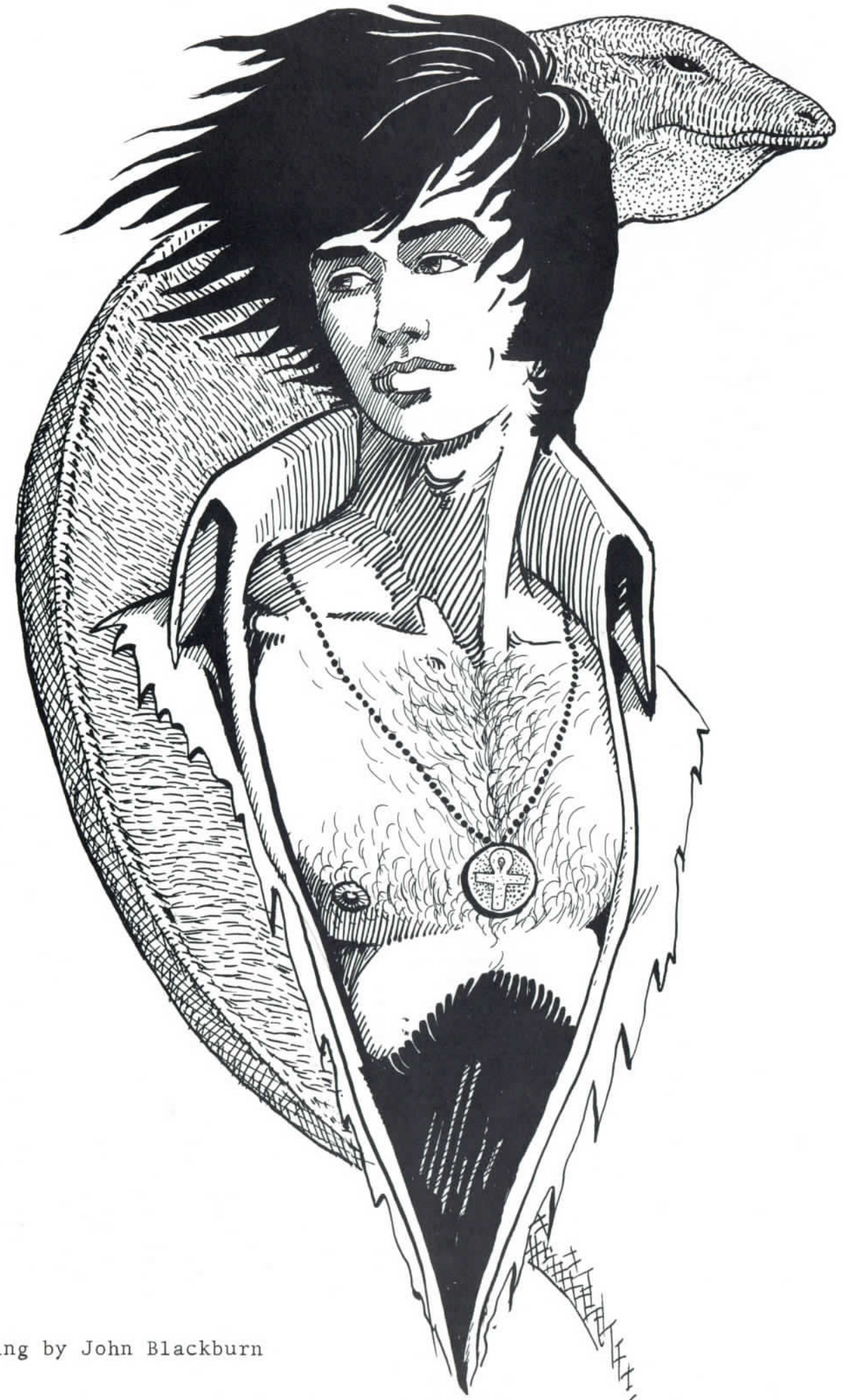
I looked down at my hands and saw
That they were streaked with my own blood.

I walked away from the decaying idols,
Down to the ragged, broken shore
At the edge of the Sea.

I waded there through the drifting waters,
Gazing idly as I walked, at the foam
Which rushed about my ankles.

I let my blood run into the Sea.

John Blackburn



drawing by John Blackburn



LOT, SODOM, ONAN & PAUL

By J. P. STARR

Men of old, as does a little child of today, endowed things with personalities. A child that stumbles over some object may kick or otherwise punish that object for getting in his way. Did not the earth lie supine as lies a woman and the sky lie over as lies a man? Didn't the sky pour life-liquid as a man, and the earth, swallowing it as a woman receives man-seed, consequently bear fruit? So wasn't a drought the result of the sky's neglecting his family duty? And, that rain might bring good crops and grazing for the herds, what more logical than that men would signal the sky by themselves doing, in his sight, that which they wished him to do?

Men showed the devil-god how to do. In primitive man's magic (which he didn't think of as magic but as deep science or plain common sense) the guiding principle was, do the thing yourself that you want the devil-god to do. To break a drought he had a woman lie on the ground (out of doors, so the sky-demon could see) and he sprinkled water on her. Or he would take a woman into the middle of the thirsty field and fuck her, he and she both naked. That was to put the sky into the notion: when the sky-god saw the mortal screwing his woman he would get hot pants, follow the mortal's suit and send the fertilizing rain.

Logical for ancient man, such reasoning is foolish for us. Our ancestors of ages ago were ignorant and mistaken but they were not fools. They lived according to such light as they had. Incidentally the magicians frequently fudged on their laity by supplementing their traditional mumbo jumbo with some wisdom born of experience and a lot of shrewdness. But we are fools if we try to live by their lights when we have better lights of our own. In them the fertility obsession was a natural error: in us there is no excusing it; and there exists today a brand of extreme foolishness which makes a few people misinterpret their own tradition and feel superstitious scruples for which they suppose there is religious warrant — when there isn't.

Garbled religion is the worst kind. In a way it is regrettable that religions die so gradually that seldom does a man say, "Here and now I cease being a Christian," and almost never does a tribe make a clean break with its past. For, because of that murkiness of orientation, we find fragments of an abandoned religion or philosophy living hundreds or thousands of years after the cult to which it belongs has been outgrown by the race. In our generation we meet many people who

suppose they believe the Bible but who have never read it. You must have more than once heard a professing Christian ask, "Have you ever read the Bible *clear through*?" Think how unfamiliar with books and how timid in their company a man must be who can regard that much reading (some three quarters of a million words) as a remarkable feat. Many people would do themselves a kindness if they read their Bible and saw for themselves how much more reasonable it is than they guess.

Any real friend of the Bible will point out that some parts of it were written frankly as fiction, as others are frankly poetry, and that when we take them as anything else we do religion a disservice — as we do patriotism a disservice if we take Edward Everett's story, "The Man Without a Country," for face to be taught as inerrant doctrine on pain of treason.

The Bible story of Sodom, the city from whose name we get the word "sodomy," is not essential to Judaism or to Christianity; and if that story were left out it would leave Jewish and Christian teaching clearer and easier of acceptance. Written possibly as late as 350 b.c., ostensibly about events of some 1500 years before, the Sodom-and-Gomorrah story has undergone vicissitudes such as befall pieces of literature first in the mouths and memories of oral recitators and later at the hands of scribes and copyists. Some things have been left out of the version that has been handed down to us and other things have been put in until the original writer's intention is in doubt. Only by means of interpretations that amount to a rewriting can we make the accounts square with verifiable facts of history. Nearly all of the names of kings and places are impossible to identify; and investigators think those names are fictitious where they are not eponymous. A minor Old-Testament tale, this is not a laying-down-the-law part of the Bible.

Sodomy is not exactly condemned or prohibited in the Sodom story: the writer merely takes advantage of a popular antipathy to sodomy (or that antipathy's assumed existence) to allege sodomy as characteristic of a disliked neighbor and to show, by several contrasts, how good and prosperous was the writer's own ancestor, Abraham. What the gravamen of the neighborhood feud was we are not told. In the region concerned the Jordan river flows; and from the tone of some passages we may compare the gossip to the animadversions

This essay, by a former long-time secretary of ONE, Incorporated, is from an unpublished book he completed in 1925. At that time, the author, after long service in the Army (later in the Navy as well) was concerned with defending traditional army tactics against the Billy Mitchell "heresy" of "tactical bombing."

Much of this material grew out of lively barracks-room bull-sessions — despite the fact that discussion of homosexuality was heavily tabooed in those days. Yet his presentation is amazingly sound.

This "chapter" surveys those Biblical passages commonly interpreted as condemning homosexuality. Starr examines the evidence with a depth, clarity and forcefulness which compares well with essays based on much later scholarship. We know that some readers are turned off by all such scripture weighing. We would remind them that far more Gays are torn apart by a misreading of St. Paul than by oedipal problems — and if there are in the world even 10 persons who wish to be both Gay and religious, we see no reason why we ought not provide the rationale to make life easier for them.

ED.

that an Arkansawyer might make about the Mississippians and which might be taken seriously by someone who has never heard a Mississippian's opinion of Arkansawyers. The Biblical Arkansawyer gives his Mississippians no chance to refute his indictment.

Here is the gist of the story. If you wish the exact words, turn to Genesis, Chapters 13, 14, 18 and 19. Really to understand all of it, however, you need to read many commentaries and other literature, some of which has only an incidental bearing on the matters dealt with.

Abraham went out of Egypt to a place in Canaan between Bethel and Hai and later into the plain of Mamre in Hebron. He and his nephew Lot, who went with him, were rich in cattle, tents, silver and gold. The land was not able to bear them, and strife arose between their two crews of herdsmen. This part of the story seems veracious: population's pressure had made itself felt before history's dawn. The two families separated, and Lot journeyed east to dwell in the cities of the plain of Jordan toward Sodom. The men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly.

Amraphael of Shinar, Arioch of Elam and Tidal of Goyim were commanded by Chedorlaomer in a war against Bera of Sodom, Birsha of Gomorrah, Shinab of Admah, Shemeber of Zeboiim and the king of Bela or Zoar. History says nothing of this war. Amraphael may have been Hammurabi of Babylonia, who is calculated to have lived between 2,124 and 2,081 b.c. The fighting is alleged to have occurred in the vale of Siddim, the salt sea, which moderns suppose to be the Dead sea. That vale was full of slime or bitumen pits — such as the brea or tar pits in Los Angeles. The fleeing kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fell into those tar pits and their comrades fled to the mountains.

The territory involved is that in which the man-loving men, the Essenes, lived 150 b.c. to 150 a.d. and for indefinite times before and afterward. That Jesus of Nazareth was an Essene is consistent with all of the reports given of him. Equally credible is the report that homosexuality has been common all through that desert country for the last 5,000 years or so.

Chedorlaomer captured Lot, who dwelt in Sodom, and Lot's goods, along with all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and headed back north. One captive escaped and told Abram (alias Abraham), who armed his 318 servants, chased the marauders to Dan, smote them by night, recovered the plunder, women and people and brought Lot back. (It is not we but the biblical writer who distinguishes between women and people.)

Apparently the king of Sodom got out of the oil weep, for

we are told he went out to meet Abram and hold him, "Give me the persons and take the goods." But Abram said, "I will not take anything that is thine, even a thread or a shoe latchet, lest thou say, 'I have made Abram rich.'"

Mr. and Mrs. Abram are shown at home in Chapters 15, 16 and 17, which have naught to do with Sodom et als unless we contrast the as-yet-unmentioned man-love of Sodom with Abram's fertility. Thus far the patriarch's sexual batting average has been zero. His name is now changed to Abraham. In Chapter 18, three men visit him and tell him he is going to knock his wife up — he and she being past the age of such phenomena. When Sarah doubted, one of the visitors asked, "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" Sarah denied, saying, "I laughed not," for she was afraid; and he said, "Nay, but thou didst laugh." We follow the narrative closely here, for it has abrupt changes of subject which might otherwise be imputed to the gistifier.

Abraham's visitors rose up and looked toward Sodom, and Abraham went with them to start them on their way. The Lord meditated upon Abraham's promised multiplication and of his clan's piety. Then the Lord said, "Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin grievous I will go down now and see whether they have done according to the cry." The men went toward Sodom, but Abraham stood before the Lord.

Abraham asked, "Wilt thou destroy the righteous with the wicked? Peradventure there be fifty righteous in the city: wilt thou spare the place for them? Be it far from thee to slay the righteous with the wicked. Shall not the Judge of the earth do right?" The Lord said, "If I find in Sodom fifty righteous, I will spare the place for their sakes." And Abram talked him into sparing it for the sake of ten, should there be that many.

Two angels came to Sodom at even. Lot, sitting at the gate of Sodom, saw them, rose to meet them, bowed and said, "My lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, wash your feet, tarry all night, rise up early and go on your ways." They said, "Nay, we will abide in the street all night." Lot insisted, though, and they entered his house. He made them a feast and baked unleavened bread and they ate. But before the strangers lay down the men of Sodom, old and young, surrounded the house and demanded of Lot, "Where are the men who came in to thee tonight? Bring them out and let us fuck them." Lot went out, shut the door after him and expostulated, "Please, brothers, do not be so wicked. Look: I have two daughters that no man has ever fucked. Let me bring them out and you can fuck them. Only, do nothing to these guests under my roof."

Said one Sodomite to another, "This fellow Lot came in to sojourn and now he wants to be a judge." To Lot they said, "Now we will deal worse with you than with your guests. The men of Sodom pressed sore upon Lot and nearly broke the door; but the visitors inside reached out, pulled Lot into the house, shut the door, smote the intruders with blindness and prevented the breaking in. The strangers asked Lot, "Have you any relatives here? — Bring them out; for we will destroy this place because of its disrepute." Lot sneaked out and told his sons in law, "Get out of this town: Jehovah is going to put a hex on it," but they paid him no heed.

Next morning the angels, hereto called men, hastened Lot, saying, "Arise, take your wife and two daughters, escape for your life to the mountain and don't look behind you, neither stay in the plain lest you be consumed in the iniquity of the city." The men (or angels) brought Lot, his wife and his two daughters forth and set them outside the city. Lot said, "My lord, you have been merciful and saved my life. I cannot escape to the mountain lest some evil take me and I die. This little city of Zoar is near to flee to. Let me escape thither." His escort said to him, "See, I have accepted your proposal concerning this also, that I will not overthrow Zoar, for which you have spoken. Escape thither." Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar, meaning "little." The Sun was risen when Lot entered Zoar. Then the Lord rained fire and sulfur from heaven upon Sodom and Gomorrah; he overthrew those cities and all the inhabitants and that which grew upon the ground in all the plain.

Lot's wife looked back from behind Lot and she became a pillar of salt.

Abraham got up in the morning and stood before the Lord. He looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah and the land of the plain; and the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace. Why the sight did not saltify Abraham as it had Lot's wife the report does not say.

Come's now some hanky-panky in a cave. Fearing to stay in Zoar, Lot went and dwelt in a mountain with his two daughters, in a cave. The firstborn daughter said to the younger, "Daddy is old, we shed our husbands in Sodom's destruction and there is no man to fuck us. Let us get our father drunk and go to bed with him that we may preserve his seed." Accordingly they induced Lot to drink a lot of wine that night, and the elder daughter got herself impregnated by him without his knowing it.

In the following evening the younger daughter followed her sister's suit. Thus were both of Lot's daughters with child by their father.

What is the point of all this Sodom story? For us, virtually none: the story's writer was not pointing any moral. It is rather to be inferred that he was explaining the distribution of the tribes in and around Palestine. By his geography Jordan runs south and empties into the Dead sea. To the west of Jordan Abraham's descendants out of Sarah included the Children of Israel. In the territory east of the Jordan, emptying into the Jordan about twenty miles north of the Dead sea, runs the river Jabbok. To the north of that river (and east of the Jordan) dwelt the Moabites, and some philologists take Mo Ab, "water of the father," to mean "The semen of the father." Moab, we are told in Genesis, was the elder of the two children that Lot got in his daughters.

Lot's other son, by his other daughter, was Ben-ammi. "He is the father of the Ammonites to this day." The Ammonites dwelt to the south of the Jabbok. In geology and paleontology you find mention of ammonites, but this word is pronounced ammon-i'-teez and means a kind of sea shells. Lot, you remember, was Abraham's nephew. Abraham begot a son by

his Egyptian concubine, Hagar, and that bastard was called Ishmael. He is considered the ancestor of those who lived on the fringe of our Genesis geographer's world, notably to the south of the Dead sea, both to the east and to the west.

Genesis tells in detail about Abraham's get out of Sarah. Indeed the book's main business is an explanation of the proliferation and distribution of those Palestinian families.

The man who wrote the chapters under our notice was little preoccupied with rights and wrongs. He may have considered the way of a man with a man reprehensible, but he may have had in mind additional misbehaviors when he reported that "The men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly." Their violation of the customary rules of hospitality might be one of the additional shortcomings, as their failure to defend themselves against the armies leagued against them might be.

Polygamy and incest occur without much editorial comment, though the Lord appears offended when Abraham's wife-and-half-sister are loaned to another man — and it is the innocent other man whom the Lord gives hell.

All in all, there is nothing in the story of Sodom and Gomorrah that should impede a Jew or a Christian should he wish to have sexual congress with a person of his own sex.

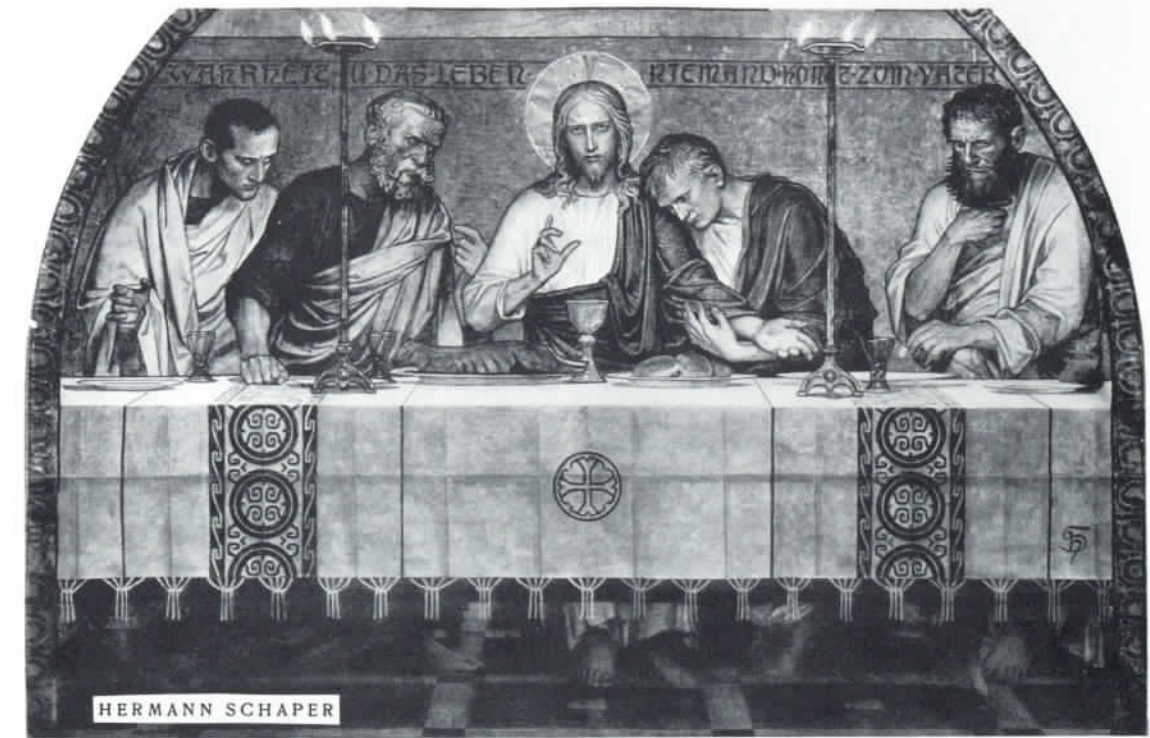
Jacob and his genitals are told about in Genesis, Chapter 35, verse 11. The events are supposed to be dated about 1,732 b.c. God changed Jacob's name to Israel and said, "Kings shall come out of your testicles." In Genesis 46, verse 26, seventy persons, the fruit of Jacob's ejaculations, came with him into Egypt. Jacob, the son of Isaac, was Abraham's grandson.

It is written in Genesis, Chapter 32, verse 24 and following, "Jacob was left alone, and there wrestled a man with him." ("Wrestled" — hmmm! Mind if we joist an eyebrow at that? Was it a contest — or an embrace? Were they enemies — though Jacob did not know the other's name?) And Jacob said to the other, "I will not let you go except you bless me." As a clem, this begins to look like a pillow fight. As a love tussle, well, the original meaning of *bless* was to consecrate by pouring blood — or something.

Along here, as other parts of the Bible, the word *thigh* is mentioned, and whether it means the leg from hip to knee or whether it takes the place of a word the translator durstn't write we can't be sure. In the same way we occasionally read "loins," "reins" (literally, *kidneys*, but how many Bibliolators know that?) and other words that are stand-ins for, simply, "cock and balls." It is asserted that modern orthodox Jews, when giving an oath, take hold one man of another's scrotum. Our best guess is that in the original tale Jacob and the stranger played with each other's prick in the way two males have always liked to play and that Nice Nellies balked at copying the naughty words.

We read in this story of Jacob that the thigh was out of joint and the sinew "upon the hollow of the thigh," wherever that is, shrank. The writer's assertion that the Jews consequently do not eat that sinew is without meaning unless we infer that eating the remainder of a man is permitted. Incidentally the word *sinew* is apparently used in its obsolete sense of *muscle*.

Onan's story is an instance in which teachers, as is their wont, have read into a passage a meaning that is not there. In Onan's case the teachers are clergymen, but they could as well be government officials or newspaper writers and practice the same deception. They tell us the Lord struck Onan dead for spilling his semen on the ground; but when you read the passage for yourself (Genesis 38) you see they are lying. If God struck Onan dead you may be sure it was for something else than "onanism." The Lord, for all his fabled whimsicality,



never put that much steam into his vengeance for that act. Ask the next fellow you meet if onany is automatically followed by lightning stroke. That man is likely to say, "I've jacked off thousands of times, and so has many another man, without untoward consequences. If God ever struck a man dead for spilling his come outside a woman's cunt, God has changed his policy completely since then." Life insurance companies do not reject applicants because of onany.

Coitus interruptus is the term for Onan's act. Onanism is popularly understood to include jacking off; but jacking off is no sin, much less "the sin against the Holy Ghost," and unforgivable, as some blatherskites tell you. No person with any grounding in theology would be mistaken: sin has been defined as a deed, word or thought against God's law; and there is no Jewish or Christian law against jacking off. The Bible regulates in detail menstruation, fucking and defecation; so there is no possibility of an inadvertent omission.

Levirate marriage is the subject of Onan's story. "Levirate" is from the Latin expression *levus ver*, "left-handed husband." Among the ancient Jews, when a man died without begetting a son it was the law that his brother must fuck the widow until he got in her a son to carry on the dead man's name. The law is laid down in Deuteronomy 25 and is reasonable, considering. The custom's effect was to give the widow a husband if she needed a provider, and a son in her old age. That the regulation was nothing important (even then, when that code was observed) is shown by the light penalty prescribed for its violation. Under the law, a law long since superseded, if a widow called upon her husband's brother to "perform the duty of a husband's brother," and he refused she could spit in his face. Modern Jews no more than Christians still pay any attention to this law: to obey it in America they would have to violate the state law, and they do not even advocate that the secular law be changed.

Onan's story is given in Genesis 38, as follows: Jacob, the father of Joseph, had other sons, one of whom was Judah. Judah had three sons, Er, Onan and Shelah. Er married Tamar, Onan stayed single and Shelah was too young to make babies when Er displeased the Lord (no bill of particulars is given) and was slain by him. Judah, according to the scripture, told

Onan, his only surviving mature son, "Go in to your brother's wife, perform a husband's brother's duty to her and raise up seed to your brother." Onan, the scribe tells us without our knowing whence came *his* word of Onan's knowledge, "knew that the seed would not be his; and when he screwed Tamar he spilled his seed on the ground lest he should give seed to his brother. "And the thing which he did was evil in the sight of Jehovah," who slew Onan also.

Tamar now began to look like bad medicine. Apparently Judah, her father in law, decided that the woman who had had two husbands fuck her and die must be unlucky; for Judah sent her back to her father, promising that his third son, Shelah, should beget a son in her when he got big enough. When Shelah matured, however, Judah continued to stall; so Tamar disguised herself as a harlot and induced Judah himself to knock her up; so Er's line was perpetuated after all.

Man's sexual delight in man gave Christianity its revolutionary character; but Christianity, as have done so many young and popular religions, attracted to itself divers persons who missed the main point. Among these was a self-asserted turncoat named Saul or Paul.

Several attitudes toward sex are traceable among Christianity's originators. You may take the esoteric approach, practice man-love secretly and live at peace with your neighbors as the Essenes did; you may try the evangelical approach, telling the whole world androphily's glad news and get hanged for your pains as Jesus did; you may try the ignorant-idealist tactic of resolving to go without sexual exercise and carry on an endless war with yourself as many have done and do; you may adopt the ruthless, reckless and cruelly selfish policy of staying celibate and fucking other men's wives as millions of priests have done; or you might retreat into a mystical fog in which nobody can tell for sure what your policy is and you can't either. It was last-named attitude that Paul took.

Paul or Saul was a Christian — or better say a Pauline — preacher, about the loudest, most persistent and most ingenious of his time. He is supposed to have lived from about 3 to 68 a.d. His cotemporaries have left no word of him; and

the only evidence about him is afforded by "The Acts of the Apostles" and the epistles or letters of the New Testament. The Acts were written anywhere from ten to a hundred years after the supposed date of Paul's death; and the letters also seem to have originated toward the end of his life if, indeed, they were not written by other men after he was dead. All of those documents bear evidence of revision at the hands of men friendly to Paul and his doctrines. So far we are concerned, Paul could have fabricated the early part of his autobiography wherever he chose to; and that part on which his churchly authority is based is the very part that sounds fishiest. The latter and better substantiated part sounds like the diary of a modern circuit-riding Methodist.

Paul said he was born at Tarsus, then a 900-year-old city that had been for sixty years under the Roman rule. Tarsus lies on a river ten miles from the Mediterranean where that sea is inclosed in a square corner by Asia Minor on the north and Syria on the east. Paul, a Roman citizen, seems to have belonged to the propertied class, which participated in government.

Born a Jew and later professing Christianity, Paul had an incentive to dramatize his conversation and give other Jews to understand that they should follow his example. So he represented himself as a Jew of Jews who had "seen the light." That pose would call for at least one trip to Jerusalem, training in a rabbinic school and perhaps membership in the Sanhedrin. That he should get thunderstruck with a vision of the messiah whose gospel he was to preach was part of the preparation for his racket, as was the report of his having meditated in Arabia. Tradition, superstition and the intellectual climate called for that sort of thing.

It is guessable that a man who carried on a humdrum trade in Tarsus and did a little political conniving on the side decided, at about the age of forty, that making tents is too hard work and that agitating a new religion is more fun. In religion Paul was a great shopper around — if he did not make up his religion as he went along; and he was always a leading exponent of his faith of the moment, making up in vehemence whatever he lacked in constancy. Saul's contact with any survivors of that band which once palled around with Jesus, if any such contact (or, for that matter, any such group) ever existed, was, by Paul's own report, uncordial. We might concede his own trip to Jerusalem, but that may have been invention or a mere going through of the motion.

Paul charged "that which is unseemly" against some men whom he disliked, along with a long list of other misdeeds, great and small. We find here a tirade, neither clear nor important, found not in the gospels nor in the Acts of the Apostles, but in an epistle, one of many letters of which several are conceded by Christian scholars to be spurious (and of course to Jewish scholars they are all heretical) appended at the New Testament's latter end and purported to have been written by Paul to a congregation of Romans.

Before Saul became Paul and muscled in into the apostle business the Jesuine church was composed chiefly of Hellenized Jews — Essenes, adventists and miscellaneous. With the death of their central figure or, if he be only imaginary, his failure to make an appearance, they would naturally fall apart. Those who remained strong in their particular conviction or who were active in proselytising would, if they lived among the Jews, accommodate their religion to that of their relatives and friends, would form a sect of reformist Jews. Such evidence as we have supports this view.

But Paul was Hellenized in a greater degree than were the companions of Jesus and he was to a still greater degree Romanized. As did the Romans, he disapproved of

circumcision and the limitation of offspring; and as were they he was inclined to accept practical expedients rather than cling, as Jews do, to a family or tribal observance.

Paul's early companion and sponsor was Barnabus, a Cypriote; and some writings attributed to Barnabus suggest heterodoxy in his Judaism. It is credible that Paul, after using Barnabus to get himself accepted in the proto-Christian community, discarded him. They parted in disharmony; and Paul took on his journeys in Asia Minor and Greece the Roman citizen Silas or Silvanus. Whatever was factual, Jesuine or Jessine in the religion they preached was subordinated to Messianic, Greek and Roman ideas with a dash of Persian.

The Jessine movement petered out, though the Essenes may have survived Paul for a couple of generations, the worshippers of John the Baptist maintained sects fairly strong and enduring and at least one religion claimed Judas as its hero or savior. The man-and-man sexual element in all those movements flourished without being woven into published doctrines, as occurred in Christianity despite Paul's no great regard for it. Paul could speak slightly of a man's working with a man but he participated in that work, thereby following a pattern that is very, very common. That Paul had never been a Jew is argued by some because of his non-belief in circumcision; but that evidence is inconclusive; Mohammed also omitted to require circumcision (and the practice, though universal among Mohammedans, is without Koranic sanction), though himself circumcised. Of the Christian churches only the Abyssinian practices circumcision.

Saul-Paul never saw Jesus, and his religion usually differed from that of his pretended master. A highly emotional man, Saul had persecuted the murdered religious agitator's followers. Paul said that he changed his mind as the result of a fit or seizure that he suffered, in which, he said, he saw the then-dead Jesus. That Paul was epileptic is no reproach to him, but it is consistent with the instability that he showed throughout his career. He apparently couldn't hold any attitude for long at a time. He is not to be blamed for changing his mind as he grew older and acquired knowledge and experience; but an inconsistency which may be only a sign of honesty and growth in an ordinary man is devastating to the pretensions of a messenger from God. Changing his religion was one of the things Paul did best; he revised his opinions from the first we hear of him to the last.

Paul's letter to the Romans is regarded by scholars as relatively genuine if any epistle can be so regarded, but its peculiarities indicate garbling. It looks to be two letters mashed together. Be discourse classified as indicative, interrogative, imperative and exclamatory, Paul's epistle to the Romans is one of the longest exclamations in our language.

Paul does not forbid man-fucking. As does the writer of the story about Sodom, all Paul does is point to man-man sex work as part of the behavior of people who reject his doctrine of the moment. Reading his letter, we infer that he had been meeting with sales resistance. Exactly what line of spiritual merchandise he was drumming then he does not mention, where justification by faith, for example, or justification by works; though possibly the former might be inferred.

Paul, now middle-aged, had another companion named Timothy, a native as Paul was of Asia Minor. (Traditionalists identify this Timothy with the bishop of Ephesus, which is on Asia Minor's west end. Men interested in sexual behavior may remark that Paul is ever and anon linked with some male companion — Barnabas, Silas, Timothy or Peter.) All this while, Paul is supposed to have made trips to Jerusalem, but it is hard to see why he should. The politicians in Jerusalem were

Roman, the prevailing religion Jewish, and the Christian element insignificant. Christianity's center of gravity was farther north or west — at Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth and elsewhere in Asia Minor and Greece.

Sometimes Paul made converts and sometimes he ran into opposition. In Jerusalem and Rome he got arrested and in Athens he met with indifference or contempt. Now and then he encountered insuperable resistance or was expelled from a community, and in each such case he cloaked the indignity under a divine mandate to go elsewhere. He wandered up the Aegean's eastern coast as far as Troy and crossed over into Macedonia, whence he ambulated down through Hellas to Corinth.

Here we seem to run into a stretch of history: that Paul was born in Tarsus and that he journeyed westward and northward along the coast of Asia Minor, crossed the Hellespont and continued along the Thracian and Macedonian coasts to Greece along an ancient and well traveled route is easy of belief. And upon his arrival at Corinth and his attaining something like his fiftieth year he wrote two letters that are considered his earliest, those to the congregations at Thessalonica or Salonica, which lies 150 miles north of Corinth and supposably upon Paul's line of march.

As contributions to the historic record of some messiah or other these earliest of Christian documents are worthless. The supposition was that the messiah had been crucified about fifteen years before and that a few years after the crucifixion Paul had seen Jesus in a fit. In these letters Paul exhorts his followers to believe in the doctrines that he has told them in person, doctrines which he does not here recapitulate. He is quite sold on the saviorhood of Jesus; but for all we can tell from these letters that messiah may be Paul's own invention.

Corinth was something of a headquarters of Paulines; and when Paul was a long time away from there he wrote letters to the Corinthians to resolve schisms, suppress bickerings and maintain his predominance. In First Corinthians he indicates that a man had best find his sexual gratification in other men, but he permits marriage where a man can't content himself without a woman. Much of Paul's counsel is practical, conciliatory and in accord with the customs and thought of the time and place. He asserts in an offhand way that he has seen Jesus Christ and that he is a brother of Peter; apparently we are to take these statements as made in a spiritual sense.

In First Corinthians' 15th chapter Paul gets around to stating his doctrine of Christ's death, burial, resurrection and appearance to Peter, to the other apostles, to 500 men "and last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time." He states Christianity's elements and gives instructions for taking up the collection. Church management and a defense of his religious authority are the themes of his other letters.

Paul tells how he went to Jerusalem, entered into the Jewish temple and there got into a brawl of even greater severity than his others. Only thus lately does he declare himself a pupil of the famed Gamaliel and a once-scrupulous Jew. Carried in arrest by the Romans to Caesarea, Paul was held there two years and then sent to Rome, where he dwelt two years. These two-year periods sound more like a mannerism than history, each coming at the end of a chapter with an abrupt change in the narrative's pace.

Christian historians seem disposed to get Paul out of the way by 65 a.d.; and some of the time-killing expedients introduced seem designed to make his conversion and ministry begin curiously early. Thus he is seen as Gamaliel's disciple at the early age of fifteen; he spends three years in Arabia doing nothing immediately after experiencing the most exciting

event of his life, the event that is supposed to have prompted his becoming the most active of the apostles; he is held two years by Felix and Festus with strangely little motivation; he is sent, on little or no provocation, on a leisurely voyage to Rome, where he is held in oddly liberal confinement by a government that customarily disposed of capital cases promptly; and thereafter it is indicated that he made trips to Spain and to the Levant, finally to return to Rome and get himself killed.

It would make truer-sounding history for Paul to have concocted his brand of Christianity some thirty years after the supposed messiah's death and that his extraordinary experiences were a pack of lies but that he did travel in Asia Minor and Greece. He may never have been imprisoned, though he was commonly involved in gang-fights. He was a clever orator, politician and theologian and a great one to magnify his tribulations. He can have invented Christianity about 60 a.d., made a profitable racket of it and in the short space of five years or so got his church established as firmly as it was to be established until it became the Roman state religion. The materials and the field lay ready to his hand. Instead of his being killed in Rome in 65 a.d., he may have lived indefinitely later, and it would be like him to switch religions again.

God's wrath, says Paul, "is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hinder the truth . . . Knowing God, they glorified him not as God," and took to the worship of images. Wherefore, Paul argues, "God gave them up to the lusts of their hearts unto uncleanness, that their bodies should be dishonored among themselves . . ."

Saul-Paul's indictment does not run against us here. We men who love men do not worship lifeless images; and as for dishonoring men's bodies, it is we who love those bodies. Mortification of the body is a Christian practice. We see in the seed-bearing, male human body a veritable temple of goodness, truth and beauty.

"For this cause," Paul goes on, "God gave them up unto vile passions; for their women changed the natural use into that which is against nature; and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another, men with men working unseemliness, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was due."

Paul accused those who disbelieved him of many other things: "all unrighteousness, wickedness, covetise, malice, full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, hateful to God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, unmerciful," and so on, verbosely and incoherently. That fellow certainly had a mad on.

He follows this blistering judgment with an exhortation against judging, "for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself." Upshot of the whole tirade is Paul's emphatic dissatisfaction with people who heard him preach and were unimpressed. So far as this passage may be held to state the Christian doctrine against Greek love, it might as logically be held to class man's men-fucking with envy, whispering, innovation, disobedience to parents and boasting. If Paul tried to revoke the behest that we love one another he had no authority to.

Our clergy mutilate the law that they pretend to tell As if 'twere theirs to do with as they please. Well, what the hell?

Their fabric 'twas, their fabric 'tis, a patent fraud, a sell.

Our course, of course, is plain: their senseless discord we shall quell.