

Sex in Christianity and Psychoanalysis: Volume 6 (Routledge Library Editions: Psychoanalysis)

William Graham Cole



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Originally published in 1956, this survey of the interpretations of sex by the major figures in Christian thought and in psychoanalysis made an important contribution to the re-thinking of our sexual morality at the time. The author refutes the common belief that the negative attitude toward sex and the body, which had been predominant in western civilization, originated with Christianity. He shows that such a viewpoint was widespread in the early Hellenism Age, nearly three centuries before Christ. He emphasizes the essentially positive view which Biblical religion demands and shows how Christianity's attitude early became corrupted by the dualism of the Orient. He points to the need for a return to essential naturalism and the Biblical interpretation of sex.

The first part of the book consists of a historical treatment in the Christian tradition, touching upon the teaching of Jesus, Paul, Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, Calvin and others. He analyses the classical and contemporary attitudes and ideas in both Catholic and Protestant circles and shows how Christian understanding comes into conflict with psychoanalysis. In the later portions of the book the author discusses sex and psychoanalysis and the major problems in sexual mores. He ends with a synthesis of the religious and psychoanalytic points of view and a critical reconstruction of a Christian interpretation.

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