

299278

A Note on the **KINSEY REPORT**

Ginder, Richard
A Note on the Kinsey
Report ADQ 2948



Philip D. Gendreau Photo

A Note On
THE KINSEY REPORT



OUR SUNDAY VISITOR LIBRARY
HUNTINGTON, INDIANA

by

RICHARD GINDER

Deacidified

A Note On
THE KINSEY REPORT

by
RICHARD GINDER



In the spring of 1948, a professor of zoology at Indiana University, Alfred C. Kinsey, together with two research assistants, Wardell B. Pomeroy and Clyde E. Martin, published a tome of 804 pages entitled *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*, and based on data obtained by interviewing 5300 men and boys on the most intimate aspects of their personal histories.

This should have caused little stir among the general public. Similar books have been published before this—some of them far more sensational, quoting sex histories in vivid language and sparing no details: the works of Ellis, Krafft-Ebbing,

Moll, and Freud, for instance. But their circulation has been confined in the main to professional circles.

With the so-called Kinsey Report, however, things were otherwise. It was given tremendous advance publicity. Handouts were issued to the daily press. It was synopsisized in magazine articles long before the date of publication—not just in professional circles among physicians and psychiatrists, but in periodicals meant for family reading.

As a result, it became the talk of the country. Bookstores couldn't keep it on their shelves. Shopgirls and clerks were actually dipping into their savings accounts for the six dollars needed to procure a copy.

This wide circulation obviously called for a proportionately great number of reviews. All kinds of people stepped forward to appraise the work and draw what they considered appropriate conclusions. Unfortunately, instead of confining themselves to an appraisal of Dr. Kinsey's methods or the validity of his findings, far too many

of these reviewers stepped into the field of ethics and handed down ready-made dogmas concerning morality and sin. And that is where we come in.

To state the matter succinctly, Dr. Kinsey purports to have found that a great many American men and boys are committing sins against holy purity.

Human Nature Always Frail

This is certainly no surprise. On the other hand priests are often overwhelmed by a sense of goodness which they discover in many of the men and boys whom they guide in moral matters. So many of them are as innocent as children, yet gifted with a rocklike chastity and a second sense that suspects and repels any temptation against that virtue. These, naturally, would not volunteer for an interview with Dr. Kinsey or his associates. They would have nothing to tell for, in a word, if they are unmarried their sexual life is a blank, and if married, they are faithful to their wives.

In many quarters, however, the Report was taken as a sort of Gallup Poll providing a pattern according to which we should tailor if not our ideas of right and wrong, then certainly our ideas of morality.

Although we can't accept such an attitude, we can certainly understand it. Monsignor Sheen puts it very well when he says that

"There are ultimately only two possible adjustments in life: one is to suit our lives to principles; the other is to suit principles to our lives. 'If we do not live as we think, we soon begin to think as we live.' The method of adjusting moral principles to the way men live is just such a perversion of the due order of things."

He compares the instance to a classroom in which the children find it hard to spell "knapsack" and "pneumonia." There are two ways of meeting the situation. One is to keep after the youngsters until they learn to spell the words correctly; the other, to write a new speller and entitle it *A Preface to Spelling*.

“This is precisely what has taken place in the field of morals,” he observes. “Instead of making men conform to principles of morality, they change the principles. This kind of philosophy would never have permitted the Prodigal Son to return to his father’s house. It would have settled the ‘crisis’ by finding a new and handsome name for the husks he was throwing to the swine, and called it ‘progress away from antiquated modes of morality.’ ”

The plain fact is that all our ethics and jurisprudence are based on man’s *moral* nature—and by *moral* we mean that a human being has freedom of action and choice: one can choose, first of all, whether to steal or not to steal, and then, having decided to steal, one can elect how much or what to take.

What We Ought to Do

Now laws governing those free actions are not merely declarative (such as the laws of physics, chemistry, biology, etc.); they are imperative. They aren’t simply

descriptive of our conduct; they tell us what we *ought* to do.

Here in America, especially, we share a culture that is a blend of Greco-Roman, Judaic, and Christian elements, all of which recognize a universal law imposed by the Creator on His creatures and existing independently of the degree to which it is kept.

Murder is wrong, for instance. In the fifth of His Ten Commandments, God has forbidden the unjust taking of an innocent man's life. Now we can imagine society in a state of turmoil, complete anarchy, where there is no punishment for murder—where, in fact, murder becomes a commonly accepted practice. But it's still wrong. Even though everyone think it right, murder would still be wrong, for good and evil are in no wise dependent on what the individual thinks of them.

To cite a common example: let's say a wet-paint sign is put on a park bench. Immediately someone takes it off. That doesn't dry the paint. It's still wet, and the one who sits on it is likely to ruin his suit.

Sin, Guilt, and Shame

A violation of God's law is known as sin. It is followed by a sense of shame, of guilt—the knowledge that one has acted like an animal rather than a human being, that one has offended the Lord of Creation.

Dr. Norbert Muhlen, writing in *The New Leader*, ascribes this guilt-feeling to the individual's belief that he belongs to a minority in the community.

The fact is that one can tell guilt even after one has run with the crowd—as in a lynching bee for instance. And that feeling of elation which is the opposite of guilt can be had from realizing that one is singular in one's conduct—sticking to God's Law against the crowd and against statistics.

The Ten Commandments really summarize the law of our being, i.e. the things that the normal unspoiled individual knows by intuition. They are neither arbitrary nor mythical. It is not a case of

someone's having once sharpened his pencil and sat down one day to write a code for the governance of the race. Nor do they float in fogs of ancient superstition. They are rooted in our nature. We don't have to be told that it's wrong to kick our mother, to have sex relations with our sister, to maim our neighbor, etc. We *know* these things.

Apart from the Ten Commandments, which exist independently of human opinion or conduct, we have the fact of Original Sin, which marred our primitive integrity and made us unable to keep God's law without His special help.

We are at odds with ourself, subject to tensions and strains within us that are forever pulling us downward: we tend toward lust, greed, avarice, and selfishness. With God's grace, we can overcome these tendencies. Without it, we yield—and find ourselves in shape for an interview with Dr. Kinsey.

In summary, the Kinsey Report only adds statistical proof to the universality of

Original Sin. We know what we ought to be. We're not what we ought to be. But that doesn't justify building a fool's paradise by trying to tamper with the eternal standards of right and wrong.

NOTE: Without wishing to endorse the validity of Dr. Kinsey's findings, we may say that his figures on the prevalence of unnatural sins between men are not a little disturbing. "Where there is smoke there must be fire," and discount those figures as we may, there is still a distressing residue.

This, perhaps, was the most sensational element in the Report as far as the general public was concerned. And yet it is a theme so loathesome that it is never preached upon and only rarely written up in popular terms.

These sins are obviously against nature. Sex exists primarily for the reproduction of our kind, and sexually a man is the complement of a woman. Hence an unmarried man and woman having sexual relations are committing fornication—a terri-

ble sin, but one that is "natural," i.e. that does not impede the course of nature.

Whereas when a man has sexual contact with another man, he is committing an "unnatural" sin, since men are not by nature attracted to one another sexually and since any such contact is bound to be sterile.

In the Bible, the sin is classed with murder as crying to heaven for vengeance. It takes its name from a city destroyed by God because its inhabitants were addicted to that particular vice. To show His displeasure, God rained down fire and brimstone on that city.

There are several places in the Bible where God declares His detestation of the sin: "Every soul that shall commit any of these abominations," He told the Jews, "shall perish from the midst of his people" (*Leviticus* 18:22-29).

"If anyone lie with a man as with a woman, both have committed an abomination, let them be put to death: their blood be upon them" (*Leviticus* 20:13).

The Words of St. Paul

In the New Testament, St. Paul inveighs against the sin as a result of pride—"For professing themselves to be wise, they become fools . . . Who changed the truth of God into a lie . . . For this cause God delivered them up to shameful affections. For their women have changed the natural use into that use which is against nature. And, in like manner, the men also, leaving the natural use of the women, have turned in their lusts one towards another, men with men working that which is filthy . . . And as they liked not to have God in their knowledge, God delivered them up to a reprobate sense, to do those things which are not convenient" (i.e. according to nature) . . . Who having known the justice of God, did not understand that they who do such things, are worthy of death; and not only they that do them, but they also that consent to them that do them" (*Romans* 1:22-32).

Elsewhere, St. Paul lists the "effeminate"

and "liers with mankind" among those to be excluded from the Kingdom of God (*I Corinthians* 6:10).

Advice to Those Tempted

There are those who will plead that they are effeminate through heredity, or through some glandular deficiency, or through corruption in childhood. Whatever the degree of responsibility for this condition, they can only be advised to keep chaste, using all the means offered by religion. Let them keep a firm grip on two truths: Nothing can ever justify a sinful action; and God is faithful, who will not permit us to be tempted beyond our strength. Prayer can overcome any temptation.

Every such person, if he is a Catholic, should take a priest into his confidence. Because of the amount of consultation necessary, this might better be done in the rectory than in the confessional. The interested party need only tell the priest that

he has a personal problem to discuss. He can be sure that the priest will respect his confidence.

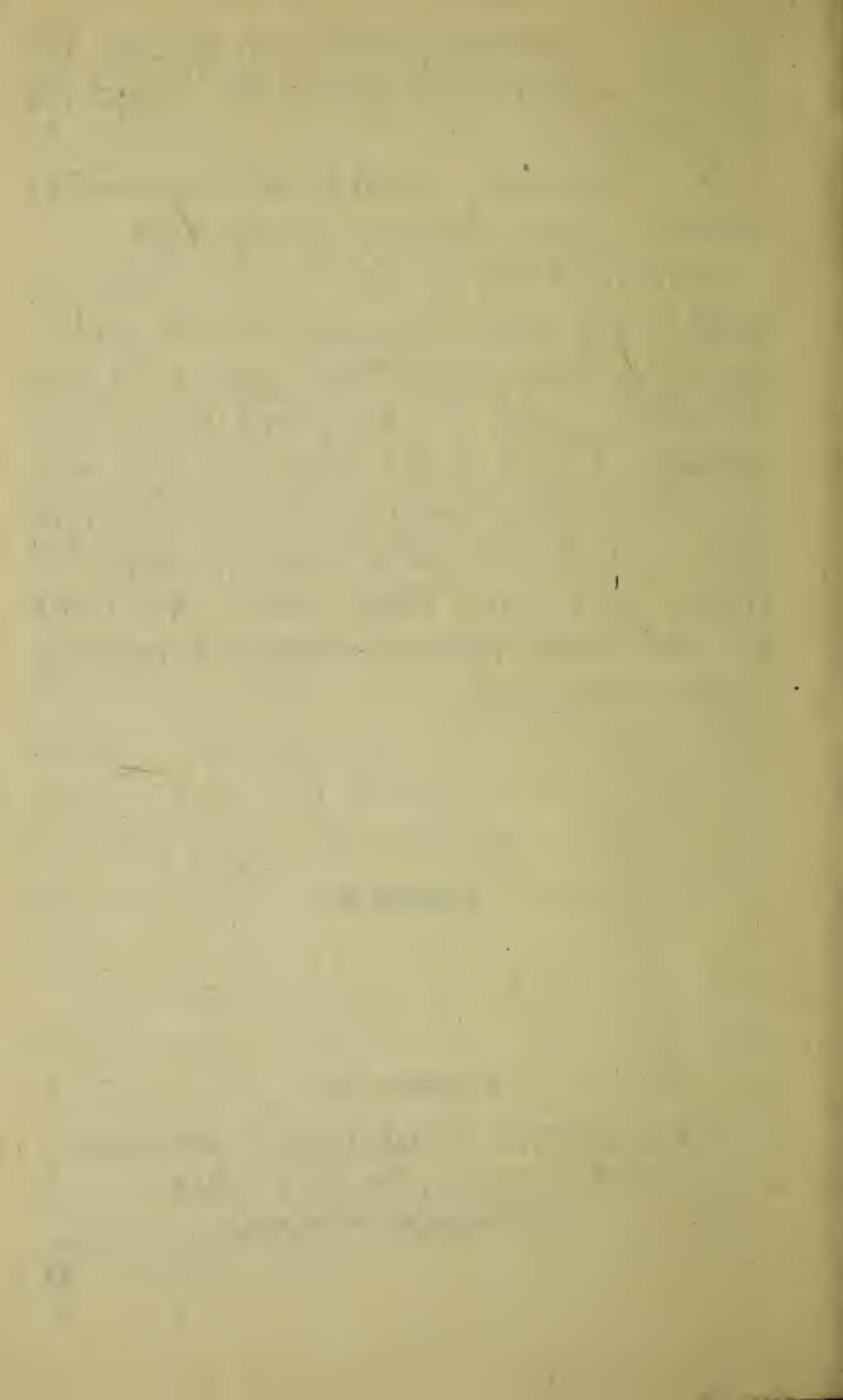
Non-Catholics would be well advised to consult a good, religious psychiatrist.

For all of us, in such matters, there is need of the greatest sympathy and understanding. Such temptations are a trial permitted by God for His own mysterious reasons. All of us are sinners in one way or another, and the one who yields here may well exceed us in charity, piety, religion, and many other ways. We must forever detest the sin without forgetting to love the sinner.



Published By

THE CATHOLIC INFORMATION SOCIETY
214 West 31st St., New York 1, N. Y.
(OPPOSITE PENN TERMINAL.)





NEVER DESTROY GOOD PRINT.
Pass It from Person to Person. Thanks!

