

Correspondence

SOME SUGGESTIONS CONCERNING HOMOSEXUALITY

DEAR SIR,

Joan Fitzherbert made some suggestions concerning homosexuality in your *Journal* (April, 1967, p. 446). I should like to offer a testable theory on how the male child might have incorrect hormone levels at the "critical period" when his sex-controlling centre is maturing. The patient's mother might have anti-testosterone (or androgen) material circulating. This might explain how some studies have shown homosexuality in the youngest of a series of sons, or only males in a series previously only containing females.

Although Professor Parkes is mentioned as a source for information, *Science*, January 17, 1964, contains an article by Young, W. C. *et al.* on Behaviour of Animals with Hormones, though references to prenatal hormones are buried in a mass of other data. *The Scientific American* last year gave a clear summary on this, and G. W. Harris in *Endocrinology*, October 1964, Vol. 75, pp. 627-651, also writes on this subject.

I hope this material may be of assistance.

D. GREGORY MAYNE.

*Mullalelish, Richhill,
Co. Armagh,
N. Ireland.*

THE TWO TYPES OF DEPRESSION PERHAPS NOT ACCORDING TO ST. PAUL

DEAR SIR,

Dr. Mark Altschule (*Journal*, July, 1967, p. 779) tells us that mediaeval theologians based a classification of depressions on the words of St. Paul in 2 Corinthians, 7, 10, and he implies that Paul himself had two kinds of depression—beneficent and malignant—in mind. I will try to show that this latter view is not well founded. As I see it, Paul was not referring to pathological depression at all, but to "sorrow" in its everyday sense of "grief or sadness, or circumstances causing this, misfortune or trouble" (O.E.D.).

(1) The words used by Paul are *λύπη* (*lype*) or a derivative, translated as "tristitia", "tristis", etc. in Latin, and as "sorrow", "sorry", "sorrowful", etc. in English. The word is found a number of times in the

New Testament, and in the Septuagint version of the Old Testament. Its very first occurrence is in the well-known passage in Genesis, 3, 16, "I will multiply thy sorrow . . . in sorrow shalt thou bring forth"; it occurs in the same context in John, 16, 20, "A woman in travail hath sorrow . . . but as soon as she is delivered she remembereth no more the anguish". Other typical instances are Proverbs, 10, 22, "The Lord's blessing enricheth and he addeth no sorrow"; and Matthew, 19, 22, "But when the young man heard that saying he went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions".

λύπη is the normal antithesis to *χαρά* (*chara*), joy, as in the passage from St. John quoted above, where the woman's sorrow is turned to joy; and in St. Paul's own use (2 Corinthians, 6, 10) "As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich . . .".

Again, in Philippians, 2, 27, Paul refers to the illness of his collaborator, Epaphroditus, and says: "But God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow."

It must be obvious that the curse of Eve did not involve an attack of depression at every childbirth; and the "sorrow upon sorrow" from which Paul was spared were not recurrent attacks of depression. In fact, wherever in the Bible anything approaching the pathological is in question some term other than *λύπη* is used, such as *πονηρία καρδίας* (heaviness of heart; Nehemiah, 2, 2) or *πνεῦμα τεταράγμενον* (troubled spirit; of King Ahab, 1 Kings, 21 5). And the same is true of the classic Greek authors.

(2) In the passages in question, Paul contrasts "godly sorrow" with "the sorrows of the world". The context is given in the preceding verses: "I made you sorry with a letter . . . [it] made you sorry, though for a season . . . now I rejoice, for you were made sorry after a godly manner". This cannot refer to anything pathological—it is not to be supposed that the Corinthians succumbed to a kind of mass melancholia. They were simply upset at receiving a merited rebuke; and since they were godly people and the cause of their consternation was a godly one, they "repented to salvation" and were spiritually the better for it. The contrasted "sorrow of the world" must surely be that experienced by worldly people from base and unworthy causes and leading to spiritual impoverishment and "death". This was the