

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Thalidomide case: research on deformities

From Dr John Murray

Sir, Professor Strang and others (January 9) have put the thalidomide tragedy in its proper perspective; we all must carry some part of the responsibility.

It is high time that this country devoted many more resources to research into prevention of congenital abnormality specifically, but also into prenatal diagnosis and treatment generally.

We at Queen Charlotte's are only too well aware of the pitifully small sums which are available for investigating the mother and child. Nevertheless I must record how immensely grateful we are to the Department of Health, the Medical Research Council and numerous other trusts and bodies for support from their meagre funds, without which we would have been unable to make the progress we have.

It is only by such research that it may be possible to prevent or correct abnormalities which cause so much despair and heartbreak in so many families.

Surely it is not good enough for society to wait for tragedies to happen and then try to correct the situation by pillorying any firm which has manufactured a drug in response to doctors' prescriptions because of patients' demands or apparent needs.

There are many, many more babies born with abnormalities requiring a great deal of personal attention than those afflicted because of thalidomide and these pose the problems for the future.

Yours faithfully,

JOHN MURRAY,

Director of Pathology and Research,
Queen Charlotte's Maternity
Hospital,
Goldhawk Road, W6.

From Miss Louise Barnard

Sir, On reading Tim Devlin's article in your paper of January 9 regarding the Lady Hoare Trust for thalidomide children, I felt that clarification of one point might not come amiss.

It was stated that "when Lady Hoare visited thalidomide victims in Sussex she was shocked to find some children placed upright in plastic pots like flower pots because doctors and nurses were desperate to know what to do with them".

Truly, the thalidomide babies in Chailey Heritage Hospital were placed in "flower pots" as we did, indeed, call them. These were made of plaster of paris to fit each child and had a firm base, being fashioned in the same way as any plaster of paris splint or jacket. Much thought and work went into this ingenious idea by members of the medical staff.

Babies were fitted with these plaster bases when they reached the age

that any normal child would be able to pull itself by its arms from lying to a sitting position. The neck objects of the bases were to enable the back muscles to develop and strengthen by near normal movement, and to develop some sense of balance—both essential for further treatment and the wearing of artificial limbs. The babies were also in a position to take stock of their surroundings and all that was going on. The time spent during the day, in these positions did of course vary according to age and circumstance.

There would surely have been more cause for concern and shock had Lady Hoare found all the thalidomide infants, babies as they were at the time of her visit, lying in and disinterested in a row of cots neatly tucked down and unable to move.

As a matter of interest, I would add that this type of developmental abnormality was not unknown to Chailey long before the thalidomide tragedy.

I am, yours faithfully,

LOUISE BARNARD,

Matron, Chailey Heritage, 1950-65
24 Rigden Road, Hove, Sussex.

From Mr K. A. S. Potter

Sir, Much of the discussion concerning the amount of compensation to be paid for the benefit of the disabled children depends on the future real value of any money now awarded.

Ten years ago a child was badly injured in a car accident and was awarded substantial damages. The sum awarded was invested by order of the court, under the control of trustees, for her benefit, as she was then a minor, and the order included the clause: "The trust period means the period beginning with the date hereof and ending on . . . , being the day on which the beneficiary will attain 21 years of age."

The Inland Revenue contend that on the date when the child attained the age of 21, and the trust money can be handed over to her, the whole fund will be liable to capital gains tax.

In fact, the capital value of the trust fund has rather more than doubled, which of course has done no more than keep pace with the diminishing value of money.

This would seem to be a suitable time for Parliament to reconsider the equity of this contention since it must affect many children who have in the past been awarded damages and who will suffer this somewhat arbitrary levy of taxation on attaining their majority.

Yours faithfully,

K. A. S. POTTER,
High Leybourne, Hascombe,
Godalming, Surrey.
January 11.

Dinners

ady Mayoress of Westminster
is part of the Fanfare for Europe
celebrations the Lord Mayor and
ady Mayoress of Westminster
ave a dinner last night at the City
all at which the guests included :

[illegible]

LC

LC
The Chairman of the Greater London Council and Mrs Abbott entertained the following guests at dinner at the Festival Hall last night:

Lord Goodman, Air Commodore Philipps, Marshall, Mr Peter Kirk, MP, and Mrs Kirk, Mr and Mrs Leslie Freeman

vil Service Sailing Association
ne annual dinner and dance of the
vil Service Sailing Association
as held yesterday at the Hurling-
um Club. The Commodore, Sir
ichael Cary, presided, and the
ests included :
el Jellicoe, Sir John Lang, General Sir Noel
omas, Lady Seal, Mr B. G. Buckley, and
J. P. Mulcahy.

ervice dinners

London and Kent Artillery
Major M. F. Collett and Officers of
(London and Kent RA) Battery
held the London and Kent Artillery
fest night last night at the Royal
Artillery Mess, Woolwich. Captain
A. C. Winterton presided. The
first toast to the battery was proposed
by Colonel D. A. H. Sime, Honorary
Colonel 6th (Volunteers) Battalion,
The Queen's Regiment, to which
Major M. F. Collett replied. Brigadier
H. E. C. Weldon proposed the
second toast to the guests and the chief
guest, Lieutenant-General Sir Cecil
Baker, replied.

AF Coltishall

Mr. Vice-Marshall H. A. C. Bird-
ilson was the principal guest at
e Officers' Mess, Royal Air Force
lthall yesterday evening when
ven departing members were
ned out. Wing Commander R. T.
hson, president of the mess
mmittee, presided, and the other
eakers were Group Captain J. A.
lbert, Commanding Officer RAF
lthall, and Wing Commander
A. Bear.

Supper party

IM Government
Mr Anthony Kershaw, Parliamen-
tary Under-Secretary at the Foreign
and Commonwealth Office, and
Mrs Kershaw were hosts at a con-
cert party at the Festival Hall last
night. Afterwards a supper party
was held at the Savoy Hotel. The
guests included :

The wisdom in the wi

By Joseph McCulloch
Rector of St Mary-le-Bow

"We are never told that Jesus laughed, while we are once told that he wept." Dean Farrar, writing thus in his *Life of Christ* leaves an impression of Jesus, which, though far from warranted by the gospel-narratives, still seems to be fairly general. It is the impression given by most of those who have sought to portray Jesus whether on canvas or in writing—that of a man always grave, pensive or even sad. Today, when many people are turning to the gospels for the first time, this persistent impression needs to be corrected, as it makes much of his teaching difficult to grasp.

One such new reader, struggling through Luke without the aid of a commentary, came to me baffled by the parable of the dishonest bailiff, and was astonished when I suggested simply that Jesus was laughing, using ridicule to expose a common type of human folly. To anyone coming to the gospels with a preconceived image of an unnaturally humourless Jesus, his habitual use of irony will at times be bound to make his teaching seem somewhat baffling.

We need to understand Jesus's

Middle Temple awards

The Masters of the Bench of Middle Temple announce the following awards :

awards :
Harmsworth Major Entrance Exhibitions:
M. J. Jordan, Warwick and Lincoln C.
Oxford; P. D. Marshall, Highlands S.
Halifax, and Clure Cambridge; A. J.
Robertson, Bradford GS and Christ's C.
Cambridge; P. E. Sayer, Darford GS and
Christ's C. Cambridge; S. P. Stewart,
Whitefield Stand GS, and St Peter's C.
Oxford; R. C. Stoaate, KCS and Christ's C.
Cambridge.

A. G. Hampworth Minor Entrance Examinee
A. G. Bompas, Merchant, London, and Oriel
C. Oxford; T. P. Brennan, St. Thomas
C. Oxford; L. B. Petherhouse, Cambridge;
A. Aquinas, GS, Marnborough and St. Peter's
A. C. S. Coleman, Marnbridge and St. Peter's
A. Oxford; M. J. Crane, St. George's, A. B.
Weybridge, and Balliol C. Oxford; D. A. B.
Edwards, Sir W. Borlase, S. and St. John's
C. Cambridge; J. L. T. Head, Marlborough
C. Cambridge; J. C. Oxford; L. G. Kosmicki,
St. George's, A. B. and St. George's, A. B.
Preston Manor Sen. HS and Exeter, and
Calus C. Cambridge; G. W. Little, Leigh
GS, Wallasey; E. Z. Lomnicka, Ursuline C. Cam-
bridge; M. E. Z. Lomnicka, Ursuline C. Cam-
bridge; S. Wimbeldon, and Girton C. Cam-
bridge; C. W. Mathieson, Whitaker, Burnley
HS and Church C. Cambridge; R. L. L.
Wood, Nottingham HS and Lincoln C.
Oxford.

Oxford.
Entrance Bursaries: P. A. Clark, John
Leggott GS and Jesus C, Oxford; J. K.
Reynolds, Campbell C and Peterhouse, Cam-
bridge; J. P. Stockton, Wallasey GS and
Lincoln C, Oxford; J. L. Walters, Rugby
and Balliol C, Oxford; Miss H V. Williams,
Reigate Co S and King's C, London Uni-
versity.

Memorial services

Bishops H. W. Baines
and Tan Sri R. Koh

A memorial service for Bishop H. W. Baines, Bishop of Wellington, New Zealand, and Bishop Tan Sri R. Peck-Chiang Koh, Bishop of West Malaysia, was held yesterday at St Martin-in-the-Fields. The Rev S. Austen Williams officiated. The lesson was read by the Rev A. C. H. Peatfield, and prayers were said by Bishop C. K. Sansbury and Canon A. C. Dumper. The Bishop of London paid a tribute and an address was given by the Bishop of Worcester. The Assistant Bishops of Winchester, Coventry and Worcester and Bishops Geoffrey Allen and F. R. Barry were also present in the sanctuary and robed. Among those also attending were :

Miss Susan Baines (sister of Bishop Baines) with Mrs Frederick Baines (sister-in-law), Mr and Mrs Edward Baines (brother and sister-in-law), Mr and Mrs Richard Baines and Mr and Mrs John Baines, Mrs Christopher Tatham, Miss Priscilla Baines, Lady Paget, Lady Stephenson, Mrs Richard Talbot, Talbot, OC, and the

irony if we are to perceive the essential truth of the C claim that he took our life upon him; for we experience human existence both as joy and tragedy. Walpole's "This world is a comedy that think, a tragedy to feel" is too neat a dichotomy. We all both think and feel, in varying degree and in varying ways. The world can seem at once joyful and tragic. Pathos and joy often go together, and human life is to be seen in relation to the one or the other. Nowhere in literature is this more clearly discernible than in the

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message across. "I
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Jesus undoubtedly
his reporters, and
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