

The Caretaker's Letter



This is the last time I shall be writing to you in my capacity as 'The Caretaker'. Not that I shall care any less for you, but with the advent of Chris and Pam there will be a new Rector (and a new Rectory too) and I shall be able to resume my shadowy role of Assistant Curate. When John arrives at the end of September the load will be further lightened, and when he is priested we shall be back to a staff of three - I won't know where I'm at.

I don't know about you, but I think we have brushed through the interregnum very well. Too often when a Rector leaves the congregations drop off alarmingly, but ours have not. Too often pastoral structures fall apart, ours have not. The various groups set up by Vyvyan are still functioning and functioning well; the P.C.C. is still its own loveable, intransigent self, Philip and David are still full of enthusiasm, new members are being enrolled into the Choir. I think we can say with modest pride that Chris will find a strong, hard working, caring Church when he comes to us.

One thing that happens during an interregnum is that baptisms fall off, parents holding the babies back, as it were, until "The new Rector arrives". Its a darn good job they didn't here, I think my average has been six a month. Poor old Chris would have thought he was on an assembly line. Marriage has also been very popular, but fortunately Willis Fell from St. Mark's has helped out, so that burden has not been too great.

All things considered it has been an interesting time for me - interesting to see so many people working together so well to keep standards of christian care up, determined that should they be asked to give an account of their stewardship they should not be found wanting, and that whoever came as the new Rector he should find a solid base to work from.

Finally, I should like to thank all those who have helped me in the conduct of worship in our three churches, Canon John Rollinson, and the Revds Bernard John and Vernon Brook; our two Readers Sylvia and Harold who have helped with Evensongs and Family Services; Philip and David for their support and help; and to all of you for your love.

See you again,

Ken Scott

Thank You!

Orchard Cottage
Wash House Lane
Off Chatsworth Road
Brampton
Chesterfield S40 3AZ
Tel: (0246) 566639

6th June, 1985

To Ken and all my friends at St. Thomas'.

I wanted to write this letter, first of all to thank you so very much for your many prayers for me and then to tell you how God has answered them.

As you may know, I have been having trouble with my eyes since 19th Jan. this year, the result of 34 years of diabetes. Immediately, the verse, "Before they call, I will answer", comes to my mind, because the use of laser to treat diabetic retinopathy has only been developed within the last 10 years, and I would already be totally blind without it. So the fact that laser is available means that I can still see.

However, as I have been for increasing "shots" of laser, it has been found that I have a rare condition (and I thank God that it is rare) which means that I grow capillaries very rapidly. These cover the blood vessels which have closed down and they are so fragile that they easily haemorrhage and, as I understand it, that is what causes the loss of vision. Anyway, because of this, the specialist said that the laser was not controlling the condition and then, finally, about three weeks ago, when I asked for a prognosis, he told me that he was sorry to say that it was possible that I might go blind before the end of the year.

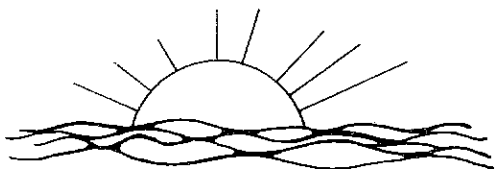
I have had many times of absolute terror during the last months. I would ring up friends frantically asking for prayer as I feared for my sight. The Lord was with me all the time, even if I was not always aware of His presence. He was answering the many, many prayers of friends like yourselves.

Because I was so frightened, I spent so much more time in reading my Bible and praying. At first, I felt as that paralysed man in the Bible must have felt. He was lowered down through the roof of the house by his friends and it was THEIR faith which Jesus praised. My faith was as I imagine his to have been. I was upheld by the prayer of others, and their faith in God.

Gradually, however, I began to see the Lord in all of this. I had become such a lukewarm Christian that my faith counted for little. A quick prayer, a glance at the Scriptures if I had inclination, although my library book often got priority; a helping hand now and then, but no witness to the Lord, because I had nothing to say. However, day by day, I began to see things differently. I read again in my Bible that God is my father. He is love personified. And He disciplines as a father, only for my good. He loves me. He loves me enough to spend this time over me.

At one time, I had taken my "bed-rest" in the garden walking cautiously about, so that I didn't have any more haemorrhages and inwardly (and outwardly) bemoaning the fact that I would probably never see it again. And even then, not always looking at the garden, but at the haemorrhages. I remember one particularly lovely Monday, when I went outside in the afternoon, when the Lord said to me,

"Look at all the beauty of the sky, the trees, the flowers. Look at all these wonderful things which I've given you to look at, and yet, there you are, looking at these black spots." It is rather like looking at the spots of dirt on a car wind-screen rather than looking through them to the view beyond.



Behold God's wonders!

As well as helping me to look through them, the Lord has given me the gift of sight in another way. I used to admire flowers, etc. but now I actually look at them. How beautifully each one is formed; the shape; the colours. How marvellously different. In all these years, I have never noticed so much beauty, nor particularly thanked God for it. It was a gift from the Lord and I never enjoyed it properly before. Moreover, I began to appreciate all my other senses. I used to be more prone to complain about aching feet than to thank God for them. It was a gift - the fact that I could actually walk. I am not confined to a wheel-chair. I can also HEAR. I even got up at 4 o'clock one morning to listen to the dawn chorus and those who know me will realise that that is a miracle in itself!

We have so much, and I had been taking virtually everything for granted, until the Lord brought me back to the realisation of His many, many blessings. Psalm 103 became my own,

Praise the Lord O my soul; praise Him from my inmost being."

It goes on to speak of all His love and compassion, His forgiveness of sins and His healing.

I believe that I began to grow in my faith in Him. Simply because I had this trouble, so many people came to see me or wrote and I was able to tell them how God was helping me. I had a new peace. I began to know as a reality that if my earthly father loved me so much, which he did, how very much more does my heavenly Father love me. He will only allow what is best for me, if I am ready to accept His will, which I now want to do - for the first time in many years. And I wasn't now doing it from fear, or as a sort of attempt to bargain with Him.

The most recent answering of prayer has been so beautifully worked out by the Lord. Since my eye specialist had to go and work abroad for the last 3 weeks, my diabetic consultant suggested that it would be worth having a second opinion, although he said that specialists usually agree. As a result, I was taken to London by Richard. He had a week's holiday, so that too fitted in beautifully. Nevertheless, I had a bad week, fighting the thoughts of fear and anxiety which I knew weren't from God, since "perfect love casts out fear."

The Hammersmith hospital seems to specialise in diabetics in particular and I was very impressed with the normal routine check which they do on each patient. After I had mine, I then met the internationally recognised specialist who is concerned with diabetics' eyes. She leads a team of four and each patient is examined by all of them, just in case one of them misses anything. To my great joy, within minutes of talking to me, she told me that within the last 2/3 weeks, she had access to a drug which perhaps could be used to stop the growth of these capillaries. It is only in an experimental stage, but what hope! What joy! It almost brought tears to my eyes, as I thanked the Lord. If I had seen her earlier, she wouldn't have known about its availability.

I am sure that you can imagine my joy and hope. Which is why I wanted to write and thank you for all your prayers and share this with you. I realise that I am not out of danger, but I know that the verse in Philippians chapter 1 and verse 19 which has given me so much comfort lately, now means even more to me. "Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, for I know that through your prayers and the help given by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance . . . so that Christ will be exalted."

Whatever happens, I have been delivered from the coldness of my faith. The Lord has used this time to show me how loving, caring, supportive and faithful in prayer my Christian brothers and sisters are, and even to use me to witness for Him in a totally new way.

Bless you all from the bottom of my heart for the part which you have played in it and which I know you will continue to play, by your prayers. The enemy won't allow a good work to go unchallenged, but our God is stronger. And all things do work for good to them that love God.

With love in Him,

Jill.

the LORD is our
Strength



from

The Parish Registers_ _ _

FUNERALS

BAXTER - on 10th May, Doris Baxter, 90, 190 Somersall Lane. Crematorium.

BURGIN - on 1st July, Annie Constance Burgin, 80, Walton. St. Thomas' and Boythorpe.

DAVIDSON - on 17th June, Elsie May Davidson, 92, 22 Walton Fields Road. St. Thomas' and Boythorpe.

GIDLOW - on 7th May, Reginald Lewis Gidlow, 86, 16 Miriam Avenue, Somersall. St. Peter's and Churchyard.

HOPKINSON - on 24th May, Edith Hopkinson, 86, Slate Pit Dale, Walton. Crematorium.

MADIN - on 23rd May, Thomas Godfrey Madin, 72, 47 Walgrove Road. St. Peter's and churchyard.

PEDLEY - on 9th May, Ernest Arthur Pedley, 83, 424 Rhodes Avenue, Newbold. St. Thomas'.

RILEY - on 20th June, Charles Riley, 63, 345 Chatsworth Road, Crematorium.

RILEY - on 24th June, Clifford Riley, 69, 606 Chatsworth Road.

WARNER - on 30th May, Mary Eileen Everard Warner, 82, Cherry Trees, Chandler Hill, Holymoorside. St. Peter's and Crematorium.

Pray For

ST. THOMAS' NEW DEACON

I was born in Kenya, and have lived in various parts of the world and England. For the last fourteen years my home has been in Liverpool, although we are really "southerners". My family has a strong medical bias - my father is a surgeon, and my mother a nursing sister. I am the eldest of four, with a brother who is a medical student, and two sisters who are still at school.

Five years of my life were spent at Repton School, so I am not a total stranger to Derbyshire. After school I read theology at St. John's College, Durham, and then went to work at Holy Trinity, Brompton - a church a stone's throw from Harrods. For the last two years I have continued my theological studies at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford.

As I come to Chesterfield I ask for your prayers, that I will keep close to Christ, and that I'll hear and obey His voice.

I look forward to getting to know Chesterfield, and to meeting you all.

John R.M. Cook.



BILLY GRAHAM **mission:england**

BRAMALL LANE 22-29 JUNE 1985

Having been to hear Billy Graham speak last year in Birmingham, I already had some idea what to expect. Even so, the size of the crowd gathered there was still very impressive, filling about $\frac{1}{4}$ of the stadium. (About 24,000 people attended, even on the first night).

The weather was somewhat damp and chilly, and during the evening it began to rain, much to the dismay of everyone sitting on the chairs on the open pitch!! Dr. Graham commented on how large a turnout there was, considering the weather, he said in America not nearly so many people would have bothered.

We arrived at the stadium at about 7.20 p.m. and from our position, high up in the stand, we could watch the stadium gradually filling up as it neared 7.45 p.m. At about this time, the choir started singing hymns and choruses, and Cliff Barrows (the man who led the singing) introduced himself and the choir and invited people to join in with the songs.

Mr. "Fill-a-Packing" (Philip Hacking, as we later found out) was scheduled to speak first, but he had been delayed, so his welcome to the Bishop of Sheffield had to come after the Bishop had spoken!

The Bishop led us in prayer, then George Hamilton IV and Bev Shea followed with short testimonies in song. At about half past eight, Dr. Graham began to speak - unannounced. (His introduction was so casual, that it took everyone a couple of minutes to realise who it was!!). His message was simple but powerful and to the point. He spoke about the increase in terrorism in the world, for example - the hijackings, and that there are 40 wars going on throughout the world, today. He talked about the starvation and famine of the third world, throughout 'all the forgotten places' - eg. S.E. Asia, where the TV cameras don't go. About the economic and social problems of the western world, the unemployment, tension, loneliness and despair.

His message was simply that "God loves YOU and if you get nothing from this mission, nothing from anything I say, I want you to believe that you are important to God as an individual." After speaking for about half an hour, he quietly made his famous request for people to come forward. He explained that it was public because that was how Jesus asked all His disciples to follow him - then they all came.



People came forward in their thousands, slowly at first, but gradually more and more followed, until there seemed to be no more room left on the pitch. There was quiet and awe. Although I'd seen many go forward at Birmingham, the numbers were nothing like as great. It was a very moving moment as all those people went forward to commit their lives to Christ.

It was an event that I will never forget. An estimated 10% went forward (an average of the first few nights). This was only the beginning, and so much more was to come.

Now I think that it's up to us to continue to support and pray for all those who went forward, and to make an individual effort to see that they are welcomed and helped by us, in our church, to continue all that has been started by the Billy Graham Mission.

R.J.R.

RESOURCES SHEFFIELD

MANY PEOPLE, particularly leaders of Christian groups and organizations attended the *Christian Resources Exhibition* in London in February and found a vast amount to interest them. Now we hear of a *Christian Life Resources Exhibition* (under different 'management') being held at the Sheffield YMCA Thursday, Friday and Saturday, Sept 5th, 6th and 7th. It looks likely to be worth a visit to investigate what's on offer and can only increase YMCA Sheffield's reputation as a Christian resource centre for the North.

MESSAGE FOR THE MONTH

NEED

They need
to feed to live
We need to give.

They need
to know we care
We need to share.

They need
to feed each day
Please give and pray.

*By a 12 year old boy from
Bearsden about the famine in
Ethiopia*



GENESIS - Fact or Fiction?

The story of the creation as told in Genesis Chapter 1, verses 1 - 26, is one of the oldest controversies ever to arise from the Good Book. Is it a myth? Is it symbolic? Is it the literal truth? I favour the latter, but am not blind to the faults in the text. Imagine if you can, some venerable Jew sitting in his living room and then suddenly the Almighty reveals the truth of the origins of the Universe to him. What must he do? Write it down, of course, but in his natural haste I feel he may have made one or two errors.

Firstly I believe that "fresh growth" could only have appeared on earth after the formation of the Sun, not immediately before it as the Scripture states. I would also think that "birds" (v. 20) which allegedly appeared on earth at roughly the same time as the sea creatures, ought to be read as "flying insects." I also feel that when God "let the earth bring forth living creatures (v. 24) he let the reptiles tread the ground before the mammals, and not vice versa as Genesis states.

When we adjust the text of Genesis as I have set out above the story of Creation can be paraphrased thus:

a) Firstly an explosion of light b) A division in the universe c) The formation of a barren planet Earth through the aggregation of molecules d) The condensation of water in the atmosphere making the seas e) The sun to provide light, the commencement of days on earth, with stars now visible in the night sky f) The development of vegetation on earth, first primitive organisms ("fresh growth") g) The commencement of animal life. It originated in the seas, but almost simultaneously flying insects started to develop on land h) An increase in the pace of evolution; proliferation of life forms on earth - reptiles, mammals, then i) The first homosapien.

To me this chronology of events is a astoundingly similar to that postulated by the advocates of evolution. Yet I must add two things: it is written that god created the Universe in six days, but a day is not always 24 hours. On Pluto one year (ie one complete revolution round the sun) is equivalent to 248.4 earth years. Then I must point out that evolution is theory; it explains how but makes no attempt of answer the question why?. Certainly the precise and ordered development as demonstrated by evolution suggests some expert creator. Surely the fact that we speak in terms of the Laws of Physics suggest the presence of some Eternal Law-maker?

A. Banks
9th December, 1984.



Chorister at Buckingham Palace



Suzanne Nicholls, our well-known chorister, had the honour of attending a Royal Garden Party on 11th July.

As part of the International Year of Youth, the garden party organisation invited Suzanne to represent this area, because she is a very active member of the Youth Council for North East Derbyshire/Chesterfield. She has been Chairman for the past two years, of the group that meets at Brampton Community Centre, and gets involved in a wide variety of youth activities. Suzanne attended a conference following the Palace event, with the theme 'Peace, Participation and Development'.

A reception was held at International Guide HQ for the young people to meet before going to the Palace. Here follows Suzanne's personal account of the Royal event.

Wed. 10th July 1985. The Queen's Garden Party.

It is difficult to describe the atmosphere of the garden party. At the front of the palace there are hundreds of people, and chauffeur driven cars all queuing to get into the forecourt. To enter the palace you have to join a big queue on either side of the main gates and we managed to join the shortest queue and began the slow walk into the grounds. At the gates we had our cards checked by the police and then we continued on the path past the guards and under the arch to the inner forecourt. This was my first real glimpse of the palace, the size was overwhelming. We then went into the palace itself to get to the gardens, it was like visiting a stately home, but three times more impressive.

We looked down from the top of the steps into the gardens; there were thousands of people and they all stood in orderly lines behind some Yeomen of the Guards. We all walked down the steps and joined a line of people, wondering which member of the Royal Family we would meet. We found out that Prince Phillip was to come down our line. We waited and eventually the Queen, Prince Phillip, Princess Diana and Prince Charles came out of the French windows and stood at the top of the steps whilst the National Anthem was played. They then began to walk down their rows talking to people.

Prince Phillip spotted us and came straight over to talk to us. After we had gone we managed to see all the other members of the Royal Family at close quarters. Tea next, followed by a walk around the gardens. By this time the guards were preparing to march out and the Royal Family were walking slowly back into the Palace. This meant that the garden party was officially over, and we all started back through the palace, and then home.

I thoroughly enjoyed my day and wished that it could only have lasted longer. I hope, that I have managed to give you some idea of what happens at the Queen's garden parties, it was quite an experience.

S. Nicholls.