

BELOVED PHYSICIAN



Our dear Christian brother and friend, **John Aitken**, died on 3rd August, having been admitted to Arrowe Park Hospital a few days previously. In this parish we have been privileged to have known John as a fellow pilgrim for nearly ten years.

We knew John as a man of deep faith and a keen mind, who read deeply and carefully, whose heart *and* mind were set on Christ, and who gave himself in the service of Christ and his Church. In his early days as a doctor he had worked as a medical missionary in Nyasaland; he served as Elder in his native Church of Scotland and in the United Reformed

Church, where he had been a Lay Preacher also; and he served here at St Bridget's as Pastoral Link coordinator and PCC member, as well as an enthusiastic member of home groups. Ten days before he died he was sharing fully in the "Peculiar Glory" short course.

We knew of John as a respected, much loved physician. At his funeral we heard of his ground-breaking work as a consultant geriatrician at Clatterbridge Hospital, playing a major part in establishing geriatric medicine as a discipline in its own right. We heard also of the significant role he played in the foundation of St John's Hospice, and his concern for specialist palliative care. It was of course through being a doctor that he met and married a young nurse named Madge.

We knew John too as a family man, a good and dear husband to his beloved Madge, and a father and grandfather who delighted in his family, and was so proud of them and of their achievements.

And we knew John in these recent years of increasing ill-health as a man of great fortitude and great patience. It was here also especially that we saw the depth of faith and trust in his Lord and Saviour. When I spoke with John a few hours before he died he quoted to me words of the 17th century Scottish preacher Samuel Rutherford and his eyes lit up as he spoke them:

***"O Christ, he is the fountain, the deep sweet well of love.
The streams on earth I've tasted, more deep I'll drink above.
There to an ocean fullness his mercy doth expand
And glory, glory dwelleth in Immanuel's land."***

John knows the glory of Immanuel his Saviour, in whom was his hope. We commend him to his Lord's keeping and we assure Madge and the family of our love and prayers. May he rest in peace and rise in glory .

Roger Clarke December 2010