

**Transcription of a letter from Mr Goodacre,  
Pastor in Mansfield Woodhouse, to Fanny  
Gill, upon the family's departure to Apps  
Court in Walton-on-Thames**



Sutton in Ashfield

Nov 19<sup>th</sup> 1855

My dear Madam,

I heard not of your departure from M. Woodhouse till you were gone, or I would have contrived, some way or other, to have seen you and said "farewell", to me a sad one, and have declared my blessing and prayer for your future welfare.

I cannot resist the impulse to do so now by writing and to express my fervent desire, that God may bless you wherever you go.

I baptized you an infant, and have known you through life, nor more known than esteemed you. The position I held in the Parish would naturally induce a strong regard; but that regard, my dear Madam, has been strengthened by your character, and usefulness, I trust, in the Parish. On me the duty of instructing the poor first devolves; especially the children of the poor, but having always had more on my hand than I could possibly perform, I have felt more obliged to those who assisted me than they were aware of.

I allude now to your diligent attention, in former times, to the schools, and also to your kind feeling towards the poor in their sickness and distress, and though this is no more than all ought to do, according to the talent given them, out of gratitude for God's favour bestowed on themselves, yet too many neglect it, and the parochial ministers ought to feel grateful to those who assist to do this, which he ought to do, but cannot.

Once for all then, my dear Mrs Gill, I thank you for your attention to my poor parishioners, young and old, and if I have not done so frequently before, it is because flattery or paying compliments is not much in my nature and not that I did not feel it. My long confinement in affliction has give me much time for reflection, and perhaps increased the sense of my own responsibility.

You have now left us, but I pray God, that He will guide you by His Holy Spirit, and lead you to act as far as opportunity shall serve in similar manner for His glory and the good of souls wherever He may cast your lot. Your loss will be felt here still, thank God we are not destitute. I have often wished Mrs Hall would have given more time to the schools, but in her attention to the wants, temporal and spiritual, of the infirm and sick poor, she is a treasure in a Parish. Your esteemed Mother and Mrs Neale, from age and infirmities, can no longer take an active part, but I am happy to say that Mrs Neale is helping to organise a system of Parochial visiting in districts,

and bringing into election some respectable females, though rather lower in their station in society. May God prosper them.

When I exhort you to go on with this good work, wherever you may be (and I think my age, office and long acquaintance with you justify the liberty) I forget not that you have now other duties to attend to.

There are your dear children to look unto, and though you happily possess the means of providing for them the best teachers, there are certain maternal duties which cannot be delegated nor should any attempt be made so to do; because the tempers, dispositions, and consequent happiness of children in this world and a future, depend more on the tender and judicious training by the mother than perhaps any person can conceive.

I pray God that your children may be a comfort to you in their childhood, a solace to you in your declining years, and your eternal companions in heaven.

You will be pleased to hear that my health is better, and daily improving though slowly: as may be expected at my years.

Make my kind regards to Mr Gill and thank him for a present of generous wine, made to me when I was very ill, and for which I know not whether my thanks were even conveyed.

Whether I ever see you again or not (it cannot be often) I shall remember you with kind and respectful feelings; and that the blessing of God may rest on you and yours, will ever be the prayer of,

My dear Madam,

your former Pastor

and sincere friend,

Mr M Goodacre

Mrs Gill