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Electric Scotland's Weekly Newsletter for January 6th, 2023

Electric Scotland News

Beth Gay is doing a wee bit better which I'm sure we're all happy to hear. Her husband Tom is now scheduled for that surgery so things are looking up for them both.

Got a picture in from the Rev. Nola Crewe showing she finished the jigsaw I sent her for Christmas with the help of her daughter Morgana for which see below...



Wishing you all a Happy 2023. I did take a break over the New Year holidays but did manage to get some new content up for you for which see below...

Scottish News from this weeks newspapers

I am partly doing this to build an archive of modern news from and about Scotland and world news stories that can affect Scotland and as all the newsletters are archived and also indexed on Google and other search engines it becomes a good resource. I might also add that in a number of newspapers you will find many comments which can be just as interesting as the news story itself and of course you can also add your own comments if you wish which I do myself from time to time.

Nicola Sturgeon let down Scots children over free schools meals pledge, says rival MSP
Nicola Sturgeon's failure to deliver promised free school meals has been branded unforgivable in the wake of shocking hunger statistics.

Read more at:

<https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/nicola-sturgeon-free-school-meals-28849572>

Scotland rings in 2023 with Hogmanay celebrations
Scotland has welcomed 2023 with large scale events for the first time in three years.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-64126107>

Ukraine must get long-term support, warns Nato chief
Western countries must be prepared to provide long-term support to Ukraine as Russia shows no signs of relenting, Nato's secretary general has said.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-64140403>

Stonehaven Fireballs 2023 - A New Year Celebration Like No Other!
The Fireballs have been swinging here on the High Street at New Year for over 150 years, warding off bad spirits and bringing in a fresh new start to the year.

Read more at:

https://youtu.be/_b2HxWEsCSA

Rare Burns
A rare first edition of a book of Robert Burns poems was saved by a collector in the late 1800s as it was being ripped up by a barber to clean razors. book saved after pages ripped out in late 1800s

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-64153615>

The Highland peatbog seeking worldwide recognition
A vast area of peatbog in Scotland's Flow Country could become one of Unesco's newest World Heritage sites. But why do some people believe the landscape deserves the attention?

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-highlands-islands-63902143>

Edinburgh scientists work on restoring whisky flavours
Scientists are working on bringing whisky flavours from the early 19th Century back into production.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-scotland-business-64082431>

Enjoy a slice of P.E.I. with Hasselback potatoes
You can vary the recipe by adding ingredients between the slices, such as cheese, sour cream or butter blended with chopped herbs.

Read more at:

<https://www.chathamdailynews.ca/life/food/recipes/six-oclock-solution-enjoy-a-slice-of-p-e-i-with-hasselback-potatoes>

Canada's Super Visa Program
After successful lobbying from CANZUK International, the Canadian government has agreed to reverse its

decision to add restrictions on the Parent and Grandparent Super Visa

Read more at:

<https://www.canzukinternational.com/2022/12/canadas-super-visa-program-to-continue-reuniting-families.html>

Monarchy doesn't have to be modern

Hand-wringing about whether the monarchy is sufficiently relevant to today's Britain misses the point of the institution entirely. Pomp and ceremony help forge a national consciousness, so the King is right to ignore detractors and plump for a lavish coronation – he deserves it.

Read more at:

<https://capx.co/monarchy-doesnt-have-to-be-modern/>

A simpler way to stop the strikes

Reports suggest Rishi Sunak wants to clamp down on strike action with minimum service agreements. But while the case for reform is crystal clear, the experience of other European countries suggests there are better options available to the Government than complex, unworkable deals with antagonistic trade unions.

Read more at:

<https://capx.co/why-minimum-service-agreements-arent-a-silver-bullet-for-dealing-with-strike>

Foreigners now banned from buying homes in Canada

A two-year ban on some foreigners buying homes in Canada has come into effect.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-64082923>

Electric Canadian

Discovering Secret Canada:

Rainforests, Volcanoes, And Caves | Uncharted Canada Compilation

From caves to volcanoes to rainforests, Canada's landscape is vast and varying. Jamie and Francois begin by exploring the link that link that exists between the Pacific Ocean and the coastal rainforests of British Columbia. A single species, salmon, serves as the connector between these two habitats. The team then visits the volcanic plateau of Mount Edziza in British Columbia, hiking Black Tusk Mountain, and flying over Mount Garibaldi before finally finishing with a speleology expedition to discover the hidden secrets directly under our feet in the secret underground world of caves. This video added to the foot of our BC page at: <http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/bc/index.htm>

Thoughts on a Sunday Morning - The 1st of January 2023

By the Rev. Nola Crewe

You can view this at:

<http://www.electricscotland.org/forum/communities/rev-nola-crewe/26291-thoughts-on-a-sunday-morning-the-1st-of-january-2023>

Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs

For the Year Ended March 31, 1934 (pdf)

You can read this at:

http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/ontario/2010-011_001_068_0.pdf

Indians of Ontario

An historical Review (1966) (pdf)

You can read this at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/first/R5-270-1966-eng.pdf>

Lake Nipigon
The sixth great lake

Did some research on this lake and you can view my findings and a video at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/ontario/Lake-Nipigoni.htm>

Electric Scotland

Beth's Video Talks

January 4th, 2023 - A Child's War living on Orkney 2 of 5

You can view this at:

<https://electricScotland.com/bnft/index.htm>

Around the Orkney Peat-Fires

Being Sketches of Notable Orcadians, Saugging Anecdotes, Stories of the Press-Gang and Witch and Other Stories (third edition) compiled by W. R. Mackintosh (1914) (pdf)

I added this book to a page where we did add the Notable Orcadians to the site so you can read the whole book at the foot of the page at:

<https://electricScotland.com/history/orkney/notable.htm>

Stonehaven Fireballs 2023 - A New Year Celebration Like No Other!

You can watch this video at:

https://youtu.be/_b2HxWEsCSA

The Incredible Scottish Highlands

A 4 episode series on YouTube

You can watch this series at:

<https://electricScotland.com/lifestyle/scottish-highlands.htm>

Skara Brae in Orkney

This video examines what is currently known about the neolithic village of Skara Brae in Orkney.

You can watch this video at:

https://youtu.be/s4hkMkp04_c

Scenes of Scotland

A selection of photographs of Scotland which you can view at:

<https://electricScotland.com/pictures/scenesofscotland01.htm>

John Gulland

A Memoir of an Edinburgh man (1902) (pdf)

You can read about him at:

<https://electricScotland.com/history/edinburgh/johngullandmemoigull.pdf>

Story

Essays for Sunday Reading

Marriage and a single life by John Caird, D.D., from an article in *Good Words* (1863)

It is a narrow view of the office of the religious teacher which would confine him to the discussion of theological doctrines or the inculcation of devotional duties. Religion is character, and the ultimate end of all religious teaching and discipline is to produce character, to make men holy, and loving, and pure. But character is not a thing that can be developed or cultivated in vacuo. It requires the manifold persons, relations, circumstances, interests, trials, difficulties of social life, in order to its manifestation,—to some extent, to its very existence. It is true indeed that there is one side or aspect of religion which might exist if there were but one created soul in all God's universe. The essence of goodness, holiness, piety, might be developed in a man's being if he were alone with God in the world. As gravitation might be manifested if all the material system were annihilated, save the sun and one solitary planet revolving ever in a lonely heaven, so the primary element of true religion—love, might find ample sphere for its manifestation if all created beings should be swept away save one soul, and that were left to pass an eternity in isolation of worship, in the ceaseless exercise of aspiration, reverence, adoring gratitude and affection, towards the Great I Am. But the religion of man, religion according to the human idea of it, is not mere aspiration; it is the outgoing of thought, feeling, energy towards the creature as well as the Creator, towards equals and inferiors as well as towards the supreme Lord of all. The religious teacher, therefore, has to do not merely with theology and devotion, with the unfolding of the relations and duties of sinful man towards God, but with the elucidation of the principles of social duty, with the right modes of thinking, feeling, and acting in the varied situations and intercourses of daily life. He has to do with man, not as a recluse, a devotee, a divine, but as a member of the family, the community, the nation,—with the duties of the husband, the father, the child, the citizen, the subject. Religion is, or ought to be, the regulating principle of man's being in each and all of these relationships. And as gravitation is acting, and is in its principle illustrated, as really by the falling stone as by the planet revolving round the sun, so religious principle may be developed as truly in a kind word or a self-denying act in the family circle as in repentance towards God and faith in Jesus Christ. A man's mind may be in a religious attitude, engaged in a spiritual, evangelical contemplation, when considering how to behave towards his wife, or treat his servants, or invest his money, or vote for a member of parliament. Piety may be brought into exercise in the endeavour to bring Christian principle to bear on the gains, losses, rivalries, competitions of business, on the cares and toil and sacrifices of domestic life, as really as in meditating on the doctrine of justification by faith or the perseverance of the saints. Principle elevates everything it touches, ennobles every phenomenon in which it can be traced. Facts lose all their littleness when transfigured by principle or law. The chemist's or geologist's soiled hands are no signs of base work; the coarsest operations of the laboratory cease to be mean or mechanical when intellectual thought and principle govern the mind and guide the hands. And religious principle is the noblest of all kinds of principle. Let it be brought to bear on life, and all its littleness, meanness, vulgarity, all its secularity vanishes. Not only the holy offices of the sanctuary, but the trivial common acts of the household and the family circle gather thus a sacredness round them. The relations of husband and wife, of parent and child, become types of heavenly things; the daily meal becomes sacramental, common work is transmuted into worship and the very attire of the person converted into priestly raiment. It is upon this principle that we explain the importance which we find the writers of the New Testament attaching, and the frequent and minute reference they make, as to the other relationships of life, so especially to that around which they all converge, the relationship of husband and wife.

Has religion, then, anything to say as to the formation of the marriage tie? Is this a question which is to be relegated to the province of worldly prudence or of worldly passion? Is the union of two human beings for life a matter too light and sportive to be settled anywhere else than in drawing-rooms and social festivities, or, at best, too secular to be discussed, save in the chambers of the lawyer, over financial contracts, jointures, and deeds of settlement? As there are matters too grave and sacred to be introduced amidst the flutter of ball-rooms, the light play of jest and song, of sparkling compliment and blushing retort, so, on the other hand, are there matters too light and gay to come under the cognisance of religion and to be discussed by its ministers. Is the question, Shall I bind myself irrevocably to another, for weal or woe, on to my life's end, one of these? Whatever answer we may be disposed, under the influence of modern conventionalities, to give to this

question, it is obvious that if we wish to regulate our conduct by Scripture precept and example, there is but one answer which it admits of. For not only do we find, in the instructions addressed by inspired apostles to the members of the primitive churches, frequent counsels and admonitions as to the duties of the married state, but also repeatedly an authoritative opinion is pronounced as to the kind of marriage which alone is legitimate for a Christian; and, in one passage at least, a discussion of the question, whether in certain circumstances a single or a wedded life is that in which we can serve God best. I do not think, therefore, that it is in any measure a breach of Christian propriety, whatever it may be of conventional clerical decorum, if I throw out a few thoughts on each of the points which I have indicated as treated of by the sacred writers: viz., first, the general question, whether in any circumstances marriage or a single life is the state in which we can best serve God; and secondly, where marriage is best, what is the sort of marriage into which it is lawful or desirable for a Christian man or woman to enter.

As to the former of these, the only direct instruction to be gathered from Scripture is contained in a well-known passage in St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthian Church. The question whether, in the existing circumstances of the church, it was better to marry or remain single, seems, to have been submitted to him for solution. And the answer which, in various forms of expression, he seems to give, is to the effect that, whilst in no case could marriage be absolutely forbidden, in most cases celibacy was best. "I would," says he, "that all men were even as I myself," that is, unmarried; "but every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that. I say, to the unmarried and widows, it is good for them if they abide even as I." And again, "I suppose that it is good for the present distress, for a man so to be. Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife." But that these and similar expressions are not to be taken absolutely, as a recommendation of celibacy as the holier or better state for a Christian, is proved not only by St. Paul's general tone of speaking in other parts of his writings, but especially by one passage in his First Epistle to Timothy, in which he denounces the prohibition of marriage as one of the most deplorable errors of false teachers. "The spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils . . . forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth."

Whatever, therefore, be the import of St. Paul's advice to the Corinthians, it contains no sanction of that notion which became so common in later ages of the church—the notion that a special dignity and holiness characterises the virgin life; that they, of all others, live nearest to God on earth, those holy men or maidens who tear themselves away from all the soft amenities, the tender charities, and sweet associations of home and wedded life, and devote their whole existence to solitary prayer and perpetual self-denial. For this and kindred errors were but parts of a system which, even amongst Protestant communions, has not yet been altogether eradicated: a system which identified piety with austerity, and regarded the privation and pain of the creature as, in and for itself, acceptable to the Creator. Yet it can never be too often repeated that pain as pain, gloom as gloom, evil in any form, is not pleasing but hateful to God. Our Father has no grim jealousy of his children's joy. Himself the blessed and only Potentate, He delights in the communication of happiness; and it would be not only not contrary, but infinitely congenial, to His nature that all the world should be flooded with joy; that every heart should throb with delight, every countenance be radiant with happiness, every home, with its reciprocation of domestic sympathies and affections, become to man and woman a very heaven on earth. The ascetic conception of religion, therefore, which of old led men and women to choose a life of loneliness, pain, and privation, as in itself, of necessity, holier than one of human love and tenderness and innocent joy, and which in modern times associates religion with a severe look, a whining half-querulous tone, a grim distaste for all that is bright and festive and graceful, a suspicious tolerance of beauty and poetry and art, and the manifold delights of sense and imagination—this conception of religion is a miserably mistaken one. There is a kind of pain, suffering, sacrifice, that is noble and pleasing to God—pain endured for others good, suffering which is borne for the sake of truth and conscience, sacrifice that surrenders its dearest wish and casts to the winds its most prized earthly treasure, rather than forsake Christ or betray His cause. But then the suffering or privation, in this case, is good, not in itself, but merely as the means for the attainment of something else which is essentially good; and if the good could be reached without the suffering, it would be all the better. Disconnect the suffering from the good result, and it is not only not meritorious, but sheer unmitigated folly or wickedness. To let money go, rather than tamper with conscience, and, if need be, to become a beggar rather than a fraudulent bankrupt, is noble loss, for it is to become poor in worldly substance in order to be rich in spirit; but to

fling away money into the sea, or take a vow of poverty for no end but to be poor, would be either stark madness or fanatical folly. Our Lord admonishes us to pluck out a right eye, or cut off a right hand, if need be, rather than be shut out from the kingdom of heaven; but no one would infer from this that it is a meritorious thing in itself to maim or blind one's self. To be sad when there is reason for sadness, when the hand of God's chastening providence lies heavy upon us-, or when He awakens us by His word and spirit to a sense of our guilt and danger as sinners, is a sign of a right state of mind and heart; for levity in bereavement, or making light of sin, indicates utter heartlessness or moral insensibility. But to go about with a lugubrious face, or to connect piety with a starchy aspect and a chronic tendency to sighing and groaning, is a piece of weakness which we may overlook in well-meaning, good people, only because we believe that their hearts are better than their heads. Our Lord commanded men to forsake all and follow Him; to hate father and mother and wife and children for the Gospel's sake; and declared that "whosoever he was that loved father or mother, or wife or child, more than Him, and that forsook not all that he had, was not worthy of Him." And so, full often in the history of His church has this test been applied to the strength of a Christian's principles, and applied not in vain. How often have the dearest earthly ties been severed, and home, friends, kindred—all that makes life sweet to a man—surrendered, fearful though the struggle it cost to give them up, for a dearer Master's sake! How often have men of large-hearted, genial, loving natures, thirsting for human love and sympathy, formed to bless and to be blessed amidst the charities of home and wedded life, condemned themselves at the call of duty, like Paul, to a wandering, homeless, loveless existence, carrying, perchance, on to the grave the secret burden of an ungratified affection, the ever-bleeding wound of a love that might be lacerated, but that could not die! And it was this that St. Paul meant when he inculcated on others, if need were, that solitary life of which he himself gave notable illustration. It seemed to him at such a time as that in which he lived, and for men called to such work as his, that there was a possibility of more entire devotion to the work of the Lord, of a more complete and heart-whole surrender of self, of time, thought, energy, to the one great service to which his own life and being were dedicated, if men were undistracted by family cares, unhindered by the entanglements of domestic life. He did not love loneliness for its own sake, or scorn the support and strength and soothing of sympathy from man or woman. Far otherwise. Yet, with a nature singularly open to love, ardent, genial, impassioned beyond that of most men, he was ready at Christ's call to sacrifice all natural yearnings, in order that, as the sap of the lopped branches of the vine rushes with greater intensity into the shoots that are left, or as the force of the stream, cut off from diverging courses, flows all the more impetuously into the main channel, so might the ardent vital force of an undivided affection, the current of his being's energy, not one drop lost by diffusion, flow out only and ever to Christ. There once sat upon the English throne a Queen who lived ever, as has been said, "In maiden meditation, fancy free," and the explanation of whose solitary life is contained in her own well-known declaration, that "England was her husband, and all Englishmen her children," and that she desired no higher character, or fairer remembrance of her to be transmitted to posterity, than this inscription engraved on her tombstone, "Here lies Elizabeth, who lived and died a maiden Queen." Whether it was a right expediency, or a false pride, or motives of mistaken policy, to which her conduct is to be ascribed, surely her words are suggestive of that nobler solitariness which explained itself in the language of the great Apostle, "Who is weak and I am not weak? Who is offended and I burn not? In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.

The character of the age in which we live, and the circumstances of the church in our day, are very different from those of Apostolic times, and rarely, for the same reasons, are any now called to imitate the self-denying solitariness of St. Paul. Yet not seldom voluntarily, often involuntarily, are Christians in our day called, in the providence of God, to a lot apart from the cares and joys of wedded life; and wherever this arises from arrangements of society over which they have no control, or from other inevitable causes, there is addressed to such, a call as clear and sacred as that which came to the inspired Apostle: "This is the lot in which thou canst best glorify God and do the work of thy Master in the world." To the unwedded, as to the wife or husband or parent, there is a special mission assigned by Christ. "The unmarried woman," it is written, "careth for the things of the Lord that she may be holy both in body and spirit; but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband." And though the special work or mission of those who are called to lead a single life cannot be definitely pointed out, forasmuch as it varies with the special conditions of each individual case, yet it might not be difficult to indicate generally the direction in which that work very frequently lies.

To take the case of one sex only. It is at least one part of that special duty to which the unwedded woman is called, to remove from her sisterhood that reproach of sourness and censoriousness which often most unjustly points the cheap sneers of superficial and flippant wittlings. It is not true, whatever the frequent tone of coarse jocularities would seem to imply, that the spring of human tenderness is often turned to gall in her whose youth is fading or has passed away, uncheered by wedded bliss. It may be so in some cases where the fountain of love is not fed from the deeper sources of Christian faith and fellowship with God. There may be those whose whole hearts' desire in early life has been given to the world, and who cannot bear the passing away of those pleasures which had become necessary to their peace. The beauty which once perhaps attracted admiration is gone, but the admiration is as much longed for as before, and, when yielded to younger and fairer candidates, the sight of it excites envy and bitterness in the heart, and envenoms the poison of detraction on the tongue. The old home is broken up; brothers, sisters, companions have settled into their own separate circles of interest, apart from her. No longer occupied with education, or sought after as a gay and welcome participant in the round of youthful festivities and amusements, and having never cultivated her mind so as to find solacement in intellectual resources, or her heart so as to occupy herself with pleasure in works of Christian charity, she can contrive nothing to fill up the vacant thoughts and the time that hangs heavy on her hand, but an intrusive and impertinent inquisitiveness into the private affairs of her neighbours, the maintaining a strict keen-eyed surveillance over the conduct of younger women, and the performance of the duties of fetcher and carrier of petty gossip and small scandal to a whole district. No spectacle certainly can be more unlovely or provocative of censure than that of one of a sex in which all the gentleness, the tender sympathies and kindnesses of life should predominate, dried up into unwomanly hardness, or settled, like thin sweet wine, into a condition that is saved from insipidity only by its tartness. But God forbid we should present this picture as the type of a class. Far otherwise. There are unwedded women, not a few, who, though they have outlived their youth, have not outlived a beauty that fades not with the bloom on the cheek or the light of youth in the eye. There are those whose Christian cheerfulness and good sense, whose ready sympathy and serviceableness, whose equanimity and helpfulness and hopefulness, render them universal favourites. The unwedded aunt, who with almost, if not all, a mother's love for children, herself set free from domestic responsibilities, becomes the dear friend and confidant of others' cares; ready ever to enter into their difficulties and share the burden of their sorrows; to whom the little ones vie for story or song, or well-contrived sport, the more advanced for sympathy and advice in all their youthful struggles and perplexities; who bears about with her ever the "sunshine of a gentle smile" and the melody of a voice sweet and low—"a most excellent thing in woman,"—surely this is a picture taken from real life which some of us can fill up from our own observation, and which, to all who rightly study it, far more than removes the reproach which unwedded women less amiable have brought upon their sisterhood. And if, in addition to this, you reflect on the more public usefulness of others who, set free from family cares and engagements, gladly and earnestly devote themselves to works of Christian love and charity, to the care of the poor, the sick, the aged,—consecrating their gifts of leisure, of education, of gentle and refined habits, to the service of their Lord in the various works and enterprises of His church,—is there not presented to us a view of unwedded life which may well convince us that Christ in our day, as in the earlier times of the church, has a place and a work not insignificant or ignoble for the unmarried man or woman "who careth for the things of the Lord?"

Let me now add a few sentences on the second topic, viz., the kind of marriage proper for a Christian man or woman. Without attempting any formal exposition of the language of the sacred writers on this subject, I think we may gather from it generally that a Christian marriage is one in which there exists between the parties the sentiments of mental fellowship and moral or spiritual sympathy. For instance, we are told by St. Peter that the husband and wife are to dwell together "according to knowledge," and they are to regard each other as "heirs together of the grace of a life." And by this account of it there is excluded from the idea of Christian marriage a union of mere passion, or a marriage of convenience. A relationship that is indissoluble should not be based upon things that are destructible and that may perish in a moment. "Of all earthly unions," writes one, "this is almost the only one permitting of no change but that of death. It is that engagement in which a man exerts his most awful and solemn power,—the power of doing that which in this world can never be reversed,—the power or the responsibility which belongs to him as one who shall give account, of abnegating his freedom, of parting for ever with the right of change. And yet it is perhaps that relationship which is spoken of most frivolously and entered into most carelessly and wantonly. It is not a union merely between two creatures, but between two

spirits; and the intention of the bond is to perfect the nature of both by supplementing their deficiencies with the force of contrast, giving to each sex those excellencies in which it is naturally defective,—to the one strength of character and firmness of moral will; to the other, sympathy, meekness, and tenderness. And just so solemn and just so glorious as these ends are for which the union was intended, just so terrible are the consequences, if it be perverted and abused. For there is no earthly relationship that has so much power to enoble and exalt, and, on the other hand, to wreck and ruin the soul. There are two rocks in this world of ours on which the soul must either anchor or be wrecked. The one is God, the other the relation we are considering. On the Rock of Ages, if the human soul anchor, it lives the blessed life of faith; against it if the soul be dashed, there is the wreck of Atheism, the worst ruin of man. The other rock is of a different kind. Blessed is the man, blessed the woman, whose life-experience has taught a confiding belief in the sex opposite to their own— a blessedness second only to the blessedness of salvation. And the ruin in the second case is second only to the ruin of perdition. For these are the two tremendous alternatives—on the one hand, the possibility of securing, in all sympathy and tenderness, the laying of that step on which man rises towards his perfection; on the other, the blighting of all sympathy, the being dragged down to the earth, and forced to become frivolous and commonplace, losing the zest and earnestness of life, and having the whole being degraded by perpetually recurring meannesses and vulgar causes of disagreement.”

If such be the alternatives in the marriage union, can it but be that they fearfully risk the worst who rush into marriage in the frivolous haste of passion, or, if with deliberation, with the deliberation not of Christian wisdom, but of cold and calculating worldly prudence? That man miserably errs who lets himself drift into a connection which may make or mar his happiness to the grave, and mould his being for eternity, as lightly and thoughtlessly as he undertakes a brief excursion, or accepts an invitation to a party of pleasure. If the charm that lures him be mere physical beauty and attractiveness, then this is the deplorable incongruity, that whilst the relationship is lasting, that on which alone it is based is not: accident may disfigure it, disease may stamp its ugly seams on it, advancing years will surely wear away the beauty that consists in the bloom and symmetry of face and elegance of form. Even if the toy could keep its glitter, it would soon cease to please. But it will not keep it. The gloss rubs off, the surface polish wears away; and when the man who has married a pretty doll for its prettiness finds that that is gone, all that made the marriage real goes too. In the heat of passion, and amidst the fresh charms of novelty, even a man of sense is sometimes blind to the weakness or silliness which youth and beauty conceal. There is a time when even nonsense sounds charming when it falls from pretty lips; but the misfortune is, that the prettiness goes, but the nonsense remains. And so it comes often to this, that that which ought to be the strength and solacement of life—that relationship in which there should be found the soothing of wise sympathy and the strength of mutual confidence and counsel—becomes, if one of the parties be possessed of sense or principle, a yoke which ever galls and frets, but is borne, like other self made burdens, in silence, because nobody else can be blamed for it, and because it is inevitable. Nearly the same thing may be said of the marriage of convenience. Prudential motives are not, of course, to be despised; but to make prudential considerations the beginning and end of the matter is as foolish as it is base.

The only union, then, that deserves and does not dishonour the name of marriage is one in which, whatever external attractions accompany it, there is mental and moral sympathy, and, above all, the hallowing presence of religious faith. For this alone brings us into real union with another. We may dwell in the same home with another, and yet be wide apart as if oceans rolled between us. But where there is congeniality of taste, sympathy of souls, union of heart in the same God and Saviour, no external distance can affect, or lapse of time weaken it, nor can even that which breaks up all other connections, dissolve this. The hands that were clasped at Mammon's altar may soon drop from each other's grasp. The hearts which passion's force united, when passion's fire has cooled, may fall off from each other, or, in the recoil, fly far apart. But they whom God and holy love bind together, none can ever put asunder. Money may go, hardship and ill fortune betide them, but there are those, many and many a one, whom sorrow and toil and suffering, borne together, have only bound into a closer, deeper, dearer affection. The ardour of youthful passion may evaporate, but there is a calmer, serener, profounder feeling that rises, as the years pass on, in hearts that have known and trusted each other long. The fair face may lose its outer loveliness, and the form its roundness, and the once light and airy step its elasticity. But even on the outward face and form there is a beauty which steals out often, to replace with a more exquisite charm that which the years bear away— the beauty of Christian gentleness and sweetness, of maturing character and more deeply settled inward peace,—“the ornament of a meek and quiet

spirit." Onward through life's path, stage after stage, truer and more trusted, loving and more beloved, they who are thus united may tread together; —on, amidst the gathering evening shadows and the soft waning lights that tell how fast their sun of earthly joy is westering pensively, it may be, yet not sadly or despairingly;—on, hand clasped in hand, heart knit to heart, till the hour when the inevitable parting comes. And yet even in that which to all besides has in it a horror of darkness too dreadful to be calmly contemplated, there is no lasting gloom for them. A little longer, and the loved and lost shall be once more and for ever united; and when the churchyard shadows in summer and winter days play softly on the grave where side by side their dust reposes, bright with immortal beauty, loving as immortal spirits only love, they shall dwell together in the presence of the Lamb.

END

Weekend is almost here and wishing you all a Very Happy New Year in 2023.

Alastair