

22nd August 2020

Trust

“[I] could not help reflecting in my way upon the singular ill-luck of this my dear country, which, as long as I ever remember it, and as far back as I have read, has always been governed by the only two or three people, out of two or three millions, totally incapable of governing, and unfit to be trusted.”

Lord Chesterfield, The World (1756)

Alfred, Lord, Lord Tennyson, wrote in *Idylls of the King, Merlin and Vivien*, “And trust me not at all or all in all.” Trust matters, in the whole of a person’s life and in all aspects of society – as we shall see ...

In the late 1960s when I was a student in Edinburgh University, I played shinty – and was awarded a “Blue”. Shinty, you ask? Imagine “field hockey without rules”. Or *Google* it if you want the real description. In any event, in my final year we won the Scottish University Championship, the “Littlejohn Vase”, in St Andrew’s. The trophy had been bequeathed to Aberdeen University Shinty Club by Alexander Littlejohn in 1905 and is second in value only to the Scottish Cup as a sporting prize in Scotland.

Cue lengthy celebrations! The beautiful, solid-silver Rose Bowl was filled with whisky and passed round in the pub and in the coach home. I was the most sober one left at the end, it appeared, and to save the Littlejohn Vase from lasting damage, I took it home for safekeeping. For a whole weekend I had a *very* valuable, rare and historic piece of silverware in my digs – hidden under dirty-washing at the bottom of my wardrobe!

Since I’d never looked after a silver Rose Bowl before, could I be trusted to do so this time? Of course! Thankfully, my trustworthiness had been established in other aspects of my life, sufficient for me to be trusted with the safekeeping of our trophy. Tennyson was right. I was trusted “all in all”. The Littlejohn Vase was in good hands. Trust matters. If a trust is given to us, it’s because we’ve proven to be able to hold that trust.

Two or three people out of several million running a country, when they are incapable of governing and unfit to be trusted? I hope things are better now than they were for Lord Chesterfield in 1756.

A prayer for today

Will my life show I can be trusted? I hope so.

Can you trust me “all in all”, Lord, the way I can trust you? I hope so. Amen

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