

7th January 2021

Myself

**“Resolve to be thyself: and know that he
Who finds himself, loses his misery.”**

Matthew Arnold, Self-Dependence

Resolution 4 – “Try to keep resolutions 1, 2 and 3”

Having been distracted by changes in Government regulations and the arrival of Epiphany, I return, for the final time, to the subject of resolutions.

Hudibras is a satirical narrative poem from 17th century England, written by the poet, Samuel Butler, shortly after the English Civil War. [It's](#) a mocking lampoon of the Roundheads, Puritans, Presbyterians and the cause of Parliamentarianism. The epic tells the story of Sir Hudibras, a knight who is described with such over-blown praise as to be quite absurd, showing up the conceit and arrogance of the man, with his religious fervour eliciting most derision. Butler says this of his flawed hero:

*Great actions are not always true sons
Of great and mighty resolutions.*

You and I could be Sir Hudibras. Consider our New Year Resolutions. We hear that mocking voice in our head criticising us for making *our* “great and mighty resolutions” with no “great actions” resulting from them. Expressing our love, keeping things simple, being honest ... how many of us have made such resolutions which have lasted no time at all and, despite our sincere promises, have brought little or no change?

Edward Young, writing in the 18th century, in his poem *Night Thoughts*, suggests that each one of us “in all the magnanimity of thought resolves; and re-resolves ...” Yes! That’s me, and maybe you too!

But rather than “re-resolving” all the time because we fail, would we not be better each day to decide ... to be the best we can be right now? Why not “resolve to be thyself”, as Matthew Arnold suggests? A year? *Far* too long to cope with. A daily resolution? More manageable. Maybe *this* could be your “re-resolution” from which great actions will result – and nobody can mock you for that.

A prayer for today

“Take, oh, take me as I am; summon out what I shall be.” (John L Bell)

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