

14th February 2021

Luve

“Luve ... kens ey tae keep a caum souch.”

W L Lorimer, The New Testament in Scots

Happy Valentines' Day to one and all, wherever you find yourself today.

William Laughton Lorimer was born in 1885. Educated at the High School of Dundee, Fettes College in Edinburgh and Trinity College, Oxford, he was a scholar of Ancient Greek, ending up as Professor of Greek at St Andrews University. For the final ten years of his life, he dedicated himself to translating the original Greek sources for the New Testament into Scots, and, although he didn't finish this task before he died in 1967, his work was completed by his son, Robin, and published posthumously in 1983.

It's been said that if we'd had this version of the New Testament in general use in Scotland 300 years earlier, we might now be fully bilingual, like most Europeans, with Scots used as a language of culture, commerce and education, instead of its words being rarely voiced, or even worse, relegated to tea-towels and coasters for amused tourists.

On Valentine's Day, when love is celebrated, here's Lorimer's version of part of St Paul's great hymn to the nature of love in 1 Corinthians 13 – which I had the privilege of reading at my daughter's wedding. You can work on a translation with your own Bible to hand ...

Luve is pàtientfu; luve is couthie an kind; luve is nane jailous; nane sprosie; nane bowdent wi pride; nane mislaired; nae hame-drauchit, nane toustie. Luve keeps ne nickstick o the wrangs it drees; finnds nae pleisure i the ill wark o ithers; is ey liftit up whan truith dings líes; kens ey tae keep a caum souch; is ey sweired tae misdout; ey howps the best; ey bides the warst.

Among the many things I could explore, I'll choose this one: *Luve ... kens ey tae keep a caum souch*. *Caum* (the 'au' as in "awl") is calm. A *souch* (the 'ch' as in "loch") is a gentle wind or a sigh. Be calm like a whispering wind, a warming breeze, a gentle sigh. In the English of the King James Bible, it's given as love "beareth all things". But *tae keep a caum souch* is much more poetic. With all that's happening at the moment, loving one another with *a caum souch* is so important. For our calmness can be a gift in a time of turmoil, and yet another witness to the triumph of love.

Prayer for today

Give me the calmness love brings, and the gentleness of sharing it. Amen