

14<sup>th</sup> November 2021

## Blessings

**"They come as a boon and a blessing to men,  
The Pickwick, the Owl, and the Waverley pen."**

*MacNiven and H Cameron Ltd, Advertising Slogan, 1879*

The choice of the slogan above as a marketing tool for "MacNiven and Cameron" pen-nibs the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, is gender-biased. Don't women write too? Maybe it's the laziness of an advertising executive who couldn't be bothered looking beyond "men" as a suitable rhyme for "pen". Or perhaps he *was* being sexist ... But, leaving that to one side for now, I'm also interested today in the use of the word "blessing" in the slogan.

My minister recently offered a series of sermons on elements of worship – prayer, praise, the Word, the offering and the like. His final one was on "The Blessing", the Benediction, not a "boon and a blessing" from a marketable pen, but the pronouncing of the blessing of Almighty God on His people. It brought to mind two stories.

A deaf lady came regularly to church, and, with no sign-language on offer, heard nothing. Because of Diabetes, her eyesight was also deteriorating, such that she couldn't read her bible or hymn book. But she still insisted she be taken to church every week. Admiring her determination, her minister asked her, through her carer's signing, why she continued to come. She replied, "Because ah aye get the blessin'." God's blessing wasn't determined by the quality of the preacher or the receptiveness of a worshipper. It couldn't be limited by human constraints.

The second is from my hospice. Danny always called me "Father Tom". As a Roman Catholic, all clergy were "Father" to Danny. To be honest, I quite liked it, so I never corrected him. My last time with Danny was giving him Communion. He was in and out of consciousness, and in truth, I wasn't sure I was doing much good. When the Sacrament was over, I said, "God bless you, Danny." And, right then, Danny opened his eyes and, with absolutely clarity, said, "And God bless you too, Father Tom".

Thank God, for a deaf lady, a dying man, a hospice chaplain and you, there is this eternal truth. "You aye get the blessin'." A Benediction indeed!

### **A prayer for today**

*Bless me, Lord. Oh, of course, you already do.*

*So, help me to more aware of the blessing that's always there. Amen*

*An original reflection by © Tom Gordon*

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