

7<sup>th</sup> December 2021

## Rebooting

**“Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!”**

*Robert Browning, Boot and Saddle*

I have no idea how computers work. In truth, I don't need to, as long as they work when I need them to. And there's the rub ... because sometimes they don't, and I find myself in the realms of, "What do I do now?"

Of course, like any complicated machine, breakdowns sometimes require a "deep diagnostic test" and specialists who know how to put things right. But in computer-land, there is a simple piece of advice that comes before that: "Perhaps it needs a re-boot." Now, I have *no* idea how the word "boot" became attached to computers. But you have to "boot up" your laptop, phone or tablet, and, therefore, you are advised to try a "re-boot" before panicking that the device is broken. And, lo and behold, often as not, re-booting works and no further action is required. Switch off ... switch on again ... and all is well – most of the time, anyway.

Boots? Footwear for wet weather, especially for hiking. Boots for Robert Browning? For riding, so that you can be "to horse, and away!" But boots for computers, and *rebooting* when things go awry? I'm lost! Perhaps someone can enlighten me ...

How wonderful it would be if life were so simple. A problem that appears insolvable? Just unplug, reboot and everything should work OK. Oh, you wish! Life's not like that, most of the time.

But, there again, might it not be useful to go back to first principles rather than just muddling along? Why should we be so reluctant to "take stock", clear away the clutter in our minds, *and* in our faith, and start again? We could benefit from returning to more basic things, switching off and on again and seeing where it gets us. Might rebooting be a place to start?

My granny told me when I became a minister in 1973: "Keep it simple, son," and "Tell people God loves them, and that'll be enough." That's what *she* returned to every day. Before she tried anything else, she did a reboot, back to the moment when God's love was enough. Might we need that kind of rebooting today?

### **A prayer for today**

*OK! I need to start again. I'll plug in, switch on, reboot, and wait ...*

*Yes! I'm in! Thank you, God! Now, we have messages for each other ... Amen*