10th August 2023

Burdens

"His burden loosed from off his shoulders,
and fell from off his back."

John Bunyan, *Pilgrim's Progress*

Today I venture once more into the occasionally-explored territory of what the Scots tongue can teach us – encouraged, as I am, by the responses I've received from previous explorations.

The Lord's Prayer, fundamental to Christian worship for two millennia, is powerful in any language. We can debate the familiarity of it in the "King James" English as opposed to modern translations. But when I turn to *The Lord's Prayer* in Scots, there is, for me, new insight and depth.

The phrase "lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil", was put into Scots by W L Lorimer in 2012 in this fashion:

An sey-us-na sairlie, but sauf us frae the Ill Ane.

Sairlie – or sorely – speaks to me of the painfulness, the inner anguish of doing wrong, and the struggle to do right. In contrast, my friend, the late minister and poet, David Ogston, put it this way:

Keep's airted awa fae fear we're like tae tummle, an rax us free o coarseness.

We *fear we're like tae tummle* – we are frightened that we will trip up or fall over. To stay upright when the paths of life are hard is certainly difficult for us all. But the version I like best in Scots uses a word familiar to my old granny. An anonymous translation gives us this:

An dinna trauchle us sairly, but free us frae the Deil.

To *trauchle* is to burden. So, to be *trauchled* means to trudge wearily, to be weighed down, struggling on with too much to carry. Goodness! Is this not something we can all understand?

In Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress,* Christian was severely *trauchled.* He was weighed down by the heaviness of his failings, trials, temptations and struggles with the pilgrim journey. And in the presence of his Lord, "His burden loosed from off his shoulders, and fell from off his back." Simply put, he wasn't trauchled anymore. So when we feel life has treated us *sairly;* when we fear *we're like tae tummle;* when we're severely *trauchled,* might we not find that our burdens can be eased too? I certainly hope so.

A prayer for today

Lord, I lay my burdens down, and, for now, my journey is easier. Thank you. Amen

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