

## Trinity Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> June 2017. Canongate Kirk.

**St Matthew 28:20** *And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.*

Recently I've been caught up in an unexpected trail of correspondence about Adam Smith, the father of economics buried in our Kirkyard. In fact it began rather surprisingly with a letter addressed quite clearly to him, addressed clearly and accurately to Adam Smith, 153 Canongate, Edinburgh EH8 8BN, the correct address for the Kirk and the Kirkyard. I took it upon myself to open the letter and found it came from an internet company called One.com, based in London. And it read as follows:

Dear Adam Smith

On March 18<sup>th</sup> 2017 we sent you an invoice regarding your subscription of the web space with the domain 1002ni.com. We sent the invoice via e mail...we have noticed that you still have an outstanding amount of £33.55 regarding order number 4645150. The letter goes on to explain how the debt should be settled before further costs are incurred and concludes "It is very important that you always keep your e mail and address information up-to-date in the Control panel so that we have the correct information . Best regards One.com.

Further taking it upon myself to reply on behalf of Adam Smith, I emailed back in the following terms:

Dear One.com

Many thanks for your letter, reference no 1003ni.com, dated 14<sup>th</sup> April and addressed to Adam Smith at 153 Canongate, Edinburgh EH8 8BN. As a distinguished political economist he would be disappointed to learn of the outstanding amount of £33.55 regarding order number 4645150. Sadly his death in 1790 means it is highly unlikely that this debt will be settled any time soon. Perhaps you should amend your records accordingly?

With all good wishes

(Rev) Neil Gardner

Canongate Kirk, 153 Canongate, Edinburgh

Last resting place of Adam Smith (1723-1790)

I got an electronic reply impressively promptly, which began, We are sorry to hear of Mr. Adam Smith's passing. And which went on to explain how the subscription can be transferred or deleted but not without a copy of the death certificate. I'm afraid I ignored this on the grounds it was getting too silly, and I had better things to do, but then just the other day I had another letter, or rather he did, indicating that the new balance due was £43.55 after incurring a £10 reminder charge. I heard a very good line in an after dinner speech the other night, and for once I can remember it. Abraham Lincoln once said the trouble with the internet is you can't always trust the quotations to be genuine. I'm inclined to think Adam Smith would probably agree!

*And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.* Words of Jesus at the very end of St Matthew's Gospel and at the end of what's known as his great commission to go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. *And remember,* he concludes, *and remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.* Next week we shall fulfil part of the commission by baptizing a little boy at our 11-15 service, but for now today is Trinity Sunday, when the Church marks the conclusion of those weeks after Easter when Jesus appeared to his disciples several times following his resurrection until he disappeared at the ascension and then sent the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. With all that behind us now we mark the completion of the mystery of God in three persons, blessed Trinity.

*Blessed and holy Three,  
glorious Trinity,  
Wisdom, Love, Might,  
Boundless as ocean's tide  
rolling in fullest pride,  
Through the world far and wide  
Let there be light.*

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations...*And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.* The Holy Trinity is one of the more complicated doctrines of the Church and over the centuries preachers and teachers have tried to explain it in different ways – St Patrick, you remember used the clover leaf, three parts in one leaf. But perhaps at its heart lies the simple promise of Jesus to be with us always, to the end of the age, or to be with us always, as the Authorised Version quoted on the reredos of the King David Aisle puts it. And continues, incidentally, “to the end of the world”. Whether it’s to the end of the world, or to the end of the age, it’s the promise of Jesus to be with us always that we are challenged today to remember. *And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.* And it’s the power of the Holy Spirit that makes it possible. The Spirit that was there at the dawning of the world, when a wind from God first swept over the face of the waters; the Spirit that allowed St Paul to conclude his own trail of correspondence with the Corinthians with confidence that whatever challenges they faced, whatever the dangers and difficulties that lay ahead, they would not do so alone but that the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion, the fellowship, of the Holy Spirit would be with them all; the Spirit that enabled Jesus to take his leave of the disciples even as he promised them and every subsequent generation of his friends and followers a sense of his living and continuing presence. There would be no death certificate to pass from one generation to the next, he would be with them, with us, in the internet age and in every age that follows whatever the future holds, whatever challenges and difficulties and dangers every generation faces in its own time and its own setting.

*Our vows, our prayers, we now present  
Before thy throne of grace:  
God of our fathers! be the God  
Of their succeeding race.*

*And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.* And now may God bless to us this preaching of his most holy word, and to God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, blessed and holy three, glorious Trinity, be all praise and glory now and forever. Amen.