



# Abernethy and Dron and Arngask Parish

Scottish Charity SC000586

## From the Minister.

As we look forward to Autumn and the darkening and shorter days of winter, perhaps like me, you are hoping for some decent programmes on the telly? One of my favourites last year, was a BBC docusoap called “Fake or Fortune”. Journalist Fiona Bruce teamed up with art expert Philip Mould to investigate mysteries behind paintings. By using scientific techniques and detailed analysis, they decided which paintings were the genuine article and which ones were fake. One episode focussed on a still life painting by the British painter William Nicholson – at least, that is what was assumed. The likeable lady who purchased it in 2008 paid the whopping sum of £165,000. It depicted a glass jug, a pile of plates and two pears. Maybe not the kind of thing you might like hanging on your wall, but the owner in question, Lyn, was obviously very fond of it indeed. Questions had been asked about its authenticity and that is when the programme makers stepped in. As a result of extensive research, consultation with art experts, and an interview with an art forger, the news was not good. At the end of the programme lovely Lyn, is told the bad news: her painting is deemed a fake and therefore worth very little. Although disappointed and deeply affected by the blow, Lyn is brave and all she says, in the end, are the enigmatic words: *“This too shall pass”*. And the credits roll.

Her apt quotation is often thought to be Biblical, but it is probably an Iranian saying used by the Sufi poets. As the writer of the Book of Ecclesiastes, a philosopher called Qohelet, was also wise enough to point out: if we are having a happy and good time in life, then it is best to enjoy it whilst we can because it won’t last for ever. And, on the other side of the coin, if we are currently experiencing a sad or difficult passage in our lives, then that too, will (thankfully) come to a conclusion. Saint Paul, in his Second letter to the Corinthians wrote something similar, but with a more hopeful slant:

*“...this small and temporary trouble we suffer will bring us a tremendous and eternal glory.... What can be seen lasts only a time, but what cannot be seen, lasts for ever.”*

The viewers of the programme are left with the distinct impression, that even although she has just lost a great deal of money, Lyn has no intention of tearing her favourite painting off her living room wall. Worthless it might be, in an extrinsic sense, but she remains captivated by its beauty and artistic qualities, regardless of who may have actually painted it. Although saddened, it remains *her* picture and she is holding onto it right reason or none.

*“Good for her!”*, I say. Faith is sometimes about acknowledging that life can be very good or very bad. The trick is to accept that neither condition will last. We hold on to an unchanging God, who remains steadfast and who cares for us whilst undergoing all of life’s widely varying conditions. We too, hold on to *our* picture, faults, deep disappointments and all,

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because it is *our* picture and although not perfect, we trust that God will indeed transform it one day into “*a tremendous and eternal glory*”.

Meanwhile, why not get up into that attic and see what you uncover? “Fake or Fortune” wants to hear from you.

**(Rev) Stan**