

A REFLECTION from REV. IAN W. F. HAMILTON

"VENTURE AGAIN"

I always enjoy a visit to the quaint harbour at Pittenweem in the East Neuk. I spent several childhood holidays there. My late aunt used to rent a harbourside holiday house just across from the fishmarket and many an hour I spent as a wee boy down at Pittenweem harbour jumping on and off the fishing boats!

In fact I used to be able to rattle off their names and registration numbers no bother at all! I even recall being taken on an East Neuk cruise, a short sail along the coast from Anstruther harbour to Pittenweem harbour, just a couple of nautical miles, but I thought I was casting off on a maritime expedition! So as you can imagine, a stroll around Pittenweem harbour today certainly brings back so many delightful childhood memories.

On a recent visit to Pittenweem harbour, I was intrigued by a fishing boat moored there which had been named "Venture Again II". What an appropriate name to give a fishing boat I thought, because that's exactly what its crew of fishermen must do time after time! Some catches will be better than others I imagine, and you know what they say, "If at first you don't succeed.....venture again!"

Again and again the crew of this vessel, and of all the others moored there in the Fife harbour, will venture out into the North Sea hoping to do better than they did on their last fishing trip.

Venturing again - or TRYING again - is part and parcel of life of course. I'm reminded of the classic story told long ago by Jesus, you will remember it well, about the father who had two sons, one of whom ventured out from home with his share of the family estate tucked safely into his money belt. He lived it up to say the least, he had a ball!

But of course sooner or later the money ran out and in a situation of sheer poverty and desperation, realising his folly, he decided to venture home again!

What would the reception be like? He just couldn't be sure, but at least his father might take him on as a hired servant. However he needn't have worried, what a welcome he was extended! The best robe.....the ring.....the shoes.....the fatted calf and a family party thrown in for good measure!

"Try again, you'll do better next time" was in effect what his forgiving father was saying to the boy. And Jesus' purpose in telling this story is to show us just how much God our heavenly Father gives all of us the opportunity to try and to venture again and again and again, that we each might do better next time.

Let each one of us then, in our venturing, in our trying, in our giving and in our service do better than we did in the past.....and let us be truly thankful that God our forgiving and loving Father gives us each the OPPORTUNITY to venture again in the cause of Christ and of his kingdom .