

SPIRITUAL EXERCISE

O F

S O U L,

A N D

Blessed Departure

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Of Dame MARY RUTHERFORD Lady
Hundaly, and MARY M'KONNEL,
Cousin to the said Lady; which fell
out in the Year 1640; both died in
London.

Written by Mr. ARCHBOLD PORTEOUS, a young
Man, who attendd the said Lady from *Scotland*
to *London.* Never before printed.

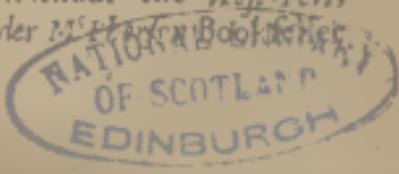
Psal. xxx. Verse 7. *Thou didst hide thy Face, and I was
troubled.*

Rev. xiv. Verse 13. *Write, Blessed are the dead which
die in the Lord; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may
rest from their Labours, and their Works do follow them.*

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THAT these Exercises were transcribed from the Original Copy [wrote by Mr. *Archibald Porteous*] by Mr. *John Breadfoot*, Minister of the Gospel in *Petineen*, in the Shire of *Clydsdale*, in *October 1699*.

Never before printed.

The Spiritual Exercise of Soul, and blessed Departure of Dame Mary Rutherford Lady Hundaly, and Mary M'konnel, Cousin to the said Lady; which fell out in the Year 1640: Both died in London.

H E Church these two Godly Women went to in *London* for religious Worship on the *Sabbath-day*, was *Black-friers*, because the ordinary Preacher there, *Doctor Gouge*, yielded to fewer Corruptions in the Lord's Worship, than other Preachers in the City then did. These Women came not to Church, till the Service was ended and over, and so were disappointed of a Seat, judging it better to please their Lord, tho' with Unease to their Bodies, than to do otherwise with wronging their Consciences; well knowing, that pleasing Christ and our selves cannot often be enjoyed together: And indeed there is no Comparison here, betwixt worldly Men, who do not know Christ's Worth, and these Godly Women, who think what they will.

Because it pleased the Lord to call first on *Mary M'konnel*, I shall first speak briefly of her: She retiring alone to a Chamber to read the Bible and meditate thereon, and entertain Communion with Christ her Lord by Prayer, as her daily Custom was, after a long staying in the Chamber, she came out to the *Lady Hundaly*, who asked her, where she had been so long? *Mary* replied, No Wonder, I could not come out sooner; for I never had such Communion and Fellowship with my Lord since I knew him, as I had in that Chamber this Day; I speak to his Name's Glory: He let out his Sweetness so to me, and in such a Measure, and I was so brouden on him, that I could not

get him left; appearingly, He has some unexpected Thing to tryst me with. This being *Tuesday*, on *Wednesday* Morning, *Mary*, ere she arose from Bed, thought she heard a great Mourning, and saw, as she apprehended, the Lady all in white at the Bed-foot: But presently afterwards, perceiving the Lady to be in Bed, *Mary* began to fear, that some sad Thing was to befall the Lady; and coming (after arraying herself) to me the Writer hereof; she said, Alas! Mr. *Archibald*, the Lady is gone now: For I saw and heard such Things as discouraged me much.

I then desired her to shew what she told me, to the Lady calmly; which when *Mary* had done, the Lady said, It presages my Death: *Mary* answered, It rather presages mine, seeing my Lord and I had so sweet a Meeting Yesterday. Then I heard them say to each other, Well is my Soul, I shall get my Love Christ now (striving, as it were, who should have him first). Then said I, Madam, I could never endure Strife, but I am glad to see such a Strife as this is for Christ; Why may not I, as a third Person, challenge my Part in the Bargain? I hope, ye dare not envy any who come to Christ. Said the Lady, Mr. *Archibald*, well were my Soul, if all the World come to him; but, at present, I will be sorry, if the Lot fall not on my self. Said I, Tho' *Mary* or I go first, yet enough of Christ remains to you; He is not parted, but every particular Soul gets all Christ, who is not impaired by another's having him: Christ, who is the Son of Righteousness, is like the Sun in the Firmament, communicating its Light to many, and yet not impaired or lessened in its Glory and Splendor; each particular Person enjoys all the Light of the Sun, and yet leaves it wholly to another.

The Night following, *Mary* finding great Heat and Lightness in her Head, said, Madam, the Debate is now out of Question; you may see, what I told you presaged my Death; and so her Fever increased, yet neither the Lady, or I, nor *Mary* herself expected her Death so soon: For, the third Day after this, *Saturday*, which was her Marriage-day with her Lord, she, tho' sick, was very distinct and sensible, her Discourse

course all these three Days running out sweetly in commending Christ's Love; and, among other Expressions, said, O! that I might live to see the *Scottish Kirk's* Delivery; I would desire only to live a Year after; to sing Praises to him, whose right Hand has done valiantly, &c. Thus she peaceably entred the everlasting Kingdom.

The next Day after *Mary M'Konnel's* Death, the Lady was mightily cast down and discouraged. Then said I, Madam, where is your striving for Christ now, and your Courage to the Battle? If ye, an old Soldier under Christ's Banner be so sad, ye will discourage me a young Stripling, and make me think ye are sorry to part with the World, and that ye are afraid lest this Visitation (for the Pestilence was then in *London*) take you away to Christ with whom ye so earnestly longed to be lately. Said she, Mr. *Atchibald*, little Reason have I to be unwilling to part with this World, wherein I have had my own Trials. Said I, Madam, ye should know this undoubted Truth, that, tho' God's Children be freed from Sin's Tyranny, yet during this mortal Life, inbred Corruption do dwells and remains in us, that your loving Lord is fain by Afflictions to exercise and humble his own Children, for purging away the Dross of Corruption; so as their Life is nothing else but a wearisome Pilgrimage: Yet for all this they ought not to faint nor be discouraged, seeing they shall find Comfort in the End. No Man is crowned unless he strive as he ought, for tho' ye had never so many Enemies and Discontents in this World, yet one Glimpse of that Glory will make you to forget all your Grievs, as *Paul* says, *Rom. viii. 18.* Said she, I have not only inbred Corruption to wrestle with, but also Satan's Temptations, which makes me to desire to be dissolved, and indeed I desire this, not for Fear of any Cross that can befall me in the World, but only that I may be freed from thir sinful Bands, and this corruptible Burden of Sin that presseth down my Soul. Death is a mean to free me wholly from Sin's Slavery and Bondage, and to bring me to the manifest and glorious Sight of God, and to the immediate Fruition of his Face; and in
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this respect I think Death might be desired, with Submission. But (said I) Madam, Why are ye so cast down in your Countenance? Where is your striving for Christ ye had a few Days past? Said she, Mr. *Archibald*, Alas! there is a great Difference between Market-days; then I had in some Measure my Lord's Presence, and the Sense of his Love, but now he has left me and is gone. How then can I not be discouraged, seeing I want his Presence, which only can comfort a poor Soul who once has had it? How can I rejoice or be content till he return, in whose Presence is Fullness of Joy, and at his right Hand Pleasures for evermore? Said I, Madam, as your Lord's Love has many comfortable Properties attributed to it, being a free, fresh, matchless Love; so it is a Property of no small Comfort to you, that your Lord's Love is a constant Love; he never wholly casts off those whom he once takes by the Hand; tho' he may for a Time draw a Vail betwixt him and us, to try our Love to him, as an affectionate Mother hides herself from her Child to make him the more brouden on her; so your Lord will come *skipping over the Mountains, and leaping over the Hills*; nothing shall hinder him from you; tho' your Sins were as hard Rocks, and as high as Mountains in his Way, yet neither the Hardness of the one, nor the Height of the other shall keep him from you; he would as fain be at you, as ye would be at him, and fainer too; take Courage, *He that shall come, will come, and will not tarry.*

Said she, A *second* Thing troubles me, I am deceived in my Access to God; for before *Mary's* Death, I beg'd her Life, and finding such Access and Freedom in seeking it, I held it as granted, that Christ had given me my Suit: But seeing the contrary follows, have I not Cause to be discouraged? I being then deceived of this Freedom, it makes me think I am but a Hypocrite, and that the Freedom I had at other Times has been only false Conceptions of Joy. Then presently I apprehending her to be in Trouble of Mind, and not daring to answer her till I had sought Wisdom and Strength from my Lord, and being

ing conscious of my own Weakness, especially to quiet such a Storm as I saw was arising, there being no Storm so great as the Storm of a troubled Mind, and not any Storm requiring such Wisdom to calm it; I said to her, Madam, I see the Dart that wounds you: Is it not apprehended Wrath or Desertion? Said she, Desertion is indeed my wounding Dart, Lord make you an Instrument to cure it. Said I, O unworthy, weak and foolish Instrument! Yet, if my Lord will give me his Spirit, then will I boldly adventure to be the Instrument; for then I am sure both of Strength and Wisdom. But, seeing it is a hard and difficult Work to cure a troubled Soul, Satan opposing it with all his Might (for he would always have you looking to Sense, or else he would make you believe there is no Mercy for you) and seeing Satan's Policy is so great that none can rebuke these Storms and Waves, *nor say to them, Peace, and by still, that a great Calm may follow*, but our Lord Jesus *whom the Sea and Winds obey*; let me first pray, and then ye, as God shall help: So, after I had prayed, I desired her (who now was Bed-fast) to pray. Said she, I cannot, I dare not pray; no Access can I get to my Lord by Prayer. Said I, Madam, I did hear you earnest at Prayer this last Night. No (said she) it was only silly, weak Ejaculations. Said I, if ye cannot pray, yet pray that ye may be helped to pray, put up Ejaculations for the Spirit of Prayer, and then pray, and if after that ye find ye cannot pray, yet these Ejaculations will disappoint Satan, for Satan desires no better, nor that ye never put up one Ejaculation to Christ till the Day of your Death: Satan knows that Prayer can overcome all Things, yea, can prevail with God, *Exod. xxxii. 10. Isa. xlv. 11. Now that which can prevail with God, can prevail against and overcome Satan also*: Therefore, give yet this Advantage to the Devil, but put up Prayer often; otherwise, if ye bide long away, beware lest this beget a Fremmedness or Estrangement betwixt your Lord and you.

To her next Trouble I answered, Madam, ye say ye are deceived in your Access to God, and thereby
ye

ye perceive ye are a Hypocrite, and that all your former Freedom in Prayer has been only false Conceptions of Joy: I will not speak a Word of Comfort any more unto you, unless ye put up this short Petition, *Lord, hold Satan off me, and give me not leave to doubt of thy Love, or to believe any Thing that comes out of Satan's Mouth:* Which she said heartily.

Then said I, By questioning your Access, *1st*, Ye greatly dishonour God. Said she, God forbid. Said I, Madam ye dishonour God, because ye raze the very Foundation which God's own Hands have laid, when ye call in Question all his Love-Tokens he has given you in former Times. *2dly*. Think not ye are deceived in your Access, because ye cannot have your Desire satisfied to the full, in having the same Thing granted which ye sought from God: For some times Christ gives us not that which we seek, and yet he knows our Prayers, by giving us a better Thing, or by giving us Patience to endure the Want of the same Thing. So was Christ himself dealt with, who desired *the Cup might depart from him*; yet it did not depart, but he suffered and drank it, the Father giving his Strength: *And he was heard in that he feared.* Ye see then that God's dearest Children may have Access to him for several Things, tho' they get not their particular Petition granted; and yet their Access to God and Freedom in Prayer, will be true Access and Freedom. *3dly*. In so thinking ye wrong your self, rendring yourself unfit to pray, or to do any holy Duty: Also by questioning your Access, ye lay your Heart open unto manifold Temptations; so that if ye be holden out of Heaven, ye hold out your self, God will not hold you out. Therefore in God's Name find Fault with your self, and say, Lord, this is my Infirmity and Weakness, pardon me for Christ's Sake. *4thly*. By questioning of your Access ye give Advantage to Satan, for if once he perceive that ye take all to you for Truth that he says, then ye may look for Armies of Temptations, and Multitudes of Objections, as a Shower of Arrows, to be sent against you. If ye mind to have an Interest in Comfort, ye must resolve not to credit Satan nor your own deceitful Heart; believe God only
speak-

Speaking to you in the Promises of his Word: The Devil is a cruel and crafty Enemy, who meeting with a Soul that feels not Sin at all, flattered the Man with false Hopes, that all will be well enough, and that he will get Mercy, tho' the Man have no Right to it: But Satan, meeting with a Sinner troubled in Conscience, and feeling Sin, and God's Wrath hanging over his Head, therefore, Satan tells this Man a quite contrar Tale, That there is no Hope of Mercy for him, the Time or Day of Mercy is over and gone, God will not be gracious, his Sin is unpardonable, the Day of Grace is past, it is vain to seek for Mercy; that so, if possible, Satan may draw the Man to Despair. Therefore, Madam, if ye would expect any Good or Comfort at this Time, you must stop your Ears against Satan, ye must believe nothing that either he or your own treacherous Heart says. Do not conclude thus, I have no Interest in Comfort, because I think I have none; God's Thoughts are not your Thoughts.

Some Days after, I, coming to her Bed-side in the Morning, asked her what Rest she had gotten in Body or Mind. Said she, Better Rest than I am worthy of: But this Night I have been troubled with Dreams, and cruel Satan's Temptations. Said I, Madam, we most all confess we deserve Hell: But whatever we deserve, yet there is Perfection enough in our Lord Jesus: Build ye on that Foundation; for ye have Ground enoug to build upon. But (said she) we must have Instruments to build withal, or else we will come short in the Work. Said I, Christ the Master-builder will furnish us with Store of such as we want, and are necessar: Then, after I had read some Passages of the Bible, I said, What think ye of these? Said she, Indeed they are sweet Promises to whom they belong, but they make rather against me. I perceiving that she applied the Threatnings, and rejected the Promises of Mercy, asked, whether she doubted of the of the Lord's Power or Love? Said she, Love is my Doubt, O for that Love to come to me again! O for a Love look I said I, Can ye love and long for Christ, and yet he not love and long for you? Be assured Christ will not be behind with you, he will give you

two Looks for one. *Zaccheus* desired but a far off Look of Christ, but Christ came and preached the Gospel to him and his House, *Luke* xix. 4. &c. *Zaccheus*, I must abide at thy House. Said she, No Love for me, but Terror and Wrath, my Backsliding being so great and grievous.

Said I, Compare your Sins with Christ's Love, the Stock whereof is in Christ: Can your Sins, however many and hainous, be equalled with his infinite Mercy, that surpasses all Mens Sins. *Rom.* v. 20. If you be not pardoned, blame your self: It is because ye will not seek Pardon: Rouse up then your fainting Heart, and think ye have to do with an infinitely merciful Father, and tender-hearted Lord, who desires not your Ruin; but is ten thousand Times more willing to give you a Pardon, nor ye are to ask and receive it. Do not so great an Injury to the gracious Lord, as to set Limits and Bounds to his Love and Kindness. What say you now, Madam? Said she, I know all that's true: But what is that to me? None find and obtain but they that ask and seek; seeing then I cannot get Access to God by Prayer, how shall I get his Love? Said I, Tho' ye get no Access, yet be importunate, Importunity will prevail. *Luke* xviii. 1. &c. Tho' ye get no Answer, yet weary not, but still threap Kindness on him till the dawning of the Day, as *Zaccheus* did, and ye shall obtain the Blessing: If your Soul be vexed with new Fears and Doubts, again confirm the Matter with new Prayers, and resolve if ye be damned, to be damned praying, as ye have often said to me: And if ye must needs perish, perish with Prayer in your Mouth, and then ye shall not perish.

Said she, Alas! ye know not my Fears and Doubts. Said I, Madam, I intreat you let me know them; for seeing it hath pleased God to make me, and me only an Instrument of Comfort to you; how can I be instrumental in your Comfort, unless ye let me know your Grief? How can I apply a Plaister till I see the Sore of your Wound?

Said she, Seeing it has pleased God to call you to be with me, I will communicate my many Maladies

dies and Wounds of Soul to you, which I may do with a sorrowful Heart. Said I, I am heartily content of it: O! if the Lord would so honour and make me that happy, as to be an Instrument of one Dram of Comfort to you! Let me tell you, Lady, this at present, there is no Temptation so foul or hidious that seizes on you but it has befallen others of God's Children, as *David, Heman, Manasseh*, who had their Faults and Fears, and yet they are pardoned. Said she, My Case is another than theirs was. Said I, I beseech you, let me see any Doubt or Fear ye have whereof I cannot shew you the like in some of God's Children, so your Case is not matchless.

Alas (said she) since the Time I thought my self effectually called and converted, I have rushed again into divers grievous Sins and fearful Thoughts, and that willingly and deliberately: What then shall I do? Seeing I was a Hypocrite, and not pardoned.

Said I, Madam, That is false, that he who sins after his Conversion is a Hypocrite, and not pardoned: This was *David's* Case; did he not sin in the very same way, as ye have said? And yet I hope ye will not say that *David* was a Hypocrite: Have ye any more to say?

More (said she) I will never be able to reckon up what I have to say more: However, with Sorrow, I say, that I have long made Defection from the Covenant of Grace, I have revolted and apostatised from God's Way, I have run, I know not, in how many Byways, even since I found some Good working in my Soul; and after I had with Forwardness, and for a long Space continued walking in the Paths of Holiness, I have again broken out and continued a long Time in my Wandrings, without any Care to return to God; and therefore I am afraid my Case is desperate.

Said I, Madam, Has not the Lord promised to heal *Israel's* Backslidings? And have not ye longed to return, since your Backslidings? Said she, I have had some Kind of Longing, but not such as I should have had.

Said I, I see ye would be at Perfection: Beware of that, indeed it is good to aim at no less than Perfection.

fection; but to seek it in your self, and if ye get it not, to be cast down, beware of that: Ye have had some Kind of Longing to come home again, when ye have been like a wandering Sheep, bleating to be at the Sheepfold: Now Christ says, *I came to seek and save that which is lost*: He will bring you home on his own Shoulders, and will rejoyce in you more nor in others that were not lost, *Luke xv. 4, 5, 7*. Assure your self that the Promises made to backsliding *Israel* belong to you: Find ye an aking and relenting of Heart for your Appostacy? Are ye longing to come back to God? Are ye willing to crave Pardon for your former Declinings; then assure your self ye did not wholly fall away: For Christ's Light is a constant Light, it never wholly goes out where it is once kindled: It is true, it may have its own Ebbings and Flowings; but when it declines, it will come to again: Tho' it seem dead, yet there is a little Kindling in it, which the Spirit of God will soon blow up again. Seeing then the Lord is seeking and calling you home again, beware to sit his Call: For he will make you answer, and give an Account for your Refusal. Next, to that your so terrible Objection of Backsliding, let the Prophet *Jeremiah's* Answer satisfy you: For, to *Israel* that had played the Harlot with many Lovers, *Jer. iii. 1*. The Lord says, *12. Ver. Return, O backsliding Israel, and I will not cause mine Anger to fall on you; for I am merciful, saith the Lord, I will not keep Anger for ever. Ver. 14. Turn, &c. I am married to you.* So whatever hath been your Appostacy, acknowledge it and return, here is a Promise of Acceptance.

At another Time, I coming to her, after some Grones she was observed to have in her Sleep, she said, I have been troubled and mastered by my Corruptions this Night.

Said I, Complain to Jesus your Captain-general: Tell him that ye cannot be quit of your Corruptions and Satan's Temptations; and he will hold up his Banner, which will be a Scar-crow to terrify your Soul's Enemy.

Said she, How can I ever look Christ in the Face, who

who has been so loving to me, while I have been so unthankful to him, and so great a Backslider from him? and yet I had no Sorrow, Grief nor Repentance therefore. Said I, Consider what Repentance is: It consists in Sorrow for Sin, Confession of it to God, earnest Calling on him in Christ's Name for Pardon, and a Resolution to amend in all Time coming: Have ye performed these four?

No indeed, said she. Said I, Have ye endeavoured to perform them? Said she, I have had an Endeavour; but what Matter of that? Said I, Lord forbid there were no Matter of it, and that God accepted of nothing but the Deed: Assure your self God accepts of our Endeavours, yea, of our weakest Endeavours: Remember ye not Mr. *David Dickson's* saying? *God accepts the Will and Endeavour for the very Act it self. Tho' thou cannot say thou lovest Christ, yet would thou fain love him? would thou fain have Sorrow, Grace or a broken Heart? Christ accepts of that for Love, Sorrow, Grace or a broken Heart.*

Said she, It is true indeed, that a small Endeavour will be accepted, if it be sincere and true; But how shall I know a true Endeavour and Desire from a false? Said I, Try the Object and End of your Desire, if both be Christ, or something else. The End of a true Desire is Christ; nothing will satisfy your Desire but the Enjoyment of him. Give a hungry Man never so much Gold, it will not satisfy him, if he get not Bread; so nothing will satisfy your Desire, if true, but that which ye desired; and, I am sure, this holds true in you; for tho' you should get all the World, it would not satisfy you, except you get Christ. Said she, I dare not deny but I have a Desire, but it is not enough, I desire him not so much, nor crave him so earnestly as I should. Said I, Will ye never leave off these Words, *Enough* and *Should*? This smells of a Perfection that ye are seeking in yourself. Ye said before, Ye longed not so much for Christ as ye *should*: I say, Only acknowledge to Christ your Desire, and say, I cannot get enough of Desire to thee, and he will give it to you: Ye have nothing as ye *should*: Look through all the *Bible*, and see if ever God said, That he that

performed not these Duties as he should, shall not be accepted. I believe ye will not find it in all the Scriptures; it is only one of your own Heart's false Devices, and a Suggestion of treacherous *Satan*; believe it not, but ask Pardon of God for such a Thought, and pray him to give you Sincerity of Desire, tho' ye get it not in that Measure ye should have it. Said She, I cannot ask Pardon earnestly and heartily, nor can I pray in Life and Power. What shall I do then? Said I, Madam, I heard your Ladyship say, that ye desired Christ more than Heaven and Salvation itself, and I hope, ere long, to hear you say the same. Tell me truly, had you not rather have your Sin pardoned, and your Soul saved, nor to have your Life prolonged at this Time, and great Riches, and all the World's Contentments? Said she, That is nothing; who would not rather have the first rather than the last? Said I, Worldlings, as the *Gadarens*, had rather have their Swine kept alive, than Christ among them; they had rather want Christ than part with a little of their Riches or Pleasure; and therefore they who desire the contrary desire sincerely.

But (said she) I want the last Part of Repentance, the Perfection of all its other Parts. I do not amend, but do still slip into the same Sins, and cannot leave them. Said I, What be these Sins ye cannot leave, Adultery, or Murder, or Blasphemy? &c. No; (said she) I may go to Hell, and be free of all these; but I find Dulness, Deadness, Coldness in Prayer, Distraction, Forgetfulness, and Wandring of Heart in Hearing, unruly Passion, and a Number of such Evils breaking out in me. Said I, Does not the Lord lovingly pass by such Weaknesses in his own Children? He remembers we are but Dust, and therefore, as a Father pitieth his Children, so he pities them that fear him, *Psal. Cill. 13, 14.* If this were a good Argument to prove that a Man's Sins are not pardoned; because he finds his Corruptions bullering up in him, then none in the World should have their Sins pardoned; for ye cannot find me one Man in the World, who is not either complaining of his Corruption, or, at least, who hath not Cause to complain. The best are
born

born down and mastered with their Corruption for the Exercise and Trial of their Faith and Patience, as some of the *Cananites* were left in the Land to try whether the *Israelites* would keep the Lord's Way or not. Away then with such an Objection, and resolve to believe your Sin is pardoned, notwithstanding of remaining Corruption: But if ye will not believe as long as ye find such Corruption in you, ye will never believe ye are pardoned as long as ye live: For ye will never want Corruption while ye are in this World.

Said she, Doctor *Jameson* at *Newcastle* said, *The more Grace, the less Corruption; the more Corruption, the less Grace.* Said I, This is also true, the more Grace a Man hath it shall be the better tryed, and he shall be sure of the more Temptations: We must not conclude we have little Grace, because we have many Temptations, but we must rather conclude the contrair.

Said she, All Grace is so feeble and weak in me, that I cannot tell whether I have any or not.

Said I, Madam, ye know a new born Man-child is a small Thing, yet he is a reasonable Creature, and a Man tho' he has not the Exercise of Reason to know this; Grace is as little as Reason in a new born Babe: Therefore if ye find your own Weakness, and a little in your own Eyes, and if ye mourn because your Grace is so little, and would fain have it increased, and if ye use the best Means that ye can to make it grow, then be assured ye have Grace.

Then, crying out, she said, Away, away, speak not to me of any Grace I have; for I am graceless, I feel not so much as a Dram of any Grace; but, on the contrair, much ill Stuff.

Said I, I see ye are striking on another String, ye are going to Sense and Feeling with the Matter: But I with Joy remember I heard you say, at such a Communion, that ye had great Sense and Feeling, and that ye felt much Joy in Prayer; What say you now?

Said she, I told you before, that these Feelings were all but false Conceptions of Joy. Said I, If you have not Feeling now, it is little Matter; ye will get Feeling, if God will, ere it be long. *David*

had as little Feeling as ye have, when he cried out, *That his Eyes failed in waiting for God's Salvation*: I say then, A Person may have his Sin pardoned, and yet feel no Comfort for the present: Ye must first believe, and then afterwards feel: Ye know that Sense will deceive in judging of Colours or Quantity, how much more in spiritual Things? Believe first, and then pray, and ye shall have Feeling to your Comfort.

Said she, I find my self weary of Prayer, and ready to faint and give over.

Said I, So did *David*, *Psal. lxxix. 3. His Eyes failed*, and he was weary with crying, and he cried still, *Psal. lxxix. 6. 13, 16. So do ye.*

Said she, I am not only void of Sense and Feeling, but, alas! I am filled with wreathful Fears and Terrors. Said I, So was *David*, *Psal. lxxix. 2. The Waters were gone over his Soul*: He was almost overwhelmed with Temptations and Fears of God's Displeasure as well as ye: So the afflicted Composers of *Psal. lxxvii. and lxxxviii. and cii.* Madam, do your Terrors drive you to God, or from him? If from him, let them do so no more, and ye shall have Comfort: If to him, do so still, and ye will get Delivery.

Some Days afterwards, I, coming to her, asked her how she was? Said she, Never in such a Case; for the more I would have him, the further he goes from me; it is very like to be an utter Desertion. Then I, not knowing what to say, privately put up my Ejaculation to my Lord, That he would give me what to answer her; and, as his Spirit moved me, I said, Courage, Courage, Madam, Is it so, that ye perceive a greater Fremmedness and Estrangement between God and you than ever you did before? Happy are you, you will get the Thing ye are seeking: There is never greater Darkness, than immediately before Day break, never greater Rage in the Sea, than immediately before a Calm: So there is never greater Distance, Fremmedness and apparent Absence from a Soul, than immediately before the Enjoyment of his Presence: I hope to see a fair quiet Morning, notwithstanding of this dark tempestuous Night. Said she, All this is but Dassing; for this Night I have been tempted

tempted to despair, and put Hand in my self, and to do other vile Things, such as to blaspheme, and to deny him. Said I, It is all the better, for it makes my former Answer good, that the Matter is come to such a Height. But had you not greater Striving and Reluctancy, as you had greater Temptation? Said she, I was always sniffling and resisting as I could.

Said I, Madam, for your further Satisfaction, know, That, tho' *Satan* may throw in most vile Temptations into the Hearts of God's Children, yet as long as ye reject and abhor them, they are not your Sin, but only your Trial: Did not the Devil pursue Christ himself with such like Temptations? And; if he was tempted to so horrible Ills, may not any Christian be tempted also? Do ye not oppose them by the Word of God? Then surely they are not your Sin, unless ye yield to them.

Said she, That is my Case: I have yielded to some of these vile Thoughts.

Said I, perhaps the Multitude and Violence of them did so tyre (or *weary*) you, and put you out of Breath, as it were, that ye had no Strength to resist them: Ye were so fore-foughten with them, that *Satan* made you to believe, that ye yeilded: But know it is one Thing to yield to a Temptation, and another to be so tryed and outwearied with the Temptation, that ye are not able to make any sensible Resistance as once ye did: So as that which ye call Yielding, was not yielding, but an Inability thro' your fainting to make Resistance: Wait still upon Christ, and ye shall at last get Victory: For the more slowly that Comfort comes in at first, the more surely it shall abound to you at last. Tho' ye cannot say, The Lord hath pardoned me, yet let Hope comfort you and sustain you; Say, I hope the Lord will pardon me: Then that Hope will draw you to Prayer, and set you at Defiance of *Satan* and your own Corruption, and will make you highly to esteem of Christ: And this will support you, and will, in end, bring you Comfort; which the Lord grant for his own Name's Glory.

After

After this, she found herself in great Extremity of Pain, and in a Fever, and she finding an Excrecence or swelled Lump in her Flesh, she apprehending it to be the Plague (for the Pestilence raged at that Time in London) said to me (she being tempted of *Satan* to that Doubt) Mr. *Archibald*, Is it possible that a Child of God can die of the Plague?

Said I, Lord forbid that ever ye put such a Thing in Question! Have ye not heard, that both in *Scotland* and in this Kingdom, God's dearest Children have been smitten unto Death with this Visitation? Said she, I never heard of any. Said I, Wo betide that Enemy *Satan*, who never rests to put such Things in your Head: He is but a Liar. Tell me, Madam, Do ye question whether *Mary M'Konnel* your Cousin was a Child of God? She now rests with her Lord, who, by this Visitation, took her to himself in as great Peace as in the gentlest Sickness, whereof ye were an Eye-witness.

Said she, I must confess she was a most dear Child of God. Said I, Call yourself then a Liar, and call *Satan* a Liar, who tempted you to believe a Lie. But for your further Satisfaction, it is concluded, that *Hezekiah's* Disease, *Isa.* xxxviii. 21. was the Plague; he had a Boyl to which a Lump of Figs was applied, and so he was cured: When God offered *David* his Choice of three Judgments, he wished rather for the Plague or Pestilence, nor for Sword or Famine, *2 Sam.* xxiv. 13, 14, 15. I think *David* an elect Man, and a Child of God, would have been very loth to have made Choice of the Pestilence, if it be a Visitation laid only on the Wicked, and not on the Godly also. Away then with that foul Enemy, who has put such a Thought in either your Mouth or Heart, and question this no more.

At another Time, after a little Rest she had gotten in Sleep, she said, O! what Mercies I have gotten since I was born! And so she shewed me a little Book, wherein she had written a Catalogue of Mercies received, and of the particular Acts of God's Kindness to her in his Providences thro' her Life. But (said she) see my Hypocrisy and Ingratitude: Are not e-
very

very one of these Mercies, as a Ditty against me, these Mercies are as so many Judges to condemn me, who have been such a Backslider from my Lord, who has been so loving and merciful to me. I replied, Madam, I am very glad that I have seen this Sight; tho' ye say they are Judges to condemn you, yet, in the Lord's Name, I assure you, and the Spirit of God will ere long assure you, that they are Sentences of Absolution, proclaiming to the World that there is a sound Work of Grace in your Heart, and that they are as so many Judges absolving you from the false Calumnies that *Satan* lays against you, and doth charge you with; for this dings down Hypocrisy, and sets up Reality. Tho' a Hypocrite go far on in outward Formalities, yet it is more than he can do to meditate deeply on God's Goodness and Christ's Love, and to registrate the Tokens thereof in Heart and Book: Fear not, Madam, the Lord hath made this last Temptation, by which *Satan* designed to throw down all, to be a Mean to stop *Satan's* Mouth, so as he has no more to say (and indeed this proved to be her last Temptation: For I saw her spiritual Exercise, by Degrees, growing more and more calm; I perceiv'd that her bodily Weakness did increase thro' her several Weeks Sicknes, and thro' her Disquiet of Mind she was under: And therefore, I said further to her) be earnest with God in Christ, by Prayer, to hold off *Satan*, and I shall be earnest with God for you, as he shall enable me: For ere it be long the Duel will be over, and the Field shall be won.

And, accordingly, after I had left her, these that waited on her Person that Night following, did observe her to get the calmest Rest that Night beyond any other Night since her Sicknes began; they remarked also that she sang in her Sleep, of this they informed me the next Morning.

Then I said, when I came to her in the Morning, Madam, ye have gotten calm Rest, praised be your Lord: What was your Dream this Night when ye smiled in your Sleep?

Said she, Smile! how could I but smile, when I saw my Lord drawing by the Curtain? But he went quickly

quickly away. Then, stirring as tho' she would have risen up, she said, Where is my Love gone? For seeing I have gotten a Blink of his fair, and lovely Face, I cannot want him, or else I will burst.

I said, Wherefore gave he you this Blink, but to cheer you up till ye get more? Ye say, That ye cannot want him; he can as little want you, he is within a Cry, and no Crying he likes so well as Prayer: Therefore cry aloud and spare not, for if ye want him, Prayer will get you a Blink of him, yea many Blinks, till ye arrive at last at the full Enjoyment of him.

Then she desired me to leave her for the Space of two Hours; and then I thought all was well when I perceived her to delight in Prayer. But, tho' I withdrew, yet fearing her Weakness thro' her long spiritual Exercise, and her heavy bodily Sickness, I often came while the two Hours Time was passing, and looking thro' a Chink-hole in her Chamber-door, I saw her embracing herself, as if she had been keeping something in her Bosom; and, laying to my Ear, I heard her say, Art thou now come, sweet Love? Thou art heartily welcome to this poor Cottage of mine, unworthy of so glorious a Guest; soul and filth, and black Bride am I for such a fair and lovely Lord, even the King of Glory; long have I sought thee, and dear hast thou, my Lord, bought me; and now seeing we are met, we shall never part again.

Then I withdrew from her Chamber-door, and after a little Time, returning again now and then while the two Hours were spent, I saw her such a ravished Creature with Joy, yea ravished my Heart with Joy also, by hearing her sweet and edifying Words, so that I was not a little comforted upon her Account. Amongst other Words, I heard her say, I see now that all is not lost that is in Danger, and that God's Children will have as many Troubles as would load many Horses, to speak so, and yet they will bear them all, tho' they seem to sink under them: I see that they who love Christ, love him not for nought, but shall get as good as they brought, yea, ten Thousand Times better: I see that Godliness is indeed great Gain, and brings unconceivable Contentment

ment, tho' some Folk in the World do think that they are yoked to a Bondage, when they are engaged unto Godliness, and that they will never get leave to be merry again; but they are hugely deceived, and far mistaken: For there is more true Joy and Peace even under the sad and dejected Countenance of the Godly, nor the Wicked have in their greatest Prosperity: I now see that God never wholly nor totally casts off such as he doth once take by the Hand; or, if he seemeth to cast them off, it is only in their own Apprehension, and for the Tryal of their Grace, and in the same Instant of Time, his Hand is under their Head to uphold and support them, tho' they do not perceive it. God will have me to confess to his Glory, that the Devil and I were but Liars, in believing that the Freedom in Prayer I once had, was but false Conceptions of Joy: It was not so, it was real Access to God, and my Joys were true Joys, and merciful Blinks, which came to my Soul from a loving Lord: I confess also to my own Shame, and to the Glory of God, that both *Satan* and I were but Liars, in thinking that God's Children cannot die of the Plague.

The next Day after this, I found myself mightily distempered with a Lightness in my Head, and a feverish Heat in my Body, and, coming to the Lady, I said, I observe my Lord's Goodness to you, Madam, that it hath pleased him to spare me just till the Time of your Delivery from Soul-trouble; he has wrought strangely by me a weak Instrument, and a brittle Reed; all the Glory be to him, I will have none of it. What say ye to me? For I am not able to bide longer from Bed, my discomposing Pain is so great. Said she, The Blessing of the Lord be on you, and a double Portion of his Spirit on you: Lord, increase his Grace in you, and make me an Instrument of Comfort to you as ye have been to me.

Said I, being recovered of my distemperring Pain, after a little whiles retiring from her, Madam, seeing we will not all meet again in this World, till we meet in the Kingdom of Heaven, tell me what ye have to say, that I may communicate it to your Friends, if the Lord shall spare me for returning

Home to Scotland. Then she blessed them all, particularly her Husband, Children, Brother and Sisters.

Then, Said I, Madam, bless me also. Said she; *The good Will of Him that dwelt in the Bush that burned and was not consumed*, be on thee Mr. Archibald Porteous, who was separated from thy Brethren, even thy dear Parents for my Cause, to come hither with me to a foreign Land: This is (said she) the Blessing of *Jacob to Joseph*: She also encouraged me, saying, I am fully confident, the Lord will spare you for telling to the World the gracious Lord's Love to *Mary McKonnel* and me.

Afterwards she spake to God; Thou, O Lord, hast given me Christ; give me Hell, if thou wilt, providing I have Christ, the only Thing I desire; for he and I shall never part again. I said, as long as we have Tongues and Life, let us spend them in the Praises of God: And ye that have found Christ, tell me what he is like, that I may know him when I meet with him. Said she, *1 John iv. 16.* shews, *That God is Love*: Whenever then ye shall find a Love to Christ kindled, and flaming in your Breast, hold on in that Strain, for ye have the right Scent of Christ. Said I, Tell me something of the Love of Christ to you, that so I may fall in Love with him. Said she, The more I think on him, the more lovely he is: I am wounded with the Darts of his Love: I am straitned how to express it, and therefore I covet and long to be with him in Heaven. It was thro' Love that Christ became Man, and died and rose again, after he had purchased a Kingdom for us: It is a boundless, matchless, free and constant Love: O the Heighth, Depth, Breadth, Length, and Unmeasurableness of this Love of Jesus! Many a Time have we run away from him, but his Love would not let him part with us; when we were lost, he found us again. When we had lyen long in our Sins, his Love raised us up again; I cannot get Words to express this Love; it passes the Heart of Man to conceive it, it is so very deep. Therefore when ye perceive my Senses to fail me in dying, I desire, that ye may found in my Ears these Words, *the Love of Christ*, that so my very Thinking of his Love may cheer

cheer me up at the last Gasps. Said I, If it please God I be alive, and with you, I shall do it: But what do ye think of eternal Life, and of the Joys ye shall get in Heaven? Said she, That is the only Life, in respect of this Life; for this Life, which we live in the World, is but a living Death: But that Life in Heaven is a lively everlasting, honourable, immortal, easy, happy and comfortable Life: *In his Presence is Fulness of Joy, and at his right Hand are Pleasures for evermore.*

Next, I asked, How do ye like Death? Said she; very well, I think it a welcome Guest, it will do me the best Office that can be, it will take me to Life eternal, it is a Passage to bring me into, and to plunge me in that Ocean of Love; it is the Mean whereby I shall be brought to the Fruition of God for evermore, that I may enjoy his immediate Presence: Glory to Him, who has sweetned my Death and Grave by his own Death; I may say, *O Death! where is thy Sting? O Grave! where is thy Victory?* If I could win out of this House, I do think, I would be content to go and see my own Grave made. Said I, Madam, What do ye think of the spiritual Marriage betwixt Christ and a believing Soul? Said she, No Body can conceive the unspeakable Love of the Bridegroom to his dear Spouse, the Lamb's Wife: She shall be clothed with the garments of Salvation, and arrayed and compassed about with the Robes of his Righteousness, and adorned with Jewels and Bracelets: The Spouse may rejoice in the Honour of her Bridegroom, for He is a glorious Lord, and she is a base sinful Worm: She may rejoice in his Love, which found us when we were lost, and did cloth us (when naked) with the Garments of Salvation: His Love *washed us in his own Blood, when we were wallowing in our own Filthiness and Pollution.* The Spouse may rejoice in the Beauty of the Bridegroom; for he is beautiful among, and above all the Sons of Men, being *the only begotten of the Father, and his Face shining as the Noon-day-Sun in a cloudless Firmament, His Garments being white as the Snow.* Must not then the Joy of her Marriage with him be incomprehensible?

At last she left off speaking, and was observed thro' the following Night, by the Motion of her Lips and
Eyes

Eyes, to pray much in her Heart. The next Morning, I coming to her Bed-side, saw her Dissolution approaching, and her Eyes fixed towards Heaven, with a Smiling: Therefore, as she made me to promise, I founded in her Ears the *Love of Christ* often. So she, with lifted up Hands, fixed Eyes, and smiling Countenance (as I have said) and, with a Heart, doubtless, panting after a Fill of her Lord's Love, steep peaceably into Eternity, and so was plunged over Head and Ears in these Rivers of Pleasures, which she long looked for, and shall now enjoy for evermore. *Amen.*

F I N I S.

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