

A Secret Survey into the State of the Soul

by James Meikle, 1730-1799

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"Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends You, and lead me along the path of everlasting life."
Psalm 139:23-24

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"Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends You, and lead me along the path of everlasting life."

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1760 - 1770

September 14, 1760. Nothing is more incumbent on a Christian than to make his calling and election sure; and when this is cleared up, nothing can be a greater comfort. Every man should try his state and walk accordingly. He should hold what he has attained, and reach forward to apprehend what he has not yet apprehended.

Should I be ashamed to confess to God the great things he has done for me, at which I am astonished? But let the praise be his alone. However I have gone after vanities, yet I can, through grace, say—"None for me but God! Heaven and earth are shadows without him; but he is my portion and my all. I love him for himself, for his holiness, for his love. I set nothing above him, I seek nothing beside him—but count 'God reconciled in Christ', a treasure sufficient to enrich eternity itself. All my fear is lest I offend him, all my desire is to please him, all my ambition is to be like him. I dispute not his will, I repine not at his providence, for when repinings arise, as too oft they do, I represent to myself his love, his wisdom, his promise—whence I infer—that he cannot order wrong for me. True, **I daily fail—but I daily bewail myself, and daily dip myself in the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness.**

My graceless companions are my daily grief, and I bewail over those to God—who never bewail themselves. I shun the company of the wicked, and where necessarily cast into it, I am uneasy all the while. I esteem the saints very highly, even the excellent ones of the earth. Prayer is my daily exercise; and though too often formal and full of detractions, yet it is the joy of my soul. I make the sins of the land my

burden, and the sins of the whole world my concern. Jews and Pagans, deluded Turks and Papists, have a part in my supplications, and all the Christian churches in my prayers. When true religion suffers, I burn; when it triumphs, I rejoice. I have not an enemy in the whole world but I desire to forgive, as I expect to be forgiven. The rising generation dwells on my mind, and I plead with God in their behalf.

Above all things in the world, were I qualified, I would gladly serve God in the gospel of his Son. O I esteem it more to win one soul from hell, than to sway the scepter of the universe. I dare not seek to be learned—but to be useful. I dare not cherish vain schemes about future times—but commit my lot to God. I count that day idly spent, wherein I have not some divine meditations. I rejoice in hope of the glory of God, and wait for Christ from heaven. I count the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord and honorable. I have joy in believing on the unseen Christ, whom the highest heavens contain until the restitution of all things.

I have had a turbulent spirit often—when I have been misused. But now I desire to throw down pride and self-conceit, to overlook reproaches, forget affronts, and forgive injuries. When I awake in the morning, I am with you, and my meditation of the most high God affords me sweet thoughts. The light of your countenance makes me exceeding glad, and gives me greater joy than those whose grain and wine increase. Some sins I confess more easily beset me than others—but these I desire to guard against, and I allow not myself in any known sin. Hence I see, that what I am, I am by grace, and not by nature. My daily vain thoughts and errors who can understand, for they are innumerable? Yet my daily complaint is against them, "O who shall deliver me from this body of death?" and my continual struggle is to oppose them.

As to holy frames and feelings, I dare not build on them—but on the solid promises which in Christ are yes and amen. Yet do I desire to walk always with him, and in the light of his countenance to go on rejoicing, and mourn when I go without the sun. My daily fear is, that I am growing worse, and not better; going backward, and not forward; and my cry is, O that it were with me as in months past, as

in former times! I desire to rejoice in the gifts and graces of others, as if they were my own, and not to have an evil envious eye, because God is good, and gives others more than me.

Of all changes—death is the most shocking; of all trials—judgment is the most tremendous; of all states—the eternal world is the least known. Yet let my soul bless his name forever, when I have seemed in the arms of death by sickness, I could, with a sound mind and unshaken faith knowing in whom I had believed, say with the psalmist, "into your hands I commit my spirit, O God of truth! who has redeemed me." When I thought I was on the brink of death, with a serenity of mind, which yet refreshes me, I commended my soul into his hand, in view of hastening into the eternal and changeless world.

September 24, 1760. Alas! I have sometimes evil thoughts arising in my mind, which I can scarcely think are mine; but if they are mine, I immediately bewail them, and myself for them, and beg both pardon for them, and preservation from them for the future. And if they are injections of Satan, I strive to suppress them and reject them with all haste—as I would quench a fire without delay. And sometimes I get them smothered in their formation—all praise to sovereign grace. **These things make me humble, and a daily suppliant to free grace, and give a continued demonstration of my own abominable vileness.** My! what a mass of hell is my corrupt nature on the one hand. But how prevalent is true grace on the other hand! through which I hope I can say, thanks be to God who gives me the victory.

Another thing I condemn myself in is a too great delight in the creature, and having excess pleasure in the possession of any worldly thing. But, as in the day of adversity I am to consider; so in the day of prosperity I not only may—but should be joyful. So, that I might not err, **I resolve:**

1. To accept every blessing with a cheerful countenance and thankful heart from God.

2. To see that my thankfulness, both to God and my fellow-creatures, increases with the increase of worldly good things.
 3. To look on all creature enjoyments as common mercies, promiscuously dealt to saints and sinners—of which the last have often the largest share.
 4. To fix their fleeting nature in my mind, and neither boast of, nor build upon them; remembering that he who was one of the greatest men one day, was a poor naked Job the next day.
 5. Not to have an exceeding joy in anything beside Christ.
 6. And, therefore, to hold all things, as it were, at a moment's warning, even friends and relations, which are the dearest of worldly enjoyments—to be delivered back at God's call. "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord."
 7. That anything which may ever fall to my lot in the world, through grace, shall no way jostle itself into the place of God in my soul, or take off my meditation from that purchased possession, that inheritance of glory which fades not away.
 8. To use common things with Christian caution, and as one who must answer for things in the day of judgment, even as to my food, my drink, and my apparel. Thus would I wish to use the world as not abusing it, because the time is short until I am no more. And such a one should be, if he weeps—as though he wept not; if he rejoices—as though he rejoiced not; and if he buys—as though he possessed not.
- May 21, 1761.** For some time past, though the iniquities of my heart have been many, yet God has done wonders for my soul. Grace lives within, and there is a longing kindled in my bosom, that I hope will never abate until I see my Beloved face to face. My secret sins cause both my shame and sorrow—before him who sees in secret. And his wonderful, triumphant, victorious love, (let every saint commend it, and eternity continue the praise), that will not

be provoked to depart from me, increases my grief for sin. **O how can I sin against his goodness! How can I forget his love, or offend his holiness, and abuse his fatherly kindness!** I desire to keep conscience always awake, that it may roar aloud against my sins, and give me no rest, until, by fresh acts of faith, I apply the blood of him who speaks better things than that of Abel, even peace to those who are afar off, and to those who are near.

In my studies I can toil hours together on an Hebrew Bible, and yet, while only seeking the meaning and roots of words, not behold the beauties in the oracles of truth. This is a misfortune always attending the young student. But, in view of future advantage to the soul or the church, this burden is to be borne, and I therefore appoint so many hours for such studies, and some time for meditation and reading on other subjects or studies. I try to refresh my soul by spiritualizing the subjects in a momentary meditation. But O how happy that golden age of eternity, when God and Christ shall be my whole study, and not one distracting thought!

September 6, 1761. As the traveler Zionward should be always making progress on his journey, so should he still examine his state for the present, and see how matters stand with him. In like manner, I should ask my soul the following queries, and let conscience, as in the sight of God, make the answer.

Have I seen myself lost by nature—an heir of wrath—and a child of hell?

Have I seen God's equity with respect to the covenant of works, and condemning a fallen world in the loins of our first parents?

Have I been convinced of the depravity of my nature—the lethargy of my conscience, the darkness of my understanding, the hardness of my heart, the stubbornness of my will, and the deadness of my whole inner man—and consequently of my utter inability to help myself?

Have I seen the vast demand of the divine law—which will

take no less than complete satisfaction of offences, and requires perfect, personal, and perpetual obedience—and which threatens the curse for the least failure?

Have I then looked upward—and seen an angry God? Have I looked to the scripture—and seen a fiery law? Have I looked inward—and seen a deformed, guilty, ugly monster? Have I looked forward to futurity—and seen wrath as the portion of my cup, and hell as the lot of my inheritance—and so in all respects seen myself lost and undone?

But then, have I seen, with exceeding great joy, help laid on ONE mighty to save? And have I run into the arms of this gracious Redeemer to be saved from sin and wrath? Have I taken his complete righteousness, his spotless life, and meritorious death—for my complete righteousness, and sole title to justification and eternal life?

Do I endeavor to walk as under the law of Christ—in all holy living and godliness; and account myself, though freed from it as a covenant and its curse, yet bound by the strongest bonds to walk as he also walked?

Does my admiration of 'created excellencies' daily diminish, and my estimate of heavenly things daily rise and grow?

Do I frequently converse with my own heart, survey my inner man, and examine the state of my soul?

Are my thoughts on things that while I view them vanish—or on a precious Jesus, the same yesterday, today and forever?

Do I watch against sins of omission, as well as sins of commission; against the iniquity of my thoughts, as well as the iniquity of my actions?

Am I not only burdened with corruption that rises within me—but with sin that rages around me? Am I zealous for the Redeemer's glory, both in my own bosom and abroad in the world?

Are pious exercises my continual delight, and more

esteemed than my necessary food?

Can I forgive my enemies, even the most cruel, with the greatest alacrity, and sincerely seek the prosperity of my inveterate foes?

Do I resign myself wholly to the divine disposal of providence, and welcome its most unwelcome dispensations, because of him who sends them?

Am I, while under the rod—more desirous to be refined from sin, than brought forth out of the furnace of affliction?

Do I esteem the lowest saint more precious than gold—and make them my companions; while I shun to sit with the carnal and profane?

Is my delight in the house where God's honor, yes, where the God of Glory dwells? And are the public ordinances, where I hear the glad tidings of eternal things, as refreshing to me as cold water is to the thirsty soul?

Do I keep a court within, and often sit judge on myself, that at last I may not be judged and condemned?

Is it my daily endeavor to grow in the knowledge of God my Savior, and draw nearer and nearer to his throne?

How do I react, when I see myself ill used, despised, affronted; or hear that I am ill spoken of, and my character wounded, though without a cause? Am I then humble, meek, patient, peaceable and silent; or turbulent, angry, passionate, contentious, and clamorous?

Am I conscientious in the discharge of all Christian duties—public as well as private—in my family as well as in my closet—in my employment, and among my relations?

Is death a strange theme among my meditations? Am I altogether unacquainted with the dark apartments of the grave?

Do the fore-thoughts of that eternal communion which all the elect shall enjoy above, afford me a joy superior to all the anguish which ever presses on me?

Am I not only a daily penitent for all my sins and shortcomings, and daily seek, that all I have, all I do, and all I am—may be accepted ONLY in the Beloved?

November 20, 1763. Through various changes, my natural life is preserved. But O! where is my growth in grace; and the daily renewing of my inner man? My cares multiply, my business fills my hands, and my fond enterprises fill my head. But why is not my heart more consecrated to God? Return to my soul, O my God, that my soul may return to her rest! Surely, in the midst of all my declinings, grace prevails within, for I find no peace but in peace with God; and praise, and prize, and would sincerely pursue after likeness to God.

Sometimes there is a deadness on my soul, and a restraining in prayer—but even here I have hope, for

1. All my needs are known to God.
2. Christ presents the imperfect prayers of his people with his own incense.
3. I am driven out of all my self confidence, and wholly lean on him.
4. I am made to lift my eye to him, in whom the fullness of the new covenant is treasured up.
5. I am taught to trust nothing to my best frames in coming times.

I desire to set death daily before me, by which I may put a proper estimate on the things of time.

September 25, 1764. I desire to find God in all things. If he prospers my undertakings—I magnify his goodness. If he dashes them—I own his justice and adore his sovereignty. If

he leads me heavenward in the even way of prosperity and peace—I desire to walk there with gratitude and circumspection. If he leads me in the rugged way of trouble and affliction, I desire to walk there with faith and submission; having the full assurance, that whatever way he leads me, I shall at last arrive safe at my eternal home.

For many years I think I have loved God; and yet, alas! I find not my love going out on him who overcame the world, as it should. The things of time deserve my loathing, not my love; and yet how often are they like to steal the heart, and love, and all from God. O! avenge me on my enemies.

November 24, 1764. I pray for heaven, and expect it at last, and yet I am often surprised that I long not more for it, and wonder if I can be one of those happy Israelites who shall enter into the holy land, the heavenly country, when so content to dwell still in this desert. O to be crucified to the world, and the world to me!

January 4, 1765. Amidst all my changes still I hope grace lives, and though I daily condemn myself, I acknowledge your goodness. Whether you lift me up and cast me down—I desire to honor you by an entire resignation. O to get the stubborn will and rebellious affections bowed to you, and to have every cross in the world driving me nearer to God, and fitting me more and more for heaven! Alas! that my thoughts are so much on the things of time.

January 21, 1765. In all things I desire to see your love; if you cast down in one thing you lift up in another. A little mercy in the world, is a great mercy to one who has a world of mercy to come. I dare not think that, because I love you and fear you, it should go such and such with me; but I think, if you love me, it matters not how matters go with me in the world. Well may he who is going to dwell forever with the king, in his palace—put up with a dirty road and a rainy day.

April 27, 1765. I desire to have this motto in my heart, "Be angry, and sin not." I have sometimes cause to be angry with the men of the world, and yet I would rather choose

not to be angry in my heart. Thus by passion under the government of grace, I may prevent the same injury being done to me again and again; thus shall I be wise as the serpent. But I must not repay injuries with injuries, else I would not be harmless as the dove. Yet I think where the peace of God rules in the heart, there will not be much room for wrath or revenge. I would rather envy the meekness of Moses, and the patience of Job, than the power of the one, and the possessions of the other. O to be daily imitating Jesus, who, when his worst enemies were doing their worst, cried, "Father, forgive them." Forgiveness will be no grief of heart to me, when I arrive at the heavenly throne. Forgiveness is the only way to get the better of a treacherous world. It is to be as like God in the world as possible.

September 22, 1765. Many a sad struggle I have, among other things, with vain thoughts, which, like the Canaanites of old, will dwell in my heart. I blame myself, for I lodge them all the week as harmless, and then, on the holy Sabbath, they will neither leave nor be at rest. **O! how dangerous to let my mind go too much after the world!**

November 14, 1765. This day I attempt a fast for sin. But, alas! I know the name, not the nature of sin, and my flinty heart can hardly *sorrow* for that for which my Lord *suffered*. O! that I should not only give room in my house—but lodging in my heart—to the crucifiers of the Lord of glory! The blind man sees no faults; so the less I see of sin in and about me, the more blind I may believe myself. The room I sit in just now, is the very picture of my heart—I see not the least floating dust or wandering atom. But were the clouds scattered, how would the solar beam be loaded with dust above computation, beyond, far beyond belief! So, should the Sun of Righteousness shine into my soul, what reeking abominations and secret sins would be revealed in his ray! Such a sight cannot fail to humble me; and the less I see, the more cause I have of humility, because to all my other sins, that of spiritual blindness is added. When I look into my heart and practices—how am I driven out of myself! O I think a great sinner must be a great believer! The man who is wrecked on a sand-bank despises help, and thinks to plod

to the shore on his own feet—but perishes in the undertaking. But he who is drowning in deep water takes hold of the rope thrown in for his relief, and never releases it until out of danger.

February 8, 1766. Though I trust not in frames, yet, blessed be his name, my heart has been enlarged for some time past. O hold me by the right hand, then shall my soul follow hard after you, and not otherwise.

I still lament that I cannot drop some spiritual word properly in discourse, when the conversation of all is so vain.

April 12, 1766. O how the day is changed! I pray without the spirit of prayer and supplication. The world has gotten into my heart. The treacherous world is the worst enemy to divine love, because it is lawful to give it some part in my concern. But to give it but its own part and no more—is the hardest lesson in Christianity. To give the world too much love brings the heaviest curse—for if any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

September 14, 1766. Again I sing of his mercy, and O to dwell under the shadow of the Almighty all the days of my life! Alas! I confess I know not whether I grow or not. For if in a thriving condition, why is not every grace stronger, and every corruption weaker than I find them?

December 3, 1766. This day is appointed for a thanksgiving-day, for public mercies being continued in the midst of our manifold sins; and O what double cause of gratitude have I! that I am not made a scandal to religion, a terror to others or myself, that I am not in hell, and have a true hope of heaven! O that my practice, my conversation, my pen—could praise you for all the mercies, the benefits, the pardons—that burden yet support, that load yet relieve, that oppress but comfort my whole soul!

April 7, 1767. Many are the wounds the souls of the saints smart under. The foes, the Canaanites, even wicked and horrible thoughts, (whether *thrown in* by hell—or *spued out* by that fountain of uncleanness and corruption in the heart,

is hard to say), are numerous. Among which some are like the Anakim—of great stature and terrible appearance; by reason of which the poor Christian is but a grasshopper in his own sight. This was my own case, and a sad one it is. But faith in the God of heaven shall defy not only those giants of hell—but the king of the bottomless pit.

October 22, 1767. It is strange, yes terrible—that an expectant of heaven should with great difficulty, be reconciled to go to heaven. I would take it ill if any should tell me, I shall never go to heaven; and yet would be startled if one should tell me, I shall go to heaven *tomorrow!* Am not I carnal, sold under sin? for if one would give me a wealthy estate, I would not defer one day to go and inhabit it. Has earth thus the ascendancy over heaven, with me? O for the heavenly mind that will never rest, never be satisfied—until in heaven!

November 13, 1767. In what a dangerous situation am I! While I think all is well, the enemy is at the door; for though I think I can say that I hate sin and love holiness, yet I am not aware of the idols which divide my heart from God. The more apparently harmless these idols seem to be—the more dangerous they are! The error lies not so much in the act of loving, as in the excess of my love. How sad to find my affections centering on the creature—and delighting in perishing things!

February 27, 1768. Now and then, for some months past, I have written a few lines, in a poem called 'Heaven', with a view to wean my affections from the world, and that divine things may triumph in my affections. But what darkening, diminishing, disadvantageous views of heaven have I—whose *words* are lost in ignorance, and whose *thoughts* are swallowed up of inconceivable glory? When I arrive at the state of perfection, my most elaborate writings will be but childish prattlings—compared to the language of glory; and my sweetest songs but harsh and insignificant sounds—compared to the eternal hallelujah!

July 24, 1768. Nothing is so terrible than by sickness to be brought to the brink of eternity, and the soul eagerly recoiling back to time. I am afraid this was too much my

case in my late illness—else why did the world retain its bewitching charms with me, even when my vigor was wasting like a moth? O to be enabled to cheerfully leave the world at the hour of death, as easily as Elijah let his mantle fall, when he ascended up to everlasting day!

December 21, 1768. Whatever my state be, I desire to lay hold on the promises—that the righteous shall grow as the cedar in Lebanon, and flourish like the palm-tree. When I seem like the heath in the desert, this shall refresh me.

March 5, 1769. Discord and contention about trifles with the men of the world, alas for some time, has focused my attention to earthly things. O how am I to blame! Though the earth should be removed, and the ocean roar; though the mountains tumble among the dashing billows, and the rocks tremble before the mighty waves—still the soul which makes God his refuge and his strength should not in the least be dismayed. When the *creator* of the ends of the earth, ceases to *rule* the earth—then let me feel pain. Like the hedge in the garden, the more I am clipped and kept down in the winter of affliction, even to the apparent spoiling of utility and beauty—yet the more lovely and flourishing shall I be in the summer of glory. Then under my winter-prunings—let me not complain until the sweet summer make amends for all.

April 16, 1769. When I compare past and present times, how am I pained! Once my time was a time of love; my meditation of him was sweet; his candle shined on my head; and by his light I walked through darkness. But, alas! for some time past, how have I been sighing and going backward! A bewitching world, in its cares and concern, in its profit and pleasures, in its sorrows and uncertainties, in its projects and plans—has too much tossed my mind, like a straw before the whirlwind. Return, O Lord! how long? and cause my soul return to her center, her rest. Did a pleasant paradise spring up in the wilderness—I might sit still. But when *Satan*, like the fiery serpents—the *world*, like the cruel Amalekites—and *corrupt nature*, like the barren desert—all conspire to make my situation dismal and deplorable, no wonder that I long to pass over Jordan, and go in to take eternal possession of the land of promise!

January 15, 1770. In all things I should seek communion with God, in his providences, as well as in his ordinances. I admire, I adore, and would sincerely doubt God no more. For he who gives me one mercy today, can give another tomorrow, and will give what seems good in his sight.

January 28, 1770. Though there is always a real *communion*, though not always sensible; as well as vital *union* maintained between the renewed soul and God; yet at some times, for a few moments, I am favored with such displays of his love, communications of his grace, glimpses of glory, and foretastes of heaven—that all the powers of my soul are both refreshed and ravished. Nor dare I challenge this as a delusion, for it comes in a scriptural, rational way—and always then, God is most adored, the Redeemer more endeared, grace more admired, death more welcome, sin more abhorred, earth more despised, and heaven more longed for. Yet this attainment is but of short duration; for God will have me, even in spiritual things, to walk by faith, and not by sense.

What, then, must heaven be, where the joys of God shall pour into the soul through everlasting day! Hence I may see that vicissitudes await my life below. If I ascend mount Tabor—it is to come down to the valley of Achor. And if weeping endures for a night—joy comes in the morning. But as on the mountain I should be humble—because the valley lies below; so in the weeping watches I should hope—because the day shall break, and the shadows shall flee away!

April 15, 1770. The righteous Judge of all the earth has been pleased to remove a near and dear relative by death—and O how stupid am I under the stroke! I see affliction reveals us to ourselves; for did I think that the loss of my friend would have made a lack in my soul, when refused even to be filled with God? Why do I dream of immortality in *the region of death*? This fleeting world is not my rest! Why, then, take it so amiss to be disturbed in the *land of trouble*?

June 13, 1770. Many a time has a kind providence blessed

me with blessings beyond my expectation, and above my faith. And trials, which in appearance seemed insupportable when approaching, have been light and easy when pressing on me.

August 6, 1770. O how good is it to take God for my all! His providence for my treasure—and I have never yet lacked! His promise for my charter—and I shall never be cheated out of my inheritance! His Son for my Savior—and I shall not perish! Himself in all his fullness for my portion—and I am enriched for eternity!

November 20, 1770. What comfort to the poor buffeted believer, that his High Priest intercedes for him; and in the hour of sad temptation, when likely to succumb—sends him such fresh supplies of grace, that he not only stands his ground—but triumphs over his foes! As I have no strength—why should I have any confidence in myself? But why should I despond—seeing in Christ I am complete?

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A Secret Survey into the State of the Soul

by James Meikle, 1730-1799

"Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends You, and lead me along the path of everlasting life."

Psalm 139:23-24

1771 - 1780

February 14, 1771. How sad is my case, that the nearer I come to the Sun of Righteousness, the center of my soul, my motion is more dull, and my progression more slow! There must be some *false centers* that draw my soul aside from God; O to have them all removed, and fly to him alone!

March 23, 1771. Instead of being surprised when disappointed by the world, I should wonder that disappointments come not oftener, and they are not of a more disconsoling nature. Sometimes I am tempted to envy some flourishing men. But I have *three antidotes* against this mental disease, when my soul, returning to herself, has time to apply them.

1. I see but a few that I envy—but I see many who may envy me.
2. It is but when seen in such and such a point of view, or in such a certain circumstance—that I envy others. When taken as a whole—I would change lots with none.
3. The love of God makes up all.

April 21, 1771. Vexed with wanderings, and distressed with impertinent roving, I bewail myself, that I should not wait with more fixedness of heart on God in his own ordinances. But I have pleasure in pious duties, in spite of all the pain and tumult that is raised by indwelling sin. What ecstasy and delight, shall I share in the glorified state—where nothing around shall disturb me, nothing within shall distress

me—but God be all in all.

April 4, 1772. That person need never be disappointed in anything—who may claim God in his portion. In everything I offend—but in all things the God I serve is gracious; therefore my offences shall be forgiven. The lot that God appoints for me, I will account good, and cheerfully accept of—merely because it is his appointment. In a word, I condemn myself, I acquit God; and am resigned, in the sweet hopes that better things are in reserve for me.

June 28, 1772. This Sabbath how have I been oppressed even with infirmity, so that I could not properly attend to the things that were spoken! If wandering one day, and weariness another, distress of body, and distractions of mind, thus attack me—shall not I be compelled, not only to welcome—but to long for death, to translate me to the perfect state?

September 26, 1772. Careful about many things, I have much cause to fear that I forget the one thing needful! O that I could shake myself loose of the world, for I cannot carry the world with me to heaven! O! then, to carry heaven with me through the world, the heavenly mind, the heavenly conversation, and the heavenly speech!

February 2, 1773. If the path of the upright be like the shining light, which shines more and more unto the perfect day; what shall I say or think of myself—who seem to be sighing and going backwards?

October 4, 1773. I condemn myself for being too earthly minded; yet I can say, never allow myself to fall asleep without some heavenly theme in my thought. O that it were my food and drink to meditate on God!

December 25, 1773. He who knows all things, knows that I dearly esteem those who have his image; and that I always wish my family may consist of such, and of none but such.

I wholly rely on an omniscient Providence with profound resignation, and then, as the events may be, I know whom

to praise, and where to implore.

April 7, 1774. I have this to remark of Providence, that sometimes afflictions have been sent, when, in all respects, I thought myself least able to sustain them; and yet I have, to my own surprise, been carried honorably through. And at other times, threatened troubles have been suspended until a time that they fell much lighter than had they fallen upon me sooner than they did. Therefore I admire, and confide wholly in the unerring wisdom of my glorious Leader.

September 12, 1774. The Christian life is a warfare, and O how the battle is increased in sacred times! Of this I have mournful experience; O for relief and divine assistance!

November 2, 1774. In disappointments, crosses, and losses, this I observe—that sometimes I am prepared for the event by an equal temper of mind, and cheerful resignation to the divine disposal. At other times I am supported above expectation when it comes.

November 14, 1774. When I look around me, I see one man who has more honor; another who has greater riches; one who has more pleasures; another who has more conveniences; one who has more friends; another who has more relations. But notwithstanding, no where do I see the man that has more blessings than myself. At least, I see myself possessed of so many blessings, which I deserve not, that I desire to be content, thankful, and happy.

January 19, 1775. I have prayed for many a thing in faith, which I have not obtained; and at this I have been pained. But on reflection, I think that I have had all my prayers answered, even while my petitions were not granted. For, whatever I asked, it was in the view of its being a good. Now, if infinite wisdom saw that it was not fit for me—though I might be mighty fond thereof—he did me a kindness in withholding it from me. Moreover, my constant and highest request is, that God in all things may be glorified—and he is glorified in doing what he pleases, and in my approving his divine disposal.

March 25, 1775. Were I to write an account of all my wars, conflicts and encounters with my spiritual foes—what a volume might I fill! But one thing is strange and terrible to me, that in sacred times, and in pious duties I am sorely attacked—and by a banditti that give me little trouble at other times.

May 19, 1775. What a shame is it to forecast so much about the uncertainties of life—and think so little, on the world to come! O that in every scheme and purpose I could submit all to God, and keep the heart wholly for God! One may maintain a fair character before the world—and yet have a foul heart before God. But O for the renovation of heart that is approved in the sight of God!

Some days have been memorable in a kingdom for the loss of battles and the ravages of enemies; so the Jews had their fast in the fourth, fifth, seventh, and tenth months. And it is even thus in the Christian; there are some days to be had in mournful remembrance, for the ravages of spiritual enemies, for distractions in time of duty, for vain thoughts and heart-wanderings, when we should be otherwise employed. O for the last victory over every enemy!

August 29, 1775. In everything I offend; for as God is still the same, why is not my holy fear and reverential awe of him still the same? Were all the angels in heaven, and all the men on earth, around me in the hour of prayer, would God be more magnificent? Or would he be less to be adored in the silent desert, or in the midnight gloom? So great, so glorious, so possessed of all perfections, and tremendous majesty, are you—that it is only my weakness and corruption which hinder my prayers.

January 2, 1776. What a comfort is it, that flying time makes no impression on the unchangeable love of God! I may change my servants, my relations I may die, I may alter my place of abode, and I may see the world turn upside down. But this is my comfort—that the Lord is my God, who changes not.

Some great favors with regard to this life I have in

prospect—but I plead that God's love may still be the sugar, the honey of all my good things, the marrow of all my comforts, and the substance of all my consolations. If I ever take the creature for my portion, the best of created good things will convey poison into my soul. Whatever good you shall bestow (and I shall gratefully receive whatever you shall graciously give,) I still claim you as my supreme portion, rich inheritance and chief good, with which only I am satisfied and charmed forever.

March 8, 1776. I am daily convinced of my own folly, and chastened for my error; and from a late providence I am taught:

1. To commit all to God, and to hold all that I possess, all that I expect of God, where I can only find everything safe and secure.
2. To think more of God, and less of the most amiable of his creatures.
3. To believe that uncertainty is interwoven with every human affair.
4. Therefore never to be surprised when disappointed in the things of time.
5. To study an unreserved resignation in all things, and at all times.
6. To consider myself as only a traveler to another country, and another state.

April 6, 1776. An afflicting providence, not looked for, has overtaken me. But what comfort is it to my soul to see sovereignty in it! I can appeal to the great disposer of all things—that he led me in the right way, and when he sees fit, he may make my way dark and slippery. In a word, whatever I may feel, through grace I am resolved never to doubt his love, never to dispute his conduct, and never be impatient with his dealings with me. O that God's faithful overflowing love may fill up all needs, and sweeten all

troubles!

April 7, 1776. This day I have heard an excellent sermon—but I found a pious parent, and his afflicted family all absent, because an unfortunate child was to be publicly rebuked. No sooner has the careful father got him a church-member, than he becomes the object of church censure. May not this teach those that have not families to be moderate in their desire; those who have, to be moderate in their expectations; and us all to dwell at a throne of grace, that we may obtain grace to help in time of need?

What shame can sit heavy on me—which has not sin as its cause, and sorrow as its consequence?

April 9, 1776. If all things are possible to him who believes, I desire to act faith on him at this time. But it is beautiful for faith to be accompanied with resignation. Faith in his power, resignation to his disposal; faith in his wisdom, resignation to his will; faith in his sweet mercy, resignation to his chastisement; faith in all his promises, resignation to all that he imposes. This is indeed more than flesh and blood can do. But I plead that through grace I may be enabled to believe all, and then I shall be able to bear all, for faith is the victory which overcomes the world.

April 28, 1776. When I look among the great men of the world, instead of envying their felicity, I deplore their folly, and pity their situation; and wonder that I, or any that have the hopes of being forever with the Lord, have not more crosses and calamities, disappointments and pains in the world; or that I should ever complain of any trials that I have. What can that man enjoy—who enjoys not God? Where can he find his pleasures—who fetches none from heaven? What vanity and emptiness is his time! What a *round of sin*, or *circle of vanity*—though he should dwell in the courts of kings—who has not a moment for true religion? How poor would the best best furnished mansion be, where its owner only lodges a few nights on his way to the prison of hell, where he is to be tormented through an endless evermore? What can his many friends, great connections, and noble relations avail him—when all the perfections of God are against him—and in a little while of all the fiends of

the pit, and all his companions in sin, will be his tormentors forever!

May 12, 1776. The plagues of my heart are past description; for in sacred times and in solemn duties, there is a heart-wandering, that defies my watch, and disquiets my whole soul. O! to sin against God when tasting of his goodness, is horrid ingratitude. O to have my heart fixed on God, and the things of time shut out!

July 9, 1776. Last Sabbath I went to hear sermon, where I was afraid that I might have distractions. But blessed be his name, I had a pleasant day. O that I could say so of many days, for I am afraid that it is not with me as in months past!

July 16, 1776. I attended at a neighboring church, though woefully vexed with a wandering heart. Yet thus am I driven entirely out of myself to Christ, and see that he must be the all of my salvation, both in his justifying merit and sanctifying Spirit.

My trying providence is removed, and I am made to sing of mercy, and find that everything that God gives is well worth the waiting for. I would rather have blessings in God's way, and at God's time, than my own. Now, may all-sufficient grace enable me to walk humbly and circumspectly before him; and O to have all my heart-risings, my fears, and anxieties forgiven! While my heart is filled with gratitude at his goodness, and approbation of his whole providential procedure—though painful.

July 28, 1776. Though I desire never to trust in forms, yet I bless his holy name, that attending a sacramental solemnity, in family-prayer I had a sweet enlarging. O how sweet will it be to be an eternal adorer before the throne of God and of the Lamb! to have the whole soul glowing with heavenly love! to dwell in the mount of communion, and, instead of coming down—to climb higher through eternity! O to press forward, and not lose ground in my Christian course!

August 22, 1776. How much do I err in limiting Providence,

which can do great things, and at a moment! My patience may expire—but Providence can never be confounded.

Again, the men of the world count themselves better providers than Providence; hence they gouge, extort, and oppress, to amass large fortunes for their children. But mark the outcome—often these wealthy inheritors turn out, when they commence life, spendthrifts—and die beggars. Whence I infer, though, on the one hand, I should neither despise nor destroy what God bestows; yet, on the other hand, to commit my children to the munificence of Providence, whose goodness is infinite, and whose funds are inexhaustible.

August 28, 1776. Trust not in princes, trust not in any creature, in whom there is no stability. I leave with the whole creation as false and insufficient—and take God as my only portion.

On some late incidents in life, without revenge, I think I can say, Plead my cause, for to you have I revealed my cause.

Again, with respect to some circumstances I am presently in, though I have not the least prospect any way, I desire to act faith in God, accompanied with resignation to the divine disposal, in such a manner, (and for this I bless his name), that I can say—According to my faith, so be it to me. When infinite goodness is exhausted, and infinite wisdom is confounded—it is time for me to be perplexed—but not until then.

October 21, 1776. While waiting an event of great moment, I have a sweet tranquility of mind, and a full resignation to the will of my heavenly father, who never did, nor never will do me harm. His wisdom, his goodness, his power, his omniscience—compose and comfort me. O to be helped to act as a Christian in every case and circumstance!

November 5, 1776. When brought to quit with my request, Providence seems to be granting it. Hence I see **it is best to commit everything into the hand of God, and to have everything from his bountiful fatherly hand.** But now I flee to the blood of sprinkling to have all my sins washed

away. O to walk softly all my days!

November 26, 1776. While I have mercy to sing of, why should I be silent? Then I bless you for all that I enjoy, and for all that I expect. How bountiful is the providence of heaven, even in the things of time! O that the more I share of your kindness—the more my love may abound towards you! and whatever gratitude I have for your gifts—may my heart still be kept for the Giver.

December 6, 1776. Blessed be God, who has not turned away my prayer from him, nor his mercy from me; and I still implore the heavenly blessing on myself and my family in all respects.

January 2, 1777. Weak-sighted mortals often take God's dispensations as heavy afflictions, which Omniscience intends for their good. So just now, I believe I shall see cause to bless God for this cross in time coming, as I have grounds before of thanksgiving for events, which at first came like sore trials. To commit all to holy sovereignty is my duty, and both now and ever after will be my peace.

January 14, 1777. It is good for us to have our high opinions of creature-comforts lowered; for the creature is but vanity, and will disappoint all who depend thereon for bliss. I roll all my comforts into the hand of my heavenly Father, to give or withhold from me as he pleases. I expect a thorn in the fairest roses which grow in the garden of time—but in God I expect endless joy!

February 4, 1777. O how has my heart wandered after vanities, and things that cannot profit! I confess my sin, and mourn over it. O let it be known that you are the Lord my God, in bringing back my heart to you again!

February 18, 1777. Some years ago I met with a disappointment in an affair which I then looked upon as a great affliction. But from what has since taken place, I now clearly see that it was a kind providence! What a fool am I, to plan my own lot! but how happy am I that infinite wisdom rules for me!

March 8, 1777. Dining with some gentlemen at a public inn, and drinking wine too fast and too freely, when come home, I grew so sleepy that I sunk down like a stone, and it was four next morning before I awoke. I was angry at myself, and resolved at no table to drink more than a certain number of glasses. O in all things to be under the heavenly direction! To excite my abhorrence of drunkenness, I see—

1. That the drunkard is like a dog, if he vomits.
2. Like a sow, if he wallows in his vomit.
3. Like a Bedlamite, if furious and mad.
4. Like an idiot, if he knows not either what he does or says.
5. Like a fool, if he knows nothing that is past.
6. Like an Atheist, if he cannot pray to God.
7. Like a dead man, if he must be carried to his bed as to his grave, and falls asleep, yet knows not that he is falling asleep.

March 16, 1777. I accept of all my afflictions—but I plead for deliverance from my sin. O what a crowd of vain thoughts vex me in sacred times, and in pious duties! O return, O Lord! how long?

March 23, 1777. O how few know anything of the power of religion on their souls! and what continual songs of praise should the child of grace give to God, that he is apprehended by him; while so many are lying in wickedness!

April 12, 1777. If I have not a feast within, if I have not joy and peace in believing—what advantage have I more than the wicked? Whatever they have, have not I more? Have they sons? Is not he, the heavenly Bridegroom, better to me than ten sons? Have they friends? Is not he a friend who sticks closer than a brother? Have they, in a word, the desire of their hearts? Is not he the desire of my heart, who

is the desire of all nations?

April 28, 1777. Committing all to my heavenly father, and confident that all shall be well, I submit to his sovereignty. Do all your will, and I will study to be resigned. Forgive my sins, for in everything I offend; and your mercy be on me, as I trust in you.

May 2, 1777. When the good things of time are bestowed on us—when we flourish in this and that respect—when we have the desire of our heart to such a degree that we are ready to find satisfaction in the creature, and forget God—then we may expect some stroke at hand. And often the great affliction is attended with others of a lesser nature. Thus God speaks once, yes twice, that he may be heard. The severest storm is often after a dead calm; then let me always walk with fear and humility.

May 5, 1777. It gives me no pain, that in some points I have abased myself. It is always better to suffer than to sin.

I bless God that he is governor; I see but the appearance, he sees whatever shall take place. I have a calm conscience, and that is a comfort. I have an all-sufficient God, therefore I have nothing to fear.

May 24, 1777. While I have a house to dwell in, food to eat, and clothing to put on—I bless God for his goodness; and pity those who may lack any of the above necessities of life. Blessed be the God of grace, that his love or hatred is not known by the lack or possession of these things. Yet may he who is the *Father of mercies* supply the *children of affliction* with such good things as they need.

August 12, 1777. In common things I have often experienced the divine direction; and why should I wonder at this—since a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without my heavenly Father? If he numbers the very hairs of my head—will he not over-rule the ordinary actions of my life? My faith may humbly plead with him to perform whatever he condescends to promise. I have but confined views of the omniscience, omnipotence, and kindness of God—if I do not

believe that they extend to every action of my whole life. Henceforth I cast myself from under my own government—and desire to be wholly under God's.

November 16, 1777. When I consider how near I am to the heavenly state, and how the good or evil of the present state shall be forgotten there—I triumph in spite of all distress, and check my sorrow, and reprove myself that I do not always triumph. He thinks little of heaven for an inheritance—who greatly laments any loss on his way there. He thinks little of God for a portion—who is not completely satisfied with God, whatever else he may lack.

February 1, 1778. If I have joy in waiting on God in his ordinances, amidst vain thoughts and distractions; O! what shall my joy be, when I shall serve him in his temple above, with a heart full of heavenly rapture, and glowing with seraphic love, amidst a multitude of sinless adorers, and while entertained with the ever-opening wonders of eternity, and the astonishing mysteries of redeeming grace!

April 18, 1778. Amidst all my requests, I would cheerfully say, "Not my will—but your will be done." This pitch of resignation, and no less, shall give me peace at last. It were Christian wisdom—as we cannot see far before us in our requests for created good things—to be submissive and resigned in our desires.

June 2, 1778. We seek mercies and beg blessings from God, while we are not prepared for receiving them. But when God prepares the heart to receive gifts, that we may not consume them on our lusts—but lay them out to his glory, it is a sweet sign that he will cause his ear to hear, and his hand to perform our requests.

I am blessed with kind providences daily; I experience them in matters of great consequence, and also in my lesser concerns. O then, in the lawful use of means—to commit all to a kind, unerring providence!

July 4, 1778. What a constant battle is the Christian's life! He must always be on his watch-tower; one foe or other will

ever be assaulting him. And if he is found in a fleeing, not in a fighting posture, he is undone.

O how sad to be harassed with heart-wanderings and vain thoughts in holy times, and in pious duties! O that sovereign grace may heal all my heart-plagues, and make me more than conqueror over all my enemies, in his name and strength!

July 16, 1778. In obtaining common mercies, the saint seems to come behind the sinner. Esau's sons were dukes and kings, while Jacob's posterity are slaves and bond-men; and yet Jacob had the blessings. Saul is anointed king, and in short time, and with little opposition, he is fixed on the throne. David also is anointed—but it is after a long time, and through much opposition, that he comes to reign, and at first only over his own tribe, where he has a seven years struggle before he gets the whole kingdom, though promised by God.

Why is this? Why are *common mercies* cast to the wicked, in the general course of providence. But these same blessings, though common, come to saints as special favors, and so must be the fruit of much prayer. And the Christian must be prepared for receiving them, by having his graces sweetly exercised. His faith must rest on a promising God, even while providence seems to contradict the promises; his patience must have her perfect work; and he must be wholly resigned to the wisdom and to the will of God, in opposition to his own.

Thus the saint is often made to give up with his comfort, or his request—just before it be bestowed on him. Now, this preparation of heart being a great work, requires time and exercise in the Christian's life, and so common mercies are longer in coming to the child of God than to others. But they are well worth the waiting for, and wrestling for; for when they come they come with the fragrance of heaven, and with the love of God.

July 30, 1778. When we are very fond of any created good thing, we are apt to have a full belief that we shall obtain

that very thing. And when disappointed, we conclude that as our faith has been false in this and that particular—so we may think that our faith is not genuine, at last may deceive us; and we may perish. But this is our mistake. Our faith of spiritual good should be as full of assurance as possible. But with respect to our faith for the blessings of time (as that of a barren woman to bear a son, or that for the life of a dying friend,) it should be far otherwise. Our *resignation* to the divine disposal should be of equal extent with our *faith*—and then we shall never be disappointed. Again, our faith in spirituals may be particular for this or that grace which we stand in need of—as the disciples who pray, "Lord increase our faith." But our faith in temporals should be general, that what is good the Lord will give. And we ought not to presume to teach infinite wisdom what is good for us; since the want of a son, and the death of a dear friend, may do us more good than the gift of the one, and the recovery of the other.

Moreover when we have a strong affection for anything, we are ready to take our desires for faith—and our passion towards any point as a promise given to us, that we shall obtain our desire. And especially, if we recollect any scripture-text that will any way apply to our wish or view—we take it as a special promise of God to us. In this way, we allow ourselves to be deluded. But we are not to expect revelations from heaven, as the rule of our conduct. Nor are we to apply particular promises concerning perishing things; though we may believe, if we belong to God, that he will guide us with his counsel while we live, and afterwards receive us to glory. We are not to claim a particular promise, that sons or daughters shall be given us—but we are to believe, that to saints who have none, God will give a name better than that of sons or daughters. We are not to expect a promise that our children shall be certainly saved. We are not to dream that this or that particular man or woman, shall be our husband or wife. But we are to believe, that, if God sees fit, he will set the solitary in families; and we are to avoid being unequally yoked with unbelievers.

July 31, 1778. While we are mortal, we are to expect trials and troubles, crosses and afflictions, pains and disappointments—always in our lot. But while I feel under a

new and unexpected disappointment, I check my complaint, and would rather praise than complain. A parent who gives an apple to a sick child, and correction to a stubborn child, shows himself equally a good parent to both, though the boys may have a very opposite opinion of his conduct. Says James, "Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted"—all men will agree to this. "But the rich should rejoice in that he is made low"—this may bewilder. Yet it is much better to have chastisement, and thereby be approved a son, than to be without it, and be in doubt of being a son. And more so, when we daily see that all flesh, poor and rich, wither as grass in the present state, and quickly pass into an eternal state.

My plan proceeded from myself, and therefore, however noble my motives were, I might have flagrantly erred. But my disappointment is from the unerring wisdom of providence, and therefore I heartily approve of it, and praise God for it. For though we are not to pray for, but to deprecate afflictions—yet we are to sing of judgments as well as mercy—and what appears judgment in the beginning, may be mercy in the end. Now, with my hand sealed up, my eye quite shut, and entirely resigned to heaven, I wait on providence without pain or repining!

August 6, 1778. Professors will wait a while on God—but at last they grow weary; and, like the wicked king of Israel, say, "This evil is of the Lord, why should I wait on the Lord any longer?" But the true Christian, like the psalmist waits *patiently* on the Lord, and at length he hears. Nor do I doubt but that every saint dies while waiting the accomplishment of some promise; nor is he a loser; for though disappointed in this or that particular, yet all the promises are made yes and amen to him in the eternal enjoyment of God in glory. Now, it is my duty thus patiently to wait on God, when even such a disappointment will enrich me forever.

September 10, 1778. O how difficult to keep the heart in holy times, and in pious duties! The various occurrences in life vary—but continue the snare. O for sweet deliverance!

How has infinite wisdom been pleased to mix saint and sinner together! In one house the husband fears God—but

the wife knows him not! In another, the wife is a believer—and the husband a barbarian! In another, the masters are Satan's slaves—and the servants Christ's free-men! In another, the servants are in bondage to sin—while their masters walk in the glorious liberty of the sons of God! In another, how are the children and parents, and even the children among themselves, divided! And here I am sad, and sympathize. O for the heavenly sympathy to all concerned! A child, while one parent is uninterruptedly attending the throne of glory, and the other in the courts of grace on a sacramental Sabbath—is in the porch of hell committing wickedness! And a near relation, who comes to the knowledge of it, is filled with anguish and bitterness of heart. The father is mingling his praises with the hallelujahs of the higher house, and the mother joining in the prayers of the church militant—and the son treasuring up wrath to himself against the day of wrath! In a word, wickedness is committed within those walls where prayer is accustomed daily to be made. But should not my heart daily flame with love and devotion! and, alas! what wickedness is committed often there! But O that heaven may preserve me and mine!

March 7, 1779. This day I confess that I am nothing, and that I cannot walk one step in the strength of grace formerly received—but must daily fetch grace out of his fullness. My comfort and confidence then is, not that I am not a sinner—but that Jesus Christ is a Savior, and a Savior for the chief of sinners. And I desire to fly to him anew, as if hitherto I had been a hypocrite in all my former acts of religion. I may prove false—but he is faithful who invites me to believe, and will not cast away those who come to him.

March 23, 1779. Many and marvelous are the turnings of providence. I grieve not so much that I suffer—as lest I sin in my sufferings. In everything I acquit God—and condemn myself. My prospects may disappear—but my confidence is not shaken; because my prospects are but human—but my confidence is in God. One thing which I mourn over is, that trifles should raise such a tumult in my bosom, and so much possess my thoughts.

April 13, 1779. There is one thing which is needful, and only one thing. Henceforth let me attend to it with diligence and

care, and not to make trifles such matters of concern. If I am traveling to my Father's house, I should attend closely to my journey, and not consume myself with anxiety about the weather, whether it be fair or foul, whether the road be good or bad, and whether I join agreeable company, or walk alone. For my Father's house will make me completely happy, so happy that I shall forget all the toils of my journey.

April 30, 1779. Impatience in any situation, or under any affliction—is a sin. There may be an unbelieving haste to change conditions, and get from under the affliction. But infinite wisdom and fatherly kindness knows what affliction is best, how long it should be continued, and when it should be removed. Now, as I am wholly God's, I desire to be wholly at his disposal in all things; and sure I am I never shall repent it.

May 7, 1779. Paul saved the lives of all them that were with him in the ship. O for the souls of all those who are with me in my house! This is a part of my daily prayers to him that is both the hearer and answerer of prayer.

May 14, 1779. I know when I meet with a worldly loss—but I hope never to repine. Yet, why should I not also be sensible of the comforts of life? I deserve nothing—sometimes I lose a little—but I enjoy all. O for a grateful heart to him who gives me all that I enjoy!

May 22, 1779. I meet with another loss of the same kind—but anything I have in the world is by loan. Therefore, whether friends or wealth be taken away, I am not injured, because the time of my loan has expired. I am more bound to be grateful than to grumble, when so much is left with me, and so little is taken away—who can claim nothing as my own. But there is one portion, Christ, the gift of God—that can enrich my soul, were heaven and earth dissolved, and whom I still claim as mine, were all things else recalled.

June 11, 1779. It is sad to be rising into years, drawing near to death, and walking on the very brink of eternity—and yet

to be sinking in earthly cares, and more and more swallowed up of worldly concerns. Much of my worry arises from my caring for myself, and not casting all my care on him who graciously condescends to care for me. Henceforth, in every affair of life, I desire to have no choice, no will of my own—but to commit all to infinite wisdom and infinite goodness; and I shall never have cause to repent, nor occasion to complain or repine.

August 18, 1779. It has always been a ruling principle with me, not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers; so this day I was married to a girl that I hope has the fear of God as the chief ornament to all her other qualifications.

September 5, 1779. O the corruption that dwells within! O the distress that has invaded me this blessed day! I should perish eternally—but that Jesus is almighty to save; and this alone is my comfort.

January 1, 1780. Whenever I leaned to my own understanding, and depended on my own wisdom—there I have met with disappointment and pain. But when I have committed the matter wholly to God, it has had an happy outcome, beyond expectation. O! then, let me always be at his direction and disposal. When heaven pleases, he can bless with **little**—and put a blessing into little. Or he can blow upon **much**—and put lack into the very wealth that we possess. All is to the end that he may be all in all to us, and that in all things we may have our eye to him.

March 23, 1780. When I have sad and gloomy forebodings of trouble and afflictions, befalling me or mine, I am composed with this consideration—that all things being under the government of God, he will conduct everything for his own glory. And as for his glory I would do and suffer all things—so, if that noble end is attained, I can never complain, however much or long I suffer or smart.

June 25, 1780. God has been pleased to bring my wife safely through child-bearing, and to give a living mother and a living child. But let me avoid making an idol of anything below. O still to keep the heart for God! I know not how

soon, or after what manner, my child may be removed by death—but I commit her to him who has bestowed her on me.

July 11, 1780. By baptism I have dedicated my child to God, and I desire no more to look on her as mine—but only as heaven's loan to me, which at his pleasure he may recall, and at which event I would wish neither to quarrel nor complain—however affection may rise, and nature may rebel. But my grand, my earnest, my daily request is, that she may be a chosen vessel, enriched with the graces of your Holy Spirit. I would also humbly plead, that she may be spared to be a comfort for her parents in the ways of piety.

December 13, 1780. In all things I desire to acknowledge God. And being convinced of its lawfulness, have inoculated my child—after imploring his blessing on the means, that it may prove successful.

December 25, 1780. The child has escaped according to wish. Blessed be his name.

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A Secret Survey into the State of the Soul

by James Meikle, 1730-1799

"Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends You, and lead me along the path of everlasting life."

Psalm 139:23-24

1781 - 1786

March 28, 1781. When threatened with the loss of goods or relations, what a tumult is raised in the mind! How apt are we to arraign the wisdom, the goodness, and the justice of God! Alas! this is too much my present error. But I flee to God in all trials—approve of all his conduct—and claim him for all and all. So sweet is his mercy, that I know it shall be my song while in the valley of misery. And in spite of all my misfortunes, I have reason to sing of it in things of lesser importance, and I hope shortly to sing of it in things of the highest consequence to me in time, and at last to sing to your mercy to me through eternal ages.

April 16, 1781. For some time past my wife has been very ill. But there is mercy mixed with affliction—it was sent at a time when the child was fit to be weaned, and she had patience in her trouble. Medicines have been used for some time without the desired effect. But as it is our duty to use means, so I desire to look to him who can work with or without means. He knows that in all things I would sincerely say, "Your will be done." But O that it may be his holy will to spare the life, and recover the health, of my dear wife. But why do not I expect the death of my friends, or my own death every day?

June 17, 1781. Alas! how little do I improve for the heavenly state? Affliction on our family is too often a clog on our souls—but, through the heavenly blessing, shall in the mean time, or afterwards, yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness. O to improve health and gospel-ordinances when enjoyed!

September 23, 1781. Two days ago my wife, who has long been sick, delivered a dead child, two months before the time. We were struck to think that the little creature was entered on its eternal rest before it came into the world. I had this comfort, that we had both given it in prayer to God. I desire to adore his sovereignty, and to bless him for our remaining living child, and humbly to implore the recovery of my dear wife.

October 6, 1781. My wife, after an apparent recovery, has grown so much worse, that I fear her death. But I have this sweet comfort—that I shall be the only loser, for death to her shall be great gain. O how pleasant are pious spouses in life, and at death! I still implore her recovery. To sit alone without my daily companion, to see my child without a mother, must greatly distress. But to view God sovereign over all, sufficient in all, and an all-sufficient portion after all, may silence and support me under all. I desire no comfort but from God. I refuse no cross that comes from him. But O for grace to improve both to his glory!

While there is life there is hope, and while there is hope I desire to be always at the throne of grace; for who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, and recover my dear wife to me? I believe his power, that he can do it. I believe his mercy, that what is good the Lord will give. And I wait on him with humble expectation, confessing that I am less than the least of his people, and deserve nothing at his hand.

October 8, 1781. If in this life only, I had hope for myself or my dying wife—how miserable I would be, now that she is on the borders of eternity—and I must soon follow! But what glories open to my faith, and shall soon break on her soul in cloudless vision! When this world, and the eternal world of glory world are taken together—the gloom is broken; for this world is but our inn, that our eternal habitation. No matter, then, at what time, or in what manner, we leave our inn, since going home to our Father's house—home to God and to glory!

When the ungodly loses one idol, he cleaves to another, and cleaves closer. But when the Christian (and O to act the saint now!) has idols broken, or delights removed—he

cleaves to God alone.

October 15, 1781. My dear wife is laid in the dust of the earth—torn from my affection and my arms. But her soul is this day triumphing in glory. And is not this comfort, and cause of thankfulness? A few days before her death, she fell into a lethargy, and so could not speak. But I have found a paper since her death, which speaks sweetly, and contains a collection of scripture texts which, she says, had been useful to her, and a personal covenant the day before her marriage, and another since, in which she makes a surrender to God of her husband and her child. O that God may accept of both!

October 21, 1781. O what a sweet soul-satisfying portion do I find God! When the earthly family is broken—he can set the solitary in the heavenly family, and afford communion with himself. When storms and tempests rage, he can command a calm; when affliction and woe, sorrow and anguish, spread gloomy night on the soul—he can reveal the glories of the eternal world, and make celestial day break in on our darkest night.

October 22, 1781. I mind, that on the day my wife died, the psalm that fell to be sung in family-worship was that part of Psalm 39 ver. 5. "You, indeed, have made my days short in length, and my life span as nothing in Your sight. Yes, every mortal man is only a vapor," and verse 9. "I was silent; I would not open my mouth, for you are the one who has done this." I desired to imitate the psalmist in a holy silence; at the same time not despising the chastening Lord—but lying low before him. **And now I desire to commit all my cares, all my concerns to him,** and my child to his protection and providence, where she shall be safe, though I were taken away also by death.

November 20, 1781. On a back-look into many occurrences of my life, O how am I ravished with the conduct of providence, with the kindness of God! In the affairs of life, he has not only given me many things I asked of him—but many times blessed me with kindness, and thus checked my solicitude, and forbade my anxiety. But O where are my returns of gratitude—my full confidence, and fixed

dependence on him?

The best cure of sorrow for the loss of dear relations, is faith fixing within the veil, and taking a glimpse of the inheritance in light! I could have felt no grief, had I gone with my deceased wife to glory. Now, the intervals between our departures is so short in itself, and compared to the eternity of that state, is nothing, that I shall have scarcely time to look around, and see myself left alone, until I shall lift up my eyes with transport, and see myself with all my pious relations, adoring at the highest throne!

December 4, 1781. Though, in the affairs of this life, I have often met with disappointment and pain, yet I see this took place from my own folly; for, trusting to my own wisdom, and wedded to my own plans, I would not drop them when providence dashed them out of my hand. And so it was just to correct my folly, that I should smart the more. But all things have gone well with me, when I have—waited on the counsel and will of God—left with what he took away—accepted of what he gave—and said amen to all he did!

Even in the common affairs of life, I should acknowledge the special providence of God—who over-rules all things, and forseees all events. And though I am afraid to extend my plans for many years to come, who dare not boast of tomorrow, yet prudence in the affairs of this life is the duty of those who look for another life; therefore I lay my plan—and whether providence prospers or disappoints me, I am resigned.

January 1, 1782. To be stubborn, stupid, or insensible under afflictions, may suit a Heathen philosopher—but not a Christian believer. I feel, and because I feel, and am sensible of my losses and afflictions, therefore I strive to be submissive and resigned. But if I felt nothing, resignation would be no attainment.

January 12, 1782. What a sweet display of the power, wisdom, and goodness of God, have I often seen in the conduct of holy providence! So has heaven ruled for me in

the affairs of life, that I am ashamed I am not more resigned to the heavenly disposal. I should trust in him at all times; and at no time shall I be ashamed of my trust. Let goodness and mercy all my days follow me, while I travel on to the heavenly glory; and may my little child be adopted by his heavenly Father—and it does not matter how soon the earthly father be no more.

January 26, 1782. When I look forward to the heavenly state, and see such a weight of glory, such a world of bliss, awaiting every heir of God, I wonder that we should ever complain of any affliction that can befall us by the way. What though laden with disease, and broken with sickness? In a little while, the immortality of bliss, and the vigor of glory, shall be mine. What though oppressed with poverty and need on every side? The treasures of eternity shall shortly enrich me forever. What though he has made desolate all my company? In a short time, I shall join the heavenly multitude in glory.

February 2, 1782. One of my plans has misgiven—but I have no uneasiness, because infinite wisdom and infinite goodness rules for me; and it is enough that God is concerned about all my concerns.

When I look around, I see many parents that get a world of grief with their children. But how often is their sin written in their punishment! They are at no pains to teach their children to fear their heavenly Father—so it is no wonder, then, they forget to honor their earthly parents. Now, though some pious and conscientious parents may have stubborn children, yet it generally holds true—that a neglect in their pious education lies at the root of all.

February 13, 1782. Though affliction and death rob us of our dearest earthly comforts, yet this is ground of consolation, that the throne of grace still stands, to which he may still come with boldness; and that into these courts of grace, not like the Persian courts, we may enter, though mourners.

May 4, 1782. O how good is it to trust in an all-sufficient God! Some time ago an event happened that deprived me of

an annual income. I approved of the dispensation, committed all to providence, and am this day as amply provided for as ever, and am thus encouraged to depend on God alone.

Last night someone broke into my barn, and stole a few oats. The loss is trifling—but the lesson is vast—to secure a treasure which moth cannot eat, rust corrupt, or thieves steal. The worldling toils night and day for the thief or the robber, for it is the same thing whether a man's treasure be snatched from him, or he from it. Now, to every sinner death will act the most complete thief, and relentless robber, though in a manner different from all other robbers, for he leaves him not one penny of all his sums, not a foot-breadth of all his estates, neither friend nor relation, title nor distinction. But, O happy saint! from whom death can take nothing—but brings him to the full possession of all.

July 2, 1782. I hope I can say that the things of time are not very high in my esteem. I can hear of some making great fortunes without any emotions of mind, for I think the patrimony of my children is safer in the treasure of divine providence, than in any bank in Great Britain.

But I lament that corruptions rise, that sin rages within, That my meditations are not more heavenly, and my thoughts more holy. I desire to have no confidence in the flesh—but to depend on all-sufficient grace, the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

July 26, 1782. I was informed that a debtor had by a point of law, defrauded me of a round sum. But my mind was very easy, seeing the treasures of heaven are still entire, and shall enrich me forever.

Sunday I was seized with an influenza, a disease that had raged all around the country for months. Thus I was detained from sacrament, and lay sweating in bed all the Sabbath day—but recovered in a few days. On the whole, while I confess my sins, and confess that I am punished still less than my iniquities deserve, I desire to give God the glory of his wisdom, and to believe that he sees such losses

and disappointments the fittest for me. I would give him the glory of his sovereignty in approving of his disposal, without inquiring why; and the glory of his truth and faithfulness, that all things shall work together for my good.

I have also to remark, that the same Psalm 39 in course of family worship, fell to be sung while I was under this illness; as it had nearly ten months before, when my wife died. I may say, that the admonition being doubled, should keep me mindful of in my frailty, and caution me against murmuring at afflictions of any kind. "You have made my days a mere handbreadth; the span of my years is as nothing before you. Each man's life is but a breath. Man is a mere phantom as he goes to and fro: He bustles about, but only in vain; he heaps up wealth, not knowing who will get it. But now, Lord, what do I look for? My hope is in you. Save me from all my transgressions; do not make me the scorn of fools. I was silent; I would not open my mouth, for you are the one who has done this." Psalms 39:5-9

August 1, 1782. I have often said to God—give me Christ, and I put a blank in his hand, with respect to everything in the world. But I correct myself; for if Christ is mine, I can have no blank, seeing he is more than all riches, dearer than all relations, better than all enjoyments, and can not only satisfy—but fill and overflow my soul, though heaven and earth were gone.

October 11, 1782. Rachel named her child of which she died, 'Benoni'—the son of my sorrow. But Jacob would not keep up the remembrance of the death at his beloved wife, and so he called him 'the son of my right-hand'. So, on the one hand, I wish not to forget the afflictions that befall me; and, on the other, to acknowledge all the mercies of my lot.

October 25, 1782. Yesterday, the shocks of corn were covered with snow, and the growing corn that was strong was laid flat, and covered with snow; and this day it is tempestuous and rainy, and in some parts of the country the harvest is not much more than begun, and the farmers are much afraid that their corn will not be fit for seed. As I suffer, so I sympathize in the calamity. But I observe,

1. That judgments on our substance are felt by all, the saint not excepted—but spiritual plagues are felt and lamented by few.
2. That some parts of the country have escaped the stroke.
3. That we are apt to overlook a special providence in common things, as if he who made the seasons did not over-rule them.
4. We are more prone to mourn for what we have lost, than to be thankful for what is left, though by sin we have forfeited all.
5. That the saint is safe in all, for in famine he has a promise to be fed; and even though he should die of hunger; *death*, like a servant, would only set him down at the table of glory, to feast forever on royal dainties.
6. That to be stupid and insensible under a stroke, is a sin on the one hand; as it is on the other hand to despond under a calamity. Now, though, for my own sake, the sake of the poor, and of a whole country-side, I implore favorable weather; yet if it were said I should have my will in the weather, I would roll all over on an unerring providence, though he should be pleased that my whole crop should rot, for it would be but the chastisement of a father, not of a cruel one; more so if my soul might still feast on eternal love.

November 12, 1782. Two days ago it began to thaw, and this day is a great thaw, with wind and rain. Many potatoes are not dug up, and almost gone with the frost, which will be felt by many families. And too many are likely to cry out against providence, whereas we should condemn ourselves, for we have sinned, and have not served him in the abundance of all things, and therefore he is sending cleanness of teeth. O how vain all earthly things! this crop was very great, and promised plenty—but has come to little. I desire to reprove myself for carnality and too much looking to second causes; and I bless God that I can say, "Your will be done;" and though everything in the world should go to

ruin, still I will rejoice in the Lord, and rejoice in the God of my salvation.

December 3, 1782. The more we concern ourselves with the things of time—the more we are disappointed. But the more we mind heavenly things—the better it shall go with our souls. God is such a portion to his people, that they are rich in the midst of poverty; and content in every condition. I have taken God for my portion, my governor, my guide, and my director in all things. And it is just, when I let him go in any of these respects, that things go ill with me.

December 23, 1782. I seek not to be rich in the world—but to be rich in faith; and this day, it has been to me according to my faith. O to trust in him at all times, and to believe that he is God.

December 31, 1782. It has pleased God to permit me to be defrauded of a certain sum by an unjust person. But I rather pity than rage at my adversary; for when I look onward a few years, and see us both stand at the great tribunal, no losses will disturb me, and no gains will advantage him. The Chaldeans and Sabeans violently spoiled Job, and yet he looks beyond the instruments, and says, "GOD has taken away, blessed be his name."

So I desire to see God in all, who can spoil my crop by frost, or my substance by the fraudulent dealer, or by water, or by fire. But, blessed be his name, I have a treasure which can neither drown, nor burn, nor be frost-bitten, nor be taken away by the deceit of law, or the injustice of the wicked. This year I have met with so many losses, (nor am without the fear of more) that I have nothing for it but an entire resignation to the divine disposal, and strong faith in my divine Rock. God lives—I care not who dies. God rules—let all nature reel in confusion. Though I see nothing but difficulties and darkness before me, well may my faith act on him who is omniscient to foresee, and omnipotent to perform all things. The more purely I rely on God above and beyond means, (neither neglecting nor despising the use of them) the more is my faith of the right kind, and the more is God honored.

January 7, 1783. I kept the morning time as a personal fast, on many accounts, and could not but observe, that Psalm 111 was the ordinary family worship, "He provides food for those who fear him," and the chapter was Jer. 17:7, "Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is." These promises were food to my faith.

February 8, 1783. The price of grain fell a little, and plenty was imported. Let his name be blessed, and the poor praise him.

In something I had an expectation of, I am disappointed. But I am resolved now never to be disappointed—but to approve of every providence. Why do I acknowledge him in all my ways, if I will not allow him to direct steps? Why do I ask counsel of him, and yet murmur at his providence? I have this kind providence to observe in common things; and he who rules in one thing rules in all. But I am angry at myself, that in anything I should sin against this gracious God.

February 14, 1783. I have often observed, that if harassing and disquieting affairs came upon me at any time, it was about sacred times and holy solemnities; and so it fell out at this time, two days before our sacrament. But still my mind was serene, and I had the faith that God, who gave his Son for me, would set bounds to the wrath of man. And O how light is the wrath of man, when the soul is delivered from every spark of divine wrath!

March 23, 1783. Many a method does God try to wean us from our love to this vain world, to this vexatious life. Our flowery comforts are always attended with thorns and prickles, and our best earthly blessings have always something embittering about them. Thus the death of pious and agreeable relations leaves a lasting hurt, and yet we strike our roots deep in the earth, which, being under the curse, can yield nothing but briars and thorns. The storms that ruffle my abode, the disappointments I daily meet with—are kindly designed to call to my mind, and to dispose and prepare me for my departure. And yet how deaf am I to these warnings! But when anxious cares, and vain and

wandering thoughts, vex in sacred times; when temptations assault, and sin gathers strength, and the Comforter who should relieve my soul is far from me, because I have sinned him away—then I grow weary of the world, and say of life, I loathe it, I would not live always. I think I could spin out a life in the midst of every disaster—but I cannot endure a life of sinning or estrangement from God.

April 26, 1783. God is pleased sometimes to delay giving what is needful until the last—to exercise our faith, our patience and resignation. And though the things may be of a common nature, yet, to an observing eye, there is a beautiful concurrence of providences, all wisely ordered by him, without whom a sparrow or a hair cannot fall to the ground. My anxious cares profit me nothing. But the heavenly care supplies all my needs.

July 4, 1783. I desire to acknowledge the kindness of God in all things. O how sweet are those mercies which come as returns of prayer! And as God is the God of all mercies, I may expect that he who gives me one mercy at a needful time, will give me another when the fit time comes; and the more so, since he has given me Christ the sum of all mercies.

August 10, 1783. O what vile, vain, wicked thoughts dance in my mind sometimes amidst pious exercises! This I say—He is a thoughtless Christian that thinks little of the sin of his thoughts. But my comfort is, a gracious Savior can cleanse from secret faults, as well as keep back from presumptuous sin.

November 16, 1783. When come home from sermon, being a cold day, I feel very sleepy, and could not improve the day as I should! But O happy day, when, free from sin and from infirmity, I shall be all vigor in his divine presence! shall never rest, yet never be weary!

December 8, 1783. Being returned home from attending at a sacramental solemnity, my first news were some disasters, and seeming worldly losses. But my soul is composed, cheerful and serene, since nothing in the world is either my

chief joy or chief good.

December 16, 1783. The providences of my lot are amazing and wonderful, and supply the present necessity in a manner which bids—which commands me to hope for the future, and to cast all my cares on him who cares for me.

April 6, 1784. Of all the enemies to the spiritual life, worldly cares are the worst. They come in so many shapes, and from so many quarters, and under such fair pretenses—such as *a lawful care to provide for our family, and to deal justly with others*. And thus they consume our thoughts, and engage our meditations, to the things of time, while heavenly concerns are shut out. Therefore, with Augur would I pray, "Give me neither poverty nor riches."

June 16, 1784. I ask, and dare hardly ask, lest I ask amiss; therefore I ask all temporal good things with submission, and would wish to say—Give **what** you will, give **how** you will, and give **when** you will. This in all things shall not only silence—but support me, that it is the Lord who chooses and refuses for me.

O to arrive at heaven with a soul flaming with love, and well acquainted with the work of the place!

October 5, 1784. I am afraid that my love has not that ardor, nor my devotion that fervor, which they should have, or had at one time. O quicken and revive me, and shed your love abroad in my heart!

October 17, 1784. Alas! on a view of my life and walk, I think it is a dreadful contradiction; for, instead of running the race which is set before me—I sigh and go backward. Instead of having my face heavenward, and my back towards the wilderness—I have my back to heaven, and my face, heart, and affections towards this world. I call evil good—and good evil. I put light for darkness—and darkness for light. I am careful for my body as if it were my soul; and careless of my soul as if it were but my body. I put time in the place of eternity, and the creature in the place of God.

August 28, 1785. My heart, which at all times should be a garden enclosed for none but my Beloved to walk in, alas! this day has been as a vineyard whose hedge is broken down, so that the wild boar of the forest, and the wild beast of the field, destroy it at their pleasure. Vain thoughts, like an herd of untamed brutes, run here and there, and my poor soul is all dismay. O for pity and compassion to my case!

November 16, 1785. As it had pleased Providence to take away my wife about four years ago, so it pleased him to bestow another wife on me at this time; and as I wished never to be unequally yoked with unbelievers, so the woman I got now has the appearance of true religion. But I trust more to the kindness of heaven, than to my own sagacity.

January 10, 1786. Amidst all things in a world, I have only one request—that all my near friends may be the fearers of God. I desire to come with a strong faith to the God of all grace for my poor friends. O to see some marks of grace, some real marks of religion!

April 4, 1786. It is better to go to a throne of grace for everything I need, than anywhere else. I come therefore to the God of all grace, for grace, the best of blessings to my nearest friends, to the wife of my bosom, and my dear child.

May 13, 1786. My child is learning to read the Bible, and to learn the shorter catechism by heart, and I implore a blessing on her education, that she may be able to search the Scriptures, which testify of Christ.

In what danger does a traveler to heaven pursue his journey! Though there were no tempter to waylay him, yet his impediments may be many. There may be some hindrances from his constitution, as he may be fiery or fretful, which in his cooler moments will give him pain; or from his friends, when any of them are either profane, or loiterers in the ways of God; and, finally, from his very circumstances, whether his be affluent or indigent. As, while in the body, the cares and solicitude with which we are pestered are often very great, so great, that, alas! with me, eternity seems to be swallowed up of time, whereas time

should be swallowed up of eternity. But grace shall shine triumphant at last, and shall bring the traveler in safety to the land of glory!

June 30, 1786. Common providence will sometimes add wealth to carnal men—but the child of God feels no disquiet. No degree of poverty will affect my future state, or bar my soul from heavenly bliss. But riches obtained by sinning against God, like Elijah's little cloud, will darken my whole heaven, and pursue with storm and tempest through eternity itself.

September 1, 1786. It is a shame for the child of God not to believe in the *bounty*, and in the *blessing* of providence. By the blessing of providence, I mean, that two men, whose families are alike numerous, of the same station, and whose incomes are equal, yet the one shall be in easy circumstances, and the other in pinching circumstances. However, on the other hand, pinching circumstances are no sign that one is not the favorite of heaven; for even our Savior, the Father's well-beloved, in our world had nowhere to lay his head.

September 9, 1786. It is common to come with our afflictions and troubles to a throne of grace to get them removed, or to be supported under them. But we should also bring our blessings there to get them sanctified. Then I desire to bless God for a living wife and a living child, and to implore grace, the best of blessings, on both their souls. The child is strong—but the dear mother has suffered much. In the natural birth, the poor woman only can travail for her child—but both parents should travail in birth until Christ be formed in their children. Alas! how little do I know of mental pangs, strong actings of faith, constant stugglings in prayer, and exhorting and instructing them as they grow up?

September 17, 1786. Our child was baptized, and so declared a member of the church visible. O that she also may be a member of the invisible church! To go through the ceremony, or the visible part of the sacrament, is easy. But let me mind that the vows lie on me as long as my children are lent to me; and may I, and my tender-hearted wife, never forget that this child is but a loan, and may be called

for whenever Sovereign Wisdom pleases.

November 7, 1786. When this, and that, and the other friend proves false, it gives me great comfort that there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother--and that he is better than all other friends--and that such a friend is mine!

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A Secret Survey into the State of the Soul

by James Meikle, 1730-1799

"Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends You, and lead me along the path of everlasting life."

Psalm 139:23-24

1787 - 1799

June 5, 1787. I continue my complaint of carking cares, and earthly concerns. O to obtain the victory over this beast, which gets its mark imprinted, not only on my hand—but in my head and heart! It will be a happy day in the Church, when Babylon shall fall, and rise no more; and a happy day in the Christian's soul, when sin, Satan, and the world, shall be cast down, and rise no more at all! What cheerful songs and sweet hosannahs will raise to my divine Deliverer on that day!

June 22, 1788. God has been pleased this day to bring my wife in an easy manner through child-birth, and to bless my family with a living mother and a living child. With Jacob I would say, *The God who fed me all my life long unto this day, the Angel who redeemed me from all evil—bless the lad*, and let a better name than the name of my ancestors be named on him; and let him have a name among the living in the New-Jerusalem above; and as he is come into our world on the Sabbath, so, when taken out of it, may he enter on an eternal Sabbath of rest.

May 5, 1789. So full is my dependence on divine Providence, so strong is my faith that God will give what is good, and do what is best for me—that my mind is serene and tranquil.

July 30, 1789. Though far advanced in years, yet being properly called, and being willing to accept of the least office in the church of Christ—I have been admitted an elder. O to set the glory of God before me in all things—and may I be helped to walk according to my engagements.

March 2, 1789. In some things, I see the deceit and partiality of men. But that they and their very actions are under the government of God, composes me. And what I look upon as a present disappointment, and a present loss, may turn out for my future advantage and gain—at least shall let me see the vanity of this world.

Satan is the accuser of the brethren, and, when permitted, how black would he make even the saints, not only to one another, and to the church—but to the heavenly Father himself. But what a comfort that the divine Intercessor answers all his accusations, maintains their cause before the throne, and will at length bring forth their judgment like the noonday!

From the history of the Jews in Esther, may I not learn, that Providence baffles all the wisdom and devices of men—that sinners often make their own snares, and fall into the pit which they have dug—that the wicked can be brought down from their highest station, and that suddenly; as it were in a moment—that the church and people of God can be suddenly brought out of distress—and that all this can be done by very unlikely means, that God the glorious worker may have all the praise. Now, why is such a history preserved in the sacred records—but that God may be glorified, and his people supported under all their pressures, since God changes not?

March 24, 1790. Two days ago my wife safely delivered a fine boy, and both are doing well. Here I would desire to act faith on God in a double respect; as the God of nature, that my son shall not lack food and clothing; and as the God of grace, that he shall have an inheritance among those who are sanctified. Many a parent has lamented that ever such a son was born, and has had good cause to do so. The fear of this may keep me humble. But as race unto race shall praise him, and my child may be among the happy number, in hope of this I am thankful.

January 1, 1791. When I consider the flight of time, I see that all created things must soon be concealed in impenetrable darkness, and then the worldling's heaven

must dissolve in smoke. But as the rising sun gilds the tops of the mountains, so at this period the heavenly glory shall spread a beauty on all around; and then the heaven of the saints shall unfold with every felicity that finite souls can enjoy, or God can bestow.

January 13, 1791. Business people balance their books at the end of the year, and compare their state with former years, and so know whether they make profit or loss; so should I, not only at the end of a year—but when the end of my life cannot be far away. Thirty years ago, my evidences for the heavenly glory seemed solid, clear, and comforting; and though my shortcomings and backslidings have been many, yet I rest in his love. "I will be your God throughout your lifetime—until your hair is white with age. I made you, and I will care for you. I will carry you along and save you." Isaiah 46:4

But when I look round the world, I find some who can talk of death and a future state with all the composure of a real Christian, and yet I have great concerns about the state of their soul. Now, there must be some dreadful mistake here, even in the great concerns of their immortal souls. And lest I fall into the same error, let me examine all again. As I may persuade myself, that I believe on Jesus, and therefore all is safe—let me see if my faith be a dead faith, being without works—or if it works by love. The tree is known by the fruit. Again, if the world has all my love, and if my supreme delight be in the creature, whatever I may pretend to, the love of the Father is not in me. If I can willingly defraud, though under the mask of fair dealing, that is, sell to an ignorant person, any commodity above its real value, and which I perfectly know to be so; or if I buy anything below its real value, taking advantage of the seller's ignorance or necessity; or, by any quirk of law, evade the paying of a just debt; or go to the rigor of the law to oppress a poor opponent, or to gratify private revenge; whatever I may pretend to, these are not the spots of God's children. If I can give up with family-worship for a while, because some are my guests that are not accustomed to call upon God; if I can mingle in carnal discourse, when in carnal company, though seemingly very circumspect when among the saints, whatever I may dream, my heart is not right with God. If I

can keep company with the profane, associate with blasphemers of God's name, and pay friendly visits to the most impious wretches, without any necessity, with whatever calmness I may talk of death and the world to come, surely this is not the way to prepare for either.

February 27, 1791. What a sudden and astonishing transition awaits me from time to eternity, from the material to the spiritual world! Today engaged in the affairs of life, and conversing with my friends, and tomorrow surrounded with millions of spirits, associated with angels, and employed in everlasting concerns! It will, therefore, be my wisdom daily to take farewell of the things of time, and get more and more acquainted with the eternal state.

July 20, 1791. To live at a distance from God, and to have the world rolling in our minds, and created concerns engrossing our thoughts—is not fitting for an heir of God, an expectant of glory. Such a situation may make us long for the happy period of our departure, when we shall flee into the immediate enjoyment of God, and in our adorations rise to the ardor of angels, and the glow of seraphim. Had I any right apprehension of the eternal enjoyment of God, I would meditate more on it, and long more after it, and, in midst of all present disasters, rejoice in the prospect of it.

September 1, 1791. While I might wish to change some things in my situation in life, I reflect that the wisdom of that gracious God who rule me is so perfect, that any other situation in life would not be good for me. Now, though I cannot see how such and such circumstances should hurt me more than others who are in these very circumstances, yet his wisdom is a thousand times better than mine; and if he sees fit—that should silence me. Moreover, I would adore his sovereignty, and submit to his disposal in all things—just because he disposes all things.

October 20, 1791. In the midst of some kind and unexpected providences, for which my heart is filed with gratitude, I condemn myself, that for the best of all blessings, the greatest of all gifts, even Christ, the unspeakable gift of God, my soul is not always filled with glowing gratitude, and a lively sense of heavenly kindness.

November 24, 1791. Some days ago my youngest son was very ill, so ill that I had great fears, and I condemn myself that I held the grip so fast, and I had great struggling between affection and resignation, between sense and faith. However, my kind heavenly Father has given him perfect recovery, for which I desire to bless his holy name.

January 28, 1792. It is the duty of every living man, to acknowledge the goodness of God in continuing him in life, and crowning him with blessings. More so must the Christian to have his heart full of gratitude, if enabled to live a life of faith on the unseen Jesus, and to have his graces—like the fire on the altar—always burning heavenward. But, O! what glowing gratitude, joy, and rapture, will fill my whole soul in heaven, to find myself enjoying a life of communion with the three-one God, and that through all eternity!

February 23, 1792. What continual cause of joy has the child of God, who can say in faith, amidst cares and crosses of every kind—You are the guard of my youth and riper years, the length of my days, the light of my eyes, the joy of my heart, the life of my soul, the rock of my salvation—and, in a word, my God, and my all!

April 21, 1792. Though I am traveling through an enemy's county, beset with dangers, and surrounded with difficulties—yet owing to the wisdom of my heavenly guide, and the omnipotence of my divine guard—I am always safe, and shall finish my course with, joy. And when my race is ended, I shall obtain the crown. O how comforting is this! when I see many who started for the heavenly prize, stumble and fall in their race, have their bones bruised and broken—and question whether ever they shall rise again, and run any more.

But, though now near the ocean of eternity, and the center of everlasting rest, alas—how slow is my motion heavenward, how torpid my love, and how languid my desires after the eternal enjoyment of God! But, O happy day! when in the blissful state I shall approach nearer and nearer to God, and the nearer I approach, my motion

towards him shall be swifter and swifter; and the more I know and love him, my soul will be enlarged and captivated to know and love him still the more.

July 3, 1792. I have been long your servant, and have found you the best of masters, though I have been an unprofitable servant. And after forty years service or more, O Lord, I humbly say, "I am your servant, the son of your hand-maid; you have loosed my bands." And as I can say, I love my master and his service, I love his family, my fellow-servants; so I would never change my service, nor lodge under another roof. I am willing to have my ears bored to his door post, and serve him forever. Yes, I can go a step higher than the Hebrew servant of old; for though neither in the year of release, nor in the jubilee, he did go out, yet at death he was forever free from his master. But at my death I shall only go home to serve him day and night in his temple. I also devote all my family to be his servants forever and ever.

July 15, 1792. Attending a sacramental solemnity in the neighborhood, I was attacked with fits of rheumatism by intervals. When we were to go about family-worship, which was my turn, I had so much pain that I could not be composed. I earnestly entreated God to command relief; and he heard me, for immediately I was serene, and in perfect ease. O how good a Master do I serve! nor let this seem presumption that God heard me, for he has done infinitely more for me—even given me his Son.

July 23, 1792. How uncertain my present life! How near to a future eternal state am I at all times! But how happy if the day of my death shall be the day of my glorification! Then, though the call may be sudden, my passage shall be safe, and my arrival shall be sweet, and I shall forget—not only my afflictions, but all present things, though crowns and kingdoms—as the sports of children, and the amusements of school-boys.

Two days ago, my youngest child seemed to be dying. I resigned her to God, and he has gloriously recovered her. But henceforth I would wish to remember, that all my children are walking on the very brink of eternity, and may

be called there in a moment. But O may it be to the eternal enjoyment of God!

September 30, 1792. The children of Israel were typical of all the children of God. They were not only delivered from the iron-furnaces, the brick-kilns, and the cruel taskmasters—but they were brought into a land flowing with milk and honey, blessed with the liberty of a free people, allowed to sit every man under his vine and his fig-tree, and none to make them afraid. So the saints are not only preserved from going down to the pit, delivered from the lowest hell, forever set free from the anguish of damnation, and the agonies of consummate despair—but are planted in the heavenly Canaan, in the full possession of all good, and in the beatific vision and full enjoyment of God and the Lamb.

Thus the poor sinner has one hell in the punishment of **sense**—while the billows of divine wrath roll over his soul forever; and another hell in the punishment of **loss**—on being banished forever from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.

But the Christian has one heaven in being rescued from such a hell; and another heaven in being raised to such a glory, and possessed of such inconceivable bliss!

January 1, 1793. In the beginning of the year I acknowledge your kindness through all the years of my past life. I look back with wonder and gratitude, I look forward with hope and confidence. I plead for protection from fraud, and direction in all lawful affairs; and I wish to cast my eye a little further, beyond all created things, towards that invisible world which I must shortly enter.

February 24, 1793. With what surprise will I lift up my eyes on the heavenly glories, and will gaze with wonder on the ravishing displays of infinite perfections! It is my shame and sin to know so little of that triumphant heavenly state which I am so soon to enter upon. And the reason is, the things of time so engross my meditations—that heavenly things are such strangers to me. O to be crucified to the world, and to

get the world crucified to me! It will be sad, and unfitting an heir of heaven—to die with the world in my heart; and die I shortly must. I desire to have nothing to do with such a load of cares, since allowed, yes, called and invited—to cast them all on God. But may my whole soul open to the joys of heaven, and the eternal enjoyment of God!

April 21, 1793. How comfortable does piety make old age! My strength may fail, my eyes wax dim—but to be but a few day's journey from my father's house, supports me under all the troubles of my journey. Alas! that I should be such a stranger to my father and my father's house! And how sad that so many should travel so far on the road of life together, and never converse one word about the country where they are going. But some professors, like children, find all their felicity in trivial games, which serious Christians will not join in.

October 6, 1793. Sometimes have I promised myself, in such an ordinance, and at such a season, that I should enjoy communion with God. The season has come, and I have been disappointed. But I have one sweet prospect—that there is a period not far distant when I shall enjoy full, and free, and uninterrupted communion with God. In the heavenly state I shall not be vexed with one distracting thought, not a meditation shall be barren of God.

January 2, 1794. While I am in the body, it is no wonder that I begin the new year with lamentation, mourning, and woe. But I will begin the eternal year with songs and hallelujahs, in which all former cases of grief will be forgotten. When our near connections are guilty of walking contrary to the divine law in any point, I think this should be the rule of our conduct:

1. In the spirit of meekness to show them their error.
2. To use gentleness rather than severity.
3. To bring their case to a throne of grace; for, though with our arguments we may silence them, yet we cannot convince them—God alone can search and convince their heart.
4. To wait with patience towards them, since God is daily exercising patience to us all.

I am taught some noble lessons:

1. To expect no solid or lasting happiness in anything but in God.
2. To see how much we may be mistaken in our opinion of men and things.
3. To expect nothing but disappointment and pain in the world--and so to be prepared for misfortunes.
4. To build upon no present state of things; for a storm of troubles may gather from any place, and at any time.
5. In all things to rejoice in being forever with God, who will eternally wipe all tears from our eyes, and sorrow from our hearts!

January 18, 1794. What a noble prospect opens to the expectant of glory on the other side of death, when the soul shall rise unto the full enjoyment of God, and all troubles of time shall be forgotten forever! It would be a shame for an heir of heaven, walking on the brink of eternity, to be despoiled of his mental calm, his joy in God—for all the storms that earth and hell can raise against him.

There has been a terrible storm, and a great fall of snow, so that the roads were almost impassible. I walked some miles with great difficulty, and coming home after it was dark I lost my way, though not more than a mile from home. I then tried to find the road, and walked backward and forth—but in vain. At last I lost all idea of direction, and, after wandering for hours, I made no progress, and had the melancholy prospect of passing the night in the open field. I made my request to him who in all respects leads the blind in the way they know not. But after walking about two miles in deep snow, I came upon a road, which, after walking two miles more, brought me safely home. I was full of gratitude, when I reflected that my strength might have failed me, as I wandered between three and four hours, often up to the knees in snow, or might have fallen into some pit or loch, and never be seen more. O how safe to dwell under the

shadow of the Almighty!

February 20, 1794. I have in my eye a great number of scripture examples, high in the favor of heaven, who had uncommon afflictions in their families. Adam loses a son by the bloody hands of a brother. Noah pours a severe prophetic malediction on one of his own posterity. Aaron loses two of his sons—consumed in the very commission of their crimes. The meek Moses has to sustain the wrongs of a brother and sister. The wicked advice of his wife would have ruffled the temper of any man but Job. Eli gets a doleful message of what God intends to bring on his house. But "it is the Lord" silences him. David, the man of God, has so many out-breakings in his family, that on his death-bed he complains that his house is so troubled.

May 18, 1794. On my entrance into heaven, I shall find a sweet change, not only of my state—but of the frame of my soul. Every faculty shall be full of God, and every power of soul shall center in God. What a pleasant prospect this to the poor saint, who is daily harassed with worldly thoughts, and a wandering heart, and at his best times buffeted by the grand enemy! But **rest** on the back of such toil, and **victory** on the back of such a conflict—will be doubly sweet. And of such a rest, and such a victory, every saint may rest assured!

October, 1794. That God lives, is the comfort of my soul. That he rules, composes me amidst all the crosses and losses that can befall me below. How often have I had communion with God, in his providences as well as in his ordinances, and beheld him doing wonders for me! When a cross of a singular nature or from a quarter not expected, is protracted, it is a proof that its language is not well understood, or its end not attained; for God does not afflict willingly, or grieve the children of men. O to hear the rod, and him who has appointed it!

October 24, 1794. Though I should not wish for death out of a fit of discontent; or for heaven because greatly afflicted on earth—yet when surrounded with distressing spectacles of sin; when griefs, heart-piercing griefs, pour in on every hand; when people we love seem under the dominion of

Satan; and afflictions, like waves of the sea, dash on us from every quarter—then faith in our eternal enjoyment of God will support the soul under all.

November 18, 1794. To what purpose do I believe in a future state of bliss, if I neither improve for it, nor improve it to my present comfort? Though I am as much concerned in the world as ever, yet in a little time (how soon I cannot say) I shall be separated from all my concerns, bereft from all my friends, estranged from all my acquaintances, and dissolved from all connection with time. Even my dear wife and children, shall keep their place in my affections no longer than my present earthly life. Then, since they are so near and dear to me now, and since I am a daily suppliant at the throne of grace, let my heart's desire and prayer for them be, that they may be saved. But what must that future state be—which is so fast approaching? How will all the divine perfections blaze fully on the powers of my soul! Here they twinkle like stars in the night—there they will shine like the sun in brightness! Here in my views of divine things and future glories, I am like a prisoner, who can see no higher than the roof of his prison. But when brought from prison, my views shall be grand, noble, and extensive as the arch of heaven!

January, 1795. O how am I reprov'd by the men of the world! They are so anxious to heap up riches--which can endure but for a day. Yet I am so careless about the riches which endure to eternity!

It pains me to see some who pass for Christians—they have head, and heart, and hand, full of worldly schemes—not to support a needy family, but to aggrandize a family already in a state of opulence! They are so much occupied with their worldly affairs, that the morning family worship is wholly laid aside, and the evening worship is often interrupted or curtailed; which, I fear, might entail a curse on the wealth thus amassed. Perhaps all their accumulated wealth will be squandered away in dissipation and vice by their children, though the parent's eyes may be hid from the mournful scene.

May 7, 1795. One noble end of affliction is to wean from all

created things, and bring the Christian near to God. But, alas! how do I cleave to what I should let go! But grace can give the victory by degrees, and at death I shall go off in perfect triumph over every foe.

One thing I have to lament, that go where I will in this present world, the discourse in conversation is trifling and insipid, nothing of true religion, nothing of God, nothing of Jesus, nothing of a world to come; and herein do I condemn myself as the chief transgressor.

May 26, 1795. How proper would it be for one in the decline of life, often to set a little time apart to meditate on the heavenly state! And may not I be ashamed to hold the trifling affairs of life so unweariedly, and pass over eternal concerns as trifles of no account.

July 25, 1795. What advantage has the expectant of heaven and glory above others—if the afflictions of this life crush his spirits? In hope of the eternal enjoyment of God, I triumph over all that can befall me in the world. The loss of earthly things is a trifle to me—who have my treasures laid up in heaven. And even the sins of others, which gave me daily sorrow, cannot pain me beyond the hour of death. But on the back of death, I shall enter into the joy of my Lord for all eternity. There my tears of sorrow shall be lost forever, in the rivers of pleasure which flow at his right hand! And my bitter, my heart-felt grief, shall be wholly swallowed up in that fullness of joy which is in his presence!

November 17, 1795. How sad is the case of the child of God sometimes, when he goes mourning without the sun; when the Comforter who should relieve his soul is far away; when he moves heavily in the ways of piety; when he is barren and unfruitful in the work of the Lord; when he walks in darkness and has no light; and complains that God is to him, as failing springs of waters. But in this the saint may still comfort himself against grief on every side: That the covenant of grace can never be broken; that all the promises are faithful; and that God rests in his love, and will bless his people with peace forever more.

January 5, 1796. Worldlings feast in the beginning of the year. I will feast also—but it shall be in the prospect of a happy eternity—when time and trouble are forever past. I will feast on the fullness of the covenant—on the offices of Christ—on the perfections of God. And here I may feast from the beginning to the end of the year, yes, through eternity itself!

June 17, 1796. My wife delivered another child, and I this day devote my young family to God. O! let my daughter **Jean** be duly taken up with the concerns of the invisible world! Let my daughter **Agnes** early seek after God! May my son **George** know and fear the God of his father! May **William** serve God in the kingdom of grace, and enjoy him in the kingdom of glory! Make **Elizabeth** a child of God, and **Margaret** an heir of glory!

June 23, 1796. Long have I had to lament a spiritual languor in my soul—a sighing, and standing still, if not going backward. But if I have a union to the Lord of life, he will recover me from all my decays, and will keep, though weak, still alive.

1797. For several weeks past, by a disorder on my lungs, I have been threatened with death. And though I can say, I know in whom I have believed, and to whom I have committed the keeping of my soul—yet strong were my desires to live a little longer. My reasons for imploring a little time were, several hymns I had in view to get printed, and one essay just going to the press; also my young family, and a worthy affectionate wife. But I condemned myself for putting anything in balance with the eternal enjoyment of God. Yet I thought my request was lawful—from the psalmist's prayer, "O spare me, that I may recover strength." and good Hezekiah's conduct, who wept sorely.

What folly to defer preparation for death, until seized with sickness—when the body is sore broken—and the powers of mind are all languid and feeble—and arrested by death!

However trivial it may seem to some, yet I had comfort in the psalm that fell to be sung in family-worship, which I was

still able to perform, though wearisome nights were appointed to me, Psalm 101:1. "I will sing of mercy and judgment." Here I saw the song of the saint was a *mixed* song. But mercy was the first and chief part of the song; and the judgment inflicted did not hinder him to sing of the mercy bestowed.

After the first comfortable night's rest I got, Psalm 103:4 was my theme, "Who redeemed your life from destruction!" O how sweet was that to my soul!

February 7, 1797. After being home-bound for many weeks, I have been able to attend the sermon for the two past Sabbaths. O how shall I account for the many golden opportunities I have enjoyed! About this time, five of my children had the measles—and all recovered. O what mercies heap on me! I condemn myself that I am not more heavenly minded. O for rich supplies of grace!

February 20, 1797. Our youngest child was in a critical state, through a severe infection. O how anxious were we for her recovery! Whence I condemn myself, that I am not more concerned for her salvation than for her physical health. I would wish to be resigned to holy Providence, who does all things well, and as it were, hang suspended between paternal affection and Christian resignation. O heavenly Father pity and spare!

March 3, 1797. The dear child is still alive—but in great danger. O to be able to say amen to whatever my heavenly Father may do!

March 12, 1797. Some days ago, my pleasant child, not nine months old—was taken from us by death, and set our hearts a-bleeding. But I find, that when strokes of this kind are repeated, there is not a better way to get peace of mind restored, and triumph over our sharpest trials, than by contemplating our eternal enjoyment of God. And in the very prospect of enjoying such an infinite good, I lose the sense of all present afflictions. Is it much to drop one tear, or heave one sigh—and have my eyes wiped for eternity, and my heart brimful of joy forevermore? The time of my

sorrow is so short, that it expires amidst my grief—but my eternal enjoyment shall go on forever; and there shall I forget my afflictions forever!

April 4, 1797. I have had some severe lapses in my health, and I am afraid that I have not learned the language of the rod. I need not say with Job, "Show me why you contend with me," but may say, 'You are righteous, though you should contend against me forever.' But I plead your fatherly compassion, and heavenly pity and desire to act faith on you at all times.

June 4, 1797. For several weeks past, I have been getting better and better, and am now in a tolerable state of health, and desire to bless my kind deliverer, and to live to his glory.

May 28, 1798. You preserve both man and beast; how precious is your grace! Thus, after severe falls, bruises, and broken bones, and other illnesses, I am still in a tolerable state of health. O that I could say that my soul also prospers! However little the world may think of it, I bless the Most High that in my long illness I have been able to go about family-worship morning and evening. I find it good to wait on God.

July 19. It is my duty to be resigned, not only to the cross—but to the kind of the cross, and to its continuance. With what courage may I bear with every burden, with every aggravation, since I have the promise of present support, and in a little while—of eternal deliverance!

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