

THE

Wonderful Conferences

WHICH PASSED BETWEEN THE

Ghost of Mr. Maxwell of Cool,

AND THE

Rev. Mr. Ogilvy of Innerwick.

AS IT


Was found in Mr. OGILVY'S Closet, after his Death, and written by his own Hand.



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T H E
 WONDERFUL CONFERENCES
 WHICH PASSED BETWEEN THE
 GHOST OF MR. MAXWEL OF COOL,
 AND THE
 REV. MR. OGILVY OF INNERWICK.

UPON the 3d day of February 1724, at seven o'clock at night, after I had parted with Thurston, and was coming up the Burial Road, one came riding after me; upon hearing the noise of the horse's feet, I took it to be Thurston; but looking back, and seeing the horse of a grey colour, I called, who's there? The answer was, The Laird of Cool, be not afraid: Looking to him with the little light the moon afforded, I took him to be the Collector of Castle Law, who had a mind to put a trick upon me, and immediately I struck with all my force, with my cane, thinking I would leave a mark upon him that would make him remember his presumption; but being sensible, I aimed as well as ever I did in my life, yet my cane, finding no resistance, flew out of my hand to the distance of
 sixty

sixty feet, and observing it, by its white head, I dismounted, and took it up, but had some difficulty in mounting again, partly by the ramping of my horse, and partly by reason of a certain sort of trembling throughout my whole joints; something also of anger had its share in the confusion: For I thought he laughed when my staff flew out of my hand. Coming up with him again, (who halted all the time I was seeking my staff) I asked him once more who he was? He answered, The Laird of Cool. I enquired, first, If he was the Laird of Cool, what brought him hither, and what was his business with me? He answered, The reason that I want you is, that I know you are disposed to do for me, what none of your brethren in Nithsdale will so much as attempt, though it serve never so good purposes. I told him, I would never refuse to do any good thing, to serve a good purpose, if I thought I was obliged to it as my duty: He answered, since I had undertaken what few in Nithsdale would, for he had tried several persons upon the subject, who were more obliged to him than I was to any person living. Upon this I drew my bridle-reins, and talked in surprise, asked what I had undertaken? He answered, That on Sabbath last, I had heard, you condemned Mr. Paton and the other Ministers of Dumfries, for dissuading Mr. Menzies from keeping his appointment with me; and if you had been in their place, you would have

have persuaded the lad to do as I desired, and that you would have gone with him yourself if he had been afraid, and that if you had been in Mr. Paton's place, you would have delivered my commissions yourself, since they intended to do several persons justice. I asked him, Pray Cool, who informed you that I talked at this rate? To which he answered, You must know, that we are acquainted with many things that the living know nothing about. These things you did say, and much more to the purpose; and all that I want is, that you would fulfil your promise, and deliver my commissions to my living wife. Upon this I said, 'Tis a pity Cool, that you who know so many things, should not know the difference between an absolute and conditional promise: I did indeed, at the time you mention, blame Mr. Paton, for I thought him justly blameable, in hindering the lad to meet with you, and if I had been in his place, I would have acted quite the reverse; but did I ever say, That if you would come to Innerwick and employ me, that I would go all the way to Dumfries on such an errand; that is what never so much as entered into my thoughts. He answered, What were your thoughts I do not pretend to know, but I can depend upon my information, that these were your words: But I see you are in some disorder, I'll wait upon you when you have more presence of mind.

By this time we were at James Dickson's inclosure below the Church-yard, and while I was recollecting in my mind if ever I had spoke these words he alledged, he broke from me thro' the Church-yard with greater violence than ever any man on horse-back was capable of, with such singing and buzzing noise, as put me in greater disorder than I was all the time I was with him. I came to my house, and my wife observed more than ordinary paleness in my countenance, and would alledge that something ailed me; I called for a dram, and told her I was a little uneasy. After I found myself a little refreshed, I went to my closet to meditate upon this, the most astonishing adventure of my whole life.

Upon the 5th of March 1724, being at Harehead baptizing the shepherd's child, I came off at sun-setting, or a little after, and near William White's March, the Laird of Cool came up with me as formerly; and, after his first salutation, bid me not be afraid. I told him I was not in the least afraid, in the name of God and Christ my only Saviour; that if he would do me the least harm (for I know that HE, in whom I trusted, was stronger than all they put together, and if any of them should attempt to do even the horse that I rid upon, as they have done to Dr. Menzie's man, if it be true that is said, and generally believed about Dumfries) I have free access to complain to my Lord and Master,

ter, to the lash of whose resentment, you are as liable now as before.

Cool.) You need not multiply words on that head, for you are as safe with me, and safer, if safer can be, than when I was alive.

Ogil.] Well then Cool, let me have a peaceable and easy conversation with you for the time we ride together, and give me some information about the affairs of the other world, for no man inclines to lose his time in conversing with the dead, without hearing or learning something that is useful.

Cool.) Well, Sir, I will satisfy you as far as I think it proper and convenient: Let me know what information you want from me.

Ogil.] May I then ask you, if you be in a state of happiness or not?

Cool.) There are a great many things I can answer, that the living are quite ignorant of: There are a great many things, that notwithstanding my additional knowledge I have acquired since my death, I cannot answer; and there are a great many questions and things that you may start, of which the last is one, that I will not answer.

Ogil.] Then I know not how to manage our conversation, for whatever I shall enquire of you, I see you can easily shift me, so that I might profit more by conversing by myself.

Cool.) You may try.

Ogil.]

Ogil. Well, then, what sort of a body is it that you appear in, and what sort of a horse is it that you ride upon, that appears so full of mettle?

Cool.) You may depend upon it, it is not the same body that I was witness to your marriage in, nor in which I died, for that is in the grave rotten; but it is such a body as serves me in a moment, for I can flee as fleet with it, as my soul can be without it; so that I can go to Dumfries and return again, before you can ride twice the length of your horse; nay, if I have a mind to go to London, or Jerusalem, or to the moon, if you please, I can perform all these journies equally soon, for it costs me nothing but a thought, or wish; for this body is as fleet as your thought, for in the moment of time that you can turn your thought to Rome, I can go there in person: And as for my horse, it is much like myself, for it is Andrew Johnston my tenant, who died forty-eight hours before me.

Ogil.] So it seems when Andrew Johnston inclines to ride, you must serve him in quality of a horse as he does you now.

Cool.) You are mistaken.

Ogil.] I thought that all distinction between mistresses and maids, lairds and tenants had been done away at death.

Cool.) True, it is, but you do not take up the matter.

Ogil.]

Ogil.] This then is one of the questions you will not answer.

Cool.) You are still mistaken, for that question I can answer, and after this you may understand it.

Ogil.] Well then Cool, have you never yet appeared before God, nor received any sentence from him as a Judge?

Cool.) Never yet.

Ogil.] I know you were a scholar, Cool, and it is generally believed that there is a private judgement, besides the general one at the great day, the former immediately after death.—Upon this he interrupted my arguing.

Cool.) No such thing! No such thing! No trial till the great day. The heaven which good men enjoy after death, consists only in the serenity of their minds, and satisfaction of a good conscience, and the certain hopes they have for an eternal joy, when that day shall come. The punishment or hell of the wicked immediately after death, consists in the dreadful stings of an awakened conscience, and the terror of facing the great Judge, and the sensible apprehensions of eternal torments ensuing; and this bears still a due proportion to the evils they did when living: So indeed, the state of some good folks differs but little in happiness from what they enjoy in the world; save only, that they are free from the body, and the sins and sorrows that attend

tend it: On the other hand, there are some who may be said, rather not to have been good, than that they were wicked, while living; their state is not easily distinguished from that of the former, and under that great class comes a great herd of souls, a vast number of ignorant people, who have not much minded the affairs of eternity, but at the same time, have lived in much indolence, ignorance, and innocence.

Ogil.] I always thought that their rejecting the terms of salvation offered, was a sufficient ground for God to punish them with his eternal displeasure; and as to their ignorance, that could never excuse them, since they lived in a place of the world where the knowledge of these things might easily have been attained.

Cool.) They never properly rejected the terms of salvation, they never, strictly speaking, rejected Christ: Poor souls! they had as great a liking both to him and heaven, as their gross imaginations were capable of. Impartial reason must have many allowances; as the stupidity of their parents, want of education, distance from people of good sense and knowledge, and uninterrupted application, they were obliged to give their secular affairs for their daily bread, the impious treachery of their pastors, who persuaded them, if they were of such a party, all was well; and many other considerations, which
God,

God, who is pure and perfect Reason itself, will not overlook: These are not so much under the load of divine displeasure, as they are out of his grace and favour; and you know it is one thing to be discovered, and quite another thing to be persecuted with all the power and rage of an incensed earthly king. I assure you, mens' faces are not more various and different in the world, than their circumstances after death.

Ogil.] I am loath to believe all that you have said at this time, Cool, (but I will not dispute those matters with you) because some things you have advanced, seem to contradict the scriptures, which I shall always look upon, to be the infallible truth of God; for I find in the parable of Dives and Lazarus, that the one was, immediatly after death, carried up by the angels into Abraham's bosom, and the other immediatly thrust down to hell.

Cool.) Excuse me, Sir, that does not contradict one word that I have said, but you seem not to understand the parable, whose only end is to illustrate the truth, that a man may be very happy and flourishing in this world, and most wretched and miserable in the next; and that a man may be miserable in this world, and more glorious and happy in the next.

Ogil.] Be it so, Cool, I shall yield that point to you, and shall pass to another which
has

has afforded me much speculation since our last rencounter, and that is, how you came to know that I talked after the manner I did, concerning Mr. Paton on the first Sabbath of February last. Were you present with us, but invisible? He answered very haughtily; No, Sir, I was not present myself. I replied, I would not have you angry, Cool; I proposed this question for my own satisfaction, but if you don't think proper to answer it, let it pass. After he had paused with his eyes on the ground for three or four minutes of time at most, with some haste and seeming cheerfulness, he says;

Cool.) Well, Sir, I will satisfy you in that point: You must know, that there are sent from heaven angels to guard and comfort, and so to do other special good services to good people; and even the spirits of good men departed, are employ'd on that same errand.

Ogil.] And do you not think that every man has a good angel!

Cool.) No, but a great many particular men have, and there are but few houses of distinction especially, but what have at least one attending them, and from what you have already heard of these spirits, it is no difficult matter to understand how they may be serviceable to each particular member, though at different places, at a great distance. Many are the good offices which the good angels do
men

men that fear God, though many times they are not sensible of it; and I know assuredly, that one powerful angel, or even active, clever soul departed, may be sufficient for some villages; but for your great cities, such as London, Edinburgh, or the like, there is one great Angel that has the superintendance of the whole: And there are inferior angels or souls departed, to whose peculiar care such a man of such particular weight or business is committed. Now, Sir, the kingdom of Satan does ape the kingdom of Christ as much, in matters of politics, as can be well known that the course of wisdom is from above; so that from hence are sent out Missionaries in the same order; but because the kingdom of Satan is much better replenished than the other, instead of one devil there are in many instances, two or three commissioned to attend a particular family, of influence and distinction.

Ogil.] I read, that there are ten thousand times ten thousands of angels that wait upon God, and sing his praise, and do his will, and I cannot understand how the good angels should be inferior in number to the evil.

Cool.) Did I not say, that whatever the number be, the spirits departed are employed in the same business, so that as to the number of original deities, whereof Satan is chief, I cannot determine, but you need not doubt, but there are more souls departed to that place,

place, which in a loose sense you call hell, by almost in infinity, than what are gone to that place, which in a like sense you call heaven, who likewise are employed in the same purpose; and I can assure you, by the bye, that there is as great a difference between angels both good and bad, as there is among men, with respect to their sense, knowledge, cunning, cleverness, and action; nay, which is more, the departed souls in both sides, out-do, severals, from their very first departure, of the original angels. This you will perhaps think a paradox, but it is true.

Ogil.] I do not doubt it, but what is that to my question about what I am solicitous.

Cool.] Take a little patience, Sir, from what I have said, you might have understood me, if you had had your thought about you; but I shall explain myself to you. Both the good and bad angels have stated times of rendezvous, and the principal angels who have the charge, either of towns, cities, or kingdoms, not to mention particular persons, villages, and families, and all that is transacted in these several parts of the country, are there made open; and at their rencounter on each side; every thing is told as in your parish, in milns, kilns, and smithies, only with this difference, that many things false are talked at the living rencounters, but nothing but what is exact truth is said, or told among the dead; only I must observe to you, That as I am
credibly

credibly informed, several of the inferior bad angels or souls of wicked men, departed, have told many things that they have done, and when a more intelligent spirit is sent out upon enquiry, and the report of the former seeming doubtful, he brings in a contrary report, and makes it appear truth, the former fares very ill. Their regard for truth prevents it, for while they observe the truth, they do their business; and keep their station, for God is truth.

Ogil.] So much truth being among the good angels, I am apt to think that lies and falsehood will be as much in vogue among the bad.

Cool.) A gross mistake, and it is not the alone mistake which living folks fall under, with respect to the other world, for the case plainly is this, an ill man will not stick at any falsehood to promote his design, so, as little will an evil soul departed, stand at any thing that can make him successful, but in making report, he must tell the truth, or woe be to him; but besides their monthly, quarterly, yearly, or weekly meetings, or what ever they be, departed souls acquainted, may take a trip to see and converse with one another yearly, weekly, daily, or oftener if they please. Thus then I answer your question, that you were so much concerned about, for my information was from no less than three persons, *viz.* Andrew Aikman, who attends Thurston's family,

mily, James Corbet, who waits upon Mr. Paton, who was at your house: and an original emissary, appointed to wait upon yours.

Ogil.] At this, I was much surprized, and, after a long thinking, I asked him, And is there really, Cool, an emissary from hell, in whatever sense you take it, that attends my family?

Cool.) Yes, you may depend upon it.

Ogil.] And what do you think is his business?

Cool.) To divert you from your duty, and cause you, underhand, to do as many ill things as he can, for much depends on having the minister on their side. Upon this I was struck with a sort of terror, which I cannot account for, nor express: In the mean time, he said several things that I did not understand, but after a little, I coming to my former presence of mind, said,

Ogil.] But Cool, tell me in earnest, if there be indeed a devil that attends my family tho' invisible to us all!

Cool.) Just as sure as you are breathing; but be not so much dejected upon this information; for I tell you likewise, that there is a good angel that attends you, that is stronger than the other.

Ogil.] Are you sure of that, Cool?

Cool.) Yes, there is now one riding on your right hand, who might as well have been elsewhere, for I meant you no harm.

Ogil.]

Ogil.] And how long has he been with me?

Cool.) Only since we passed Brand's Lee, but now he is gone.

Ogil.] We are just now upon Elenfcleugh, and I desire to part with you, though perhaps I have gained more by our conversation, than I would have done otherwise in a twelve-month. I chuse rather to see you another time, when you are at leisure, and I wish it were at as great a distance from Innerwick as you can.

Cool.) Be it so, Sir, I hope you will be as obliging to me next rencounter, as I have been to you this.

Ogil.] I promise you I will, in as far as it is consistent with my duty to my LORD and MASTER CHRIST JESUS; and since you have obliged me so much by information, I will answer all the questions you propose, as far as, consists with my knowledge, but I believe you want no information from me.

Cool.) I come not to be instructed by you; but I want your help of another kind.

Upon the ninth of April 1724, as I was returning from Oldhamstock, Cool came up with me on horseback, at the foot of the ruinous inclosure, before we come to Dod; I told him his last conversation had proved so acceptable to me, that I was well pleased to see him again, and that there was a vast number of things that I wanted to inform myself
further

further of, if he would be so good as to satisfy me.

Cool.) Last time we met, I refused you nothing you asked, and now I expect, that you will refuse me nothing that I shall ask.

Ogil.] Nothing, Sir, that is in my power, or that I can with safety to my reputation and character. What then are your demands?

Cool.) All that I desire of you is, That as you promised that Sabbath-day, you would go to my wife, who now possesses all my effects, and tell her the following particulars, and tell her in my name, to rectify these matters. First, That I was owing justly to Provost Crosby, five hundred pounds Scots, and three years interest: But upon hearing of his death, my good-brother the Laird of Chappel and I, forged a discharge, narrated the bond, the sum and other particulars, with this honourous clause, that at the time it was fallen by, and could not be found; with an obligation on the Provost's part, to deliver up the bond, as soon as he could hit upon it; and this discharge was dated three months before the Provost's death; and when his son and successor Andrew Crosby, wrote to me concerning this bond, I came to him, and shewed him the discharge, which silenced him; so that I got out my bond without more ado. And when I heard of Robert Kennedy's death, with the same help of Chappel, I got a bill upon

upon him for an hundred pound sterling, of which I got full and complete payment, and Chappel got the half. When I was at Dumfries, the day that Thomas Grier died, to whom I was owing an account of thirty-six pounds sterling, Chappel my good-brother was then at London, and not being able of myself, (being but a bad writer) to get a discharge of the account, which I wanted exceedingly; I met accidentally with Robert Boyd, a poor writer lad in Dumfries, I took him to Mrs. Cornock's, and gave him a bottle of wine, and told him, that I had paid Thomas Grier's account but wanted a discharge, and if he would help me to it, I would reward him: He fled away from me in a very great passion, saying, "He would rather be hanged, but if I had a mind for these things, I had better wait till Chappel came home." This gave me great trouble, fearing, that what Chappel and I had done formerly was no secret, I followed Boyd to the street, made an apology that I was jesting, commending him for his honesty, and took him solemnly engaged, never to repeat what had passed. I sent for my cousin Barnkewrie, your good-brother, who, with no difficulty, for a guinea and a half, undertook, and performed all that I wanted; and for a guinea more, made me up a discharge for two hundred pounds Scots, that I was owing to your Father-in-law, and his friend Mr. Muirhead; which discharge I gave to

John

John Ewart, when he desired the money; and he, at my desire, produced it to you, which you sustained. A great many the like instances were told, of which I cannot remember the persons' names and things: But, says he, What vexes me more than all these, is the injustice I did to Homer Maxwell, tenant to my Lord Nithsdale, for whom I was factor: I borrowed two thousand merks from him, five hundred of which he had borrowed from another hand; I gave him my bond, and for reasons I contrived, obliged him to secrecy; he died within the year, and left nine children, and his wife had died before himself. I came to seal up his papers for my Lord's security: His eldest daughter entreated me to look through them all, and to give her an account what was their stock, and what was their debt; I very willingly undertook it, and in going through the papers, I put my own bond in my pocket: His circumstances proved bad, and his nine children are now starving. These things I desire you to represent to my wife, and take her brother with you, and let them be immediately rectified, for she has sufficient funds to do it upon; and if it were done, I think I would be easy and happy; therefore I hope you will make no delay. After a short pause, I answered, 'Tis a good errand, Cool, you are sending me, to do justice to the oppressed and injured, but notwithstanding that I see
myself

myself come in for two hundred pound Scots: yet I beg a little time to consider on the matter; and since I find you are as much master of reason now as ever, and more than ever, I will first reason on the matter in its general view, and then with respect to the expediency of my being the messenger, and this I will do with all manner of frankness. From what you have said, I see clearly, that your present state is so, that I need not ask more questions upon that head, and you need not bid me take courage, and not be afraid of you, for at this moment, I am no more afraid of you, than of a new born child.

Cool.) Well, say on.

Ogil.] Tell me then, since such is your ability, that you can fly a thousand miles in the twinkling of an eye, if your desire to do these oppressed justice, be as great as you pretend, what is the reason you do not fly to the coffers of some rich Jew or Banker, where there are ten thousands of gold and silver: Invisibly lift, and invisibly return it into the coffers of the injured: And since your wife has sufficient fund and more, why cannot you empty her purses, in your invisibility, to make those people amends?

Cool.) Because I cannot.

Ogil.] If these things be rectified you would be easy and happy: I do not at all credit that, for whatever justice may be done to the
people,

people, yet the guilt of the base action always remains upon you.

Cool.) Now you think you have silenced me, and gained a notable victory, but I will show you the mistake immediately; for I cannot touch any gold or money, by reason of these spirits that are the stated guardians of justice and honesty.

Ogil.] What is that you tell me, Cool? Do not unworthy fellows break houses every night? and yet you that can put yourself into so many hundred different shapes in a moment cannot do it: What is that you tell me, Cool?

Cool.) 'Tis true, Sir, but against the living, men may find out some probable means of securing themselves, but if spirits departed were allowed that, no man would be secure; for in that case, every man that I had a prejudice at, would soon be beggared.

Ogil.] Might not you go to the mines of Mexico and Peru, where these little sums will not be missed?

Cool.) No, Sir, for the same reason.

Ogil.] But, Cool, there is so much treasure lost in the sea, you might easily dive into the bottom of it, search that, and refund those people their losses, where no man is injured.

Cool.) You are a little too forward this night, Sir, and incline much to banter, what I have said, might satisfy you; but since it
does

Does not, I will tell you further, that no spirit, good or bad, have power to take any money or gold: The good never do, though the bad, if one in an age, 'tis no small quarrel, for if we were allowed them, then they would be very successful in their business, and never fail of gaining their points.

Ogil.] What hinders them, Cool?

Cool.) Superior powers that guard and govern all.

Ogil.] You have satisfied me entirely upon that head, but pray, Cool, what is the reason that you cannot go to your wife yourself, and tell her what you have a mind; I should think this a much surer way to gain your point.

Cool.) Because I will not.

Ogil.] That does not satisfy me, Cool.

Cool.) That is one of the questions that I told you long ago, I would not answer, but if you go as I desired, I promise to give you full satisfaction, after you have done your business: Trust me for once, and believe me, I will not disappoint you.

Upon the 10th of April, 1724, coming from Old-Hermes upon the post-road, I met with Cool, upon the head of the path called the Pease. He asked me if I had considered the matter he had recommended? I told him I had, and was in the same opinion I was in when we parted; that I could not possibly undertake his commission, unless he could give me

me it in writing under his hand. I told him that the list of the grievances were so great, that I could not possibly remember them without being in writing, and that I wanted nothing but reason to determine me in that and all affairs of my life: I know, says he, that this is a mere evasion; but tell me if the Laird of Thurston will do it? I am sure, said I, he will not; and if he should, I would do all that I could to hinder him, for I think he has as little concern in these matters as myself. But tell me, Cool, is it not as easy to write your story as to tell it, or to ride on what do you call him, for I forgot your horse's name.

Cool.) No, Sir, it is not; and perhaps I may convince you of the reasonableness of it afterwards.

Ogil] I would be glad to hear a reason that is solid, for not speaking to your wife yourself; but however, any rational creature may see what a fool I would make of myself, if I should go to Dumfries to tell your wife, that you had appeared to me, and had told me so many forgeries and villainies that you had committed; and that she behoved to make reparation: The event might perhaps be, that she would scold me; for she would be loath to part with any money she possesses: and therefore tell me I was mad, or possibly pursue me for calumny. How would I vindicate myself? How could I prove that you had

24 *Conferences between Cool and Ogilvy.*

had ever spoken with me? Mr. Paton and the other ministers of Dumfries would tell me, it was the devil that had spoken to me, and why should I repeat these things for truth, which he, that was a liar from the beginning, had told me? Chappel and Barnhewrie would be upon my top, and pursue me before the commissaries; and every body would look upon me as brain-sick or mad; therefore I entreat you, do not insist upon sending me an April errand. The reasonableness of my demands I leave to your own consideration, as you did your former to mine. But dropping these matters, till our next interview, give me leave to enter upon some more diverting subjects: and I don't know, Cool, but the information you have given me, may do as much service to mankind, as the redress of all these grievances would amount to.

MR. OGILVY died very soon after.



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