

T. Kendall to B. Woodd, 23 January 1813

Harrow Road 23 January 1813

Rev^d and Dear Sir,

In communicating any particular occurrences in my own private history, especially such as are calculated to shew the influence of Religion and religious principles upon my mind, I am aware that I ought solely to endeavour thereby to magnify and illustrate the exceeding great and tender mercies of God in Christ Jesus and to tell of his goodness only. I shall therefore, I trust, under this impression, and in compliance with your request proceed to relate some circumstances which under the direction of Divine Providence brought me under the sound of the Gospel, and led me to express a desire to use my feeble efforts in promoting the views of the "Society for Missions to Africa and the East" in its endeavours to instruct, and point out the way of salvation to the Heathen World.

For many early religious impressions which were cultivated in my mind, I have been [f] indebted under God, to the kind instruction and exertions of my ever honored mother, whose immortal spirit has sometime since taken its flight to another, and I trust to a better world. It had pleased God to exercise her with many trials which led her to seek for consolation in Religion. She was a constant attendant at Church and a regular communicant, and took a great deal of pains with me while I was with her at home. She took delight in reading the Bible, and its contents were the general topics of her conversation. The family was called to prayer, and I and my youngest sister often attended her in her private devotions. I recollect her laying one command upon me in particular when I

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first left her at the age of fourteen, namely, "that I would never omit falling on my knees to private prayer either in the morning or in the evening in any situation in which it might please Divine Providence to place me." This command, given in such an affectionate manner I never dared to lose sight of. But alas! [f] I got into a Solicitor's family where there was no religion; this important duty was therefore soon performed only as a kind of quittance, I felt very little interest except in the time of trouble. It was a mercy that I did not continue living there! In the year following I engaged to teach a School in a village nearer home. There I came into the House of a religious Family and the anxiety which the ^(a) Master and Mistress manifested to promote my eternal interests will, I hope be ever recollected with gratitude by me. I had also another pious^(b) friend (a Clergyman) to whom I am indebted for the chief part of my education, and from whom as opportunity offered, I have received the most friendly counsel and assistance with regard both to my spiritual and temporal welfare. He was Minister of the Parish ~~Church of North Thoresby~~ [sic] where I was^(c) born and took great notice of me while I attended his School; and some years after he had removed to another^(d) Village he sent for me to live near him. This happened when I was about eighteen years of age and about this period I had strong religious impressions upon my mind. I assisted my

(a) Mr & Mrs Lawson Immingham (b) The Rev^d W^m Myers (c) North Thoresby
Lincolnshire (d) North Somercotes [f]

impressions upon my mind. I assisted my friend in the education of his Scholars, and also paid strict attention to study with him. I proceeded in the

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Latin Classics. I read also Burkitts Testament, The Lives of Bishops Wilson and Ball, and part of their other writings, also Doddridge's Rise and Progress and various other books upon religious subjects. I also purchased a little farm consisting of a House and fifteen acres of Land upon which I studied and practised agriculture for about two years, and I should undoubtedly have continued in this way of Life, but Providence interfered, and on a sudden I was requested to take the care and Education of the children of three Gentlemen at some distance and I gave up the delights of plowing and sowing, and reaping. Should I be called upon to resume this employment, I should find my little stock of knowledge in Agriculture exceeding useful to me. In this last ^(e) situation I first became acquainted with the affectionate and willing partner of my enterprise.

(e) Kirmington [f]

The above particular instances of the goodness and mercy of God in raising me up such valuable friends in early life, I think it my duty to record in order to shew how many claims He has upon my gratitude and love. And you will judge, Sir, that to see me go on in the above promising way was to my mother and my ^(f) friend peculiarly gratifying; but they were deceived and disappointed; and I was deceived and humbled too. The world was giving me praises which I could not bear, and after having lived three years or more as a tolerably consistent religious character, the World and sin and Satan entangled me in their snares and I fell an unhappy victim. I had trusted too much to my own arm, I was not acquainted with myself and the evil nature of sin. I did not

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cry for help. I listened to the voice of temptation. I was something like to Cornelius in understanding; far beneath him in manner of life. Thus passed on many days, unhappy always.

^(f)I still correspond with this Gentleman. [f]

When I thought of religion, partially awakened and having some confused Ideas of the way of salvation but I had not learnt the deep apostacy [sic] of fallen man; it would be well for me if I knew more of this truth now! I had not studied the spirituality and excellency of the divine Law, as holy, just and good; worthy to be observed and obeyed; that man as a transgressor cannot be justified by it, and that therefore it is as a Schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ. That the agency of the Holy Spirit is indispensably and absolutely necessary to enlighten the understanding, to change the will, renew the affections and to form the new man. That Faith which is the gift of God, must be earnestly sought for and prayed for in order that we may be directed to the foot of the Cross of an expiring Redeemer as the only refuge from the wrath to come. The fault was in me. I have reason to be humbled and ashamed before God: for had I called upon Him faithfully, He would [f] have assisted and instructed me: but I neglected Him, and the kind instructions of my friends as to their apparent effects, for some years seemed to have been in vain.

I now, Sir, come to that part of my little history which I humbly and devoutly pray both you and I may have reason to reflect upon with joy, and with thankfulness to our common Lord and Saviour while we live, and after our Death. I have before mentioned to you the circumstance of my first becoming

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acquainted with M^{rs} Kendall. After I was married to her I returned to my own native village where I followed the Business of a Linen Draper and Grocer. My returns were insufficient which led me to speculate in Hops. It was in the year 1805 that I purchased fifty five packets with an intent to sell them again at the first favorable opportunity: and it was in the month of November in the same year, that I was induced to ship part of them for London in consequence of the flattering accounts given in the London Papers of the advance of that article. [f] From the sale of the Hops I expected to receive considerable profit; and as I had a desire to see the Metropolis I thought this the only time to gratify it. Accordingly I came up with them myself by Sea. Upon the Lords Day after my arrival I was providentially led by Bentinck Chapel while on my way to see a near relation of M^{rs} Kendall, and I overheard the Congregation singing a psalm. This circumstance led me to enquire in the course of my conversation with my friends at Paddington to what Society of Christians this Chapel belonged; for I had not before then seen a Chapel of Ease belonging to the Church of England. When I received an answer and was rather particular in my enquiries respecting the character of the Minister their little boy (William Johnson) who was then in the Philological School showed me some of his Cards & Tracts; and offered to obtain for me a comfortable seat in the evening if I was inclined to attend Divine Service. I readily accepted this offer; for I had been from my infancy attached to the established [f] Church, and was then in intimate friendship with the clergyman of the Village where I resided. As I entered the Chapel the congregation was singing again, and the prospect was new to me

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and delightful. My attention was arrested as out of a long slumber during the solemnity of the service and particularly when I was told so plainly and impressively what was the only remedy for sin and misery. Before this I had never seen Public Worship conducted throughout in the Church of England with so much advantage. I had indeed met with very few instances in which our excellent Liturgy did not appear reduced to a mere form. The Devout singing of psalms was very rare, and generally speaking no attention whatever was paid to the catechetical instruction of children. I had never heard a sermon preached in favor of the heathen, nor of any other charitable institution in my life. Those who best know the value of religion would upon being told of the above merciful dispensation of Divine Providence towards me think it a mercy that I did not disregard it. It was a call upon me to reflect! I had been brought by a way that I knew not [f] and directed to the "fountain of Living Water." And I do account it one of the greatest Mercies that I have received from a merciful Saviour, who "came to seek and to save that which was lost" that I was induced to relinquish my situation in the country which on account of the nature of my connections would have been very unfavourable for an undecided christian. Accordingly after the service at Bentinck Chapel was over, after I had reflected on my want of a situation, and the state of my mind as to spiritual things; and saw, or thought I saw the probable means of my recovery before my eyes I resolved in dependance upon the blessing of Providence to remove to London. With this view I left my Hops unsold, I returned home upon the monday following and sold my little property; I came to Town in January, and

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fixed my residence near to those means of grace, which I trusted would lead me to the hope of glory. The 227th and 235th Psalms in your Collection as subjects for Devotion were particularly interesting to my feelings as soon as I first heard them sung. [f]

There was one event of a temporal nature which I believe happened on account of my departure from the country, and which gave me much pain. My Father and Mother had retired to spend their declining years upon a small copyhold estate, which by birthright would have been mine. Upon this I had spent all my early days. The fruit trees were called mine, and some trees round the orchard and premises had been planted by my own hands, and were growing up towards maturity. There was not a piece of arable or pasture land belonging to it, to which I had not been repeatedly led by the hand of my mother. The whole had borne witness to her industry, and to her prayers and grief. There died my father at the advanced age of ninety three years, and there also died my youngest sister rejoicing in the bright prospect of eternal glory. I visited her once upon her deathbed; she loved me; I think I can still see her raising her head from her pillow, and expressing the most affectionate and tender concern for my future and everlasting welfare. It pleased God that I [f] should neither have nor enjoy this little paternal property. I have therefore bid farewell to it, and have left it to return no more. I am now very thankful even for this. I had been too fond of it. When a local attachment stands in the way of a mans usefulness or happiness it is extremely injurious to him; and the recollection of the joy mingled with weeping with which my mother received

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me at my last interview with her, and the chief occasion of that joy, will I hope continue to bear down in my mind every other consideration which compared with this is not worth a moments concern.

I have now had the happiness to enjoy the inestimable priviledges [sic] of public worship and christian communion here for upwards of seven years and it affords me great comfort and satisfaction, that I have had so many opportunities (private and public) of receiving the most important instruction and information from you, and my pious friend the Rev^d M^r Mann. I trust that the sense of these blessings which extend to my family as well as to me, will always be treasured up in our [f] grateful remembrance both to God and to you & him. Indeed Sir; upon the whole I have had no reason to regret this adventure; quite other wise; It was the way I was led by a gracious hand to a clearer discovery of what man has brought upon himself by sin, and from which the mercy and grace of God in Christ Jesus our Saviour can alone deliver him. To His Name and to his Salvation shall every ransom'd son and daughter of our first offending parents ascribe the praise of their eternal felicity.

I am now about to be sent out in a cause of all others the most important, and in which Faith and Patience require to be kept in lively exercise. It was after reading the eighth report of the "Society for Missions to Africa and the East" that a desire was awakened in my mind to embark with my family in the cause the Society had espoused. I could not but be seriously affected with the distressing accounts which I continually heard respecting the deplorable state of the Heathen World. That the Soul of a poor heathen was as valuable as my

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own I could not doubt; nor that Christ was as ready to save him [f] nor could I take the slightest retrospective view of past Blessings, mercies, and deliverances without noticing the innumerable obligations I was under to the Divine Author of them. I pray that under a feeling sense of obligation and duty to Him, I may henceforward be employed in promoting the real good of my fellow creatures, that I may experience more of the love of Christ in my own soul! be under the influence of His Holy Spirit more and more, and divinely led by that influence to use my feeble efforts in publishing to the heathen World the Honor of Jesu's Name and the Blessings of his Salvation.

I and my dear partner are now going to bid farewell for a time to the enjoyment of many blessed priviledges, and to the society of many with whom we have joined in sweet communion, and whom we sincerely love in the bonds of the gospel. Under any other circumstances than those in which we are placed the Idea must be truly distressing. Indeed, Sir, as it is, it will be a painful separation. [f] We humbly hope however, that it is but for a time and that we shall finally meet you in a brighter World. We feel ourselves happy too, in the contemplation that the prayers of the Faithful will ascend in behalf of ourselves & our children, that we may be divinely instructed, and qualified for the work that lies before us: so that we may have the high and distinguished honor through the blessing of the Lord and through the instrumentality of the society to proclaim as soon as it may be practicable the news of the approaching Gospel to a class of our fellow creatures who are at present lost in ignorance, and know not the way of salvation. And am Rev^d Dear Sir

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Dutifully & faithfully Yours,

Tho. Kendall

The Rev^d Basil Woodd

Paddington Green