

Journal 1767

Oct. 25 - Nov. 1

A copy of a Letter written by ye Revd Saml Kirtland
to ye Revd Dr. Wheelock.

Sir: I am now set down to give you some account of my situation
& circumstance of affairs in ys quarter.

(Oct. 25) *October 25th sabbath evening I was inform'd by a young
man that 2 or 3 women were drinking just by ye town & that they
had great Quantities of Rum; I thanked him for his faithfull-
ness, & sent for 2 or 3 of ye principle Indians & went imme-
diately to ye Company found one very much intoxicated & 2 or
3 more just upon ye turning point; I was inform'd by some
of ye by standers who were unfriendly to drirking where they
had concealed their Liquor. for fear of me which I distroy'd
as soon as discover'd, without any further Ceremony: I am
sence informed that one of ye poor sordid wretches fell upon
her kneess & with cries & tears mourned over her Beloved &
licked up what was not soaked into ye Earth with many Imprecations
against ye cruel Minister.

(Oct. 26) Monday morning ye Husband of ye drunken woman that
owned ye Liquor called Jau-na-whau-na-gea came to my house to
inquire into ye affair & know ye Reasons for my doing as I
had done. We talked together about 2 hours. I reasoned with
him to ye utmost of my Ability upon Temperance, Righteousness,
& Judgement to come he gave in to every thing I said &
pretended to be well pleased, but before he would leave me
he insisted on my paying for half ye Liquor if no more other-

* Oct. 25 was Sunday in 1767

wise he could not forget, if he justify'd my conduct. To which I answerd if I granted his Request I should do that which is much worse & less justifiable than breaking the Cagg of Rum. I gave him such Reasons as quite silenced him; he sat mute for some time, after all appear'd dissatisfied and I suspected from his Looks he was determining on Revenge. He went off for that Time but soon after purchased Liquor of some of ye Onondages passing that way on their Return from the white People & gave out very high words towards evening. Next Morning
Oct. 27) (Tuesday) he came into my House in a very haughty & insulting Manner & began to threaten me; I desir'd him with ye utmost calmness & seeming indifference to retire till he was a little more composed & better prepar'd for conversation, when I would be glad to see him; he still persisted & finding I was not frightened, told me he was in earnest, that I had better attend to what he said upon which I thought prudent to get clear of him as soon as possible, and ye sooner ye better as I was jealous he had a knife in his hand by his keeping one arm under his Blanket. which I afterwards found groundless. While I was gently leading to ye Door he attempted to gripe me on ye Throat-- upon which I clos'd with him & laid him down and call'd for Joseph Johnson to assist in binding him-- he had twice too much strength for me had I not been engaged in a good cause-, tho' I gave him fortunately such a fall as disabled one of his arms (for any use that day) or I could

not have kept him where he was. Mr. Dodge being a stranger I refused his hand in ye affair; he helped a little notwithstanding in tying ye knots: soon after came in his wife in a terrable passion, demanded him loose, but I refus'd to grant her unreasonable Request, tho' I told her with a seeming indifference by & by it was best for her he should continue in that posture till he was a little over his passion. She raged with more Violence, began to strike & tried to bite like a dog-- at length she shared ye same fate by ye kind assistance of another Indian woman (your little Peter's Mother) call'd ye Queen for which her hair was pulled & her Life threatened afterwards.

All this was done without being sensible of ye least emotion of Anger (Malice or desire of Revenge) tho' ye most disagreeable Breakfast I ever had in my life. I was so tender of him as to put rags round his wrists to prevent ye Cords fretting his skin-- laid him upon one Blanket & cover'd him with another often rub'd his Hards that ye Blood might not settle & give him pain tho' he ye mean time loaded me with curses & threatenings without Number.

He often repeatedly said these words, "You shall die, I will kill you, let ye consequence be what it will, my Life may go to ye devil, I hate you and all English Ministers- you are a good for nothing fellow, a Villain, a Mis-chief Maker, a servant of the devil &c &c. He told me he was

not drunk, I might believe him, I should see his words prov'd with a witness when he once got loose: indeed he was as sensible for aught I see as at any other time, only enrag'd with liquor & the instigation of ye devil-- some times finding I paid no regard to him, he would earnestly beg of me to kill him-- he had no comfort of his life- wish'd himself dead, he was too great a sinner to live, doom'd for destruction & therefore no matter how soon he went to Hell & you said he are the cause of it, by your continual talk of sin,- sin,- sin,- as tho' there was nothing else in ye World- you are a Plague to me, you give me all this trouble. My sins now all lie before me as fresh in my remembrance as tho' they were committed yesterday. He then recon'd up the Murders he had committed which amounted to 13 or 14 (7 Cherokees 3 of his own Nation & 4 White People) after this repeated his Intreaties that I would immediately kill him, saying Father, Father, I beg, I beg, for God's sake kill me-- and perhaps in ten minutes after would wish me to ye lowest Hell.

This Revd Sir gave me a more lively Idea than ever I had before of the Nature or Cause of that Malice and Rage with which the Enemies to a work of God cry out against it & persecute the faithfull servants of it, & heap the most cruel Reproaches up ye faithfull servants of God who are us'd as instruments to promote & carry on his work.

As I have often heard you say, when a little light

breaks in Conscience begins to awake & pass Judgement, ye sinner can't stand it must have his Conscience pacified some how or other or fall a Victim, then if he once stifles & silences ye remonstrances & accusations of Conscience for a while & cries peace, peace, he cant endure any thing that has a tendency to stir it up, & perhaps because ye prejudice many have imbibed against lively, rousing preachers as Disturbers of Peace, Authors of Confusion, Devision separation &c & from hence perhaps these Titles or Characters took their origin that have been given to some of God's servants in years past to distinguish them from easy sweet handsome preachers, that keep at arms End from the Conscience those Titles I have reference to are such as Hell-fire Tennant-- wild enthusiastic Whitefield bellowing Wheelock & crying Hell-fire &c &c. This has opened to me such a score of new Ideas I know not where to stop.

Pray Revd Dr is not this agreeable or similar to what our blessed Lord & saviour said unto his Disciples respecting ye Consequence of his divine Mission viz., I come to send a fire on Earth & no sooner does it begin to burn, but ye devil blows his sparks a horrid smoke & Blaze too & then ye Lord of Life & Glory must be

stigmatized with these hellish appellations Belzebub, Satan, divel, yea Prince of devils, & why not his faithfull followers share ye same fate, if they are zealous & faithfull in ye cause of their Lord — as the Master so ye servant, they that will live Godly in Christ Jesus must suffer Persecution in this world, yea shall have Tribulation. 'Tis thro' great tribulation that ye must enter into ye Kingdom, but ever blessed be God, 'tis only in this transitory world of sin, Temptation & sorrow, that ye fire will burn ye Godly- I beg, Rev'd father, you would favor me with your thoughts upon ye head— & how Ministers are called into Christ's vineyard, what kind of a call that is (perhaps I shall give you too much trouble).

This agreeable animating theme, has made me forget what I was upon. I return to my old Murdering subject disagreeable as it is in ye afternoon loos'd ye Man, with my own Hands; he went to his House, soon return'd

& with a feigned forced smile told me he was pleased with what I had done; that he had a pint of Rum left & intended to drink no more that day — beg'd I would believe him & not think he lied — repeated this twice or 3 times — past me & went into ye town — stole a chain & return'd with ye chain bound about one of his Legs — said with a feigned smile, Father, see this I intend by & by to fix a stake in ye ground & there chain myself. I am too bad a man to go at large — went off, a few moments after came ye young Man who first inform'd me of ye Rum, running with great speed to know what his uncle (this Jaunawhaunagea) had said to me: I told him at which he was surprized & said Father take care of yourself & dont believe a word he says he this Minute told me as he went off to

his House, ye Matter was settled, ye Minister should never see another rising sun, that he had a large cagg of Rum which he had just took by violence from one of ye Onondages, that the Men were come home whome he sent for in ye morning from Onida that he was now strong armed & was determin'd at all adventures to put an End to our Father — & then added his desire that I would make my Escape in season, as there was but one or two Men at home who could not do any thing with his unkle. I thanked him for his kind Message told him I would take it into Consideration.

I at first declin'd going out by reason of my Indisposition & ye inclemency of ye weather. I thought it would too much expose my Life & Health & if God had nothing further for me to do I was

willing to depart — & if he had easily preserve me from the Rage of Men & Devils (which I believe since was a Temptation of ye very Devil himself). Rev. Dodge insisted upon my retireing & almost charged me With Presumption which brought to mind ye Message to St. Paul by a certain young Lad, of ye lying in wait of ye Jews for him — upon which I concluded to retire. We prepar'd fire works & Blankets & set out for a sugar house nigh a Mile distant from ye Town. It being very dark and a thick swamp to cross we miss'd the House, but by a kind Providence (for I must acknowledge ye Hand of God) were led forward half a mile and directed into ye very door of another sugar House where I never had been & of which House I knew nothing at all, had not so much as heard of one anywhere that way. We spent chief of ye Night in Prayer,

singing of Psalms, Meditation & Conversation & a blessed Night it was to me yea a Night to be remembered. O that I had a heart to bless God for his infinite compassion & tender Mercy to a worm so vile- why should a holy God condesend & stoop so infinitely low to look upon so vile a wretch otherwise than in Anger all I can say he is God & not Man & his ways and thoughts are not as man's thoughts, he will act like himself, like an almighty, gracious, sovereign God, without respect to Persons. I had a glorious soul reviving faith in ye all-sufficiency & boundless Mercy of ye blessed Jesus, never did my Heart so rejoice before, that King Jesus Reigns. My soul rested herself in ye Arms of her dear Redeemer secure from the Rage of Men & devils. I long'd to depart

& be with Christ but at ye same time willing to tarry.
I did not pray to be taken before Christ's time. Indeed
I felt no will of my own. I never tasted before what ye
beginnings of Resignation were. I had at ye same time
such a deep sense of ye infinitely holy, all-seeing &
heart-searching God as made me to shrink into nothing—
a small glimpse a little sense of feeble Nature must have
resign'd. O how small a Portion is heard of him. I
can't inlarge time fails). I have not quite lost all
that sweet rest of soul in God. I am sometimes amazed
to think what a kind compassionate long-suffering &
forgiving God I serve & yet complain so much, so much.
I have done enough ten thousand times since that day
one would think to wear quite out the Patience

of this long-suffering God & he still forbears.

I have a prevailing belief that a merciful God wont lieve me wholly to dishonor his Name, but unless this prevails to a considerable degree I am not watchfull, I find ye more I cleave to ye Promises, trust and give myself up into ye hands of a kind mercifull & faithful God, ye more watchful I am less confident & become more of a beggar, whence I infer that a dead Faith is not only unbecoming a Christian but good for Little or nothing & gives great advantage to ye Tempter.

My corrupt deceitful heart is beyond conception. I am ready sometimes to think so much corruption is inconsistent with grace, or that there is not another such

a pretended Christian's heart in all ye world, its wilds & deceits by far beyond my utmost penetration & strictest Watch. I know no other way at present but to watch over my deceitful Heart with a Godly Jealousy, watch even unto prayer may ye Lord be merciful to me for Jesus sake.

Rev'd sir, you will pardon my long Disgression
(Oct. 28)
& correct my folly— in ye morning/we return'd into ye Castle. The murdering shouts of ye drunkard were still ringing towards noon came to me five of their head men who were sent for ye Morning & Evening before, & spake as follows—

"Father hear ye Minds of your children. Our minds are troubled with ye dangerous & disagreeable situation you are in at present we are fill'd

with concern for our Father as his Life is threatened & immediate death pronounced for his Portion.

"Father we know not what to do tho' we are ye great ones of your children that are here assembled. We are poor, ignorant creatures we know not what to do in such a case; we dare not say. Father don't regard your Life, make Light of it— perhaps we may go too far out of ye way, & err not knowing ye scriptures. Therefore we think our Father must take ye Matter into his Consideration, & tell us what we must do & what he thinks proper to do for himself our Father is wise & understanding knows how to act in such an affair as he is taught by ye holy word he will say & act according to it. This Father is our Minds; we are poor Creatures have no strength & authority if we say that which is good & right so far as we know; we are not regarded, our

word is nothing when Men are once determined on Mischief we cant overcome ye subtlety & malace of ye Devil. This being our Case we desire & think proper our Father should acquaint our great Br. Sir Wm. Johnson & that immediately he also knows how to act- in such a case & as he is one that has ye care, & Management of our affairs will readily espouse ye cause. This father is our minds we esteem your situation ours we partake with you in your Distress."

To which I made answer—

My Brethren & dear Children in ye Gospel. I heartily thank you for what you have now said, your present Behaviour looks encourageing notwithstanding this dark Cloud; you have as it were reach'd out your Hands to steady your poor Father whom ye Devil & his Emesaries have attempted to throw down. I thank you my dear Children; for ye present

and compose your Minds & be not over concerned for your poor Father in ye Gospel his Hope and his help is in God, who can govern & subdue both Men & Devils; as this unhappy affair is attended with so much Difficulty, due consideration & care are very necessary, you wont therefore expect my answer till ye Evening or tomorrow— in ye meantime I would have you think that what your Father shall say & do in this affair will be agreeable to ye word of God & ye will of Christ by whom you say he is taught & in whose ways he walks. This my Children is all I say at present; at which they express'd the greatest satisfaction, returning Thanks, rose up & giving me their hands one by one wished me divine protection.

Wensday evening returned an answer to their address which was too lengthy to write particulars I told them ye extreme

difficulty of ye Case by reason of ye Ignorance & miserable condition of the poor Indians having no form of government, & let them know what I thought ye voice of God was to them in this affair what they might expect if they were not in earnest about Religion & did not abide by their integrity & covenant with me as for myself I told them I was wholly at God's disposal & willing to live or die. What chiefly I wanted was to know his will & be ready to obey.

I dare not say I would immediately leave them nor how long I would continue with them. Time only must discover the will of God in that request.

I then acquainted them more fully with ye Nature of the Commission Christ Jesus gives his Ministers from Matthew 10, my desire of continuing with them 3 years longer from ye parable of the Vineyard, if it might be will of God. I had a very solemn & affectionate meeting with

them. I desired them to give me some evidence of their sincerity & resolution to abide by their covenant with me last winter, that their Br. Thomas had done, who took away ye cag of Rum by violence from those drunkards, & broke it while I was in ye wilderness whither I fled for shelter. I further told them I should follow their advice to acquaint Sir Wilm Johnson with my Condition & ask his advice and ask his assistance. I should also write to my Father in ye Gospel, especially their great Father (as they call'd Him) Dr. Wheelock & ask his prayers and advice what steps to take as he had been long in ye Road & must by this time well know a minister's path. I should not chuse to proceed without Necessity drive me to it, to any further measures without their concurrence.

(Oct. 30)

Friday Morning came to me with the words & a speech to Sr. Wm. to be delivered to me which I must

omit. Jannawhaungea & his wife went off by themselves.

(Nov. 1) Sabth. day morning but still persisting in his cruel designs he tarried a day longer for my cows to return from the woods, was determined to kill one of them before he left the Place they were grazeing in ye woods for 3 or 4 days therefore escaped his Hands. Some say he has gone to an Indian Town near Canada others say only a hunting-- he gave out word at Fort Stanwix that he intended to visit the Minister once more before he left these parts. I am now on my way to Sr. Wm. Johnsons to beg his influence & assistance, that I may if possible continue a little longer with my poor people some of whom I love in the Bonds of ye Gospel. I have some reason to hope Thomas (one of my Deacons) has lately been converted,

& ye Queen (as she is call'd) brings forth some fruits of an evangelical Repentance. I have some hope of 3 more—blessed be God all the Glory & Praise belongs to him. Oh when shall the dear Redeemer see of the travil of his sould amongst some of these poor benighted Pagans.

I expect to reach Sr. Wm. today, am not very well much fatigued with (sic) & weary'd out with my troubles & cares. If I han't time to correct & copy this Letter I beg the favour you would do it, & set one of your Pupils to draw it of(f) & by ye first opportunity send me a Ccopy or ye original.

some time Pass'd I had resolutely determined never to write another Letter of any consequence without correction & a copy. I find I must break thro' for this time. I find upon recollection that in many of my Letters I have wrote in such hast & without any correction, there has been many imprudent espressions & much unchristian Temper espress'd which hurts me exceedingly.

(No date or place)

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