

Transcript of part of a letter¹ from Pleasant Williams Kittrell² to his sister, Sarah Williams Kittrell³, dated April 27th, 1834⁴

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This difficulty then being set aside & that it is by this view of the subject seems clear to me. I am clearly of the opinion that, we can not only fall from grace but we can generally be restored again by a work of penitence—The example of David is in point for he not only lost the favour of God which is implied by falling from grace, but we have every reason to believe that he was again reinstated in his favour. This will appear very evident by reading the Psalms when he contrasts his condition while alienated from God & while enjoying his favour & mercy.

I am irresistibly brought to this conclusion by the whole history of Providence in his dealings with mankind as exhibited in the scriptures particularly in his conduct to the Jewish Nation who were a peculiar & chosen people. Notwithstanding he had promised to Abraham in consequence of his obedience & faith that his seed should inherit the promised land yet of all that immense number that were liberated from Egyptian bondage, but two persons were permitted to enter the land of promise. The history of the Kings of Israel & Judah furnish us with abundant evidence of the fact that we can by a life obedience to the commands of god live in his full favour & that by a neglect of these things we can forfeit & lose that favour & regain it again by godly penitence & sorrow

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for sin—In fact the experience of every Christian will prove the fact for we all know if we neglect our duties as christians & begin to seek after the things of the world how soon God will withdraw himself from us & finally we may lose his favour altogether by

persisting in a course of conduct contrary to his will—But as long as we are faithful in use of all the means of grace provided for us God will be with us & we will be cheered & animated by the influences of his grace & Spirit. If we admit the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints we are forced to admit its kindred doctrines of Election & reprobation⁵ without condition & we thereby make man a mere machine without life or voluntary motion. We destroy his moral agency & what is worse than all we derogate from the character of God by accusing him of creating man to damn him according to the purposes of his will without any reference to the conduct or character of the creation himself—I had rather be a Deist⁶ at once than have these antinomian⁷ opinions—I wont say any more on these subjects at present But may hereafter give you some references—If you will read Fletcher, Checks⁸ you will then see the doctrines often

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ably vindicated & established beyond contradictions, as a proof of it an attempt has never yet been made to answer it—If you can procure a book called the reformer reformed written by Nathan Bangs of New York⁹ you will there see the doctrine of falling from grace proven beyond question & the opposite doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints entirely refuted—

You say you have some idea of changing your mode of life—I think it is high time—I should be glad all my Sisters were well married—You have arrived at such an age where you can chose with discretion & caution of those that you have named I will not pretend to advise you which to make choice of Take the one you love best without regard to property Wealth of course should be no objection, but don't suffer that to outweigh more important considerations.

We are well now Little Mary¹⁰ grows fast is quite a promising child uncommonly sensible for her age, tolerably handsome very often speaks of her Alabama relations

I have grown to be the stoutest Kittrell I know of I have weighed upwards of 160 this winter I sa[w] in the papers the other day that one of Uncle Buck's¹¹ daughters was married Lucy¹² was her name Also Mrs. Anderson's death She died at Genl Normans¹³

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We have had a very wet spring so far A high freshet in the river— Tell Tom¹⁴ to write me often I have answered his letter some weeks since Write me of the particular productions of Alabama, what will & what will not grow there

[The letter was written on one]
[piece of paper folded]
[vertically to make 4 pages,]
[then folded again to make an]
[envelope for the letter, and]
[then addressed vertically here:]
[Frm P.W. Kittrell P.M. in]
[the upper right corner, and]
[lower and to the far left]
[Sneedsborough with]
[April 27th underneath and]
[addressed to:]
[Miss Sarah W. Kittrell]
[Greensborough]
[Alabama]

particularly whether your ~~Southern~~ water is fit to drink or not
Give my love to all Your brother P W Kittrell

Endnotes

1. The surviving portion of this letter is now in the collection of Don C. Stone. The letter, folded vertically, is 7 ³/₄ inches wide and 9 ³/₄ inches high. Transcription was completed on 6/17/2006 by Catherine M. Stone, Don C. Stone, Wayne W. Clark, and W. S. McAliley II using the guidelines at <http://docsouth.unc.edu/true/about/transcriptions.html>.

2. Pleasant Williams Kittrell (b. 13 April 1805 in Chapel Hill, Orange, NC—d. 29 Sept. 1867 at Huntsville, Walker, TX) was the third child and second son of Bryant and Mary (Norman) Kittrell. In 1834 he resided in Anson County, NC, and represented that county in the North Carolina House of Commons in 1833 and 1834, according to John Hill Wheeler, *Historical Sketches of North Carolina from 1584 to 1851*, Vol. II, p. 25. For more detail see the Pleasant Williams Kittrell biography in *The Handbook of Texas*, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fki40>.

3. Sarah Williams (Kittrell) Goree (b. 26 April 1807 in Chapel Hill, Orange, NC—17 June 1903 at Midway, Madison, TX) was the fourth child and second daughter of Bryant and Mary (Norman) Kittrell. According to Kemp P. Battle in his *History of the University of North Carolina*, Vol. I, p. 309, “One of the most popular Chapel Hill belles of this period, very winning and beautiful, a good singer, accustomed to raise the tunes in church service, was Miss Sarah Williams Kittrell, whose father removed from Granville to a home about two miles southwest of the University buildings, where he carried on a farm and took student boarders. Tradition says that she agreed to marry a promising Senior, afterwards United States Senator, but the match was broken off because of his poverty and great distance from Chapel Hill. After he became famous, he returned by invitation to deliver the annual Commencement address, and his old boarding house keeper, Mrs. Betsey Nunn, upbraided him for breaking faith with her favorite Sally Kittrell.” Bryant Kittrell and his family moved to Greene County, AL in 1833 (Battle, Vol. 1, p. 312). Sarah Williams Kittrell married Dr. Langston Goree (b. 19 September 1793 in SC—d. 5 July 1853 in Midway, Madison, TX) in Greene County, AL on 25 November 1834.

4. The letter is only dated April 27th, but the year can be determined. The return address of Sneedsborough in Anson County, NC, is where Pleasant Williams Kittrell lived in 1834, and the address to Miss Sarah Kittrell, Greensborough in Greene County, AL, is where she lived in 1834 and married later that year. Lucy Frances Kittrell was married earlier in 1834. *See also* notes 2, 3, and 12.

5. *Perseverance of the saints* and *unconditional election* are two of the five points of Calvinism (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Five_points_of_Calvinism, as of 6/17/2006). *Reprobation* is a consequence of election, since if “some of mankind (the elect) are predestined by God for salvation, the remainder are necessarily pre-ordained to damnation, i.e. reprobation” (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reprobation>, as of 6/17/2006).

6. deism: “a movement or system of religion advocating natural religion, emphasizing morality, and in the 18th century, denying the interference of the Creator with the laws of nature.” (*Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th Edition, 2003, p. 328)

7. antinomian: “one who holds that under the gospel dispensation of grace the moral law is of no use or obligation because faith alone is necessary for salvation.” (*Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, p. 55)

8. Fletcher, John (1729-1786). *Checks to antinomianism: in a series of letters to Rev. Mr. Shirley and Mr. Hill*. Originally published in England 1771-1775, and later in the United States in many 2 or 4 volume editions, e.g., New York: J. Soule and T. Mason, 1820.

9. Bangs, Nathan (1778-1862). *The reformer reformed: or, A second part of the Errors of Hopkinsianism detected and refuted: being an examination of Mr. Seth Williston’s “Vindication of some of the most essential doctrines of the reformation.”* New York: John C. Totten, no. 9 Bowery, 1816.

10. Little Mary was Mary Evans Kittrell, the daughter of Pleasant Williams Kittrell’s first marriage to a Mrs. Evans. Mary Evans Kittrell married David M. Barkley in Greene County, AL on 13 October 1847.

11. Uncle Buck was William “Buck” Kittrell (b. 13 November 1779—d. 1843), the uncle of Pleasant Williams and Sarah Williams Kittrell and the younger brother of their father Bryant Kittrell (b. between 1773-1776 in Granville County, NC—d. 21 September 1837 in Greene County, AL). The date given for Bryant Kittrell’s birth varies in different sources, but the obituary notice that appeared in the *Raleigh Register*, October 23, 1837, on p. 3, column 6, lists his age at his death in 1837 as 64.

12. Lucy Frances Kittrell (b. 7 May 1814 in NC—d. 21 August 1896 in Liberty, Weakley, TN) was the daughter of William “Buck” Kittrell and Lucy S. (Hayes) Kittrell. Lucy Frances Kittrell married William Whitfield Young on 31 March 1834 in Franklin County, NC.

13. Thomas Norman, the maternal grandfather of Pleasant Williams and Sarah Williams Kittrell, was called “the old General” according to Edwin Sue Goree in *A Family Mosaic*, p. 40. He was the father of Mary (Norman) Kittrell (b. about 1776 in Granville County, NC—d. about 1867 in TX), wife of Bryant Kittrell.

14. Thomas Jefferson Kittrell (b. 1809, Chapel Hill, Orange, NC—d. 1836, Greene County, AL) was the brother of Pleasant Williams and Sarah Williams Kittrell and the fifth child and third son of Bryant and Mary (Norman) Kittrell. The other children in this family also were born in Chapel Hill, Orange, NC: Margaret Norman Kittrell (b. 1801—d. 1836, Greene County, AL), Jonathan Bryant Kittrell (b. 1803—d. ?), Tabitha Bryant Kittrell (b. 1811—d. before 1833), William Jones Kittrell (b. 1813—d. September or October, 1863, Camden, Wilcox, AL), Mary B. Kittrell (b. 1815—d. ?).