

Letter to William Thompson, 27 September 1855

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[0001]

Linyanti 27th September

Copied 1855

My dear M^r Thompson

I have just learned that my Arabian post office man is detained at Sesheke by the sickness of one of his party so I am glad of the opportunity to write a little appendix to that hurried note of the 13th I particularly wish to express my sympathy in the bereavement you have been called on to suffer in the departure of your most excellent father in law. I hear of it only now and as I have always since my attendance on his theological lectures and ministry regarded him with very great affection I think of his removal with unfeigned sorrow. May God grant us grace to follow in his footsteps. Unquestionably he served God in his day and generation with rare abilities and unswerving devotion through good & through bad reports. When such are removed we feel somewhat nearer to the grave. There seems to be nothing now between it and us. May we live to Christ and for the prosperity of his great cause and receive the welcome well done as we have every reason to believe our much lamented

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friend has ~~done~~. I shall always revere his memory.

I believe I did not refer very pointedly to what may be called missionary prospects in this region. And the reason is I feel perplexed on one point viz. the insalubrity of the climate. It is no obstacle to myself personally. I think no London

society's "zendeling" worth his salt. would
bolt at that. Even though we have
no law against cowardice (vide the 2^d Art.
of the Bushman commando mighty men
of valour) most of our fellows must
feel in the same way. And my better
half would go as readily as any one. But
I am not clear on exposing my
little ones without their own intelligent
self dedication. As far as opportunity
goes there is no lack. There are tribes
and villages without number to the North
and East of this and all would be proud
of the presence of a white man. I
know of no hindrance to missionary operations
in any part of the country North of
the Zambesi and towards the centre
of the Continent. And every day we hear
of commerce extending its ramifications
in all directions. Only think of the
way this letter goes. by an Arab from

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Zanzibar who takes charge of a party of
Makololo with ivory for Loanda. When
they return my late companions will
be ready to start again. So one relay will
always be abroad on business. Before
my trip the Makololo never visited another
tribe except to plunder. They have not
given this trade up yet, for two forays
were made during my absence. (not being
in the country I did not lend my pot ~~again~~)
What a mercy, the "ill report" wont be
retailed in Government House again)
But ^ the remedy for that and every evil
is being applied. The blessed word of
the living God has been preached though
in much weakness - and the prayers
of Gods people are ascending as incense
before the throne of the Hope of Israel, ~~and~~
the time is coming, the set time, when
all nations shall call Him blessed.

I have been guilty of some innocent
wonderment in seeing it stated in terms
lugubrious enough that the Bakwains
Bakhatla and Bahurutse &c were not a
whit better for all our labours, nay
much worse. I followed the rule invariably

of making no enquiries respecting the labours or conduct of other missionaries among natives and therefore can say

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nothing about Bahurutse or Bakhatla. But about the Bakwains the verdict would I most sincerely think, require reconsideration. During the whole of our sojourn there we strove so to conduct ourselves as that there should be no cause of offence except concerning the law of our God. I feel humbly and heartily thankful to our Heavenly father for enabling us to effect this. This is a point of vital importance in estimating what has been effected among a people. So when we left we had not one single enemy in the whole tribe and even when the waggon was inspanned on our departure for Sebituane's country. Sechele and his principal men tried to persuade me to remove to the (afterwards) scene of the massacre of his people, offering to build a house and church free of expence. I need not refer to my reasons for refusing - (I am perfectly satisfied as to their validity) except that the principal one was determined hostility to the requirements of the gospel unmixed with any hostility to ourselves. Some may think this

[if it were necessary for me to seek a "character" I would confidently refer to the Bakwains for it]

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hostility to the gospel evidence of deterioration from their state of heathenism I believe it to be a most important step in advance from that state. for though they refuse to bow in humility to the Divine law, the truths they have imbibed exert a most salutary influence on their morals * I know this to be a fact - a plain palpable fact. And if any one doubts it. As he cannot compare what the Bakwains were with what

they are let a comparison be
made between the Makololo and
Bakwains. Why in ^ coming from Makololo meeting with
them and ^ some of the people near Kuruman
who still hate the gospel as much
as the Bakwains I used to feel
I had entered civilized life, I
dont wonder at it. The word of
the living God has been brought in
contact with their hearts & minds His
word has life and power. Few

[Sechele asked the Boers on commando not to fight on Sunday. The former beat the
Bakwains hollow in lying & meanness - and it would be an insult to compare the honesty of
the Bakwains with the dishonesty of the Boers]

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human souls can withstand its force
and no hatred however deep can
quench its power. I bless God
from the bottom of my heart for
allowing me to sow the good seed
among the Bakwains. Their present
posture is a terrible one if they continue
so to the end. But though they do ^ so it
is God's will the offer should be made
though thousands both white and black
make a bad use of it. You will probably
live longer than I shall. Remember
seed was sown among the people
of Sechele.

I thank you for publishing the
"Pot" defence. I have not seen the
remarks of Scholz or whoever it was
that wrote in a defamatory way against
me. I bear the poor wretched Boers in
^ the interior no malice - I never did, but I pitied
their ignorance and wickedness - Although
I were a Boer myself I could not
help saying ^ as they do that in morality ~~and good~~
~~sense~~ they are decidedly inferior to

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the Bakwains and considerably worse
indeed than the heathen who have had
no advantages. I think it is not usual
for Editors of Newspapers to publish defamatory

remarks against persons whom. they
know cannot, for months or as in
my case years, have an opportunity of
answering them. They would not
in England publish the like against
officers in an Artic expedition. Would
they? But you have got a new
constitution now and M^r Buchanan
has crept under the wing of
a likelier hen. requiescat in pace

I have got only one scrap from
you but it accompanied the celestial
map & pamphlets. Go on & fear nothing
my friend. O, O!! What a shame to
spring on the poor bishop. The first
and only bishop and box his ears
so unmercifully.

Believe me very Affectionately
Yours
David Livingstone

[0008]

I get no letters from my wife. Cannot
account for it no way. Hope she has
not come to the Cape. But you will
take care of her no doubt.

Excuse this nasty Yankee paper
I have nought else

May I beg you to give the Directors
notice of my welfare at this date. I
cannot write them now

Wretched Yankee paper this
all else is expended - assuredly
they need rags

via St. Helena
Rev^dW. Thompson
Cape of Good Hope