

## Letter to Hamilton M. Dyke, 24 February 1843

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[0001]

Motito 24 Feb 1843 My Dear Brother

I was very much gratified indeed by the reception of the kind favour you sent by M<sup>r</sup> Lennie & [...]s I am just about to cross the boundary of comparative civilizati[-]on in order to visit the Interior I should be sorry did I not give you a word in passing by way of acknowledgment. An answer it cannot be for I have unfortunately left yours behind at Kuru[-]man But I hope you will receive it such as it is with forbearance

I am most happy to hear the heart enlivening accounts of the state of your missions among the Bassoutos, you have been very highly favoured, May the Lord grant that you be blessed still more & that you may not only become the benefactors of the people among whom you at present are But that by means of them you may become blessings to many beyond you in the Interior. Many being raised up by your [...] instrumentality to spread the knowledge

I expect to return (D[...]) in about 4 months. If you kindly write so that I receive it on my return & I shall be glad, My friend you try & decipher putting in words awaiting try & leaving out those which ought never to have been in  
D.L.

[0002]

of the everlasting gospel. M<sup>rs</sup> L has no doubt given you an account of the state of affairs here & at K. The aspect of The Mission is not so wanting as one might expect But still the change which has been affected in a portion of this people is very great indeed. It is not such as would

strike a visitor from Europe or the Colony  
with any thing but disappointment, particular[ly][...]  
if he had heard the accounts of it which  
the good Christians in England ~~by~~ usually  
do But after one sees the depths from  
which they have been elevated exemplified  
in the Interior tribes there is considerable  
cause for Thanksgiving By the way when  
I think of the degradation of these people I shall  
be glad if you ~~will~~ let me know if you  
believe they are really so very far sunk  
as has been represented, I heard M<sup>r</sup> Moffat  
say in England that the Bechuanas had  
really no conscience until it was formed  
by the missionaries, Now although the  
statement excited my risible faculties a  
little at the time thinking it was only a  
poetical figure expressive of the wonderful  
creative powers of us Sentelings The same  
statement nearly appearing in his book

[0003]

as I understand inclines me now to believe  
that it was meant as plain prose. What  
do you say as to their belief? I mean of the  
Bechuanas in relation to God. Futurely &c.  
Besides other fragments of knowledge which  
I have found among them they seem to have  
had the idea of ~~the~~ future existence clearly  
For instance what else than this idea can we  
deduce from the fable of <sup>the</sup> Cameleon &  
dark lizard, I heard Imokhuana in an  
address reason thus, "Is it not a fact that  
we Becuanas of old believed that we should  
not perish entirely at death. I dont speak  
of the knowledge the white man had brought  
I speak of the knowledge we had of old, God  
sent the Cameleon with a message to man  
saying you must not do wickedly, you must  
reform for when you die you will  
come again, you will not "nyelesa hela"  
But the Black lizard (Katoane) was sent  
by the devil (Barim[...]) & as it runs fast it  
soon preceded the Cameleon & said to man  
you may live as you like, there is no  
God, & when you die you are gone  
forever, another messenger is coming &  
he will tell you lies, He will say you  
will be judged for your deeds but dont

believe him - So spake the Katoane

[0004]

Now this Mocuana after appeallin[...][g] to his audienc[e]  
if this were not reall Bechuana belief of old  
turned to M<sup>r</sup> Edwards & myself & said, these  
men are the cameleon, The devil's messengers  
came before them & has destroyed both  
us & our fathers But now I beseech you  
listen to the message of the Cameleon & live  
The same individual referred also in his  
address to the Bechuana idea of the soul &  
reasoned with his countrymen most power[-]  
-fully, arguing that our doctrine was  
not new even to the people he was add[-]  
-ressing. I was much pleased the other  
day to hear from M<sup>r</sup> Lemure that the  
word he made use of to express "soul"  
is the same as the Sesuuto namely  
Muruti or shade, not "moea" the breath  
which as been adopted by the missionaries  
He went so far as to describe the food  
of souls in the o[...][t]her world, namely  
common flies dried in the same way  
as is usualy done to the locusts & I have  
since found that these & other points  
were really the common belief of old  
If you can give me any information  
respecting their autumn creed I shall feel obliged