

## Letter to William Thompson, [20?] July 1852

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[0001]

Scheit Fontein.

My Dear Sir

Herein you will receive the fulmination of the Commandant Potgeiter who I believe has gone to a tribunal at which nothing but truth will be told. It is a copy sent from the committee by the then secretary M<sup>r</sup> Ashton. The answer which they sent me at the same time is I find not by me - but it must be at Kolobeng and as soon as I can lay hands upon it I shall forward it. A re-perusal of the document brought some circumstances to my mind which had nearly vanished from my memory. One was that when the Bakwains heard of the intentions of the Boers to molest me they instantly called a Peecho and resolved unanimously to defend their missionary with their blood. On my objecting to their exposing their lives on my account they replied it was on their own account for whatever was done to me was done to them. They intended to mislead the Boers into a strong ambushade if they found out by any means that they were approaching and a simultaneous attack was to follow by both guns & assegais. If they should come upon us at unawares the whole tribe was to rush

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to our house and defend us with their lives. Had Potgeiter come he would have met a very different reception from any he ever had before. The tribes he has attacked never could do him or his party on horseback any harm. His fighting has been a series of cold blooded murders. In his bloodthirstiness he has poured out drunk offerings to the Devil. What a terrible surprise such men must look upon their prowess in the still shades of Hades. No false pretences there of "making peace among the natives" and no Predikants to baptize them into the belief that

they are christians and no mistake and then land them in the "Land African". I am however preaching to you instead of writing a letter. Well when I saw the Bakwains were determined to doctor the Boers I thought it right to send my family out of the way M<sup>rs</sup> L. was in child-bed but much preferred going westward with the Bakwain women to going to Kuruman. The Kurumanites pressed upon us the propriety of sending the family out there - and I did so about four months after the threats of the Boers had vanished into thin air. a short time after they left for Kuruman I departed for the Lake - the first time - I remember too that

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the imputation of having run away nettled me more than all the rest. I wrote on the paper in pencil the words you see & left the letter in a conspicuous situation at Kolobeng in case they should come when I was absent at the Lake. I destroyed about [...] [t] 350 letters before going - and many of these I regret but felt unwilling anything should fall into their hands of which they could make any bad use

I am here in the house of M<sup>r</sup> Alheit of Skeit Fontein and may inform you how we have succeeded hitherto. We have come but slowly. My oxen were lean but quite fresh. I used them only and by buying some and exchanging others as they became tired for fresh ones giving about 10/ on each for the extra flesh of the new ones I succeeded pretty well. I shall soon be at the River and thence will get on well. The oxen I have now are in good condition & will carry me thither quickly.. The waggon however is enormously heavy - This ^ loading is one of those things I shall do but once in my life. We had to pass through a bad defile - and hired a span from a Boer to take us through. He took us into it but his large fat oxen could not move it farther. I inspanned our meagre beasts and

[0004]

they walked out with it at once. The Boer then left us in disgust and when we had got fairly through

wanted payment but this I declined.. I shall feel  
glad when I deliver the articles to their owners  
The wood work of the wheels cracks from the  
enormous strain There now take a lesson  
by my folly. Of George I have seen nothing  
though I have travelled so slowly. I gave him two  
men so as they do not make their appearance  
he must be on his way after us either by  
the road we hence come or by some other  
we shall be sure to meet at Kuruman  
I have been quite busy all the way with the  
Dictionary I did not know I had so  
many words in my head as I have put  
down but every time I sit down there is  
no end to them. They are hooked together  
by strange associations. I have not begun any  
thing else. The waggon is most inconvenient  
for writing. I can write only on my side  
and must doff & trek on my "inexpressibles"  
only when lying flat on my back. I must  
be getting old & illnatured now for the constrained  
positions of my waggon life rather makes me  
crusty than gentle. The longer one lives the  
more one learns, is however true  
Dictionary

[0005]

2 sheet

I have been reading the tour of the Bishop. He is quite  
an angel compared to me. Dont you see the  
effects of the Puseyite partial belief in salvation  
by works. He is quite in earnest, no doubt of it  
he and the Archdeacon tramping it on foot  
Well done my hearties. If I had £800 or even  
£400 a year travelling expenses as you my Lord  
and your venerableness the Archdeacon have I  
would not be so self denying. No not I. I would  
sport good oxen in my waggon and good horses  
in my cart and should now be somewhere  
beyond your Lorship's diocese. Perhaps sitting  
at supper with the bishop of Kuruman aye  
with the Apostle of the Bechuanas.

You will have observed a great deal of ignorance  
apparent in his Lorship's notes and a great  
deal understood or rather presumed in the  
readers for whom it is intended- see the  
Preface. You are expected to believe that  
he passed through unknown regions and  
even where he seems to have been without  
a path you find him looking for M<sup>r</sup> Harding's

spoor. And mention is made of Captain  
Gardner but none of a body of troops which  
went through the same parts with a large number of waggons

[0006]

The earnestness with which he works is however  
very pleasant and almost excuses the ignorance  
The sour looks at the Independants, the grinning  
with watering teeth at the Dutch Predikant's salaries  
the Political partizanship and inoent gloating  
over two poor simpletons daughters of a London  
missionary.. He feels not all the while that he  
makes the least part of his book by imitating  
the Independants way of doing things. And as for  
the missionary's daughter's, bless his heart we  
could give him a couple of missionaries themselves  
yes a couple three times told and be no losers either.

I have nothing to tell about the Boers  
or any one else. Have heard nothing about  
the Caffre war since I left nor of Botha  
The Boers are certainly the remnants of  
the Lost Tribes of Israel they speak  
of nothing but Pounds, shillings, dollars  
guilders sheep & oxen. Their whole  
souls seem absorbed by this world's  
goods - Their talk is just exactly  
what you overhear in the Jews  
of London. I shall be glad when  
I hear something else.

[0007]

M<sup>r</sup> Alheit is a fine friendly man. He does not  
believe in baptismal regeneration as do some  
of his bretheren. At least I believe so for  
when I said that the bishop liked him  
because of holding similiar views on  
baptism he laughed and said But  
we dont all believe in that doctrine  
He seems a great admirer of Luther. He  
has been successful here. Has 80 commu[-]  
-nicants but is plagued by the surrounding  
Boers badgering his people. Intends to  
remove to the Orange River with his peo[...][ple]  
but the present war prevents his gett[...][ing]  
the necessary permission from Govern[...][ment]

Please present kind regards to your  
sister. Ralph, Jessie and my worthy friend

Willie. May God bless you all and help  
you who are in the forefront of the  
strife to be valient for the truth. &  
righteousness.

I lost my horse about a week ago  
a great affliction - he ran away. A  
Trader called Bredencamp going back

[0008]

may find him and if he writes please know  
how to do with the beast. He was an excellent  
traveller but like many other travellers became  
disgusted with the way & went back. Malatsi  
my man spent a week in search of him  
Believe me ever yours

David Livingston

/v/v/8<sup>d</sup>

Prepaid

Rev<sup>d</sup> W<sup>m</sup> Thompson

Church Square

Cape Town

1 - Dictionary

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