

Letter to Margaret Sewell, 9 September 1850

Livingstone, David, 1813-1873

Published by Livingstone Online (livingstoneonline.org)

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Kolobeng 9th September 1850

My very Dear Friend

I wrote you about six months ago and having been absent from home for more than four months lately I could not of course address you again. But you have often been in my remembrance. I have been reminded again and again of your kindness when reading the Banners you kindly sent us. And more than once I have wished I had had an opportunity of thanking you for them. In this however there was a good deal of selfishness for I feared that as you had recieved no thanks you might, disgusted with my ingratitude, have sent them somewhere else. I did not advert to them particularly in the letter I sent acknowledging the receipt of the parcel in which they were. And the reason was I did not know what a treat they contained. Now however I thank you most sincerely and beg a continuance of the same favours. Dr Campbell is really a fine fellow I hope he may long be spared to the world. I have had no letter or parcel from you lately. this is a disappointment for I expected one at least when I returned from the Lake. From the Pynes I am sorry to hear of your indisposotion but hope you are again restored to health. Be sure & let me know if your illness has in any way impaired your bodily vigour. I love to remember you skipping out of the parlour or springing up to ring the bell as nimbly as ever did the little Frenchman Courvoisier

Have only recently returned from revisiting the Lake. the reason we have for bending our thoughts in that direction is the Bechuana mission having been shut up into a kind of cul de sac. On the East by the Boers they have prohibited any missionary instructing the natives. A French missionary M^r Fredoux of Motito lately attempted to follow on my trail to visit the Bamapela but was forcibly driven back by a party of armed boers, forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved - they truly know not what they do. By far the largest portion of the Bechuana people live in that direction. On the West we have a country without water & hitherto deemed impassable

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and as the desert extends round to the North East we must either have confined our attention entirely to a few tribes or bully the Boers. I am sincerely thankful that God has given us an entrance into the far North for when the Bechuanas see that we cannot go to others they become extremely careless about the benefits we try to impart. It is rather a favour for them to attend to our

instructions - not [^][a favour] for us to impart them without fee or reward. And O they are as a people slow of heart to believe - patience long continued patience must be practiced here. Hope deferred has been a frequent visitor to me since I saw you. I cannot work away at other things if I have not real missionary work too. this set me away again to the Lake M^{rs} L and children & Sechele accompanied me. When we got to the Ngami we found the fever raging. A fever I suppose not very unlike that which cut up the Niger expedition. It seems destined by Providence to keep the Intertropical Africa for the black races alone. No boer could live in there. It cuts off stout people first and they are generally very much so. A party of Englishmen went in and a young artist & a Hottentot servant died of fever. A trader too called Wilson who resides at Kolobeng was brought to a stand still by all his people & himself being siezed by it. He got a terrible squeeze from the king of terrors and lay for several days more dead than alive. Our children played in the Lake as if they had been used to water from infancy or as ducklings do. but two of them had fever and were nearly cut off. God was gracious to us our people had it too - and I had to become driver in order to get away from the focus of malaria. We spent two very pleasant sundays with the Botasana But the fever & fly prevented our going on to Sebitoane. M^{rs} L would have preferred waiting for me [...] at the Botasana while I went forward on ox back but I could not leave after the fever began. We must find a salubrious settlement in some of the regions beyond and I have some hopes that we will find such for the Teoge which falls into the lake at the North West runs very rapidly and probably descends from an elevated region the Ngami is low as compared with Kolobeng. then we must have a passage to the sea on either the East or west coast You will understand this necessity when I tell you that here we are 270 miles North East of Kuruman and the lake is 600 miles beyond this. If spared to effect this we should then probably be allowed to introduce the gospel into a large & populous region of at least equal [0003] importance to the entire Bechuana mission. I hope to go in again next year and will make perhaps a twelve months sojourn there Dont forget me in your prayers. I shall try & write you again but that may be my last. It is well to be always prepared. May He remember us both who said I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.

We were favoured with a little daughter seven days after reaching home. We have a pair of each now. 2 boys & a like number of girls. Behold the fruits of matrimony which you always advocated Robert is now speaking to me with all his might and turning round my face occasionally when he sees my thoughts are quite away in 57 Aldersgate St. How is Charles? I could not find time to write him as I intended but you must be kind enough to give him my kind remembrance and good wishes. And your son & daughter in India how do they get on. they have population enough without travelling far. China seems to attract a great deal of attention now M^r Robert Moffat lately visited his parents at Kuruman - he is a Gov^t land surveyor at between £300 & 400 per annum. Seemed enough

to benefit Africa but the mode of life he has adopted does not seem well calculated for that end. What a poor set you are in England Cant pay your secretaries decently. And then so suspicious of the [...] You dont seem to know that the Directors of our society give smaller salaries than those of any other society 38 Wesleyan missionaries cost about £3000 more per annum than an equal number of ours do. Then such a scurvy meeting as that at Leeds passing resolutions such as 1st. Directors the mission churches must be free independent self governed &c. 2. Why do you allow free independent churches to do as they like in reference to Gov^t grants for education. the directors poor fellows must proclaim freedom & coercion with the same breath. I am a voluntary but if I proclaimed a certain church independent & self governed I would never think of grumbling because that church acted out its independence both in reference to Gov^t grants & everything else. then pretending they were only sifting affairs after "a lapse of 50 years" though only two years had elapsed since there was quite enough of sifting and poking What would they have? Remove our suspicions and then we shall contribute Wont we. Ough. they parted with a stroking of each other backs [0004] and puffing about the "excellent spirit which pervaded this meeting" Bah

Wishing you every blessing - many thanks for the Banners and a wish that you may send more. Believe me Ever yours

very affectionately

David Livingston

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