

Letter to Hamilton M. Dyke, 24 February 1843

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[0001]

Motito 24 Feb 1843My Dear Brother

I was very much gratified indeed by the reception of the kind favour you sent by M^r Lennie &[...]s I am just about to cross the boundary of comparative civilizat[-]ion 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 awanting try & leaving out those which ought never to have been in
D.L.

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of the everlasting gospel. M^{rs} 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^r 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

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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 ^{the} 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

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Now this Mocuana after appeallin[...][g] to his audienc[e]
if this were not reall Bechuana belief of old
turned to M^r 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^r 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 usually 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