

Letter to Arthur Tidman, 26 April 1852

Livingstone, David, 1813-1873

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Cape Town 26th April 1852

Rev^d D^r Tidman

My Dear Sir

The chief object of this letter is to advise you of the departure of M^{rs} Livingston and four children on board the "Trafalgar" Captain D. Robertson, bound for London. She sailed on the 23^d curr. And as this goes by the Royal Mail Steamer which will sail on the first of May, you will in all probability receive this before M^{rs} Livingston's arrival

In thus committing my family to your care I may state that nothing but the fullest convictions of duty would have led me to adopt this step, but having already addressed you twice on this subject, and by full and explicit statements endeavored to furnish data on which to form your own Judgement, I feel the less inclined to advert to the subject again. Your silence however makes me fear that my letters may have miscarried, and I shall add that our children have claims on those by whom we are sent. It is well known that the laws of God avenge themselves on those by whom they are contemned. they resemble two edged swords when caught by the blades. The Emigrant boers who despise the law of benevolence enuntiated in the declaration that God hath made of one blood all the nations of the Earth are themselves becoming as degraded as the natives whom they despise - A slave population every-where works the ruin and degradation of the free class which employs it. Tyranny and every other form of vice reproduce themselves and the moral contagion spreads like leaves by means of the children. It is but just that such contagions should infect those who

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fear not the vengeance of the divine laws or of Him who is their author. But missionaries expose their children to a contamination which they have had no hand in producing. We expose them and ourselves for a time in order to elevate those sad captives of sin and satan who are the victims of the degradation of ages. None of those who complain about missionaries sending their children home ever descend to this. And again

as Mr James in his "young men from home" forcibly shews a greater misfortune cannot befall a youth than to be cast into the world entirely without a home. In regard to even the vestige of a home my children are absolutely vagabonds "When shall we return to Kolobeng"? "When to Kuruman"? ["]Never The mark of Cain is on your foreheads. your father is a missionary." Our children ought to have both the sympathies and prayers of those at whose bidding we become strangers for life[.]

I intend to leave this during the course of the next week. I need scarcely again advert to the plans which in consequence of what I believe to be the direct leadings of Providence I have been led to form. In passing in to the distant region to which I feel called. I shall have to mourn over the defection of Sechele now more apparent than ever. By letters which I have recieved since I have come to Cape Town I learn that Sechele has plundered an Englishman whom he believed to have killed one of his people. I have little doubt but such is the fact The Englishman being a person of immoral character and the companion of the missing native declares that the Englishman inflicted injuries sufficient to terminate life & then left him. Two companions of this same man (Moyle) have perished in suspicious circumstances. One of them named Dalman perished near to Kolobeng but being in the way to Cape Town at the time of his death I can give no particulars. The plunder of Moyle by Sechele

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is quite unjustifiable and as I stated before I believe Sechele is an apostate. He cannot be referred to as a trophy of grace but never did man bid fairer for years to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven than he. You will see no success in that region so long as Inglis and Edwards are your missionaries. It would be absurd to expect the Divine blessing. I am sorry to write so but it is the truth, and truth which ought to be known by the Directors. I do not wish to be or appear censorious but were I now placed in the most solemn circumstances my past experience of the vicinity of these men would lead me to declare that it is a mere waste of life to labour near the ~~mse-men~~. Eight years experience has only strengthened the conviction that our Society would be incalculably more useful were there a safety valve by which such characters might be let off.

Believe me
Affectionately yours
David Livingston

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Cape Town Apl 26/52
D^r Livingston

Arr^d 14 July 1852

Received June 7/52

Prepaid
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London