



KAW MENDI MISSION.

LETTERS:

TO

SABBATH-SCHOOL CHILDREN

ON

AFRICA:

WRITTEN WHILE ON A MISSION TO AFRICA, AND DURING
A VISIT HOME.

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VOLUME III.

CINCINNATI:
AMERICAN REFORM TRACT AND BOOK SOCIETY.
1858.

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36918

PREFACE.

IN view of the interest manifested by children and adults in the preceding volumes of Letters from Africa, the author is induced to prepare another volume of the remaining letters of the series, with the hope that they will communicate matters of interest and profit to all.

They will give an interesting view of our school, our children, and of the success of the Gospel among that people. The children are allowed to speak much for themselves, in their own simple way.

That all who read may be as deeply interested as was the writer in witnessing the scenes described, and be stimulated to labor, and pray more earnestly for benighted Africa, is the desire and prayer of

THE AUTHOR.

(v.)

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LETTERS
TO
SABBATH-SCHOOL CHILDREN
ON
AFRICA.

LETTER I.

THE AFRICAN BOY'S FIRST COMPOSITION.

THE following composition was written by a boy in Mr. Brooks' school, at Mo Tappan. It was written in Mendi, and translated by him into English. The name of the boy who wrote it is not mentioned, but I presume that it was Wm. B. Tucker, for I think that no other boy (at that time) in Mr. Brooks' school, could have done it in Mendi. But to the composition.

"THE HUNTER.

"A hunting-man went a hunting, and killed a leopard. There were a number of people around, trying to settle the question, *who* killed the animal; and among them came a stranger, and inquired the cause of their dispute. They

said, 'We are trying to determine what killed this leopard. The man who went a hunting had a gun; now, the man, or the gun, which killed the leopard?' The stranger answered, 'I suppose it was the man that killed it.' 'No,' replied the others, 'for we saw him with the gun, which he pointed toward the animal.' Then said the stranger, 'I suppose it was the gun, *with* which the man killed the leopard.' They answered, 'Why? How would the gun have killed it, were there no man? Could the gun have killed the animal by itself? And as you have before said, that it was the *man* who killed it, would he have killed it, had there been *no ground* to stand upon?' To this the stranger made no answer. And before they could speak of the man who made the gun, and the Being who made the ground so rich with iron, the members of the hunter caught the spirit of dispute, and fell into a quarrel for the beast. The eye said, 'Give me my beef,* for without me the leopard would not have been killed.'"

So abruptly ends the composition, without its application. We could wish that the boy

* An African term for all animals that are eaten, whether great or small.

had carried out his idea, and given his own moral, but the reader will have to take it as I get it. Each can make his own application.

There is evidence of thought manifested in this which is interesting, and which has since been more fully developed.

ANOTHER FIRST EFFORT.

Here is another composition, by James R. Anderson, a boy in my school.

"DRUNKENNESS.

"Drunkenness is one of the most horrible sins that ever existed on this globe, and has reduced human beings to a lower state of existence, by brutalizing them, and making them unconscious of their high nature. For example, I will mention the case of Lot. He was deceived by wine, and after being reduced to so low a state of mind, he committed the sin of *lewdness* with his own daughters. Thus we have now seen how a man is readily brutalized by this practice.

"I believe also, that the writer of this composition has seen how men by this have become dissipated, so that poverty has followed them all their life here, and afterward they are sent

'where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.'

"So when I think of those multitudes in Freetown, who are perishing, day by day, in consequence of their taking 'one glass a week, and then one a day, and at every friend's house, till they want something stronger and stronger, and at last murder their fellow-man to get more rum,'* I pray that the Lord may hasten the day when Temperance shall sway the world around.

"At last, when I think of my own father, who loves me so much, I am at a loss what to say. But as I have written to him many times, and spoken to him, if he does not hearken the Lord knows that I have not spared my voice, to speak to my parents what the Bible tells me. I am glad I have done so; yet I feel to be telling them every day, either by letter, or from my own mouth.

"Dear brethren and friends, will you join with me to pray for them? I beseech you in the name of the Lord,

'For though he may awhile forbear,
He'll help them from on high.'

* This quotation is from a Temperance Card which I published, and circulated in Africa. G. T.

Dear children, what do you think of these first efforts at composition? Is there not hope? Shall we not be encouraged to go forward and labor for this people? What if we die, if laborers here may be raised up to take our places? Will you not be encouraged to pray, and do more than ever?

Your Missionary,

GEO. THOMPSON.

LETTER II.

LETTERS FROM AFRICAN CHILDREN.

The first is from a boy who belongs to the church. He has joined since I came out to Africa this last time. I asked him to write a letter to a Sabbath-school in Illinois, which is raising money to help us. I think he was gone not more than half an hour, and came back with the following, which I send you with scarcely a single correction. For such an off-hand effort I was pleased with it.

KAW MENDI MISSION, 1854.

MY DEAR FRIENDS:

I wish to say something about this country. In this part of the world, they serve idols of

wood and stone, and worship hills and rivers. When a man dies his family beat drums, drink palm wine, shoot guns, and give liquor to the people till they are drunk. The property of the dead is divided among his family. They then begin to dance, and kill sheep, and goats, and fowls. They feast and make merry with each other, near the grave. They do not like to think that death will come to themselves, and so when it appears, they drive away the thought by such bad doings.

We know that death will come to all, and as we seek to love God and believe in Jesus, so we pray that we may be ready.

Oh, pray to God, my dear friends, that the eyes of this people may be opened, that they may know our Saviour, and acknowledge his blessed grace and mercy.

Oh, dear friends, make good use of the privileges you have, and pray to God, that as you grow in years, you may also "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ," so that when you grow to be men and women, you may be able to teach others who are ignorant, and thus help bring them to Christ.

Now, my dear friends, I must close this letter. Next time I may tell you something else. Much love to you all, and to your teachers.

Oh, dear friends, when our dear minister, George Thompson, asked me to write to you, I was very glad to do it.

I am your affectionate brother

C. T.

ANOTHER LETTER.

The following extracts are from one who has lately professed to be converted. He wrote a letter to a Sabbath-school in Ohio, from which a letter was written to our school.

KAW MENDI MISSION, June 21, 1854.

DEAR BRETHREN AND SISTERS.

I am one of the mission scholars. I study philosophy, grammar, Colburn's arithmetic, and other common studies.

I was once a very wicked boy, but I asked God to pardon my sins. He answered my prayer, and I was converted to the Lord Jesus Christ. I have forsaken all my sins, and now I am willing to live for my Saviour. When I pray in my room, I always remember you, although I have never seen your faces. But I believe if I am faithful to the end, and all of you are also, if you first go to Paradise, I shall meet every one of you there.

I thank you for helping us in this mission,

and for sending us missionaries, for once I was in darkness, but now I see the light.

The missionaries here are laboring very hard for us, and many of the scholars have given up their hearts to God, and have left off all their sins. But some of the natives of the town have not given their hearts to the Lord, though the minister has taken much pains to go round the town to invite them. They are fighting against that great, and mighty, and powerful God, day and night.

Some of them do not believe there is any hell for the wicked to go to, but oh, how ignorant they are! I ask them, "When you die, where will you go?" They say, "My body will just be left in the ground to rot, and all the trouble will be over." I ask them again, "Who will be your friend in the ground, when you die?" They answer, "We will meet all our fathers, and mothers, and sisters, and brothers, and all the family!"

When I see such things among the heathen, it makes my heart break down; and so I am trying to study hard, that I may be a "fisher of men" among the heathen!

Your most sincere friend,

J. H.

Dear children, I have only given extracts

from this letter, because it was so long that my sheet would not hold it all; but I have given you the substance of the whole. What do you think of these letters? Will not you love the Lord, and do more for the heathen? Pray for us.

Your Missionary,

GEO. THOMPSON.

LETTER III.*

THE REVIVAL OF GOD'S WORK.

Doubtless my young readers, as well as the older, will be interested to know, that God is answering their prayers for this benighted people, by pouring out his spirit richly upon us. And that you all may unite with us in thanksgiving to him for his mercy, I will state a few facts and incidents respecting the last two months.

It is known from my previous letters, that our meetings have been well attended, and very interesting for a year past, and that occasional conversions have occurred from time to time. But on the fourteenth of May a precious

* Written on the twelfth of July, 1854.

Spirit of God, see themselves to be "the chief of sinners;" that when there is conviction for sin, relief is found only in applying to Christ, and in the assurance that his blood has "cleansed from all sin;" that where this is felt peace and joy invariably follow; and that when the evidence of adoption is enjoyed, there is always a desire to be actively engaged for God.

LETTER V.

THE CONVERTED HEATHEN WOMAN, AND OTHER CASES.

In the villago near us lives an old lady who has no friends in this part of the country. She was born far up north-east from here, and is very old. Her name is Mantenne. Is not this a pretty name? For a long time this woman has been observed to be very attentive to preaching, and to take great delight in hearing the Gospel, and in being with Christians. These things in her conduct interested our hearts, and led us to hope that God was doing a good work in her soul. I called her to my room, and had a long talk with her. She truly talked like a Christian; had firm trust

in God, and was confident that nothing, neither wealth, shame, or suffering, could make her leave the Saviour. She loves prayer, and prays often. She is poor, very poor. She said, "I have no husband, no child, nor any one to help me. I came from a far country, and now look to God only for help. Sometimes, when I have nothing, and do not know how I can get anything to eat, I pray, and tell the Lord that I have nothing, and don't know how I am to do; and while I am praying, some one comes with something for me." Is not this beautiful? Does it not remind you of that promise of God, "While they are yet speaking, I will hear?"

God loves to see simple, child-like confidence in him, and will always honor it, and encourage it, in whomsoever manifested, though in a poor, ignorant, old African woman.

Does the reader have such humble faith in God, as a Saviour who will forgive, and a Father who will "give that which is good?" Oh, may not this old African woman rise up in the judgment, to condemn any reader who enjoys privileges and opportunities very far superior, and yet neglects them?

I asked her, "Do you know when the Sabbath comes?" "Yes." "How?" "This is

Saturday, is it not?" she asked. "Yes." "Tomorrow is Sunday," she said. "Yes." Then she counted her fingers, and showed when Sunday would come again. I asked, "Have you any stick, or any thing by which to keep count of the Sabbath?" "No, it lives^o in my head," was her beautiful reply.

I was much delighted with the spirit of this old lady. Well would it be for thousands in America, if they had such a regard for the Sabbath as this poor, ignorant, heathen woman has.

A CHIEF CONFESSING HIS SIN.

Some time since, two chiefs from up the river, came here on Saturday, and we persuaded them to stay till Monday. On the Sabbath they went to the chapel twice, and heard the Gospel, for probably the first time. In the evening, as many were speaking, one of the chiefs asked if he could speak. We said, "Yes." And he then, in the name of both, confessed their sins, and said, "We came here to Mr. Thompson, and we are glad to hear God-word. We will pray that God may forgive our wick-

^oThe word "live" is often thus applied, by Africans, to inanimate objects. A word, a thought, or any object, is said to "live there," where we say, "it is there."

edness. We can't do wicked again. We hope the Lord may help the missionaries who are trying to teach this people, for it is through them that we hear about God." I had been preaching from Prov. v: 22, showing how wicked men are taken in their sins, as with cords, and are binding themselves fast therewith. He went on, alluding to this: "Those cords of sin about us, of which the minister speaks, and which bind us fast, we beg God to break them, that we may serve him alone. Though we live in a heathen land, we have now heard about God to-day, and we can't forget the words we have heard. When you pray, we beg you to remember us."

We can not even *hope* that these chiefs were converted, but we were glad to see them so much interested in the truth. And I am persuaded, that this people only need to have the Gospel preached to them steadily, to cause multitudes to embrace it.

A LETTER TO SCHOOLMATES, ON THE GOODNESS OF GOD.

Here is a letter from one of our boys to his companions:

MY DEAR FRIENDS:

Let us think how much God has done for us in this heathen land. Just see all the things

that are around us here—these plantains, palm-trees, good water, and pine-apples, and all these vegetable products that he has provided for us.

And then he has sent so many fishermen and women, to fish for our souls, and to spread the Gospel in this land, that we may not perish; that we may know how much Jesus suffered for us; and that we may not die in our sins. And while he sends all these missionaries to us, we see that they soon die—and this is all for our sakes. So that we ought to pray for the few that remain with us, laboring only for our souls.

Though many of the people say that they can not believe what they tell them about the blessed Saviour, let us try to go forward day by day, because we have the Holy Bible in our hands, and are trying to understand it more and more. So, brethren, we ought to love God, and try to teach others, as long as we live.

Let us think, dear friends, how many of our families are perishing without Christ. Our country is before us. A life of usefulness is held out to us, and a God of almighty power is by us to support us. Oh, how much we ought to love the Lord Jesus Christ, my dear friends, for his goodness to us. C. T.

Will not every one be encouraged to do more than ever to send the Gospel to the heathen?

Reader, "*The world is before you, and a life of usefulness,*" and all needed grace to help you. "Work while it is called to-day."

Your Missionary,
GEO. THOMPSON.

LETTER VI.

FIRST EFFORTS AT COMPOSITION.

In this letter I will give you a number of little compositions, written by various boys in the school.

"GOD, AND HIS ANGELS.

"God is in heaven, and his angels are around him, praising him; and so we ought to do while we are in this world. Though we can not see him, yet he is with us, and if we are prepared to meet him, we shall see him, and live with him in heaven, with all his angels, and with his son, Jesus Christ. How happy are they who love the Lord, and go to be with him, when they die.

"J. K."

"STUDY.

"It is a useful thing to study. Some of the learned men, who have studied much, have

found out great things. I love to study, very much. See that great man, Isaac Newton. By studying, and thinking, he found out what makes things fall to the ground. And again, by studying, all the planets were found out, and named, and classed in order. How should all of us try to study, to gain knowledge, and not be like our countrymen any more—ignorant, idle, and lazy.

“T. T.”

“GLUTTONY.

“Gluttony is a great sin, in the sight of God. It is said in the Bible, that whenever we eat and drink, we must do it ‘to the glory of God.’ I know many people who are gluttons, and some boys that are gluttons. They like to eat more than they need, and after that they get sick. I know a boy who eat so much that he went and vomited, and then came back and eat again. It is very wicked to eat too much, for God has given us food to strengthen our bodies, that we may be able to serve him, and to live for him.

“S. M. C.”

“ON THE GOODNESS OF GOD.

“The goodness of God is very great to men. God has done so much for the children of men,

and now what shall we render to him for all the goodness which he has done for us? I think all the money in this world would not reward the Lord for his goodness to us. He ‘so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.’ Now, must we not love that dear Saviour, who is so good to us? I think we ought to love him more than we do, for what he has done for us.

“T. C.”

“ON SLAVERY.

“To hold a fellow-creature as a slave, is one of the most wicked things in the sight of God. In this country, when a man has three or four slaves, he will not work again, but make all his slaves work night and day. And if he gets in any palaver (trouble), and has to pay, he will take his slave and pay for the palaver. All this is sin against God, and we ought to pray that the time may soon come, when slavery shall come to an end, and peace, and love, and joy, be established.

“J. P.”

“PRAYER.

“Prayer is the Christian's life. If any man pray to the Lord, with his heart, the Lord will

hear his prayer. But if he do not pray with his heart, he will not hear his prayer. Let us, dear brethren, love the Lord, 'for his mercy endureth forever.' And let us love him more and more, because he sent his Son into the world to save sinners. And let us be ready always to answer questions about our Father who is in heaven.

"F. T."

Dear reader, what do you think of first efforts? All choose their own subjects, and write by themselves. Perhaps I may send more to you hereafter; but these are sufficient for specimens, and to show the turn of their minds. We think that there is reason for encouragement. I have many longer compositions, but choose short ones, in order to give you more variety of persons and subjects. Four of the foregoing writers are small boys, and I hope that all are Christians—but that the life must show.

Your Missionary,
GEO. THOMPSON.

LETTER VII.

LETTERS FROM WM. B. TUCKER.

MO TAPPAN, July 9, 1854.

TO MR. LEWIS TAPPAN:

Dear father in Christ—Since my last letter to you, the Lord has dealt graciously with me, in sparing my life, that I may do his will in this dark part of the world, where heathenism and superstition reign. I should judge that this part of Africa is the most involved in sins of the blackest and most awful kinds known to Africans.

They are easily deceived in matters of country-fashion (jugglery, or sorcery), and in gree-grees. They were so deceived by the Spaniards and French, as to be led to believe that there is a kind of gree-gree in Europe and America, which, when worn in time of war, would save a person from being shot, or from being killed by a sword. By such deceptions the Spaniards and French got many of their slaves. Sometimes they would bring a piece of metal, and sell it as a gree-gree, for not less than a slave!* This people having been

* I am inclined to believe that the stone idols found over the country, and used as gree-grees, were first introduced in this way. G. T.