

Received. May 17, 1844

To the Committee of the Evangelical Lutheran
Mission Society in Dresden.

Adelaide, November 27, 1843

Honored and beloved brethere.

My last letter, written in Adelaide on July 2nd of this year, mentioned a captured native named Gnarbi, whose interrogation and probable death sentence were imminent at the time. I now have to add the unpleasant news that he was executed in Adelaide on August 1st. During the time between his conviction and execution, I visited him almost every day and made every effort to impart to him some knowledge of eternity and the different states of souls after death. It was evident that he understood me to some extent, for when I spoke of the places of reward and punishment, he was moved and immediately asked me where he would go. I told him that murderers and all the wicked would go to hell (Hadlaiappa is the word commonly used in Adelaide, which also fits this dialect and actually means "fire cave"), unless they repent and beg Jehovah not to drive them into hell. He asked how he should pray, and when I recited a short sentence to him, he also wanted to know if he should say it out loud.

However, to my great sorrow, I found that I could not provide him with sufficient and clear instruction, and that, moreover, his mind was too preoccupied with the worry of ending his life in his homeland, Port Lincoln. He instructed me to tell the whites that he felt abandoned in Adelaide, that he would be killed in Port Lincoln, and that another prisoner from there should accompany him. However, this request was not granted. A proof that his heart was touched by all this was the voluntary confession of his guilt, which he made to me in one of our conversations. "Since I will soon die," he said, "I want to confess to you that I speared two whites (whom he named) after others had already speared them before me." I asked him why he had speared these people who had treated him so kindly. "Yes, of course, you're right," he replied. "Why did I spear these friendly people? The others egged me on, saying: 'Spear them, spear them, so that we can always eat sweet bread.' The potatoes (which the murdered people had allowed them to take) were bad. Thus, my life (in the natives' view, the seat of emotions) was hostile." Shortly before his death, he promised me that his soul would visit me in Port Lincoln, and to a former settler there, whom he knew, he said in broken English that he would be a white man, a testimony that my instructions had not overcome his prejudices.

On **July 20th**, while I was also in Adelaide, I approached the government through the protector, Mr. Moorhouse, with a request for the following work tools: 6 shovels, 6 sickles, 2 hoes, 2 axes, and 2 sacks of flour to continue the work of the natives, which I mentioned in my last letter. However, I received a response that the government had no money and that the governor was not convinced of the feasibility of my plan. (His Excellency is not convinced that the procedural plan proposed by Mr. Schurmann seems to be a reasonable one.)

From this laconic response and from oral discussions with the governor, it becomes clear that he is firmly opposed to all efforts to gather the natives into separate bodies from Europeans. On the contrary, he favors the idea of educating children in the English manner, in order to train them to become English servants for Europeans. To prove the feasibility of this plan, he pointed to a 15-16-year-old girl who has been in the governor's house since Colonel Gawler's time and has behaved well. However, it must not be concealed that the natives, far from being satisfied with this, have repeatedly demanded the return of the girl. The governor asked if I believed I could gather a number of children to school in Port Lincoln, and what the annual cost of maintaining them would be. After receiving a satisfactory answer, he promised his support for establishing a school modeled after the Adelaide one, as soon as the funds were available. Indeed, the English government has recently established a fund to use fifteen percent of the proceeds from the Crown lands to improve the situation of the indigenous people; however, since very little land is currently being sold, the resulting fund is not significant.

The governor also advised me to publish my dictionary of the dialect spoken in Port Lincoln, but I thought it was still too early, or rather, my collection was too incomplete. I also had concerns about the cost, as experience has shown that such an undertaking doesn't pay off. However, he took my promise to provide him with a copy of my dictionary and a summary of the grammatical rules, which I have been working on since my visit to Adelaide a few weeks ago. I haven't received a response yet as to whether the governor wants to cover the printing costs on public funds. If that's the case, I will send you some copies next time. According to the indigenous people we befriended, the Battara Gurarri, or the tribe hostile to Europeans, have been acting this way since the execution of their comrades Ngaltia and Gnarbi. Their aim is nothing less than to drive out all whites and kill the natives who interact with them, the latter because they helped in the capture of the murderers as informants and guides. They planned to gather in Munarilla, the natives' farming field, to spear them and steal their wheat. However, they wanted to spare me, as I'm peaceful and a Ngankaworta, i.e., a mediator of disputes and hostilities. But these threats don't worry me much, as the natives often make grand plans that they never carry out.

The wheat of the natives has not turned out as well as I expected, as the season from August onwards has been extremely dry, but it will provide them with a livelihood for a few months. The harvest is at the door, where there will be enough work for both me and the natives, as I will have to make or procure all the necessary tools for them

and give instructions for the new work. Although dealing with such external matters is not the immediate and actual purpose of my mission, it nevertheless brings me pleasure, partly because it provides the best opportunity to progress in the language, and partly because the natives do not fully appreciate the good intentions of such efforts. --

Recently, an elderly man belonging to the Nauo tribe died here in the city. Since all the other natives had left, I provided him with as much care as I could, for which he was very grateful. When one of his tribe members later arrived and he sensed his imminent death, he instructed them that we should bury him at my house. He lived for a whole week in great pain, but the natives, who had meanwhile returned and seemed moved by the sight of the sick man, later showed great indifference, leaving him alone all day, even though he constantly needed water to drink and fire to keep warm. With just as much indifference and without any ceremony, they also buried him after he had died.

I received your letter of April 6th this year a few days ago. I would like to avoid future complaints about neglected correspondence. Your decision to continue the mission in South Australia, and particularly in Port Lincoln, has pleased me, as my mind is now at ease, having agreed in advance with what you would respond, considering it to be the Lord's will. It's not my place, in my opinion, to discuss the reasons you've put forward, but I would like to note that I based my request for transfer on two premises: firstly, that not all mission fields are equal, but that some have advantages over others, and therefore, as in the course of apostolic history, it is permissible and even a duty for those whom the Lord has entrusted with the partial leadership of his church to do what is good for them; secondly, that when a mission society sends its messengers to a distant and relatively unknown field of work, these latter are morally obliged to express their impressions and views. I think it's easier and more comfortable for an old man to continue on the familiar path, but not always and under all circumstances does this advance God's kingdom and honor. However, to err is human. --

It says in one part of your letter: "It's certain that as long as you don't go among the natives and live with them, but wait for them to come to you, you won't achieve much." I completely agree with this; and living among the natives is what I've wished for and strived for since I've been in South Australia. However, I don't know how to do this other than by assigning the natives a piece of land as their permanent and inalienable property and assisting them in cultivating it. In summer, they wander from place to place every day, and even in winter, the Nauos, whose dialect is different and unknown to me, only stay at a camp site for eight or at most fourteen days. I do visit them then, but that doesn't mean living with them in the sense you seem to assume and I wish for. Under current circumstances, this would only be possible if one were completely a savage, wearing kangaroo skins instead of clothes and feeding on their sometimes disgusting food, because I'm convinced that the natural greed of the natives, at least of the more remote ones, would not tolerate any preference. It's also a

mistake to measure all the natives of South Australia by the same standard; in some coastal areas and along the river, they are numerous, almost always found in the same area, and cannot be compared to the nomads who roam through the bush and forests over mountains and valleys. It's a difficult task that has been assigned to us, especially for a single person.

I prayed and asked God to send me some kind of help, a friend with whom I could confide and seek advice in times of joy and sorrow, even though I can't foresee how this could happen.

Hereby, I submit myself for this time to the grace and mercy of the Lord, to your indulgence, love, and fraternal intercession for your humble fellow brother.

C. W. Schürmann