

Ebenezer, near Stockwell 22nd August, 1863

Greetings - "Grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ!"

By God's wonderful guidance I have been led to a permanent friendship with your dear daughter Anna, after having been closely acquainted with her in the past. This is what I wish to report to you if, God-willing, you are still alive, and so I greet you, dear father-in-law and mother-in-law and all your dear ones, once more with the words of St. Paul, Hebrews 13:20-21.

I hope that these few lines 'find you in the best of health. When my dear departed first wife Magdalena was terminally ill and it was quite clear to us that God would separate us through her being called into eternity, she was most concerned about what would become of me and said, "My dear, you must remarry", and she named persons whom I could take. I rejected all this and had intended, if nothing else, to offer myself to the Mission. However, after all this talking to and fro, she finally said, "I don't know what you should do, but I do know that God will most mightily stand by you". My inner inclination was that, if it be God's will, I intended to remain alone.

At her death I was brought very close to God and surrounded by his promises, "As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you" Isaiah 66:13; "I am with you always"; "Without me you can do nothing", etc. etc. Then it seemed as if Jesus himself personally wanted to take charge of our affairs and we needed only to be his children who loved and trusted him. At that time the whole of my future life, even if it actually were to be 40 years, did not seem much longer than an extended year which would end with an unspeakable harvest after a short weariness, and everything the Lord had done and allowed to happen would be transformed into eternal joy and bliss. But when I actually went back to my daily tasks I was all alone. My eldest daughter Maria was 11 years old and had to go to school, and instead of cooking dinner for me, that's when she came from school. The second, Anna, 7 years old, couldn't go to school because the smallest, Christiana, 3 years old, couldn't stay alone when I worked outside. In this distressing situation where everything, inside and outside, was dependent on me my lifetime, even if it were to be no more than a year, seemed like an eternity. Now I realized why I had been so drawn into God's presence: instead of grumbling and despairing, this situation demanded more prayer, more faith and more trust in God's assistance. So now I prayed on and on every day, and everything became easier. And there was a lot of sympathy for my situation on the part of spiritual brothers and acquaintances. In spite of the great difficulty of finding a housekeeper in this country, soon there were enquiries as to whether I needed one, even though I had not looked for one.

Because there are less women than men here they (the women) have developed a wantonness which has so corrupted their morals that they are of little use in an orderly household. They know better how to cover 30 miles per day on a horse than to understand how long a hundredweight of suger, a bag of coffee or a

pig's carcass would last. And whilst in Germany, generally speaking, the women showed more fear of God and inclination to devotion to God than the men, here in South Australia the very opposite is the case. (I am speaking in general terms, where there is always an exception to the rule.) Added to that, they usually marry before they are 20 years old. All these circumstances contributed to the fact that I had no particular desire, also not for a housekeeper, apart from which I also was afraid that my heart would deceive me. I also rejected all hints of marriage. Eventually a woman who had come from Germany, but whose husband had stayed there, was recommended to me as a housekeeper. She had good references from her friends here and so I hired her. Her annual salary was more than 140 thalers. In this situation the whole business was a burden to me, which more and more led to the thought: what shall I do?

At that time Pastor Goethe from Melbourne came to the church synod in South Australia, and also visited me in my house. As we got to know each other better he expressed the wish that I might help to build the kingdom of God, in the church in Melbourne. Because I had a blood brother in Melbourne and was also in correspondence with A. Kaiser, and knew several others, I promised that after harvest I would visit Melbourne, and that God willing we could discuss the matter further. In March 1862 I journeyed to Melbourne,*2.

a good 600 miles from Adelaide (reckoning 9 English miles to 2 German). There I visited all the brothers known to me and for most of my 4 weeks there I stayed with A. Kaiser because he lived closest to Melbourne. At the request of Pastor Goethe I conducted several mid-week services (Abendstunden) in the German church in Melbourne, Westgarth, etc. But I couldn't reach a decision concerning my offering myself for service in the church, for the mission activity which I was to take on would often involve journeys of 100 to 200 miles, which would make it necessary to give my children to someone, and this did not allow me to come to a decision which would give inner peace. Added to this was the fact, that when I came from Melbourne to South Australia all our Wendish brothers were opposed to my leaving South Australia, and each one in personal interview urged me to stay here. Many Germans also urgently requested me to stay here. But our Pastor Staudenmayer was in favour of my accepting the Call. In this situation I knew of nothing to do except pray to the Lord, that he would lead and guide me according to his will. Combined with my staying here was also the urging that I marry again, which my Wendish brothers had advised from the start. For to run my affairs I would have to have a very understanding housekeeper, seeing I am often away for several days, which means that I need someone else beside her. This not only demands great financial outlays, but, as already mentioned, the (female) sex is more scarce here, and if one does not treat them with all politeness and kindness such servant-ladies soon become headstrong and unmanageable, and are soon ready to leave the service. But if one treats them with kindness, then after one or more years they become so cocky that one is glad to see them move on. Under such conditions it is easy to see that my children, who were all still young when their mother died, even Maria, the eldest, only 11 years old, didn't have any

proper household training. (Maria) knew nothing at all about baking, sewing and mending, which is surely the true work of the woman in the home. Under these conditions Pastor Schondorf and others, who wanted me to stay here, advised that I should remarry. I also eventually came to see that the only way to soothe my conscience in all points (which cannot all be mentioned here) was to remarry. As we Wends live close together here and, apart from the worship service (which is held in German) also have our Wendish devotional meetings, it was my wish that if it be God's will for me to marry again, he would give me a Wend as wife. Because all are still young in our midst, A. Pannach, who has since died, once said to me, "What's the situation in Melbourne? You have been there, would there be no suitable one there for you? I also would dearly like to see you take one from our nation." I told him in confidence that the sister of A. Kaiser seems to be a devout young woman who loves the Lord, withdrawn from worldly things and adhering to what is good. I saw her, even though I spoke very little to her and have no idea whether she would accept such an offer from me. Brother Pannach encouraged me to write to her, and so, after pleading to God in prayer, I decided to write to Anna Kaiser, your dear daughter, on 22nd November, 1862. After an exchange of several letters I travelled to Melbourne again at the beginning of March of this year 1863, and discussed and decided the matter in God's Name, and so Pastor Goethe married us on 6th April, 1863. After 8 days we said our farewells and travelled to South Australia by favourable sea voyage which took 3 days. We landed safely in Adelaide, and for the remaining 50 miles to our destination at Ebenezer we took the train for half that distance, and the rest by vehicle, arriving safely. We were received with great joy by our 3 girls and all our acquaintances. As far as our new household situation is concerned, we have been together now for 4 months and at least now know each other, and there is nothing negative to report; rather, we praise God for his gracious guidance, that he allowed us to wait and then brought us together in such a wonderful way. We are happy about our children, that they have a great love and attachment to Anna as their mother. And Anna also loves them dearly, and so we all live together happily by God's grace - and to the present time we are all in good health.

And because, by God's grace, we recognize that all this has happened and still happens out of Fatherly kindness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness on our part, we feel obliged to thank and praise our gracious God for such wonderful guidance, and to serve him our whole life long - in which also the children of God find peace, rest and bliss, which the children of this world neither know nor experience.

Now, my dear father-in-law and mother-in-law, I am about to conclude, but when I began this letter my dear Anna - your daughter - requested that I not forget to add a few words of exhortation to you. It is in the nature of things....

(there follows a long and complicated devotional statement and admonition, which I am not in a position to translate in detail)

... There is nothing of importance to report concerning political conditions in our colony. Everything is going along peacefully. We are having an extraordinarily wet winter this year, which is always good for our purposes. Because of imports from America the price of our wheat has been very low, 3-4 shillings per bushel (3 bushels make one "Scheffel"), but has now risen to 5 shillings and 6 pence. Several ... have been transported to Africa at this price with several hundred tons of flour, several to New Zealand, etc. This year I sowed 42 acres with wheat, 4 acres with barley. In total I have 87 acres of land.

I must close, in order to post this letter, because it is high time. Tomorrow, on 25th August, the mail will leave. Our children had each written a little letter to Grandma, but they didn't finish, therefore will have to send it with another mail, and Anna will also add a few lines. So this time they all send greetings, Anna to her dear father and mother and brother and sisters. Please greet Magdalena and her husband in Gebelzig with the words of Matthew 5:1-13, also Godfather Stosch and his family, and all our acquaintances, Siegfried Schmidt, etc. Dear father-in-law, let my mother read the letter too and greet her sincerely from us all, with hymn 257, also my brother Andreas and Carl and Maria.

Adelaide, 24th August, 1863.

Translated from the original German by Rev. Clem Schmidt