David Livingstone

MAN OF PRAYER AND ACTION

C. Silvester Horne, M.P.

To David Livingstone, to become a Christian was to become in spirit and desire, a missionary.

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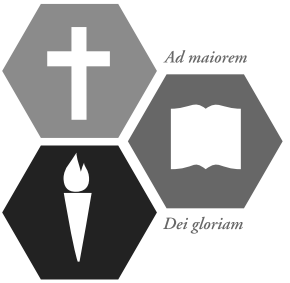

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— — Preface — —

It was the great Christian missionary and explorer, David Livingstone, who once said, "I'll go anywhere with God, as long as it is forward." These inspiring words summarize well the whole focus of this pioneer missionary to the African people. Livingstone was gifted with a forward-looking eye that was confident in the power of the Gospel of Christ to change men and nations. He acted upon his faith in full knowledge that the church of Christ would some day batter down the gates of hell.

It is sad to witness the lack of confidence characteristic of many Christian missionaries at the beginning of the twenty-first century. So many who are called to the mission field today expect a meager harvest of souls. They lack the zeal that was once so characteristic of ambassadors of Christ. How strange and almost out-of-place the immortal words of the faithful missionary, William Carey, seem today. Carey said, "Attempt great things for God, expect great things from God."

David Livingstone maintained a journal that lovingly recorded his experiences and trials as a pioneer missionary. This fascinating record reveals the long-term view that was prominent in all of his planning and enterprises. Livingstone states the following in his journal after ministering the Gospel to the chief of a remote village:

> A good and attentive audience, but immediately after the service I found the Chief had retired into a hut to drink beer.… A minister who had not seen so much pioneer service as I have done would have been shocked to see so little effect produced by an earnest discourse concerning the future judgment, but time must be given to allow the truth to sink into the dark mind and produce its effect. The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord—that is enough. We can afford to work in faith, for Omnipotence is pledged to fulfill the promise.…
>
> A quiet audience today. The seed being sown, the least of all seeds now, but it will grow a mighty tree. It is as it were a small stone cut

> out of a mountain, but it will fill the whole earth. He that believeth shall not make haste.…
>
> Missionaries in the midst of masses of heathenism seem like voices crying in the wilderness—Reformers before the Reformation. Future missionaries will see conversions follow every sermon. We prepare the way for them. May they not forget the pioneers who worked in the thick gloom with few rays to cheer, except such as flow from faith in God's promises! We work for a glorious future which we are not destined to see. We are only morning-stars shining in the dark, but the glorious morn will break.…

When Livingstone was found by the natives, dead upon his knees, on May 4, 1873, it was a fitting end to a faith-filled life. He had died in the act of prayer, and who can doubt that the last prayer, like so many that preceded it, had borne up to God "this poor long downtrodden Africa"? Though his death occurred in an area where darkness and ignorance of God were universal, he had passed on with undiminished confidence in his testimony of former years: "Missionaries do not live before their time. Their great idea of converting the world to Christ is no phantom: it is Divine. Christianity will triumph. It is equal to all it has to perform."

May God grant His church a new army of missionaries that are equipped with the zeal and faith to dare great things for King Jesus.

Michael J. McHugh
Arlington Heights, Illinois
1999

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— — Foreword — —

David Livingstone was a faithful pioneer missionary whose greatest desire was granted only after his death: the cessation of the slave trade and the opening up of Africa to Christianity and lawful commerce.

Livingstone was brought up in a pious but poverty-stricken home in Scotland. He was an avid reader and borrowed extensively from the local library. By the age of nine, he had already committed to memory Psalm 119 and won a copy of the New Testament as a reward. When ten years old, David was employed fourteen hours a day, six days a week at the local cotton spinning factory. The young Livingstone managed to read in the factory by placing his book on a portion of the spinning jenny so that he could catch sentence after sentence as he passed at his work. He maintained a fairly constant study, undisturbed by the roar of the machinery.

His conversion at the age of twelve inspired him to resolve to devote his life to the alleviation of human misery. Three themes dominated his life: *evangelism, exploration*, and *emancipation*. He wrote at the time, "The salvation of men ought to be the chief desire and aim of every Christian." He therefore made a resolution that he would give to the cause of missions all that he might earn beyond what was required for his subsistence.

After ten years of daily drudgery at the cotton mill, David set out to study theology and medicine. Medical science in the 1830s was, by today's standards, primitive. Surgical operations were performed at hazardous speed because of the lack of anesthetics. Chloroform and ether were not introduced until several years later and the discovery of antiseptics lay twenty-five years ahead. The study of chemistry was growing, but physics had hardly started, and biochemistry and bacteriology were unknown. Nothing at all was known about the tropical diseases he was to encounter such as malaria and blackwater fever.

It was not in Livingstone's character to relax. He took his task and calling most seriously and whatever he did he performed thoroughly. He was uncompromising, diligent, and inflexible in his adherence to God's Word. Friends described him as "a man of resolute courage"; "fire, water, stonewall would not stop Livingstone in the fulfillment of any recognized duty."

When he landed in South Africa on March 17, 1841, David Livingstone was coming to a continent that was plagued with problems. Africa was still a place of mystery to the Europeans. The Arabs south of the Sahara never ventured inland far from the coast. The rivers were riddled with rapids and sand bars. The deadly malaria disease was widespread and inhibited travel. Entire expeditions of 300 to 400 men had been decimated by malaria. The African terrain was difficult to negotiate. Floods, tropical forests, and swamps thwarted wheeled transport.

Livingstone soon acquired a reputation for fearless faith—particularly when he walked to the Barka tribe who were infamous for the murder of four white traders whom they had mercilessly poisoned and strangled. As the first messenger of mercy in many regions, Livingstone soon received further challenge.

Chief Sechele pointed to the great Kalahari desert and declared, "You never can cross that country to the tribes beyond; it is utterly impossible even for us Black men." The challenge of crossing this obstacle began to fascinate Livingstone. Livingstone wrote: "I shall try to hold myself in readiness to go anywhere, provided it be forward." He described his three great daily challenges as *heat, harsh conditions*, and *hardness of hearts*. Thus he asserted:

> I hope to be permitted to work as long as I live beyond other men's line of things and plant the seed of the Gospel where others have not planted. But every excursion for that purpose will involve separation from my family for periods of four to five months. I am a missionary, heart and soul. God had an only Son, and He was a missionary and physician. A poor, poor imitation of Him I am, or wish to be. In His service I hope to live, in it I wish to die.

During his first missionary journey with his wife and children, their fourth child, Elizabeth, was born. Within a few weeks

she had died and the rest of the family were sick. He received considerable undeserved criticism for the "irresponsibility" of taking a wife and four children on a missionary journey in the wilderness. Later, he was criticized for sending his family back to Britain while he pioneered the hinterland of Africa. When his wife rejoined him for his second great missionary expedition in the Zambezi Valley, she died of malaria. It was Livingstone who wrote,

> I shall open up a path into the interior or perish. May He bless us and make us blessings even unto death.… Shame upon us missionaries if we are to be outdone by slave traders! … If Christian missionaries and Christian merchants could remain throughout the year in the interior of the continent, in ten years, slave dealers will be driven out of the market.

David Livingstone was inspired by an optimistic eschatology. Like most of the missionaries of the nineteenth century, Livingstone was a postmillenialist who held to the eschatology of victory. The optimistic missionary wrote,

> Discoveries and inventions are cumulative … filling the earth with the glory of the Lord, all nations will sing His glory and bow before Him … our work and its fruit are cumulative. We work towards a new state of things. Future missionaries will be rewarded by conversions for every sermon. We are their pioneers and helpers. Let them not forget the watchmen of the night, who worked when all was gloom and no evidence of success in the way of conversions cheers our path. They will doubtless have more light than we, but we serve our Master earnestly and proclaim the same Gospel as they will do.

Livingstone continued to persevere across the continent of Africa in the face of driving rains, chronic discomfort, rust, mildew and rot, while he became totally drenched, fatigued, and fever ridden. Hostile tribes demanded exorbitant payment for crossing their territory. Some tense moments were stared down by Livingstone, gun in hand. Trials tested the tenacity of the travel-wearied team. Meanwhile, the veteran missionary continued to ask, "Can the love of Christ not carry the missionary where the slave trade carries the traders?"

After two years of pioneering across the hinterland of Africa, Livingstone reached Luanda. A ship called the *Forerunner* was ready to take him to England. Livingstone, however, chose to return overland to bring his guides and porters back to their village. Rather than risk their being sold into slavery in Portuguese West Africa, he preferred to take another two years crossing the continent that had almost killed him on his first journey! Had Livingstone chosen to return, however, he might well have ended his ministry. The ship sank with all hands lost (and with his journals)! Livingstone responded to this tragedy by asserting a simple childlike faith. He wrote,

> These privations, I beg you to observe, are not sacrifices. I think that word ought never to be mentioned in reference to anything we can do for Him who though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor.

Often Livingstone endured excessive and unnecessary suffering and deprivation hacking through dense jungle on foot because lack of funds prevented him from affording the "luxury" of a canoe!

Livingstone often saw the sickening sight of the Islamic slave trade; Livingstone's mere presence often sent the Yao slave raiders scurrying into the bushes. Many hundreds of slaves were set free by Livingstone and his coworkers. On one occasion, a war party of Yao warriors attacked the missionary party. While attempting to avoid confrontation, the team found themselves cut off and surrounded by the aggressive and bloodthirsty mob. Finally, Livingstone was forced to give the command to return fire. The slave traders fled. These incidents led to much criticism in England. Charles Livingstone, his brother, on hearing one outburst from Britain replied:

> If you were in Africa and saw a host of murderous savages aiming their heavily laden muskets and poisoned arrows at you, more light might enter your mind … and if it didn't, great daylight would enter your body through arrow and bullet holes!

It was Livingstone's great desire to see the slave trade cease. First, there was the internal slave trade between hostile tribes. Sec-

ondly, there were slave traders from the coast, Arabs or Portuguese, for whom local tribes were encouraged to collect slaves by force. Thirdly, there were the parties sent out from Portuguese and Arab coastal towns with cloths, beads, muskets, and ammunition to exchange for slaves.

Livingstone had the grace to see that his mission was part of a divine plan to set many souls free from slavery, both physical and spiritual. Livingstone's great goal of bringing to the world's attention the plight of the Islamic slave trade in Africa was achieved largely through the work of his convert, American journalist Henry Morton Stanley.

The challenge of Livingstone rings out to us today:

> Can that be called a sacrifice which is simply paid back as a small part of the great debt owing to our God, which we can never repay … it is emphatically no sacrifice. Say rather, it is a privilege!
>
> I beg to direct your attention to Africa: I know that in a few years I shall be cut off from that country, which is now open; do not let it be shut again! I go back to Africa to try to make an open path for commerce and Christianity: will you carry out the work which I have begun? I leave it with you!

Dr. Peter Hammond
Director, Frontline Fellowship
Cape Town, South Africa
May 1, 1999

CHAPTER 1

Days of His Youth

1813–1840

The year 1813 in which my story opens was a momentous one in the history of Europe. The French Emperor Napoleon was seeking to dominate Europe. Although Napoleon was the victor at Lutzen and Bautzen, he had been defeated at Leipzig, on one of the bloodiest battlefields in modern warfare. Away in the Pyrenees Mountains, however, British general Wellington was grappling with Soult and, step by step, driving him back on to French soil. Among those who were fighting in the ranks of the British army were at least two men bearing the name of Livingstone. It is doubtful whether they even heard, amid the excitement and peril of the time, that away in peaceful Scotland, and in their brother Neil's home, a lad had been born in Blantyre and christened by the good and Scriptural name of David. Yet it may come to be believed some day that the birth of David Livingstone may well have been of more vital influence upon the future of the world than even the battle of Waterloo in which Napoleon's star was set in blood two years later. For to open up a continent and lead the way in the Christianization of its countless millions was one of the "more renowned" victories for peace in the history of the world, and vastly superior to overthrowing one form of military domination in Europe.

The family of Livingstones or Livingstons—for David Livingstone himself spelled his name for many years without the final "e"—came from the Island of Ulva off the coast of Argyllshire, Scotland. Not much of interest is known about them except that one of them died at Culloden fighting for the Stuarts; so that the "fighting blood" in their veins had its way with them before David's more immediate kinsmen crossed the seas to the Peninsula. The most distinguished member of the family, David Livingstone, in-

herited the Highlander's daring and love of exploits combined with the most patient spirit, and left behind him an unstained record as an explorer and faithful missionary of Jesus Christ. Towards the close of the eighteenth century his grandfather had crossed from Ulva and settled in Blantyre, a Scottish village on the Clyde that had certainly no romantic attraction. He was employed in a cotton factory there. Most of his sons went off to the wars; but one of them, Neil, settled in Blantyre as a dealer in tea. He had been previously apprenticed to David Hunter, a tailor. And, as many a good apprentice has done before him, married his master's daughter. Neil Livingstone and his brave wife had a hard fight of it to make a living out of a small tea business, and to educate and rear their children. Two of the children died in infancy, but three sons and two daughters grew up in that humble home. David was the second son. He was born on March 19, 1813.

The small struggling tradesman who was the father of David Livingstone has had little justice done to him either by the novelist or by historians. He is usually represented as a man who could not afford to support a soul, and whose interests are limited to sordid and petty transactions across a counter, not always nor often of a scrupulous and honorable character. The reputation is very ill-deserved. The small shop has proved itself as good a training ground as any other for scholars, saints, and heroes; and, but for the fact that our prejudices die hard, we should recognize that it is so. Neil Livingstone and his wife may have lived a narrow life, serving faithfully their customers and dividing their interests between their family, their business, and the little Independent Chapel where Neil Livingstone was a deacon. Nevertheless, they found their sphere large enough for the practice of the fundamental Christian virtues, as well as for the noblest of all interests—the interest in the progress of the Kingdom of God throughout the world. This was one family tradition of which David Livingstone was immensely proud.

A saying had come down to them attributed to an ancestor that in all the family history there was no record of any dishonest man. When Deacon Neil Livingstone and his wife had passed away, the epitaph on their grave recorded the gratitude of their children

for "poor and honest parents." In this simple and public fashion, they expressed their thanks for the honesty of one who, when he sold a pound of tea, gave neither short weight, nor an inferior product. They also gave thanks for the poverty of their parents, recognizing in poverty one of those hard but kind necessities that make for industry and courage and patience; and that the children of the poor commonly leave the world their debtor for serviceable activities than the children of the well-to-do, who have less spur to their ambitions. It was eminently characteristic of David Livingstone that he should thus avow his thanks for the honesty and poverty of his father and mother.

The mother of David Livingstone was a woman of great charm and force of character—a delicate little woman with a wonderful flow of Christian joy. In her, rare devoutness and sterling common sense were combined. She was a careful and thrifty homemaker who had to make every sixpence go as far as possible; but she was remembered for her unfailing cheerfulness and serenity, and there was always something to be saved out of the meager income when the work of the local church needed extra support. She came from a Christian family, and her father, David Hunter, was a tailor. He received his first religious impressions at an open-air service, held while the snow was falling fast, and used to tell that so absorbed was he in the realization of the truth of the Gospel, that, though before the end of the sermon the snow was ankle-deep, he had no sensation of cold. He lived to be eighty-seven, was a prolific reader, bore severe trials with unflinching courage, and earned the high respect of the countryside.

It is impossible to exaggerate what David Livingstone owed to the stock from which he sprang and the bracing influences of his early environment. Although David's home education was generally very sound and beneficial, it did have one weakness. It seems that the Deacon had forbidden his son to read science fiction novels and books of general science. So far as novels are concerned, the harm done was probably slight; for no one is well read in the Bible and the *Pilgrim's Progress* without receiving a proper education, and a sufficient cultivation of his imagination; while history, biography,

books of travel, and missionary records amply served the same purpose. Nevertheless, the omission of books of science was an evidence of the old foolish notion that there is an essential antagonism between science and religion. This assumption came near to doing David permanent harm. His religious difficulties did not disappear until in his own words "having lighted on those admirable works of Dr. Thomas Dick, *The Philosophy of Religion*, and *The Philosophy of a Future State*, it was gratifying to find that he had enforced my own conviction that religion and science were friendly to one another." Few people in the nineteenth century were destined to do more towards the practical reconciliation of science and religion than David Livingstone.

> Livingstone was a born naturalist, and despite his father's ill-advised prejudices, he made himself a scientist at a very early age, searching old quarries for the shells in the limestone permeated with carbon, scouring Clydeside for "samples," and arranging the flora of the district in botanical order. These expeditions were often very prolonged, and involved the endurance of fatigue and hunger…
> Unconsciously he was bracing himself physically for the toils and tasks of later years.

It is interesting to find that even in his very young days he had a mind and will of his own, and that not even the love and respect he felt for his father could shake his own conviction of truth. The last time his father "applied the rod" was when David refused to read Wilberforce's *Practical Christianity*. The boy thought the matter over in his canny Scottish way and concluded that, on the whole, the rod was the less severe form of punishment. So he took the rod and refused a religious book for which he had no use. Looking back

upon his own religious development in later years, he used to confess that at this stage he was "color-blind." When he was led to see that God and Nature are "not at strife," and that God does not say one thing to the theologian and its contrary to the scientist, he accepted in his own simple and sincere way the Christian Gospel, and drew from it the same splendid faith in the universality of the Kingdom of God that inspired the souls of the first apostles. To David Livingstone, to become a Christian was to become in spirit and desire a missionary. It is only necessary to add that the faith which he accepted with the full consent of heart and mind as a lad in Blantyre was the faith in which he died.

The days of David Livingstone's boyhood were great days for missions. The churches were everywhere awakening to their opportunity and responsibility to fulfill the Great Commission given by Christ. Letters from remote parts of the world, where the ancient battle between Christ and heathenism was being fought out anew, were eagerly read and deeply pondered by God's people. The romance and heroism of the majestic campaign captured and kindled both young and old. The year of Livingstone's birth was a year of singular triumph in the South Seas. It was the year when his great countryman, Robert Morrison, completed his translation of the New Testament into Chinese. When he was some six or seven years old, another famous Scottish missionary, Robert Moffat, was settling on the Kuruman; and Mrs. Moffat bore in her arms a baby girl destined to become David Livingstone's wife. The life of Henry Martyn was a supreme call to consecration, while the story of the heroes and heroines of the Moravian missions was almost as familiar in that humble Scottish home as the history of the Apostle Paul.

An especially powerful influence in moving Livingstone to his life decision was the appeal of Charles Gutzlaff for medical missionaries for China.

Livingstone was a born naturalist, and despite his father's ill-advised prejudices, he made himself a scientist at a very early age, searching old quarries for the shells in the limestone permeated with carbon, scouring Clydeside for "samples," and arranging the flora of the district in botanical order. These expeditions were often very

prolonged, and involved the endurance of fatigue and hunger, but the lad could not be discouraged. Unconsciously he was bracing himself physically for the toils and tasks of later years. There is a fine story about the revenge he took upon his native African escort, on one occasion, who had been misguided enough to talk disrespectfully about his slim figure and shortness of stature. Thereupon, Livingstone took them along for two or three days at the top of their speed till they cried out for mercy! He had not scoured Clydeside for samples for nothing. His fearlessness is well illustrated in his daring and reckless exploit of climbing the ruins of Bothwell Castle, so that he might carve his name higher than any other boy had carved his. There, too, was the childlike ambition, which remained with him to the end, to do something which nobody else could surpass. "No one," he wrote at the very end of his life, on his last expedition, "will cut me out after this exploration is accomplished." Then he adds finely, "and may the good Lord of all help me to show myself one of His stouthearted servants, an honor to my children, and perhaps to my country and race." The story of Livingstone is told there: it is the story of one of the good Lord's stout-hearted servants.

All the drudgery and hardship of his lot went to make him the man he was. The days of his boyhood were "the good old days"—the days when ten-year-old children were sent to work in the factories, and David went with the rest. He worked from six o'clock in the morning till eight o'clock at night, and many people have heard how he used to place the book he was studying on a portion of the spinning jenny, and snatch a sentence or two as he passed at his work. He tells us he thus kept "a pretty constant study, undisturbed by the roar of machinery," and that this habit of concentration stood him in good stead in later years when he wanted to read and write even "amidst the dancing and song of savages." As if this were not enough, after a fourteen-hour day in the factory he would go off to a night school provided by the employers and then home to work at his Latin till "mother put out the candle." It is well for ten-year-old humanity when it has a mother to put out the candle, or young David might have worked

himself to death, and where would Africa have been then?

Nine years of such severe and determined work as this brought him to college age. Glasgow University was close by, and as he was promoted by this time and able to earn enough in the summer to keep him during the other six months, he entered as a student majoring in Greek and medicine. The Scottish universities were a paradise for poor and struggling students who had more brains and character than money, but the education was not free in those days. The money for fees had to be pinched and scraped, but it was found somehow, and in the early winter of 1836, David and his father walked to the city from Blantyre and trudged the streets of Glasgow all day, with the snow upon the ground, till at last they found a room in "Rotten Row" that could be rented for two shillings a week. Lodged thus as cheaply as could be managed, he applied himself with all his unfailing diligence and zest to learn Greek and medicine, as well as to such theological studies as could be undertaken under the leadership of the Rev. Dr. Wardlaw—one of Glasgow's most famous divines—who trained men for the Congregational ministry, and for whom Livingstone had a great admiration.

During his second session at Glasgow (1837–1838,) David Livingstone came to the most significant decision of his life. He decided to offer himself to one of the missionary societies for foreign service. He chose the London Missionary Society because of his sympathy with the nondenominational structure of its basis. It existed "to send neither Episcopacy, nor Presbyterianism, nor Independency to the heathen, but the Gospel of Christ." "This," said Livingstone "exactly agreed with my ideas." He was a member of a Congregational church, and the London Missionary Society had always been in the main supported by these churches. Nevertheless, the Society was founded by Evangelical churchmen and prominent Presbyterians, as well as by Congregationalists, and nothing appealed more to Livingstone than this union of Christian people in the service of an unchristian world.

In due course the acceptance of his offer arrived, and in the early autumn of 1838, he traveled to London where he was to appear before the Mission Board at 57 Aldersgate Street. One can

imagine that—apart from the momentous character of his visit and the anxiety he must have felt at the acceptance by the Directors—this first visit to London must have been a most impressive one to the young Scotsman. He heard many distinguished preachers and visited the famous sites of London. Among other places, he went with a companion to Westminster Abbey. It is a thrilling thought that he was never known to enter that Abbey again until his remains were borne there amid the lamentations of the whole civilized world.

The examination by the Directors was satisfactory, and according to the custom of the time, Livingstone was committed for a short period of probation to the tutorship of the Rev. Richard Cecil, the minister of the little town of Chipping Ongar in Essex. There he was expected to give evidence of his ability to commence a preaching ministry. He was sent one Sunday evening to preach in the village of Stanford Rivers, where the tradition of Livingstone's first effort at preaching is still cherished. The raw, somewhat heavy-looking Scottish youth, to whom public speech was always a difficulty, gave out his text "very deliberately." That was all the congregation got. The sermon composed on the text had fled, owing to the nervous embarrassment produced by a handful of people in a village chapel. "Friends," said the youth, "I have forgotten all I had to say"—and "hurrying out of the pulpit" he left the chapel. I have no doubt that *hurrying* is the right word. Never was failure more absolute. It is hardly to be wondered at that the Rev. Richard Cecil reported to the Directors his fears that Livingstone had mistaken his vocation. It was a risk to send someone to preach to the heathen who might possibly forget what he had come to say when he arrived. Moreover, criticism was made of his extreme slowness and hesitancy in prayer. Yet the man who was nearly rejected by the Society on this account, died on his knees in the heart of Africa while all the world was awed by the thought that David Livingstone passed away in the act of prayer. As it was, his probation was extended, and at the end of another two months he was finally accepted, and went up to London to continue his medical studies in the London Hospitals. One of the most striking things ever written about him was by the cel-

ebrated Dr. Isaac Taylor, of Ongar. "Now after nearly forty years," he writes, "I remember his step, the characteristic forward tread, firm, simple, resolute, neither fast nor slow, no hurry and no dawdle, but which evidently meant—getting there!" In November 1840, he was able to return to Glasgow and qualify as a Licentiate of the Faculty of Physicians and Surgeons, and a few days later, he said good-bye to the old folks at home, one of whom—his father—he was never to see on earth again.

On November twentieth, he was ordained at Albion Chapel, London, and three weeks later he sailed on the *George* to Algoa Bay in South Africa. One chapter in his memorable life was now definitely closed. Among the memories in it, there are few if any that he cherished more than that of his old Sunday School teacher, David Hogg, who sent for him as he lay dying and said, "Now lad, make religion the everyday business of your life and not a thing of fits and starts, for if you do, temptation and other things will not get the better of you." It is hardly too much to say that the old man's deathbed counsel became the watchword of young David's life.

CHAPTER 2

God's Call to Africa

1841–1852

A voyage of five months saw Livingstone at Algoa Bay, preparing for his first journey into the interior of Africa—"the grave of so many" but the continent of his renown. Few people realize that up until a short time before his departure from London he had hoped and intended to go to China as a medical missionary. Nevertheless, the "Opium War" was still in progress, and for the time being China was impossible. Moreover, Livingstone was brought under the influence of one of the greatest personalities in modern missionary enterprise. Robert Moffat was home on furlough, and his wonderful story no less than his striking presence exerted an influence over the young Scot and changed the goal of his ambition. Dr. Moffat often described the numberless African villages stretching away to the north where no missionary had yet penetrated, and his appeal found a ready response in Livingstone's heart.

It was to Dr. Moffat's station at Kuruman that David Livingstone took his first journey. The distance was seven hundred miles, and he immediately surrendered to the interest and delight of travel by ox wagon, the freedom of the open air life, the variety of the scenery and sport, and the attractiveness of the natives who engaged his sympathy from the first. It was now that his hardy training in Scotland stood him in good stead. He knew how to put up with inconveniences cheerfully and face difficulties with resolution, while his resourcefulness was as inexhaustible as his kindliness. That "characteristic forward tread" of which the famous missionary Isaac Taylor had spoken which "meant getting there," was put to the proof and not found wanting. To him there was a God-ordained way out of every situation, however critical, and the "bold free course" which

he took with the natives, together with his medical skill and unwearied goodness, won their loyalty. They recognized him as a great chief, and his whole career is eloquent of the extraordinary devotion which he inspired in them.

At the end of May 1841, he was at Kuruman, with instructions from the directors of the Society to turn his attention to the North—instructions that absolutely coincided with his own aspiration. It is notable that he formed the very highest opinion of the value of Christian missions from the results that he saw. Let it be remembered that he was always a slow, cautious Scot in all his judgments, with a severely truthful and scientific mind, and his testimony becomes the more valuable. "Everything I witnessed surpassed my hopes," he writes home; "if this is a fair sample, the statements of the missionaries, as to their success, are far within the mark." He is full of the praises of the Christian Hottentots, who are "far superior in attainments to what I had expected"—their worship reminded him of the old covenanters. It was thus, then, that with his zeal for his mission of evangelism greatly stimulated, he started north to the country of the Bakwains.

> "If we wait till there is no danger," said Livingstone, "we shall never go at all."

A number of problems arose, however, that caused Livingstone to return to Kuruman to plan a better campaign. The first step was a characteristic one. It was to isolate himself absolutely from all European society and live among the natives, so as to learn their language and study their habits and their laws. For six months, he rigorously pursued his plan and found his reward in the new appreciation he gained of the native character and mode of thinking, and the extent to which he conquered their confidences. So far advanced had he become in the knowledge of their language that he was able to enjoy a laugh at himself for "turning poet." One can believe that for Livingstone, this was no easy work, but he succeeded in making Sechuana translations of several hymns which were afterwards adopted and printed by the French missionaries. "If they had been

bad," he says in his naive way, "I don't see that they can have had any motive for using them."

He was waiting now for the final decision of the directors authorizing the advance into the unoccupied district of the north. The decision was long in coming. We must recognize that such a resolution was not an easy one for those who carried all the responsibilities at home. Even their most trusted advisers on the actual field were not agreed. Dr. Philip, the special representative of the Society at the Cape, and a man of great personal power and sagacity, shook his head over Livingstone's impetuosity and talked about the dangers. "If we wait till there is no danger," said Livingstone, "we shall never go at all." It was quite true, but there were big problems of policy to be decided. Settlements for educational and industrial developments had proved their value. On the other hand, Livingstone had unanswerable logic on his side when he argued that the missionaries in the South had too scanty a population and that the call to possess the North was urgent, for the traders and the slavers were penetrating there, and the gospel of Christ was imperatively needed.

There was a long delay, but in the meantime Livingstone was making proof of his ministry. His medical knowledge helped to spread his fame. He fought the rainmakers at their own arts with the scientific weapon of irrigation and won his battle. He made friends with the Bechuana chief, Sechéle, one of the most intelligent and interesting of the many great natives who surrendered to the charm of Livingstone. Sechéle was deeply impressed by the missionary's message, but profoundly troubled in spirit. He said, "You startle me—these words make all my bones to shake—I have no more strength in me. Nevertheless, my forefathers were living at the same time yours were, and how is it that they did not send them word about these terrible things sooner. They all passed away into darkness without knowing whither they were going." When Livingstone tried to explain to him the gradual spread of the Gospel knowledge, the chief refused to believe that the whole earth could be visited. There was a barrier at his very door—the Kalahari desert. Nobody could cross it. Even those who knew the country

would perish, and no missionary would have an opportunity to bring God's Word. As for his own people there was no difficulty in converting them, Sechéle reasoned, always assuming that Livingstone would go to work in the right way. "Do you imagine these people will ever believe by your merely talking to them? I can make them do nothing except by thrashing them, and if you like, I will call my headmen and with our *litupa* (whips of rhinoceros hide) we will soon make them all believe together." It must be confessed, however, that Sechéle's state-church principles did not commend themselves to the mind of an ardent proponent of human liberty like Livingstone. "In our relations with the people," he writes, "we were simply strangers exercising no authority or control whatever. Our influence depended entirely on persuasion, and having taught them by kind conversation as well as by public instruction, I expected them to do what their own sense of right and wrong dictated." He then sets on record "five instances in which, by our influence on public opinion, war was prevented" and pays a high tribute to the intelligence of the natives who in many respects excel "our own uneducated peasantry." This attitude of appreciation and respectful sympathy was the secret of Livingstone's unparalleled influence over the African tribes.

It was on a return from a visit to Sechéle in June 1843 that Livingstone heard the good news of the formal sanction of the forward movement. He hailed the decision, as he said, "with inexpressible delight" and, in a fine letter written to Mr. Cecil, declared his fixed resolve to give less attention to the art of physical healing and more to spiritual "healing." He has no ambition to be "a very good doctor but a useless drone of a missionary." He feels that to carry out this purpose will involve some self-denial, but he will make the sacrifice cheerfully. As for the charge of ambition, "I really am ambitious to preach beyond other men's lines.… I am only determined to go on and do all I can, while able, for the poor degraded people of the North."

In less than two months, he was ready for the new move. The first journey was two hundred miles to the northeast, to Mabotsa, which he had previously noted as suitable for a station. Here he

built a house with his own hands and settled down for three years' work among the Bakatlas. During this period, two events occurred that were especially notable. The first event almost ended his career. The facts are well-known from Livingstone's own graphic but simple description. He had gone with the Bakatlas to hunt some lions which had committed serious depredations in the village. The lions were encircled by the natives but broke through the line and escaped. As Livingstone was returning, however, he saw one of the beasts on a small hill, and fired into him at about thirty yards' distance. Loading again, he heard a shout, and "looking half-round saw the lion just in the act of springing upon me." The lion seized him by the shoulder and "growling horribly close to my ear, he shook me as a terrier dog does a rat." We now see the advantage of a scientific education. Livingstone was able to analyze his own feelings and emotions during the process of being gnawed by a lion. He observed that "the shock produced a stupor, a sort of dreaminess"; there was "no sense of pain, nor feeling of terror." He compares it to the influence of chloroform and argues that "this peculiar state is probably produced in all humans and animals killed by the carnivora and, if so, is a merciful provision by our benevolent Creator for lessening the pain of death." So interesting does

Livingstone find these observations, that it seems as if he must have been almost disappointed when the lion released him and turned his attention to others less well equipped for scientific investigation. On the whole, Livingstone escaped marvelously well, but the shoulder bone was crunched into splinters, and there were eleven teeth wounds on the upper part of his arm. The arm indeed was never really well again. It will be remembered that it was by the false joint in this limb that the remains of Livingstone were identified on their arrival in England. It will also be remembered that, as has been so well said, "for thirty years afterwards all his labors and adventures, entailing such exertion and fatigue, were undertaken with a limb so maimed that it was painful for him to raise a rifle or, in fact, to place the left arm in any position above the level of the shoulder."

This was a difficult trial indeed, but Providence has a way of making up to good men for afflictions of this kind. Livingstone's compensation came to him in the following year, when he had something to face that demanded more daring than a mere everyday encounter with lions. He had been a bachelor in Africa for four years, and he had resolved to try his fortune with Mary Moffat, Dr. Moffat's eldest daughter. The proposal was made "beneath one of the fruit trees" at Kuruman in 1844. He got the answer he desired and deserved, and Mary Moffat took him with all his erratic ways and became his devoted wife. "She was always the best spoke in the wheel at home," he writes, "and when I took her with me on two occasions to Lake Ngami, and far beyond, she endured more than some who have written large books of travels." In course of time, three sons and a daughter came to "cheer their solitude" and increase their responsibilities. From the first, however, they set themselves to fulfill what Livingstone called the ideal missionary life—"the husband, a jack-of-all-trades, and the wife, a maid-of-all-work." The catalog of necessary skills in the routine of an African missionary sounds somewhat embarrassing, and one realizes that the ordinary college training is in many respects incomplete. Here it is, as Livingstone expressed it—"Building, gardening, cobbling, doctoring, tinkering, carpentering, gun-mending, farriering,[1] wagon-mending, preaching, schooling, lecturing on physics, occupying a chair

[1] The shoeing of horses done by a farrier, i.e., a blacksmith; farrier sometimes refers to one who treats the diseases of horses.

in divinity, and helping my wife to make soap, candles, and clothes." It was certainly a busy and challenging career. He was carrying the whole of his world upon his own broad shoulders, and was guide, philosopher, and friend to a vast district.

He had his enemies, too, as those who champion the rights of the poor and helpless are sure to have. To the North were to be found settlements of unscrupulous and marauding Boers—descendants of Dutch Calvinist and French Huguenot colonists; they held by all the unenlightened views of the relation of the white races to the black, which were only recently extinct in England where the financial interest in slavery died hard in 1833. These Boer marauders lived largely on slave labor and on pillage, and Livingstone was brought into open conflict with them. On one side, they may be said to have barred his advance. The tribes he served and loved lived under the cloud of a Boer invasion. The time was to come when the cloud would burst over Chief Sechéle and his unoffending people, when his wives would be slain and his children carried away into slavery, when many of the bravest of his people would be massacred, and Livingstone's house sacked and gutted in his absence. This complicity of the northern Boers in those outrages on native tribes—which history most frequently associates with the Portuguese in Africa—earned Livingstone's stern indignation. Even though Livingstone detested slavery, he never did the Boers of South Africa the injustice of confounding the lawless raiders with the main body of settlers, of whom he respectfully wrote, "the Boers generally … are a sober, industrious, and most hospitable body of peasantry."

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He had, however, already begun to have glimpses of what his life-witness was to be. He saw that the curse of Africa lay not only in the internal conflicts of tribe with tribe. That form of misery was original to the continent and its unchristian inhabitants; but a new curse had fallen upon the unhappy people by the intrusion of those who united with a higher material civilization to produce a more developed and refined form of cruelty. The diabolical cunning and callousness that, under the guise of trading, would gain the confidence of a peaceful tribe, only at last to rise up some fatal night, murder the old, enslave the young, burn the huts, and march the chained gang hundreds of miles to the sea, have made the records of African slavery the most awful reading in human history. Imagination carries the story one step further. We hardly need a genius to suggest to us the horror of a slave ship under the torrid tropical skies, with its dead and dying human freight. When the slave trade is realized in all its accumulated horrors, it is easy to understand how, to a man of Livingstone's noble Christian sensibility, the manifest duty of the Church of Christ was to engage in a war-to-the-death struggle against this darkest of all inhumanities.

He was planning his campaign during the years when he passed with his wife and children from one settlement to another. Three houses he built with his own hands and made some progress in the cultivation of gardens round them. The first was at Mabotsa. It was the home to which he brought his young bride, and to leave it went to his heart. His going was the result of the attitude adopted towards him by a brother missionary. Sooner than cause scandal among the tribe, he resolved to give everything up and go elsewhere. "Paradise will make amends for all our privations and sorrows here," he says simply. It is something to know that the missionary who did him this injustice lived "to manifest a very different spirit."

Livingstone next cast in his lot with Sechéle and his people, and built his second house at Chonuane, some forty miles from Mabotsa. It was hard work, and it made a big drain on his very small income, but it was not his way to complain. The hardship fell more severely on his wife and infant children, and he felt sad to know that they were inconvenienced. The house was finished some-

time later, and a school was erected too, where the children were instructed and services held, but the harsh climate was against a long settlement at Chonuane. A period of prolonged drought set in. Supplies were exhausted. The people had to go further afield, and the position became untenable. There was nothing for the Livingstones to do but leave. All the labor of rebuilding had to be undertaken again, this time at Kolobeng, another forty miles on. Providence was indeed to Livingstone "like as an eagle stirring up the nest." Such of the tribe as were left went with him and a new village was constructed. Livingstone and his family lived for a year in "a mere hut."

In 1848 the new house was actually built, despite some serious personal accidents of which he made light in his usual way. "What a mercy to be in a house again!" he writes home. "A year in a little hut through which the wind blew our candles into glorious icicles (as a poet would say) by night, and in which crowds of flies continually settled on the eyes of our poor little children by day, makes us value our present castle. Oh Janet, know thou, if thou art given to building castles in the air, that that is easy work compared to erecting cottages on the ground!" Such was the building of his third house, the one that was afterwards sacked by a small band of Boers. Then he built no more houses. Indeed, he never had a home of his own in Africa afterwards. The dark problem of Central Africa had him in its grip. In 1852, he sent his wife and children home to England, and he himself became like that Son of Man whose example he followed so nearly, one "who had no where to lay his head."

Before that time came, however, he had laid the foundation of his fame as an explorer by crossing the Kalahari Desert and discovering Lake Ngami in the late 1840s. The circumstances that gave rise to this journey are easily detailed. The drought continued at Kolobeng as pitilessly as at Chonuane. Only the power of Livingstone's personality sufficed to retain the faith and loyalty of the tribes. He writes that they were always treated with "respectful kindness" and never had an enemy among the natives. His enemies were among the "dirty whites," who knew that he was the most

dangerous obstacle to the slave raids, and who objected to his policy of training Christian native teachers to be evangelists among their own kinfolk. But though the tribes remained loyal, the fact remained that Livingstone had led a migration which had not resulted in a permanent settlement; neither could he command the rain as their own rainmakers professed to be able to do. The heathen superstition that hostile doctors had put their country under an evil charm so that no rain should fall on it, prevailed even against their faith in the missionary. Sechéle's more enlightened mind found it difficult to understand why Livingstone's God did not answer the prayer for rain. Yet the work went forward at Kolobeng.

The chief Sechéle, after long hesitation on Livingstone's part, was baptized and entered into communion with the little church. Trouble followed when he "went home, gave each of his superfluous wives new clothing, and all his own goods, which they had been accustomed to keep in their huts for him, and sent them to their parents with an intimation that he had no fault to find with them, but that in parting with them he wished to follow the will of God." It was his solution to the problem of multiple wives that can never be satisfactorily solved, and it was both courageous and generous, but the result was seen in the fiercer resentment of the relatives of the women; and while little or none of this fell upon Livingstone, it served seriously to prejudice the religion which was responsible for Sechéle's action.

On every count, it was desirable to find the new and permanent station, where that central training-ground for native missionaries could be established which Livingstone had constantly in view, and where the water supply would be less likely to fail. But where to go? In the south, the field was well supplied with missionaries. To the east were the unfriendly Dutch Boers, bent on making mischief. To the north lay the Kalahari desert, which Sechéle had pronounced to be an impassable barrier to the progress of Christianity. "It is utterly impossible even to us black men," he had said. But the word "impossible" was not in Livingstone's dictionary.

If my readers will take the trouble to look at an old map of South Africa they will find the whole vast track of the west which

lies to the north of the Orange River and includes Bechuana Land and Damara Land, described as desert, and the Kalahari desert in the eastern portion of it. Kolobeng lay at the extreme west of what we know today as the Transvaal, some two hundred and fifty miles from Pretoria, and was more than four thousand feet above sea level, near the sources of the Limpopo River, which flows north and east, until it finally joins the ocean at Delagoa Bay. A straight line to Lake Ngami would have taken the travelers in a northwesterly direction a distance of little more than three hundred miles. But it is doubtful whether they could have survived such a journey across an untrodden route, even if they had known accurately where the great lake lay. They were certainly well inspired to go due north to the Zouga River, and then follow it westward to the lake, though this route must have added two hundred miles to their journey. Three other Europeans, Colonel Steele, Mr. Murray, and Mr. Oswell—the latter, one of Livingstone's lifelong friends and a mighty African hunter—joined the expedition, which started on June 1, 1849, and reached the lake on August 1. Livingstone has given us a most graphic and detailed description of the desert with its sandy soil, its *wadies* (dry river beds, except during periods of rainfall), its trackless plains, its prairie grass, its patches of bush, and the singular products of its soil with roots like large turnips that hold fluid beneath the soil. Above all Livingstone noted the desert watermelons on which the Bushmen as well as the elephants, antelopes, and even lions and hyenas subsist. He found the Bushmen to be a thin, wiry, merry race capable of great endurance, as indeed the denizens of the desert must be. They existed under conditions that inspired the Bechuana with terror, for, to add to the other dangers, the desert was at times infested with serpents.

It was a hazardous enterprise to which Livingstone and his fellow travelers were committed, and, humanly speaking, its success depended wholly on the discovery of water at periodic intervals. The "caravan" was a considerable one. Eighty cattle and twenty horses were not deemed too many for the wagons and for riding; these had to be watered, and the twenty men besides. Progress was necessarily slow. None could face the burning heat of the midday hours. They

had to move forward in the mornings and evenings. The wagon wheels sank deep into the soft, hot sand; and the poor oxen dragging them laboriously forward were, at a critical time, nearly four days without water, "and their masters scarcely better off." Aided, however, by the experience and keen instinct of the natives, they found wells in unsuspected places, and eventually made the banks of the Zouga River. After that, progress was easy. Leaving the wagons and oxen, they took to canoes, or snaked their way along the river banks, until, on the morning of August first, they found themselves gazing on the waters of Lake Ngami, the first white people to see it, so far as they knew.

It had been one of the goals of Livingstone for the journey that he would meet the famous chief Sebituane, who had saved the life of Sechéle in his infancy, and who was renowned as a warrior and as a powerful and intelligent ruler. It meant another two hundred miles of travel to the north, and the jealousies of the chiefs and their real or assumed fears for Livingstone's safety, prevented the realization of his hopes on this journey. There was nothing for it but to go back to Kolobeng, where the drought persisted as absolute as ever.

Livingstone's congregation and Mrs. Livingstone's school had disappeared in search of better watered lands. It was clear that for Livingstone there was "no abiding city" here. He resolved to transport his wife and three children to the north. He made more of an eastward circuit this time, and Sechéle accompanied them to the fords of the Zouga. Mrs. Livingstone was the first white lady to see Lake Ngami, but the purposed visit to Sebituane was again to be deferred.

Livingstone's aid was invoked for a fever-stricken party of Englishmen who were hunting ivory. One was already dead, but the others recovered under his treatment. His own children, however, sickened, and the party had to retire to "the pure air of the desert," and so home to Kolobeng where another child was born to them, only to be carried away by an epidemic. The infant's name was Elizabeth.

"Here is the first grave in all that country," writes the bereaved father, "marked as the resting-place of one of whom it is believed and confessed that she shall live again."

After a visit to Kuruman to rest and recruit, they were ready in April 1851 for a third attempt to reach Sebituane. Mr. Oswell, the most valuable of comrades, was again with them. The journey was successful, but it came dangerously near to being disastrous to the whole family. This crisis occurred on the far side of the Zouga River, as they were traveling northward across absolute desert. The Bushman guide lost his way, and the supply of water in the wagons had been wasted by one of the servants. Livingstone tells the incident in a single paragraph, but the agony of it must nearly have killed him and his wife. "The next morning, the less there was of water the more thirsty the little rogues became. The idea of their perishing before our eyes was terrible. It would almost have been a relief to me to have been reproached with being the entire cause of the catastrophe, but not one syllable of upbraiding was uttered by their mother, though the tearful eye told the agony within. In the afternoon of the fifth day, to our inexpressible relief, some of the men returned with a supply of that fluid of which we had never before felt the true value." At last the often-postponed pleasure of meeting and greeting Sebituane was fulfilled, and the famous chief more than justified all expectations. He met the party on the Chobe River and conducted them with great ceremony and hospitality to his home. The way seemed to be opening for a new and auspicious missionary settlement, when in a few days Sebituane sickened and died. It was one of the greatest blows which Livingstone ever experienced. Its tragic suddenness almost stunned him. Looking back upon it now, it is easy to believe that it was not God's will that Livingstone should spend his life in the work of a missionary settlement, but should be driven out along the lonely, adventurous path where his calling lay.

But at the moment he only felt severely the crushing of his hopes and frustration of his plans. Sebituane's daughter, who succeeded to the chieftainship, was full of kindly promise, but difficulties multiplied in the way of a settlement, which further exploration of the district did not diminish. Penetrating a hundred and thirty miles to the north, Oswell and Livingstone came upon the broad channel of a noble river, called by the natives the Seshsome, three hundred yards wide even there, more than a thousand miles

from the mouth. Clearly the swamps round the great river afforded no healthy land for settling. There must be more exploration done, and meantime his wife and children must be cared for. They were hundreds of miles from any white settlement. Even so, Livingstone might still have debated his mission. Nevertheless, revelations came to him that the slaver was even now establishing his accursed hold on this district. Sebituane's people, the Makololo, who were loyal tribesmen, had begun to sell children plundered from their native villages for guns and calicoes. "It is brokenheartedness," he wrote much later, "of which the slaves die. Even children, who showed wonderful endurance in keeping up with the chained gangs, would sometimes hear the sound of dancing and the merry tinkle of drums in passing near a village; then the memory of home and happy days proved too much for them, they cried and sobbed, the broken heart came on, and they rapidly sank." This was the awful revelation that came to Livingstone in the land of the Makololo. Little more than a year before, such an idea as the barter of human beings for guns had never been known among this tribe. "Had we been here sooner the slave traffic would never have existed," argued Livingstone.

He began to have a vision of Christian settlements standing sentinel over the lives and happiness of the natives of the interior. If the slaver could make his way from the coast to the center, so could the missionary. It was the one effective counter stroke in the battle for human liberty. Nevertheless, it meant separation from wife and children. He must return and do this work alone. He could risk no one's life but his own. His decision was taken. He devotes only a single paragraph to the long and arduous journey to Cape Town. It was a matter of fifteen hundred miles, and part of it was through territory where a so-called Frontier War was being waged, which excited Livingstone's scorn for the waste of blood and treasure. He was an object of suspicion at the Cape. The State authorities suspected his humanitarian sympathies and the Church officials his theological orthodoxy.

He was in debt, and had been waiting for his small salary to arrive for more than a year. He decided to write to the Directors of the London Missionary Society in the most resolute terms. "Con-

A portrait of Livingstone taken in Cape Town in 1852 while sending his family back to England.

sider the multitudes that in the Providence of God have been brought to light in the country of Sebituane; the probability that in our efforts to evangelize we shall put a stop to the slave trade in a large region, and by means of the high way into the north which we have discovered bring unknown nations into the sympathies of the Christian World.… Nothing but a strong conviction that the step will lead to the Glory of Christ would make me orphanise my children.… Should you not feel yourselves justified in incurring the expense of their support in England, I shall feel called upon to renounce the hope of carrying the Gospel into that country.… But stay, I am not sure; so powerfully convinced am I that it is the will of our Lord that I should go, I will go, no matter who opposes; but from you I expect nothing but encouragement." A happy comment on this letter is found in Livingstone's *Missionary Travels*, in the paragraph recording the farewell to his wife and children. "Having placed my family on board a homeward bound ship, and promised to rejoin them in two years, we parted for, as it subsequently proved, nearly five years. The Directors of the London Missionary Society signified their cordial approval of my project by leaving the matter entirely to my own discretion, and I have much pleasure in acknowledging my obligations to the gentlemen composing that body for always acting in an enlightened spirit, and with as much liberality as their constitution would allow."

Livingstone started back for the interior on the eighth of June, 1852. He was now in his fortieth year.