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A DEMONSTRATION OF THE VITAL ELEMENTS
OF THE DEVOTIONAL LIFE IN THE CAREER
OF DAVID LIVINGSTONE

by

SANCO K. REMBERT

B.S., Benedict College

S.T.B., The Biblical Seminary in New York

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

A. The Subject Stated and Justified

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the career of David Livingstone as a demonstration of the vital elements of the Devotional Life.

Few are the individuals who, like Livingstone, led such extraordinary lives that they inspire almost universal admiration and awe in their fellow men. "Traveler, geographer, zoologist, astronomer, missionary, physician, and mercantile director,"¹ Livingstone stands out among men when viewed from many angles. His life has been analyzed many times by biographers with varying purposes. Some wished to present Livingstone the British missionary; others wished to present Livingstone the intrepid African explorer; still others wished to present Livingstone the dogged nemesis of slave traffic. Until recent years most were hagiographers.

This thesis intends to deal with Livingstone the Christian man and to examine in his life "the little acts and words of every-day life by which character is truly

1. W. Garden Blaikie, The Personal Life of David Livingstone (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., n.d.), p. 224.

and best known . . ."¹ He was a man possessed of an uncommon zeal to do God's will, whose whole life was devoted to the working out of His will. It is this Livingstone, the Livingstone of total commitment to God, with whom this thesis is concerned.

By looking at the energetic career of David Livingstone for exemplary manifestations of the Devotional Life, one can come closer to a truer understanding of a Christian Devotional Life than is possible through the usual consideration of the cloistered life of a hermetic, though prayerful, ascetic. Most people in this rapidly accelerated society are activists. Therefore modern man can best understand exalted concepts through active demonstrations. All can appreciate the almost fantastic human feat of Livingstone's missionary travels. At the same time all should also be able to appreciate the quality and depth of Livingstone's devotion to God.

B. The Subject Delimited

There are a number of ways in which such a demonstration might be undertaken. For reasons of length and conceptual cohesion, this thesis will consider Livingstone's life in the light of various ideal characteristics of the

1. David and Charles Livingstone, Narrative of an Expedition to the Zambesi and its Tributaries (New York: Harper & Bros., 1866), p. 13.

Devotional Life. No attempt will be made to compare Livingstone's life with the prevailing religious, moral, and ethical standards of his day, or with the life of any other devoted missionary, cleric, or lay person. The method of treatment will be simple rather than complex and direct rather than indirect and comparative.

C. The Method of Procedure

The first chapter will present a brief sketch of Livingstone's life from his humble birth in 1813 to his tragic death in 1873. In presenting this sketch, those facts of his life which demonstrate the various characteristics to be treated in the following chapters, and particularly in the third chapter, will be stressed.

The second chapter will attempt to delineate vital characteristics of the Devotional Life, stressing both the descriptive elements and their cultivation.

The third chapter will again investigate the life of David Livingstone, this time for specific examples of the elements of the Devotional Life.

In the summary and conclusion, the fourth chapter, other aspects of Livingstone's life as a model of the Christian Devotional Life will be also considered.

D. The Sources for the Study

The primary sources for this study will be David

Livingstone's own writings--his two published books, the Last Journals, and family letters--, W. Garden Blaikie's The Personal Life of David Livingstone, George Seaver's David Livingstone: His Letters, W. E. Sangster's The Pure in Heart: A Study in Christian Sanctity, and William Law's A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life.

Other biographies of Livingstone will be used to fill in gaps in the primary sources and to illuminate certain issues. Seaver's, however, being the most comprehensive and up-to-date, will be used as the basic biography for the study.

Other works of devotional literature, in particular St. Francis de Sales' The Devout Life and Alexander Whyte's Characters and Characteristics of William Law, will be utilized to point out, define, and document the vital characteristics of the Devotional Life.

CHAPTER I

DAVID LIVINGSTONE: A SHORT HISTORICAL
SKETCH OF HIS LIFE

CHAPTER I

DAVID LIVINGSTONE: A SHORT HISTORICAL SKETCH OF HIS LIFE

A. Introduction

David Livingstone was born on March 19, 1813, in Blantyre, Scotland, near Glasgow, to humble parents. As Mrs. Worcester writes,

Both of Livingstone's parents were earnestly devout, the mother an active, sunny, loving woman, and the father as David himself bore witness, of the high type of character portrayed in The Cotter's Saturday Night.¹

His pious father, Neil Livingston (the "e" was not added to the name until 1857), seems to have had a great and direct influence on the shaping of the great missionary's life.

The character of his father might best be seen in the following quotations:

Neil Livingstone was a man of great spiritual earnestness, and his whole life was consecrated to duty and to the fear of God. In many ways he was remarkable, being in some things ahead of his time.²

Neil Livingstone was a strict teetotaler, a Sunday-school teacher, an ardent member of a missionary society, and a promoter of prayer-meetings, at a time when none of these things had ceased to be regarded as badges of

1. Mrs. J. H. Worcester, Jr., The Life of David Livingstone ("Colportage Library," No. 109; Chicago: Moody Press, n.d.), p. 5.

2. Blaikie, op. cit., p. 21.

fanaticism. While travelling through the adjoining parishes in his vocation of tea-merchant he often acted as colporteur, distributing tracts, and showing in various ways that his was the true missionary spirit.¹

Too conscientious ever to become rich as a small tea-dealer, by his kindliness of manner and his winning ways he made the heart-strings of his children twine around him as firmly as if he had possessed, and could have bestowed upon them, every worldly advantage. He reared his children in connection with the Kirk of Scotland--a religious establishment which has been an incalculable blessing to that country--but he afterward left it, and during the last twenty years of his life held the office of deacon of an independent church in Hamilton, and deserved my lasting gratitude and homage for presenting me, from my infancy, with a continuously consistent pious example, such as that ideal of which is so beautifully and truthfully portrayed in Burns's "Cottar's Saturday Night."²

His mother, too, influenced the young Livingstone. As Blaikie writes, "It was the genial, gentle influences that had moved him under his mother's training that enabled him to move the savages of Africa."³ Of her Livingstone wrote: "The earliest recollection of my mother recalls a picture so often seen among the Scottish poor--that of the anxious housewife striving to make both ends meet."⁴

Relatively little is known about his boyhood "except that he was a favorite at home."⁵ His elementary education

1. Worcester, op. cit., pp. 5-6. Largely plagiarized from Blaikie, op. cit., p. 21, this passage was preferred because of the fillip Mrs. Worcester added to the end.

2. David Livingstone, Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa (New York: Harper & Bros., 1858), p. 3.

3. Blaikie, op. cit., p. 24.

4. Livingstone, Missionary Travels . . ., p. 3.

5. Blaikie, op. cit., p. 26.

he received at the village school. At the age of ten he was put to work as a piecer at the Blantyre cotton factory. With part of his first week's wages he purchased a Latin grammar, which he contrived to be able to study while at work. He wrote:

My reading while at work was carried on by placing the book on a portion of the spinning-jenny, so that I could catch sentence after sentence as I passed at my work; I thus kept up a pretty constant study undisturbed by the roar of the machinery. To this part of my education I owe my present power of completely abstracting the mind from surrounding noises, so as to read and write with perfect comfort amid the play of children or near the dancing and songs of savages.¹

The study of Latin was further pursued in evening classes taught by the local schoolmaster. Beginning at the age of thirteen, the young Livingstone worked at the factory from six in the morning until eight in the evening, and then attended the Latin class from eight to ten. He wrote that "the dictionary part of my labours was followed up till twelve o'clock, or later, if my mother did not interfere by jumping up and snatching the books out of my hands."²

In addition to these labors, David Livingstone managed to find time to lead an active boy's life of outdoor games and to do some reading on his own, "everything I could lay my hands on . . . except novels."³ Although his special favorites were scientific works and travel books, showing

1. Livingstone, Missionary Travels . . ., pp. 5-6.

2. Ibid., p. 3.

3. Ibid., p. 4.

the wide range of his interests, he had little interest in religious or theological books. He wrote:

My father, believing with many of his time who ought to have known better, that the former scientific works were inimical to religion, would have preferred to have seen me poring over the "Cloud of Witnesses" [stories of the Scottish Covenanters (1714)], or Boston's "Fourfold State" [an exposition of Calvinist theology (1720)]. Our differences of opinion reached the point of open rebellion on my part, and his last application of the rod was on my refusal to peruse Wilberforce's "Practical Christianity." This dislike to dry doctrinal reading, and to religious reading of every sort, continued for many years afterward; but 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 my own ideas, that religion and science are not hostile, but friendly to each other, fully proved and enforced.¹

From these works of natural philosophy and his simple, Calvinist-based faith, young Livingstone came to feel an obligation to devote his life to Christ, to participate in Christ's act of redemption. He wrote:

In the glow of love which Christianity inspires, I soon resolved to devote my life to the alleviation of human misery. Turning this idea over in my mind, I felt that to be a pioneer of Christianity in China might lead to the material benefit of some small portion of that immense empire; and therefore set myself to obtain a medical education, in order to qualify for that enterprise.²

In this resolve to become a missionary, David's father readily concurred, after an initial objection, when he saw the disinterestedness of his son's motives. This was in 1834; two more years would pass before David Livingstone

1. Ibid., p. 4.

2. Ibid., p. 5.

would actually begin his studies for the missionary life.

It is often cited, as an example of how Livingstone valued his humble background, that on the stone over his parents' grave he had engraved their children's thankfulness to God for "poor and pious parents." He later said:

Looking back now on that life of toil, I can not but feel thankful that it formed such a material part of my early education; and, were it possible, I should like to begin life over again in the same lowly style, and to pass through the same hardy training.¹

B. Missionary Preparation

In the fall of 1836, David Livingstone began his studies in Glasgow. How earnestly he applied himself can be seen in his ability to quote verbatim, several years later, lines of English poetry--and by one whose interests were not primarily literary--and his obviously solid grounding in many scientific fields which permitted him to observe the geographical features and wildlife around him with a keen, observant eye. Except for a small sum loaned by his older brother John, Livingstone financed his own education through working summers at the cotton factory. By the end of his first term, his friends were suggesting to him that he offer himself as a candidate to the nonsectarian London Missionary Society. After being recommended by a Hamilton minister, Livingstone himself applied in September, 1837.

1. Ibid., p. 6.

He was accepted on probation on August 20, 1838, when he was sent to Essex for three months under the tutelage of the Rev. Richard Cecil.

Possessing all the spirited individualism of a true Scot, Livingstone wrote that "it was not without a pang that I offered myself, for it was not quite agreeable to one accustomed to work his own way to become in a measure dependent on others; and I would not have been much put about though my offer had been rejected."¹

Almost rejected because of his grave failings as a preacher, Livingstone was finally accepted to full patronage on the recommendation of Rev. Cecil. After further study at Ongar, he was sent to London to continue his medical studies. It is reported that "on all his fellow-students and acquaintances the simplicity, frankness, and kindliness of Livingstone's character made a deep impression."²

At this time Livingstone met the great African missionary, Robert Moffatt, who told the young man that in the vast plain of South Central Africa he "had sometimes seen, in the morning sun, the smoke of a thousand villages, where no missionary had ever been."³ With these romantic words ringing in his ears, and with China closed by the opium wars, Livingstone resolved to go to Africa.

1. Ibid., p. 6.

2. Blaikie, op. cit., p. 49.

3. Ibid., pp. 50-51.

In November 1840, Livingstone returned to Scotland and in Glasgow was made a Licentiate of the Faculty of Physicians and Surgeons. Bidding his family good-bye on November 17, three days later he was ordained a missionary at the Albion Street Chapel. Louise Houghton observes, "It was the closing act of his old life, the opening of his new. From that day he belonged to Africa."¹

C. Early Missionary Travels

Leaving London on December 8, 1840, Livingstone sailed to Africa via Rio de Janeiro. Landing at Port Elizabeth in Cape Colony, he ventured north to Kuruman, then the northernmost outpost of the London Missionary Society, which was Moffatt's station. He set about familiarizing himself with the natives and their customs, learning the language, and otherwise putting himself in position to carry God's word to the Africans. Within a year he had ventured over 350 miles into the largely unexplored country to the north. By 1843 he and a fellow missionary from Kuruman had established a station farther north at Mabotsa.

While at Mabotsa, Livingstone had his famous encounter with a lion. The attack, which would have been fatal but for the intervention of a loyal African deacon of his church, left him with a severely mauled left arm. It

1. Louise Seymour Houghton, David Livingstone: The Story of One Who Followed Christ (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath-School Work, 1913), p. 31.

was so seriously injured, in fact, that he was ever after hindered and had to learn to shoot with his left eye, and it was by this wound that his body was positively identified in 1873, twenty-nine years later.

While at Mabetsa, and after a short and unromantic courtship, Livingstone married Robert Moffatt's daughter Mary. In this decision to marry--he had heretofore been firm in his belief that a missionary ought to be single, at least at first--he made one of his greatest mistakes, as things turned out.

In 1846 he took his family to Chonuane, where he took the message of Christianity to the Bakwains. He had been sorely disappointed by his lack of success among the Bakhatlas, and was at first enthusiastic about the willingness of the Bakwains to accept his teachings. However, according to Blaikie, "the residence of the Livingstones at Chonuane was of short continuance. The want of rain was fatal to agriculture, and about equally fatal to the mission."¹

From the new mission station at Kolobeng, some forty miles west-northwest of Chonuane, Livingstone made his first major trips to the north. Driven by a desire to carry Christianity to the heathen tribes beyond the reach of a missionary settlement, he challenged the prevailing

1. Blaikie, op. cit., p. 100.

conventions of the missionary societies, namely, that missions ought to follow exploration and European settlement, not precede them. In spite of the society's tardiness in picking up and endorsing his bold missionary thrust to the north, he could not wait: the souls of men were at stake. In regard to this conviction of Livingstone's, Seaver comments, "The fatalistic belief that souls were actually perishing because the gospel had not yet reached them, was one which he only gradually outgrew."¹ Another of his progressive theories developed about this time was that, instead of establishing permanent mission stations where they would reside to teach the natives, the British Protestant missionaries ought to "deputize" their best converts to teach their fellow Africans, thus leaving the missionaries free to move on to the unenlightened tribes farther north. Although the London Missionary Society and other societies were slow to endorse the idea, it later became the accepted policy. Northcott observes, "This conception of evangelization from within was Livingstone's chief contribution to the strategy of missions in Africa."²

With two English hunting friends, William Oswell and Mungo Murray, Livingstone set out from Kolobeng on June 1, 1849, to cross the Kalahari Desert and visit the great chief

1. George Seaver, David Livingstone: His Life and Letters (New York: Harper & Bros., 1957), p. 49.

2. Cecil Northcott, Livingstone in Africa ("World Christian Books;" New York: Association Press, 1957), p. 71.

Sebituane. On this trip Livingstone made the first of his great geographical discoveries, that of Lake 'Ngami. Of this discovery he wrote to his brother Charles, "The honor of discovery will probably be given to him [Oswell], but I shall have the privelege [sic] of first preaching Jesus & the Resurrection on its shores."¹ Although, in his modesty and unconcern for the mundane glory of discovery, he was mistaken in thinking that the credit would not go to him, this statement shows how he considered the feat of discovery secondary to his missionary ideals. "'The lake,' he wrote to his friend [the Rev. D. G.] Watt, 'belongs to missionary enterprise.'"²

Because he had not succeeded in reaching Sebituane in the Lake 'Ngami trip of 1849, Livingstone set out again the next year, this time accompanied by Mrs. Livingstone and their three children. While at the lake, malaria struck the party, including two of the Livingstone children, so that they had to return to Kolobeng. Shortly thereafter, a fourth child was born, but died two weeks later, and Mrs. Livingstone was stricken with a paralytic attack of short duration. For thus exposing his pregnant wife and his children to the dangers of an arduous trip into fever-infested country he has often been criticized, a point that will be

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1. David Livingstone, Family Letters: 1841-1856, ed. I. Schapera (London: Chatto & Windus, 1959), II, 50.
 2. Blaikie, op. cit., p. 119.

covered more in detail in Chapter III.¹

Again the next year Livingstone set out for Sebituane, and again with his wife and children, despite criticism for the previous year's calamity and over objections from his mother- and father-in-law. Again his wife gave birth to a child far north of civilization; this time the child, William Oswell, nicknamed "Zouga," lived, but Mrs. Livingstone was stricken with the same post-natal paralysis. On this trip Livingstone succeeded in reaching Sebituane, but shortly thereafter the native chief died of pneumonia.

On this journey he first encountered the slave trade, which he was soon to offer his whole being to eliminate, and which he described as "that traffic . . . which may be said to reverse every law of Christ, and to defy the vengeance of Heaven."² According to Seaver, this encounter with the slave traffic was

sufficient to convince Livingstone where his path of duty lay henceforward. It was to put and end to the slave-traffic by introducing legitimate trade along the highway of the Zambesi . . . but to achieve it some preliminary exploration would be necessary.³

Torn by a conflict of duties--his duty as husband and father and his missionary duty amid the dangerous wastes of Africa--he finally decided to return to the Cape and send his

1. Infra, pp. 102-104.

2. Livingstone, Narrative of an Expedition . . ., p. 637.

3. Seaver, op. cit., p. 142.

family back to the safety and civilization of England. So on April 23, 1852, his family sailed from Cape Town for England. It was not an easy decision to make, but, trusting in God's will, he committed them to his care. Less than a year later he wrote to them from Lotlakane:

But though I call you my children it is from custom, for you are now the children of Jesus. I have given you back to him & you are in his care. He is your father, and a kinder better father never was. But you yourselves must look up to him to be your Father and guide. And you must be brave little children to him. . . . I wish you to be brave servants of Jesus. I wish you not to be afraid to own him.¹

While preparing himself at Cape Town for his missionary explorations to the north, to find an outlet along the Zambesi to the ocean, some Boers from the east attacked and ransacked his house at Kolobeng, destroying his library and other possessions.

D. The Great Missionary Journey Across Central Africa

Livingstone left the Cape on June 8, 1852, for Linyanti in the hopes of finding a healthy locale where a European mission might be established. This he did not find, but, as Blaikie says, "Having failed in the first object of his journey--to find a healthy locality--he was resolved to follow out the second, and endeavor to discover a highway to the sea."² On November 11, 1853, he and his men departed

1. Livingstone, Family Letters . . ., II, 204-205.

2. Blaikie, op. cit., p. 161.

from Linyanti for St. Paul de Loanda on the Atlantic coast. According to Northcott, "This was his finest journey--in some ways his finest hour. This three-year trek by canoe, by oxback, on foot, opened the heart of Africa."¹ Before he arrived at Loanda on May 31, 1854, Livingstone had encountered a myriad of difficulties: superstitious, bloodthirsty, thieving, and treacherous natives; disappointments and misfortunes; loneliness and deprivation; and, of course, malaria. He wrote:

Disease prevented quick travelling. I have had fever in severe forms twenty-seven times, once with inflammation of a part of the head (meningitis), which kept me down 25 days and left me nearly blind and almost deaf.²

During the four months of rest and recuperation in Loanda, Livingstone was prevailed upon by his Portuguese host and by British naval officers to return to England, but he resisted the temptation and left in September for Linyanti. He arrived nearly a year later, after having suffered on the return trip as much, if not more, than on the trip out.

From Linyanti, he struck out to the east toward the Indian Ocean. On this portion of the journey he discovered the awesome Victoria Falls of the Zambesi. Here, too, as he left the hitherto unexplored interior, he encountered the vile slave trade, on this coast being practised by the Arabs

1. Northcott, op. cit., p. 23.

2. Livingstone, Family Letters . . ., II, 261.

as well as the Portuguese. Except for a slight detour, his journey from Linyanti followed the Zambesi all the way to Quillimane. This detour later proved to be a significant, even a disastrous one, for he had skirted the Kebrabasa Rapids. He seriously underestimated the cataracts through having to rely on local hearsay and, as Seaver says, through

. . . an inexplicable miscalculation whereby he underestimated the 600 foot drop between the point where he crossed the Zambesi and the point where he joined it again at Tete. But for this error he must have realized that the Kebrabasa Rapids could be by no means "small", and on his next expedition he would never have subjected himself and others to such desperate toil and danger in attacking them from below and above.¹

Because of this error, Livingstone assumed that the Zambesi was navigable from Quillimane to Victoria Falls.

E. First Visit Home

Leaving his faithful Makolo at Tete, Livingstone sailed from Quillimane on July 12, 1856. He arrived in England a national hero. The whole world had been informed of his unique and nearly superhuman travels as a selfless spreader of the Word, and it was prepared to honor him as perhaps few explorers have ever been honored. As one biographer put it, he was a "popular hero at the high noon of Victorian hero worship."²

Although he had planned to stay in England for just

1. Seaver, op. cit., p. 260. 2. Northcott, op. cit., p. 24.

a month or two of rest before returning to Africa and his calling, he stayed nearly two years, receiving many honors, making speeches and reports, and writing his first book, Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa. He had a personal distaste for all of these conspicuous activities, but he relished seeing again his family and friends. He was sorely disappointed in that he did not have a chance to meet again with his father, who had died in February, 1856, just a few months before the son emerged from the jungles.

Two very important events transpired during his two-year stay in England. One was his appointment as consul by the British government, and the second was his severance from the London Missionary Society.

This latter event was occasioned not only by Livingstone's natural proclivity for independence, which had been evident in his stated misgivings about joining the society, but also by a letter that he had received from the society's secretary. The letter, written in 1855 and received by Livingstone just prior to his departure from Africa, stated all too clearly that the society did not have the funds for establishing missions in unexplored and unhealthy climates, and in addition implied that the society considered Livingstone's travels to be only partly missionary in nature. According to Seaver, "Livingstone's severance from the L.M.S. was as much a shock to that Society as the cause which prompted it, their Secretary's ill-advised missive to the

returning wanderer, had been to him."¹ However, despite Livingstone's resignation, the society met to confer with him on the feasibility of opening simultaneously two new mission stations among the feuding Makololo and Matabele tribes. It was decided that the one among the latter would be established by Moffatt and the one among the former by Livingstone and an assistant. As it turned out, the Makololo station was established with little more than nominal participation by Livingstone.

Sir Roderick Murchison served as the agent to bring Livingstone and the British government together, with the result being that the missionary was appointed by the government to lead an expedition to explore the Zambesi River and Lake Nyasa regions. To that end, Livingstone was appointed British Consul at Quillimane for the East Coast and, at his insistence, the independent districts of the interior. Of the six assistants Livingstone selected for the expedition, two are especially worthy of mention; his best choice was young John Kirk to serve as economic botanist, and his worst choice was his brother Charles to serve as general assistant and "moral agent."

With his assistants, the paddle-steamer Ma-Robert, and the official blessings of Her Majesty's government, Livingstone set out for Africa once more on March 12, 1858.

1. Seaver, op. cit., p. 309.

F. The Zambesi Expedition

In Livingstone's own words, the "first object [of the expedition] was to explore the Zambesi, its mouths and tributaries, with a view to their being used as highways for commerce and Christianity to pass into the vast interior of Africa."¹ However, just as his trans-Africa voyage had been "his finest hour," this by contrast may have been his worst. According to Northcott,

This by all counts was Livingstone's most dismal and frustrating period. . . . He failed in his main objects, and he also failed personally as the leader of an expedition of white men.²

Another biographer, Seaver, also criticizes his conduct of the expedition and says that it "convicts him of complete failure as a leader."³

Defeated by the Kebrabasa Rapids from steaming up the Zambesi to Victoria Falls, Livingstone reluctantly--but only after an obstinate and unnecessary attempt to navigate the rapids--turned his attention to the Shire River, where he hoped to find navigable passage to Lake Nyasa. In this latter project he was again thwarted by rapids, the Murchison Cataracts, and again gave in only after risking the lives of his fellow explorers. Sure that he would be able to navigate the Shire to Lake Nyasa, Livingstone wasted half the

1. Livingstone, Narrative of an Expedition . . ., p. 14.

2. Northcott, op. cit., p. 24.

3. Seaver, op. cit., pp. 317-318.

profits from his enormously popular book, £6000, on purchasing a steamship that he hoped to float on Lake Nyasa to combat the Arab slave dhows that were operating across the lake.

Besides these geographical difficulties, the missionary ran into major difficulties because of his deficiencies as a leader of men. Three of his men resigned, willingly or under pressure from their leader, and he carried a grudge against them for the rest of his days. His brother Charles was little more than excess baggage, but he failed to recognize or admit this failing in his brother. He managed the whole expedition so poorly that even loyal John Kirk was glad when the government recalled them for lack of funds and failure of achievement.

When the Universities' Mission to Central Africa, welcomed so warmly by Livingstone, was decimated by fever and retreated from the Shire uplands to Zanzibar, the missionary explorer suffered another serious disappointment. The missions's leader, Bishop MacKenzie, was immediately respected and admired by Livingstone, and his untimely death grieved him, especially when his successor, Bishop Tozer, pulled the mission to safety and, as Livingstone considered it, to uselessness on Zanzibar.

The same malaria that killed Bishop MacKenzie and defeated the Universities' Mission also took the life of Mrs. Livingstone, who had come alone from England to be with her husband.

As for the mission to the Makololo, which Livingstone had planned and of which he was the nominal head, when he reached them, he found that almost all of them had died from fever and the few survivors had long since retreated across the Kalahari Desert to the relative safety of South Africa.

Campbell remarks that the Zambesi expedition "was regarded as a grievous failure and disappointment to all concerned, and went far towards breaking the leader's indomitable spirit."¹ This biographer adds, however:

Looking back now on the work he did in the Zambesi expedition, those most competent to judge are of the opinion that it was of even greater value than the brilliant and spectacular feat which brought him fame. But it did not seem so then either to himself or to the world.²

Northcott also observes:

Some superlative moments in this period, however, are significant for the modern history of Africa. Defeated along the Zambesi, Livingstone turned into the Shire River and by dogged persistence opened a way into Nyasaland. . . . When he had failed to get his ship the Lady Nyasa up to the lake, lost his only boat over a cataract, had the government's letter of recall in his pocket, and his wife dead, he did a 700-mile dash through Nyasaland with the ship's steward from August to October, 1863. It was the resilient Livingstone at his best. To crown it all, he sailed the Lady Nyasa across the Indian Ocean to sell her in Bombay--a 2,500-mile voyage in forty-five days on fourteen tons of coal and a limited supply of water, and himself as amateur skipper. Nothing daunted him when he could act alone.³

A development, so singular as to be worthy of mention,

1. R. J. Campbell, Livingstone (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1930), p. 193.

2. Ibid.

3. Northcott, op. cit., p. 25.

which occurred during the Shire explorations seems to symbolize the material failure of the expedition--Livingstone's failure to open up Africa to commerce and Christianity, his failure to establish the temple of God among the heathens, his personal failure. A tribe of Ajawas attacked the expedition and had to be repelled by gunfire, and blood was shed. Blaikie reports:

It was the first time that Livingstone had ever been so attacked by natives, often though they had threatened him. It was the first time he had had to repel an attack with violence; so little was he thinking of such a thing that he had not his rifle with him, and was obliged to borrow a revolver.¹

G. Second Visit Home

The Livingstone who returned to England on July 23, 1864, was still regarded as a hero, but not so tumultuously as the last time. In the eyes of the public he was a somewhat tarnished angel, still a superior being, but more nearly a frail human being like the rest of men, as his failures and shortcomings had proven. He was also a sadder and poorer human being--poorer of spirit and poorer of health.

During this second visit home, Livingstone made several speeches that aroused the ire of the Portuguese government, which he accused of maintaining "pretenses to

1. Blaikie, op. cit., p. 303.

dominion on the East Coast by which, for the sake of mere swagger in Europe, she secures for herself the worst name in Christendom,"¹ and also reported that "here, on the East Coast, not a single native has been taught to read, not one branch of trade has been developed . . ."²

The public attention drawn to his duel of words with the Portuguese government encouraged him to write his second great book, Narrative of an Expedition to the Zambesi and its Tributaries. He explicitly stated the purpose of the book:

. . . written in the earnest hope that it may contribute to that information which will yet cause the great and fertile continent of Africa to be no longer kept wantonly sealed, but made available as the scene of European enterprise, and will enable its people to take a place among the nations of the earth, thus securing the happiness and prosperity of tribes now sunk in barbarism or debased by slavery; and, above all, I cherish the hope that it may lead to the introduction of the blessings of the Gospel.³

The book was begun with the idea that it would serve as a pamphlet against the Portuguese slave trade in Africa, but by the time it was finished, it was a volume of several hundred pages describing the expedition, but, as Seaver says, "with the unpleasant features omitted."⁴

Among the most important occupations of Livingstone

1. Livingstone, Narrative of an Expedition . . ., p. 637.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p. 2.

4. Seaver, op. cit., p. 463.

during this second visit home was getting acquainted with his children. Out of this developed the close relationship between the missionary and his eldest daughter Agnes.

On January 5, 1865, Sir Roderick Murchison wrote Livingstone, asking him what his plans were for the future. Murchison proposed that Livingstone might consider undertaking the exploration of the Lake Tanganyika region in order to settle the problem of the great central watershed of Africa. Livingstone agreed to the proposal but maintained that the missionary enterprise was still his main purpose. Thus began the long and tortuous search for the source of the Nile River that was to end in his death.

H. The Last Journeys

Livingstone's one-man expedition to find the headwaters of the Nile was outfitted with £500 each from the government and the Royal Geographical Society and £1000 from his friend James Young. On his fifty-third birthday, March 19, 1866, he set out for Africa for the third and last time. Of this Northcott writes:

For him this meant another attempt to free the heart of Africa from slave trading. He knew that treaties and agreements would never do it, and stuck to his belief that slave trading must be made unprofitable by other forms of trading. His friend John Kirk rightly argued that more routes meant more opportunities for the Portuguese and Arab slavers who were already draining Nyasaland of its human merchandise.¹

1. Northcott, op. cit., p. 26.

In Bombay once more, he sold the Lady Nyasa for £2300 and secured a promise of £1000 for his expedition from Bombay. From Bombay he went to Zanzibar, carrying a letter of introduction from Sir Bartle Frere, the governor of Bombay, to the Sultan of Zanzibar, from whom he sought and obtained a "firman," or passport, for aid from all the Sultan's subjects in the interior of Africa.

He set out from Zanzibar on March 19, 1866, with a motley crew of Nassicks, Kroomen, and assorted other natives, and with a prayer: "I trust that the Most High may prosper me in this work, granting me influence in the eyes of the heathen, and helping me to make my intercourse beneficial to them."¹

Alone with thirty-six natives, Livingstone was in his old familiar element, but he was, according to Seaver,

. . . a Livingstone who [was] prematurely aged. He [was] powerless to control the behaviour of his own retinue: not only to check their laziness and recalcitrance, but also to prevent their brutal and callous treatment of the baggage animals.²

Thus he soon found himself without oxen and baggage animals. The rest had deserted.

The disastrous consequence of his inability to control his carriers occurred on January 20, 1867, when two Waiyau natives deserted, one of whom had traded bundles with the trusted bearer Baraka, who had been charged with carrying

1. Seaver, op. cit., p. 481. 2. Ibid., p. 484.

the medicine chest containing Livingstone's vital quinine and other drugs. Alluding to MacKenzie's fatal loss of medicines in a canoe accident on the Shire, Livingstone wrote in his Journal: "I felt as if I had now received the sentence of death, like poor Bishop MacKenzie."¹ In spite of this awful foreboding, the kindly missionary tried not to harbor hatred toward his fellow man:

Some we have come across in this journey seemed born essentially mean and base--a great misfortune to them and all who have to deal with them, but they can not be so blamable as those who have no natural tendency to meanness, and whose education has taught them to abhor it. True; yet this loss of the medicine-box gnaws at the heart terribly.²

Although, as Coupland observes, Livingstone's decision to continue the journey without his medicine-chest eventually proved to be suicidal, he tried to find a beneficent reason for the loss of the precious quinine.³ In his Journal he wrote:

Everything of this kind happens by the permission of One who watches over us with most tender care; and this may turn out for the best by taking away a source of suspicion among the more superstitious, charm-dreading people further north. I meant it as a source of benefit to my party and the heathen. . . . It is difficult to say from the heart, "Thy will be done;" but I shall try.⁴

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1. David Livingstone, The Last Journals of David Livingstone in Central Africa, ed. Horace Waller (New York: Harper & Bros., 1875), p. 149.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Sir Reginald Coupland, Livingstone's Last Journey, (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1947), p. 53.
 4. Livingstone, The Last Journals . . ., p. 149.

For the next four years Livingstone travelled without medicines in the fever-ridden regions west of Lake Tanganyika, unshaken in his commitment to divine will, and wholly reliant on Providence for his life. He became, however, subject to ravages of illness worse than any even he had known before. Less than a month after his loss of medicines he wrote in his Journal, "Too ill with rheumatic fever to have service; this is the first attack of it I ever had--and no medicine! but I trust in the Lord, who healeth his people."¹ By the first of April he had been so severely ill that even so laconic an observer as himself felt moved to report his symptoms:

After I had been a few days here [at Mombo's village on the south tip of Lake Tanganyika] I had a fit of insensibility, which shows the power of fever without medicine. I found myself floundering outside my hut, and unable to get in; I tried to lift myself from my back by laying hold of two posts at the entrance, but when I got nearly upright I let them go, and fell back heavily on my head on a box. The boys had seen the wretched state I was in, and hung a blanket at the entrance of the hut, that no stranger might see my helplessness: some hours elapsed before I could recognize where I was.²

It was in defiance of these dire signs that, driven by the hope of finding the sources of the Nile and thus unlock the mystery of the central watersheds--necessary to carry out his grand design of opening the interior to commerce and Christianity and to extinguish the slave trade--he wandered for two years in the Manyema country.

1. Ibid., p. 160.

2. Ibid., p. 169.

It was during this time of wandering, sick and without medicines, that Livingstone became so closely associated with Arab slave traders, the very people he was out to thwart. The degree of his helplessness during this period can be measured by the necessity of his having to make this strange alliance with slavers. That the Arabs were willing to give him aid attests to the force of his personality and to the basic goodness of their hearts, in spite of their baneful commerce. Perhaps, had he been able to foresee events, Livingstone might not have written so unfavorably of the Moslems earlier:

Many Mohammedans might contrast favorably with indifferent Christians; but, so far as our experience in East Africa goes, the moral tone of the followers of Mohammed is pitched at a lower key than that of the most untutored African. The ancient zeal for propagating the tenets of the Koran has evaporated, and been replaced by the most intense selfishness and grossest sensuality.¹

By the time the year 1867 had come to a close, Livingstone had already recognized the imminence of his own death. How could he or any other man have known or even hoped that he would survive for over five more years? His New Year's prayer for 1868 clearly illustrates these forebodings:

Almighty Father, forgive the sins of the past year for thy Son's sake. Help me to be more profitable during this year. If I am to die this year, prepare me for it.²

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1. Livingstone, Narrative of an Expedition . . ., p. 540.
 2. Livingstone, The Last Journals . . ., p. 216.

It would be a mistake to interpret these statements in his Journal as a sudden turn of pessimism. Although Livingstone's life was more active than reflective, he was no stranger to the ideas of death and the after-life. Seaver attests to this:

With all his temperamental optimism and with all his trust in Providence, he was never under any illusions about the danger of his undertaking and its possible, even probable, termination in disaster; and to a man of such phenomenal vitality as he possessed, the proximity of death was a familiar theme for reflection; indeed, the thought of it and speculation concerning continued existence in another sphere were never absent from his mind.¹

By the end of the year 1868, he was too ill to enter his customary year-end and New Year's prayers in his Journal. Unable to walk and suffering from optical illusions and painful pneumonia in his right lung, he was cared for almost three months by the Arab slave trader Mohamad Bogharib. He was, however, drawing near Ujiji where he hoped to find supplies and letters awaiting him. He wrote:

I am in agony for news from home. All I feel sure of now is that my friends will all wish me to complete my task. I join in the wish now, as better than doing it in vain afterward.²

Disappointment awaited him, however, as on March 14 he reached his goal only to find no medicines, food, or milk--nothing but a little tea, coffee, and sugar. His supplies

1. Seaver, op. cit., p. 173.

2. Livingstone, The Last Journals . . ., pp. 334-335.

had been stolen at Unyanyembe, some 150 miles to the east. In a relatively few months he was to set out again, this time to the west along the Lualaba River, whose size made him fear that in searching for the Nile sources he had inadvertently stumbled on the head waters of the Congo. With time this suspicion (a correct one) grew stronger, but because of the importance of finding the Nile sources, he would not admit it. He wrote:

I wish I had some of the assurance possessed by others, but I am oppressed with the apprehension that, after all, it may turn out that I have been following the Congo; and who would risk being put into a cannibal pot and converted into a black man for it?¹

Illness struck several times on this westward journey, and, while recuperating at Bambarre, he reflected on his now disastrously weakened condition and the need for haste in carrying his project to success while he still had time and strength. Earlier he had written, "May the Almighty help me to finish the work in hand, and retire . . . before the year is out;"² and now he wrote, "The severe pneumonia in Marunga, the choleraic complaint in Manyuema, and now irritable ulcers [of the feet], warn me to retire while life lasts."³ He continued though, driven by his zeal to see God's will done.

Before returning to Ujiji, he witnessed one of the most horrible scenes of his entire career: the slaughter at

1. Livingstone, The Last Journals . . ., p. 424.

2. Ibid., p. 312.

3. Ibid., p. 325.

Nyangwe of men, women, and children by debased African Moslem slavers. So horrified was he that he wrote, "My first impulse was to pistol the murderers . . ."¹ His revulsion sent him back to Ujiji in sheer horror.

Back at Ujiji on October 23, 1871, Livingstone found that once again natives had stolen all his goods, which had been brought up from Unyanyembe. Seaver observes:

This was the nadir of Livingstone's misfortunes. He was utterly destitute not only of the bare necessities of life, but of all hope of procuring any. Never in his life had he been so near complete disaster.²

Four days later deliverance came in the person of Henry M. Stanley, a journalist from the New York Herald, who had been charged by the publisher, James Gordon Bennett, to find Livingstone at any cost.

Intermittently rumors had reached the outside world that Livingstone had died in the interior of the dark continent. The first major rumor was started when Musa and his fellow deserters had spread the story that the missionary was dead so that they could escape punishment for having deserted him. Among the handful of disbelievers of Musa's story was Lieutenant E. D. Young, who knew Musa to be an inveterate liar. Young organized a search expedition which found evidence of Livingstone having been near the southern end of Lake Tanganyika. According to Musa's story, the

1. Ibid., p. 384.

2. Seaver, op. cit., p. 573.

doctor had died before reaching the lake. That was in 1866.

Besides Stanley's expedition, the Royal Geographic Society, through public subscription, had raised funds to send a relief expedition under Lieutenants L. S. Dawson and W. Henn and Livingstone's youngest son, Oswell. This expedition was still on Zanzibar when Stanley returned, and so it was disbanded.

During the four months that Livingstone and Stanley were together, many noteworthy things were accomplished. Together they explored the north tip of the lake. Livingstone wrote many letters, among his last. Under the influence of the Christian missionary, Stanley's roughshod character underwent a change for the better.

After tramping to Unyanyembe in February, 1872, Stanley departed for the coast and Zanzibar; Livingstone was to wait in Unyanyembe for the men and supplies that Stanley was to send back. As it turned out, he was to have a six-month wait, during which time he committed his various musings and speculations to his Journal. On his last birthday but one, March 19, he rededicated himself to Jesus Christ:

My Jesus, my king, my life my all; I again dedicate my whole self to Thee. Accept me, and grant, oh gracious Father, that ere this year is gone I may finish my task. In Jesus's name I ask it. Amen, so let it be.¹

1. Livingstone, The Last Journals . . ., p. 414.

Having thus reconfirmed his dedication to Christ, he could write six weeks later, in complete faith and trust in God, "I do not know how the great loving Father will bring all out right at last, but he knows and will do it."¹ Ten days later he expressed his faith in more detail:

He will keep His word--the gracious One, full of grace and truth--no doubt of it. He said, "Him that cometh unto me, I will in nowise cast out," and "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name I will give it." He WILL keep His word: then I can come and humbly present my petition, and it will be all right. Doubt is here inadmissible, surely.²

Just how much Stanley's visit buoyed his spirits can be gathered by comparing the above sentiments with some he committed to his Journal just a little over a year earlier: "It is excessively trying, and so many difficulties have been put in my way I doubt whether the Divine favour and will is on my side."³

Even toward the end of his wait, when weariness and impatience were overtaking him, Livingstone maintained his profound trust in God:

July 3d.-- . . . Wearisome waiting, this; and yet the men can not be here before the middle or end of this month. I have been sorely let and hindered in this journey, but it may have been all for the best. I will trust in Him to whom I commit my way.

July 5th.--Weary! weary!

July 7th.--Waiting wearily here, and hoping that the

1. Ibid., p. 421.

2. Ibid., p. 423.

3. Seaver, op. cit., p. 558.

good and loving Father of all may favor me, and help me to finish my work quickly and well.¹

However, his reflections and meditations during this period were not all happy ones, as for instance, "The slaving scenes come back unbidden, and make me start up at dead of night horrified by their vividness."² He was plagued, too, by more and more serious doubts that he was on the track of the Nile. He wrote:

In reference to this Nile source I have been kept in perpetual doubt and perplexity. I know too much to be positive.

.
I am even now not at all "cock-sure" that I have not been following down what may, after all, be the Congo.³

Although nearly every shred of evidence that he had turned up in the last three or four years of his life pointed to the Congo, Livingstone was determined to find the sources of the Nile. He hoped even to prove some of Ptolemy's conceptions about the rising of the Nile, and to find the ruins of the city of Meroe.

In spite of these serious doubts, Livingstone's wry sense of humor showed itself while he was at Unyanyembe:

The Ptolemaic map defines people according to their food. The Elephantophagi, the Struthiophagi, the Ichthyophagi, and Anthropophagi. If we followed the same sort of classification, our definition would be the drink, thus: the tribe of stout-guzzlers, the roaring potheen-fuddlers, the whiskey-fishoid-drinkers, the

1. Livingstone, The Last Journals . . ., p. 437.

2. Ibid., p. 442.

3. Ibid., pp. 428 and 435.

vin-ordinaire-bibbers, the lager-beer-swillers, and an outlying tribe of the brandy-cocktail persuasion.¹

Not long before the men arrived from the coast, Livingstone made an entry in his Journal that, uncharacteristically for one of his evangelical persuasion, gives remarkable insight into his theological thought:

What is the atonement of Christ? It is himself: it is the inherent and everlasting mercy of God made apparent to human eyes and ears. The everlasting love was disclosed by our Lord's life and death. It showed that God forgives, because he loves to forgive. He works by smiles if possible, not by frowns; pain is only a means of enforcing love.²

Of this abrupt entry in his otherwise non-theological Journal, Seaver wrote:

Here he lifts the cardinal tenet of the Christian faith from the incomprehensibility of a doctrinal formula to the certitude of personal relationship, and shows that this faith is not conceptual but experiential and is based, not on the shifting sands of theological speculation, but on the rock of conscious experience.³

Once the men and supplies had arrived and he had set off from Unyanyembe, Livingston was plagued to the end by illness, rapidly failing health, and other misfortune. He recorded, "The men speak of few periods of even comparative health from this date [September 19, 1872]."⁴ The middle of February he wrote:

If the good Lord gives me favor, and permits me to finish my work, I shall thank and bless him, though it

1. Ibid., p. 432.

2. Ibid., p. 453.

3. Seaver, op. cit., p. 609.

4. Livingstone, The Last Journals . . ., p. 458.

has cost me untold toil, pain, and travel. This trip has made my hair all gray.¹

Travelling down into the Lake Bangweolo region, often borne on a litter by the faithful natives that attended him on his last travels, Livingstone managed to preserve his great faith and determination. Despite his hopeless prospects, on his last birthday, March 19, 1873, he thanked the Lord for His love and aid:

Thanks to the Almighty Preserver of men for sparing me thus far on the journey of life! Can I hope for ultimate success? So many obstacles have arisen. Let not Satan prevail over me, oh! my good Lord Jesus! ²

His eleventh-hour determination seems incredible: "Nothing earthly will make me give up my work in despair. I encourage myself in the Lord my God, and go forward."³ The end, however, was near: "No observations now, owing to great weakness: I can scarcely hold a pencil, and my stick is a burden."⁴

One of his last observations, made some two weeks prior to his death, when he was bleeding profusely, seems almost the work of a master of literary symbolism:

Here, after the turtle-doves and cocks give out their warning calls to the watchful, the fish-eagle lifts up his remarkable voice. It is pitched in a high falsetto key, very loud, and seems as if he were calling to some one in the other world. Once heard, his weird, unearthly voice can never be forgotten--it sticks to one through life.⁵

1. Ibid., p. 489.

2. Ibid., p. 497.

3. Ibid., p. 498.

4. Ibid., p. 505.

5. Ibid., p. 504.

Livingstone died in the early morning hours of May 1, 1873, in Ilala near Chitambo's village. It is most fitting that he died on his knees in prayer, to the end the obedient servant of Jesus Christ.

His last words, written four days earlier, show him to have remained an observer to the end, despite the great pain and weakness that all but incapacitated him: "Knocked up quite and remain--recover--sent to buy milch goats. We are on the banks of R. Molilamo."¹

Under the supervision of his three most trusted men--Susi, Chuma, and Jacob Wainwright--his heart and viscera were removed and buried under a tree nearby. Then his body was crudely preserved with salt and carried on a nine-months journey back to civilization. This journey remains one of the most remarkable bits of evidence of his great power, even in death, over those natives with whom he came in contact.

His body, identified by the mangled left arm suffered years earlier in the lion attack at Mabotsa, was buried with national honors in Westminster Abbey on April 18, 1874.

I. Summary

As has been seen, David Livingstone was a most extraordinary man, one whose life still awes and inspires men. Thanks to his painstakingly scrupulous keeping of the Journal,

1. Ibid., facing page 507.

his character is accessible still. It is fortunate that one can, from the present vantage point, perceive with clarity, as Blaikie says, "the strength of his affections, the depth and purity of his devotion, the intensity of his aspirations as a Christian missionary."¹

It is well first to have a brief glimpse of the "outer man," the David Livingstone who was immediately and easily perceptible to the Africans among whom he travelled. According to Seaver,

In appearance he was unprepossessing, in manner somewhat uncouth. These outward defects may have been redeemed to some extent by less obvious qualities: transparent sincerity and simplicity, robust and wholesome common-sense, a shrewd and pawky humor, a comradely and optimistic temper that was probably infectious.²

That such a man could have inspired such high feelings in so many primitive people, people accustomed in their daily lives to what is considered the grossest of sins and crimes, seems almost incredible. Horne says:

His unique influence over the natives of Africa is admitted. It may not be possible wholly to analyse his secret, for such words as "personality" and "magnetism" are easily written, and do not help us very much.³

One thing is certain: he possessed, as Seaver expressed it, "the intuitive conviction of the Christian humanist--confirmed by personal experience--that in missions

1. Blaikie, op. cit., p. iii. 2. Seaver, op. cit., p. 28.

3. G. Silvester Horne, David Livingstone (New York: Missionary Education Movement of the United States and Canada, 1913), p. 239.

to the heathen example is better than precept, and ethics than dogma."¹ For Livingstone the missionary calling was to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, as he wrote:

The spirit of missions is the spirit of our Master: the very genius of His religion. A diffusive philanthropy is Christianity itself. It requires perpetual propagation to attest its genuineness.²

Livingstone's life is not an easy one to assess. In many ways he was a failure, both in life and in influence after his death. Although his failures in life can be laid at his feet, his motives were pure and exalted, so that what followed in his wake must not be charged against him. Of his motives Northcott says, "He had come to Africa to serve God and to extend his kingdom--it was as simple and as profound as that;"³ and of his accomplishments Campbell says, "He gave to the world a new view of the African--of his educability, industry, and capacity for moral improvement."⁴ On the other hand, of his failure Seaver comments:

By his death he accomplished far more than by his life. Truly it may be said of him, and in more ways than one, "Nothing in his life became him like the leaving of it."⁵

Again he says:

In everything he had failed: he had failed as a husband; he had failed as a father; he had failed as a missionary; he had failed as a geographer; he had failed most of all

1. Seaver, op. cit., p. 254.

2. Livingstone, The Last Journals . . ., p. 467.

3. Northcott, op. cit., p. 69.

4. Campbell, op. cit., p. 6. 5. Seaver, op. cit., p. 477.

as a liberator. It was through his fault that his wife had died untimely; through his neglect that his children were orphaned; through his misdirected zeal that the Bakwena and Makololo were left unshepherded; through his misfortune that his last discovery had gone by default, and with it all hope for the liberation of the negro. There was nothing worthwhile to show for it all.¹

Schapera also writes of Livingstone's failure:

During the whole of his residence in Bechuanaland his only convert was Sechele, chief of the BaKwena; but within six months of baptism Sechele had broken his vows and been suspended from holy communion. When Livingstone finally abandoned the BaKwena in April 1851, it was with the knowledge that, as he put it, the people had "willfully rejected the gospel."²

In regard to Livingstone's continuing influence, Seaver says:

If one takes results as the criterion [for judgment of the worth of his actions] and looks beyond a decade to the lapse of nearly a century, one sees the consummation of Livingstone's life-purpose largely nullified: Commerce corrupted by exploitation, Civilization polluted by depravity, Christianity distraught by rival policies within and hostile policies without, and the whole future of Africa imperilled in the turmoil of racial conflict.³

In contrast Northcott defends Livingstone:

He was not an ecclesiastical statesman or anything remotely resembling a missionary administrator. Any blame for the latter-day entanglements of missions in Africa cannot squarely be laid at his feet.

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No doubt the second half of the twentieth century has seen much pollution of the Livingstone tradition. We are troubled by that fact; we are shamed by it. That alone is evidence of the power Livingstone still exerts over those who care about Africa.⁴

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1. Ibid., p. 629. The extreme negativism of this comment--startling when taken out of context-- is largely rhetorical.
 2. I. Schapera, in the introduction to Livingstone, Family Letters . . ., p. 13.
 3. Seaver, op. cit., p. 630.
 4. Northcott, op. cit., pp. 71-72 and 88.

Livingstone's life in toto cannot be easily assessed, and doubtless, as the events of modern African history progress in their inexorable movement, his life will remain subject to much speculation.

One can, however, examine the man himself--the man alone who felt himself guided at every turn by God's will--and in this one may hope to arrive at some important conclusions regarding his Devotional Life. About him Seaver concludes:

For a true comprehension of the significance of Livingstone's life we must . . . envisage it against the background of eternal values. Whatever his faults of temperament and defects of character he stands before us . . . as one of the moral giants of our race. For he is to be numbered in the roll of those men of faith of whom the world was not worthy . . .¹

In a similar vein Northcott writes:

In his lifetime he played out a one-man tragedy against the immense background of Africa, and the manner of the drama adds to the nobility of the man. It was essentially a Christian drama in which life eventually triumphs over death. In this sense Livingstone's life was a victorious one.²

Therefore the life of David Livingstone now will be investigated as the Devotional Life of a man with God, and its exemplary characteristics will be studied.

1. Seaver, op. cit., p. 631.

2. Northcott, op. cit., p. 89.

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CHAPTER II

VITAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DEVOTIONAL LIFE

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A. Introduction

In Chapter II the remarkable life of David Livingstone was investigated. Before one can discover the vital elements of the Devotional Life in his career, one must examine the Devotional Life itself for those vital elements and so select and define criteria.

One might divide the elements of the Devotional Life into two broad categories: namely, the descriptive elements and the active elements. The former are those elements which give insight into the nature of the Devotional Life, that is, its distinguishing marks. The latter are those which require practice in daily life to prepare for fruit-bearing.

B. Distinguishing Marks of the Devotional Life

Depending on one's point of view, there are a number of ways to break down a definition of the Devotional Life into its various characteristics. Because of the specific nature of this thesis, only the common elements

which relate to an active, rather than a contemplative, life will be selected.

First, the word "devotion" itself must be considered. Whyte's definition is that "devotion is an earnest application of the soul to God as the only Cause and Foundation of happiness,"¹ and Sangster says that "holiness . . . lies at the heart of all devotion."² The Devotional Life then is a life of, for, and with God and a life abounding in holiness. Sangster observes that "perhaps nothing is more miraculous in this evil world than a holy life itself."³

If the Devotional Life is a holy life given over to God, one must first examine the elements of holiness. One may isolate them as follows: love, self-surrender, dedication, self-examination, and humility.

1. Love

In any treatment of devotion, love must come first. St. Francis de Sales said:

All true devotion springs from the love of God.
In fact, it is a phase of the love of God: devotedness to God. That love may be sanctifying grace which

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1. Alexander Whyte, Characters and Characteristics of William Law, Nonjuror and Mystic (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1893), p. 151.
 2. W. E. Sangster, The Pure in Heart: A Study in Christian Sanctity (New York: Abingdon Press, 1954), p. xi.
 3. Ibid., p. xvi.

renders us pleasing to God. When it helps us do good it is called charity. In it its fullest perfection--when we act through love for God, diligently, promptly, entirely--it is called devotion.¹

Without love there can be no devotion; in fact, there can be no true spirit of Christianity. St. Paul wrote:

If I give away all I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing. . . . So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.²

From the thirteenth chapter of St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, it is possible to derive the whole spectrum of virtue, as Sangster has written:

St. Paul says: "The harvest of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance."

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All the fruits depend upon the first.
Love suffereth long. Longsuffering.
Love is Kind.
Love envieth not. Goodness.
Love vaunteth not its own, is not provoked. Self-control.
Love rejoices with truth. Joy.
Love beareth all things. Peace.
Love believeth all things, hopeth all things. Faithfulness.
Having love, we have all the fruit of the Spirit.
Without love, we have nothing.³

From the word of God one can detect three distinct, although inseparably related, kinds of Christian love; love for God, love for fellow men, and love for enemies.

1. St. Francis de Sales, The Devout Life, (New abr. tr.; Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Co., 1946), p. 2.

2. I. Cor. 13:3 and 13:13.

3. Sangster, op. cit., pp. 99 and 101.

Jesus Christ said, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment."¹ It is the greatest commandment, not only because loving God is the essence of worship, but also because love is man's surest way to God, and His to man. Love is the great reflecting link between man and his heavenly Father.² St. Francis de Sales wrote of love: "It reigns over all the impulses of the heart. It can draw all else to itself and make us like what we love."³

Man's fallen nature inclines him to hate the Giver of all good because He is also the Giver of all hurt and hardship, and one must love Him for that, too. But "we love Him, because He first loved us."⁴ God also enables the Christian to love Him, as Sangster explains:

God has put this supernatural love in human hearts.
 . . . Our nature, sinful and incapable of itself, can receive and hold this first fruit of the Spirit which is all the fruits in one. It is incredible but true.

 It is not natural in fallen man to love God. . . . It is only by the gift of the Holy Spirit that we can love God . . .⁵

For the true Christian, again to quote from Sangster,
 . . . love for his fellow is only exceeded by his love for God. At times, it is hard to distinguish the two.

1. Matt. 22:37-38.

2. Cf. I John 4:16.

3. St. Francis de Sales, op. cit., p. 65.

4. I. John 4:19.

5. Sangster, op. cit., pp. 101-103.

His love to man is dependent on his love to God, and his love to God is proved by his love to man.¹

To the first and greatest commandment Jesus added, "And the second is like it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets."² Because Christians are all children of the same loving Father, they must love His children or they will be less than loving in their regard for Him. Drummond emphasizes this truth: "'The greatest thing,' says some one, 'a man can do for his Heavenly Father is to be kind to some of His other children.'"³

Christians are exhorted not to "love in word or speech but in deed and in truth."⁴ It is through true kindness that one can love in deed, for kindness according to Sangster, "is love in its smaller manifestations. . . . To be kind is to be loving in the briefer contacts of life."⁵ Although daily life presents one with many opportunities to exercise this "smaller manifestation" of love, it would be wrong to regard kindness as a lesser virtue, for as Henry Drummond wrote, "Have you ever noticed how much of Christ's

1. Ibid., p. 104.

2. Matt. 22:39-40.

3. Henry Drummond, The Greatest Thing in the World (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, n.d.), p. 16.

4. I John 3:18.

5. Sangster, op. cit., p. 132.

life was spent in doing kind things--in merely doing kind things?"¹ Thus, kindness clearly becomes an act of goodness. The holy life, the devoted life, is in no small measure the life of goodness--"pure goodness, incandescent, and utterly without guile."²

Since love for one's fellow man is a necessary part of love for God, then love for one's fellow men who would do harm, one's enemies, is also necessary. Jesus said:

You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy." But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?³

Most restrain themselves from the obviously inhuman excesses of hatred and vengeance, but how many have actually cast out all thoughts of revenge and can say that they love those who are ready to harm them? William Law wrote:

If religion only restrains the excesses of revenge, but lets the spirit still live within you in lesser instances, your religion may have made your life a little more outwardly decent, but not made you at all happier, or easier in yourself. But if you have once sacrificed all thoughts of revenge, in obedience to God, and are resolved to return good for evil at all times, that you may render yourself more like to God, and fitter for His mercy in the kingdom of love and glory; this is a height of virtue that will make you feel its happiness.⁴

1. Drummond, op. cit., p. 15.

2. Sangster, op. cit., p. 146.

3. Matt. 5:43-46.

4. Law, op. cit., p. 123.

Clearly this perfect love can be best attained by living a life of devotion to God and His way, for as St. Francis de Sales wrote, "devotion is the most delicious of sweets, the queen of virtues, and the perfection of love."¹

2. Self-surrender

Smith has said, "The greatest burden we have to carry in life is self; the most difficult thing we have to manage is self."² As Whyte has written, "Death to self is [the] only entrance into the Church of Life, and nothing but God can give death to self."³

To be rid of the burden of self in order to devote oneself to God, one must deny himself and surrender to God's will. According to Sangster, the peace of perfect love "is maintained by . . . glad abandonment to the Father's will."⁴ Smith also wrote of total self-surrender:

Oh, be generous in your self-surrender! Meet His measureless devotion for you with a measureless devotion to Him. Be glad and eager to throw yourself unreservedly into His loving arms, and to hand over the reins of government to Him. Whatever there is of you, let Him have it all.⁵

1. St. Francis de Sales, op. cit., p. 3.

2. Hannah Whitall Smith, The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life (Westwood, N. J.: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1952), p. 38.

3. Whyte, op. cit., p. 60.

4. Sangster, op. cit., p. 120.

5. Smith, op. cit., p. 211.

This surrender of the whole self to the will of God is an act not only of love but also of faith. Because of love and faith in God, it follows naturally that there is joy in surrendering one's will to His. In fact, one must find spiritual peace and happiness in surrendering himself to God's will, for, as Law wrote,

Resignation to the Divine will signifies a cheerful approbation, and thankful acceptance of everything that comes from God.

. . . the want of it implies an accusation of God's want either of wisdom, or goodness, in His disposal of us.¹

Is resignation of self to God a form of stoicism, and, if so, what does Tholuck mean when he says that "to bear the will of God becomes a meat as much as to do it"?²

He explains:

We nourish the delusion that it is only the act lying behind the suffering, the freedom behind the fetters, which God wills, and not the suffering and the fetters too. These, we fancy, have been imposed by some foreign hand; and in this manner we forego the blessing which the Lord intends afflictions and restraints and hindrances to convey.³

In this same area, William Law states that the man who can not thank and praise God for calamities and sufferings as well as prosperity and happiness is as far from Christian piety as the one who only loves them that love him.⁴

1. Law, op. cit., pp. 312 and 314.

2. A. Tholuck, Hours of Christian Devotion, trans. Robert Menzies (Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1875), p. 119.

3. Ibid., p. 121.

4. Cf. Law, op. cit., p. 317.

There are also immediate blessings to be reaped from the practise of this utter surrender of the self to the Lord's will. Smith speaks of it as making obedience to be a delight and service to be perfect freedom;¹ and Hudson Taylor observed that it brought "no small comfort."²

There is an even greater blessing to be earned from this self-denial and self-surrender. It is the blessing of holiness, the very condition of the Devotional Life, for, as Sangster wrote,

"Sanctity" consists in willing whatever happens to us by God's ordering, a simple "Be it so", the simple disposition of the will in conformity with the Will of God.³

3. Dedication

To surrender properly oneself to God's will, which is a necessary condition of the perfect love of devotion, one must dedicate himself to the doing of God's will. The nature and condition of the Devotional Life is holiness, and, as Law says, "the whole nature of virtue consists in conforming to, and the whole nature of vice in declining from, the will of God."⁴ To love God and gladly surrender to His will, one must see to it that His will is done.

1. Cf. Smith, op. cit., p. 189.

2. Howard and Geraldine Taylor, Hudson Taylor's Spiritual Secret (Chicago: Moody Press, n.d.), p. 187.

3. Sangster, op. cit., p. 205.

4. Law, op. cit., p. 311.

Also, one must be dedicated to God and His will in order to withstand the temptations of this world.¹ It is not enough to love His will in the abstract; one must also dedicate himself to a practise of it. Such dedication is also the height of wisdom, as Law wrote:

For if God is wisdom, surely he must be the wisest man in the world, who most conforms to the wisdom of God, who best obeys His providence, who enters farthest into His designs, and does all he can, that God's will may be done on earth, as it is done in Heaven.²

Dedication is necessary also for the attaining of oneness with God, for one must dedicate himself to God in love, faith, and selflessness in order to open the way for His coming. As Otto has written, "He will choose to come when we sincerely call upon Him and prepare ourselves truly for His visitation."³ This idea of oneness with God is not beyond the reach of ordinary minds; it is not reserved for the great theological thinkers. Otto gives the assurance:

Once enunciated and understood, the ideas of the unity and goodness of the divine nature often take a surprisingly short time to become firmly fixed in the hearer's mind, if he show any susceptibility for religious feeling.⁴

To follow the injunction of St. Francis de Sales, "Be steadfast in your desire to be devout, i.e., devoted to

1. Cf. St. Francis de Sales, op. cit., p. 16.

2. Law, op. cit., p. 351.

3. Rudolf Otto, The Idea of the Holy, trans. John W. Harvey (London: Oxford University Press, 1946), p. 220.

4. Ibid., p. 143.

God,"¹ one must cultivate a truly holy awareness of God. Whyte exhorted, "Practise unceasingly His Presence with you till you come to a great, a real, a personal, and a secret intimacy with Him, and till you are always with Him, and He with you."² Hudson Taylor advised how to do this: "Not a striving to have faith . . . but a looking off to the Faithful One seems all we need; a resting in the Loved One entirely, for all time and for eternity."³ The exhortation of St. Francis de Sales is also pertinent: "Keep your mind on Christ crucified, and be devoted to His service with confidence and prudence."⁴

One can pave the way to this perfect devotion in his daily life. In every condition of life, one must begin by following the commandments, for Jesus said, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments."⁵ In this regard, William Law says:

It is conformity to this will that gives virtue and perfection in the highest services of the angels in heaven; and it is conformity to the same will that makes the ordinary actions of men on earth become an acceptable service unto God.⁶

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1. St. Francis de Sales, op. cit., p. 121.
 2. Alexander Whyte, The Spiritual Life: The Teaching of Thomas Goodwin (London: Oliphants Ltd., n.d.), p. 199.
 3. Taylor, op. cit., p. 156.
 4. St. Francis de Sales, op. cit., p. 48.
 5. John 14:15.
 6. Law, op. cit., p. 311.

In serving God's will, in dedicating oneself to it and to Him, one can arrive at a state approaching perfect love. The only true freedom and the only perfect peace are also available to man through dedication and service to God.¹

Whatever glory there exists in human life is the glory of existence for and in God--the glory of dedication. In this regard, Law wrote:

We indeed may talk of human glory as we may talk of human life, or human knowledge: but we are sure that human life implies nothing of our own but a dependent living in God, or enjoying so much life in God: so human glory, whenever we find it, must be only so much glory as we enjoy in the glory of God.²

Dedication may be summarized in the words of Law:

That you may look for nothing, claim nothing, resent nothing; that you may go through all the actions and accidents of life, calmly and quietly, as in the presence of God, looking wholly unto Him, acting wholly for Him: neither seeking vain applause, nor resenting neglect or affronts, but doing and receiving everything in the meek and lowly spirit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.³

4. Self-examination

A holy and devoted life is one that goes contrary to the general tenor and custom of this world which provides many snares and pitfalls to waylay the believer who would strive to be devout. Consequently, the act of

1. Cf. Tholuck, op. cit., p. 236, and Sangster, op. cit., pp. 126 and 222.

2. Law, op. cit., p. 129.

3. Ibid., p. 267.

devotion and dedication of one's life to God and His purpose is not one that can be made once and forgotten.¹ Without careful attention to one's devotion, even the most well-intentioned believer might go astray, as both St. Francis de Sales and Whyte warned:

There is a true devotion, but there are also many spurious resemblances of it. Unless you can tell when it is genuine, you may make many mistakes, and waste time and energy in pursuing its empty shadow.²

Many serious-minded men take an infinitude of pains to produce a true holiness for themselves out of their own corrupt hearts; squeezing, all the time, oil out of a flint.³

Because as Sangster wrote, "desire and motive, thought and action, all are infected with sin,"⁴ one must be on guard against the encroachment of evil upon even his best thoughts and actions. To insure that one's motives and actions are pure and holy, one must constantly take long inward looks at himself in constant rededication to God and holiness.⁵

Clearly, self-examination is a necessary part of devotion. Some take a statement such as Sangster's, "Perhaps a holy life itself is the greatest proof of God's presence in any human heart,"⁶ to mean that the presence

1. Cf. St. Francis de Sales, op. cit., p. 118.

2. Ibid., p. 1.

3. Whyte, The Spiritual Life . . ., p. 146.

4. Sangster, op. cit., p. 185.

5. Cf. II Cor. 13:5.

6. Sangster, op. cit., p. 88.

of God can be seen in a man's outward actions. However, a person can do great "good" and profit nothing because he has not love in his heart. Therefore a man must look into himself to assess the purity of his devotion, for, as Sangster wrote, "the nature of the holy can best be hinted at by looking at the feelings it begets in the mind."¹

If examination of heart, soul, and mind reveals some deficiency in spirit or devotion, one must act to correct it. One must not resign himself to failure in attaining a life of devotion and holiness because of finding sin at the heart of his goodness, for that is the nature of the human condition: man is fallen and depraved. One must work at overcoming this sin, for it is not man's nature, when he finds sin and evil in his heart, to commence automatically, without exerting effort, to correct his faults. William Law observes:

For though it is as reasonable to suppose it the desire of all Christians to arrive at Christian perfection, as to suppose that all sick men desire to be restored to perfect health; yet experience shows us, that nothing wants more to be pressed, repeated, and forced upon our minds, than the plainest rules of Christianity.²

God has allowed a world that is full of vice in order to drive man ever the faster toward Him, for man has been given a heart and mind that he might accept the true Spirit and the knowledge that for every vice there is a

1. Ibid., p. 6.

2. Law, op. cit., p. 340.

corresponding virtue and for every check a goad. One can live life amid the vices and false pleasures of this world and profit from it, as Law aptly expressed it:

And if you would but carry this intention about you, of profiting by the follies of the world, and of learning the greatness of religion, from the littleness and vanity of every other way of life; if, I say, you would but carry this intention in your mind, you would find every day, every place, and every person a fresh proof of their wisdom, who choose to live wholly unto God. You would then often return home the wiser, the better, and the more strengthened in religion, by every thing that has fallen in your way.¹

5. Humility

If one is to love God, surrender himself and dedicate his life to Him, and guard against the corruption of sin, he must be humble. As Law wrote,

. . . an humble state of soul is the very state of religion, because humility is the life and soul of piety, the foundation and support of every virtue and good work, the best guard and security of all holy affections.

. . . This virtue is so essential to the right state of our souls, that there is no pretending to a reasonable or pious life without it. We may as well think to see without eyes, or live without breath, as to live in the spirit of religion without the spirit of humility.²

Humility must be regarded carefully, for it is a much-abused concept in these modern times. Even two

1. Ibid., pp. 148-149.

2. Ibid., pp. 208-209.

Cf. Whyte, Characters and Characteristics . . ., p. 58, and Whyte, The Spiritual Life . . ., p. 219.

hundred years ago, when the world was more simple and there were fewer temptations, Law observed:

And although it is . . . the soul and essence of all religious duties, yet it is, generally speaking, the least understood, the least regarded, the least intended, the least desired and sought after, of all other virtues, amongst all sorts of Christians.¹

A definition of humility would include that it is a selfless and faithful attitude in the conduct of goodness and a meekness of spirit in the face of acknowledged sin and of God's glory.² Humility is self-denying, but not self-immolating, as William Law wrote:

Humility does not consist in having a worse opinion of ourselves than we deserve, or in abasing ourselves lower than we really are; but as all virtue is founded in truth, so humility is founded in a true and just sense of our weakness, misery and sin. He that rightly feels and lives in this sense of his condition, lives in humility.³

Because the self is the greatest obstacle to a wholly devoted life, humility is the guard against self-interest. Every reasonable religious person can see the uselessness of gathering riches in this world as compared to the spiritual riches of the next. They must also see the vanity of seeking honor.⁴

The great enemies of humility, and therefore of true devotion, are pride and vanity. Pride is often a

1. Law, op. cit., p. 209.

2. Cf. I Pet. 5:6 and St. Francis de Sales, op. cit., p. 41.

3. Law, op. cit., p. 209.

4. Cf. Prov. 15:33 and 22:4.

fault of even the earnestly devout, as Law warned:

No people have more occasion to be afraid of the approaches of pride, than those, who have made some advances in a pious life: for pride can grow as well upon our virtues as our vices, and steals upon us on all occasions.

. . . you can have no greater sign of a more confirmed pride, than when you think that you are humble enough. He that thinks he loves God enough, shows himself to be an entire stranger to that holy passion; so he that thinks he has humility enough, shows that he is not so much as a beginner in the practise of true humility.¹

Thus it is seen that true humility does not recognize itself as humility, but always seeks to hide itself.

C. Preparation for Fruit-Bearing

It has been seen that the nature of devotion is largely that of self-denial and rejection of the world and dedication to God and His will. For three score and ten years, however, one must live on earth, clothed in weak flesh, with responsibilities to family and society. One must live and act in this world, but at the same time above it, as Law expressed the idea:

If, therefore, a man will so live, as to show that he feels and believes the most fundamental doctrines of Christianity, he must live above the world; this is the temper that must enable him to do the business of life, and yet live wholly unto God, and to go through some worldly employment with a heavenly mind.²

1. Law, op. cit., pp. 209 and 217.

2. Ibid., p. 37.

This may seem to be a paradox, but God has willed it so.

Sangster explains:

Faith, as understood in religion, is always something that acts. . . . It does not merely survey the unseen world and find God: it obeys Him. Faith lives on the reality it sees.¹

Man is by his very nature active. Therefore if a man is to devote his life to God, he must devote an active life. Devotion is more than an attitude. In this regard St. Francis de Sales says:

Just as God made trees to bear fruit, each after its own kind, so He wishes Christians--the living trees of His Church--to bring forth fruits of devotion, each according to his gifts and his station in life.²

The means by which the ground of a human life may be cultivated in order to bear the fruits of the Devotional Life are primarily prayer, the study of God's word, and devotion to mission.

1. Prayer

It is impossible to imagine a devout life without prayer, of which Law wrote as follows:

Prayer is the nearest approach to God, and the highest enjoyment of Him, that we are capable of in this life.

It is the noblest exercise of the soul, the most exalted use of our best faculties, and the highest imitation of the blessed inhabitants of Heaven.

When our hearts are full of God, sending up holy desires to the throne of grace, we are then in our

1. Sangster, op. cit., p. 221.

2. St. Francis de Sales, op. cit., pp. 3-4.

highest state, we are upon the utmost heights of human greatness; we are not before kings and princes, but in the presence and audience of the Lord of all the world, and can be no higher, till death is swallowed up in glory.¹

It is through the act of prayer, personal worship, that we are most likely to feel our hearts, our very beings, ablaze with perfect love.²

As Whyte has written, "The necessity and reason of prayer is, like all other duties of piety, founded in the Nature of God and the nature of man."³ Prayer, like all the virtues of holiness and acts of piety and goodness, brings man and God together, into the perfect union here on earth. In the words of Law, it "looses the bands of sin, . . . purifies the soul, reforms our hearts, and draws down the aids of Divine grace."⁴

Prayer does not consist in fineness of expression, but in freeing oneself from the fetters of this world to come into communion with God in dedicated, selfless love. It is a microcosm of the Devotional Life, requiring love, self-surrender, dedication, self-examination, and humility. It is giving oneself wholly over to God, committing oneself

1. Law, op. cit., pp. 162-163.

2. Cf. St. Francis de Sales, op. cit., p. 19, and Law, op. cit., p. 185.

3. Whyte, Characters and Characteristics . . ., p. 149.

4. Law, op. cit., p. 205.

to His will. Tholuck says, "All that a Christian soul has to supplicate from God is absorbed in the single petition of Thy kingdom come."¹

Prayer is adoration, not merely asking God for the things of this world. If one would aspire to the sanctity of the saints, he would do well to examine the perfect love expressed in the saint's worship, as Sangster describes it:

Personal petition . . . often disappears from his prayer altogether. Intercession for others keeps its place. But thanksgiving, praise, and worship comprise most of his praying. And chiefly worship! Sheer adoration! He just gazes on God in love and longing, and can think of no bliss in eternity which will exceed the bliss of gazing still.²

The exercise and practice of prayer is training for that time when a true devotion and love will overcome one's spirit, and he will find himself rejoicing to God and praising Him for all that befalls him. St. Francis de Sales expresses this idea: "The most acceptable prayer to God is one made in spite of ourselves and solely to please God, contrary to our inclination, and in a time of dryness and repugnance."³ He also stresses the importance of spontaneous prayer:

This habit of ejaculatory prayers is the keystone of devotion. . . . It would be difficult to find a

1. Tholuck, op. cit., p. 211.

2. Sangster, op. cit., p. 199.

3. St. Francis de Sales, op. cit., p. 116.

substitute for ejaculatory prayers. Without them it is hard to be a man of prayer, or to sanctify your labors.¹

Although prayer is an integral part of the Devotional Life, it is not sufficient in itself to produce the holiness of such a life. William Law warns:

Prayers . . . are so far from being a sufficient devotion, that they are the smallest parts of it. . . . They are certainly but a very slender part of devotion, when compared to a devout life.²

One who prays much but still leads a sinful life, neglectful of God, is not truly devout.

It is through prayer that one keeps himself in a habit of active devotion, mindful of duties to God and of life's many distractions from the Devotional Life. William Law explains that "if religion calleth us to a life of watching and prayer it is because we live amongst a crowd of enemies and are always in need of the assistance of God"³ Of this need for prayer, Whyte assures, "A lifetime of unceasing and ever-deepening prayer is by far the best security against pride, and by far the best guarantee of a genuine evangelical humility."⁴

2. Study of God's word

The Bible was made available to man so that he

1. Ibid., p. 23.

2. Law, op. cit., pp. 106-107.

3. Ibid., p. 128.

4. Whyte, The Spiritual Life . . ., p. 218.

might know the word of God. The necessity for studying God's word is as plain and simple as that. Whyte stressed the importance of and the great profit to be gained from right study of the Bible:

Now, nothing is so likely a means to fill us with His spirit and temper as to be frequent in reading the Gospels which contain the history of His life and conversation in the world. We are apt to think that we have sufficiently read a book when we have read it so as to know what it contains. This reading may be sufficient as to many books, but as to the Gospels we are not to think that we have read them enough because we have often read and heard what they contain. But we must read . . . , not to know what they contain, but to fill our hearts with the spirit of them. . . . Happy they who saw the Son of God upon earth converting sinners and calling fallen spirits to return to God! And next happy are we who have His discourses, doctrines, actions, and miracles, which then converted Jews and heathens into saints and martyrs, still preserved to fill us with the same heavenly light, and lead us into the same state of glory.¹

The truly devout person reads the Bible, reads it constantly and thoroughly. Many people--people who lay no claims to being devout--read the Bible as literature or as history. Nearly everyone in the Western world has favorite parts of the Bible, such as Ecclesiastes, the Book of Job, or I Corinthians. The devout person, however, studies the Bible for its truth; he constantly reads it through and through. He does not "scan" it or keep returning only to those parts which please him or fill some particular need.

1. Whyte, Characters and Characteristics . . ., p. 170.

In regard to this Sangster writes:

The Word of God is uniformly precious: if one part seems more illuminating than another, the explanation is to be sought in one's need, apprehension, or present interest, and not in the Scripture itself.¹

John Wesley, who called himself "a man of one book," wrote, "What is there here [in the Bible] which any man of understanding, who believes the Bible, can object to?"²

Man is privileged in that the word of God has been preserved and is made accessible to all. Of the value of the scriptures, Otto wrote:

In the holy saga and legend, shaped and fashioned unconsciously by the spirit of a people or a fellowship, there is present the . . . eternal Spirit of God . . . which, in every form of its expression, is the Spirit of revelation and truth.³

The study of God's word is an act of devotion which prepares one to understand and love God more fully and inspires him to be devout in every act of life.

3. Devotion to mission

The Devotional Life is a life unlike any other on earth, no matter what the station of life of the person living it. It is not a life heavily laden with acts of kindness, occasions of prayer, and moments of love; it is

1. W. E. Sangster, The Path to Perfection: An Examination and Restatement of John Wesley's Doctrine of Christian Perfection (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1943), p. 36.

2. Ibid., p. 34.

3. Otto, op. cit., p. 235.

a kind of life wholly different from any other. It is not necessarily a life that is obviously "religious"; outwardly it may appear to be a very "normal" life.

Devout service, no matter what its factual nature, is a life in God and for God; as Smith expresses it, "There is, perhaps, no part of Christian experience where a greater change is known, upon entering into this life hid with Christ in God, than in the matter of service."¹ It is, as Paul described his life among the Ephesians, "serving the Lord with all humility and with tears, and with trials . . ."² It is not necessarily, however, a life of great danger to, or of sacrifice of, life and limb. St. Francis de Sales says, "Great opportunities of serving God come very seldom. Little ones constantly occur."³ No matter how humble a life might be in the eyes of the world, if it is to be a devout life, it must be lived to the best of one's ability, for the service is done for God, in His name, and for His glory.⁴ Of this kind of devotion in mundane details, Smith assures, "A personal service to your Lord, such as this, will give a halo to the poorest life, and gild the most monotonous existence with a heavenly glow."⁵

1. Smith, op. cit., p. 185. 2. Acts 20:19.

3. St. Francis de Sales, op. cit., p. 96.

4. Cf. Ibid., p. 125.

5. Smith, op. cit., p. 215.

Often the degree of devotion is considered as being in direct proportion to the danger, arduousness, or anti-worldliness in the life of the devout person. It is an error to reserve the term "devout" for pioneering missionaries or ascetic recluses, as much as when the term is applied loosely to anyone who spends much time in prayer or in church. When Hudson Taylor went into China as a missionary he wrote, "We came out as God's children at God's command to do God's work, depending on Him for supplies . . ."¹ If this last phrase were interpreted to mean also "guidance" and "aid", which is consistent with Taylor's thought, then it is applicable to a truly devout life under any circumstances.

It is true that those who practice the devout life under great danger or in great privation have added a new dimension to their devotion. According to Sangster, "The fruit of the Spirit is longsuffering. It is the courage which endures."²

Although the devout life can be lived by a person in any walk of life, as long as his service is dedicated to God, the highest holiness of life is in serving God through

1. Taylor, op. cit., p. 122.

2. Sangster, The Pure in Heart . . ., p. 129.

serving His children. Again to use the words of Sangster:

Experience would seem to show that for purity of motive, tenacity of purpose, indifference to reward and self-effacement in service, nothing equals those who serve their fellows as a consequence of their worship of God. . . . Worship disinfects from egotism.¹

The truly devout life is therefore one of outward, as well as inward, goodness.

Outward goodness, like prayer, is not in itself the whole of devotion. The Devotional Life is always dependent upon being devoted or given over to God; not even goodness will substitute for this surrender to God. Of good works apart from devotion to God, Whyte writes:

. . . an outward morality, a decency and beauty of life and conduct with respect to this world arising only from a worldly spirit, has nothing of salvation in it. . . . The spirit that arises from this world is always in it; it is as worldly when it gives alms or prays in the church, as when it makes bargains in the market.²

Tholuck also speaks of the dependence of true service on devotion to God:

I have hands, feet, eyes, ears, and a tongue, and doubtless it behooves that these be subservient to the rule and laudable uses of man. My heart, however, is free, and belongs to none but Christ my Lord; and the service which I perform, I perform for no other reason or motive than free faith and free affection.³

God gave man a free heart so that he might be able to

1. Ibid., p. 203.

2. Whyte, Characters and Characteristics . . ., p. 82.

3. Tholuck, op. cit., pp. 269-270.

choose to lead a devout life, to dedicate himself to Him. Conversely, he is also free to choose to deny Him and to choose evil, as Law says, "Nothing hurts us, nothing destroys us, but the ill use of that liberty with which God has entrusted us."¹

Devotion to mission is not so much concerned then with the nature and style of the mission as with the nature and depth of the devotion to it and to God. For, in the Devotional Life, devotion to mission is but another form of devotion to God. Whatever one does in life, he must approach his duties in the same spirit of love and humility as he approaches God. His every action must be given over to God, dedicated to Him for His glory. Because of this, it is fitting that the nature of one's own mission be that of goodness and that tasks be performed as nearly perfectly as possible, because it is all in His Name. Every moment of the Devotional Life is a moment of devotion, adoration, and worship, whether the moment be one of prayer, of alms-giving, or of mundane business. As the name implies, the whole nature of the Devotional Life is devotion.

D. Summary

It has been demonstrated in this chapter that the

1. Law, op. cit., p. 322.

Devotional Life is a life given or devoted to God. It is a life lived for God, in God, and for His glory. It is a life lived in adoration and worship of Him, a life of attention and obedience to His will.

The Devotional Life is the heavenly life lived on earth, and its characteristics are love, self-surrender, dedication, self-examination, and humility.

The fruits of the Devotional Life are sanctity and the glorification of God. The preparation for the bearing of these fruits consists of prayer, study of God's word, and devotion to mission, which is His will. In these active devotions and duties, in any station or circumstance of life, the holy characteristics of devotion are more important than the outward manifestations of the acts themselves. According to St. Francis de Sales, "You will not be asked by God whether you have reaped much, but whether you have taken great care to sow."¹

1. St. Francis de Sales, op. cit., p. 123.

CHAPTER III
VITAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DEVOTIONAL LIFE
OF DAVID LIVINGSTONE

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A. Introduction

Before looking into the life of David Livingstone for specific characteristics of the Devotional Life, it is fitting to examine briefly the overall contour and tenor of Livingstone's inner feelings toward his career.

Livingstone's personal convictions on the subject of missionaries, for example, are enlightening but do not lend themselves readily for inclusion under the headings of the elements of the Devotional Life. His vision of the missionary role was at once dynamic and far-reaching: "Sending the Gospel to the heathen must . . . include much more than is implied in the usual picture of a missionary, namely, a man going about with a Bible under his arm."¹ Nor was this personal view merely theoretical; Livingstone knew exactly what was required beyond going about with a Bible under his arm. His letters, his Journals, and other published writings are filled with instances of his constant concern that the Christian world might know what was required of the men and women who were to spread the Gospel

1. Livingstone, Missionary Travels . . ., pp. 33-34.

among the unenlightened and unredeemed souls of the world.

An example of this is as follows:

He ought to have physical and moral courage of the highest order, and a considerable amount of cultivation and energy, balanced by patient determination; and above all these are necessary a calm Christian zeal, and anxiety for the main spiritual results of the work.¹

To take the Gospel to the great wilderness areas of the earth, such as Africa, Livingstone knew that great strength of body was required. He wrote:

A missionary, in proportion as he possesses an athletic frame, hardened by manly exercises, in addition to his other qualifications, will excel him who is not favored with such bodily endowments; but in a hot climate efficiency mainly depends on husbanding the resources. He must never forget that, in the tropics, he is an exotic plant.²

These qualities, both physical and spiritual, were absolutely necessary to the success of any missionary enterprise, for he conceived of missionaries as bringing God's truth to the really isolated pagans. To his mind, the mission station established in a well-explored and relatively civilized sector, staffed and supplied well, seemed a more fit post for an adventurous country minister than for a true missionary. Always he urged the London Missionary Society and his potential co-workers to advance into the unexplored regions where souls had not yet heard of Jesus Christ, but where neither had they yet been corrupted by

1. Livingstone, Narrative of an Expedition . . ., p. 599.

2. Ibid., p. 595.

the evils of "civilization." On May 24, 1872, while waiting impatiently at Unyanyembe for Stanley to send men and supplies from the coast, Livingstone wrote in his Journal this impassioned plea to missionaries to abandon their easy triumphs on the coast and strike out into the pagan interior:

I would say to missionaries, Come on, brethren, to the real heathen. You have no idea how brave you are till you try. Leaving the coast tribes, and devoting yourselves heartily to the savages, as they are called, you will find, with some drawbacks and wickednesses, a very great deal to admire and love.¹

This admiration and love for the Africans along the Zambesi and Shire rivers and around the headwaters of the Congo was genuine on Livingstone's part. Without this admiration and love, it is doubtful that he, even dauntless man that he was, would have been able to endure the manifold hardships that he encountered in his years of tramping through Africa. This strong feeling for the natives enabled Livingstone to accomplish what had seemed to be impossible. Horne explains:

Firstly, he believed in them; and secondly, he did not expect too much of them. This is no more than to say that he entered into his inheritance by means of the two ancient and Scriptural keys--faith and patience.²

It has been noted by many observers that Livingstone seemed, in the second part of his career at least, more concerned with opening up Africa to civilization and commerce

1. Livingstone, The Last Journals . . ., pp. 425-426.

2. Horne, op. cit., p. 239.

and with abolishing the slave trade than with converting souls and spreading the word of God. Because of the great diversity of Livingstone's accomplishments and interests, his career may seem to lend itself to any interpretation that an observer might care to make. One must never forget, however, that Livingstone was a practical man, a true Scotsman, and he was unshakable in his conviction that "neither civilization nor Christianity can be promoted alone. In fact, they are inseparable."¹ It was shown in Chapter I that Livingstone felt that the slave trade was a vicious and indefensible defiance of all the tenets of Christ's teachings, and so it is only natural that he was deeply concerned with its extirpation. From Unyanyembe he wrote that "the subject does not admit of exaggeration. To overdraw its evils is a simple impossibility."²

Livingstone not only wanted to stop the slave trade, but also to "introduce the negro family into the body corporate of nations, no one member of which can suffer without the others suffering with it."³ As a missionary thinker Livingstone was ahead of his time; he realized that unless the Africans were freed from the terrorism of the slave trade and the degradation of their primitive lot, Christianity

1. Livingstone, Missionary Travels, p. 34.

2. Livingstone, The Last Journals, p. 442.

3. Livingstone, Missionary Travels, p. 34.

could not succeed. On September 30, 1853, he wrote his father from Linyanti:

Have you Scotch folks any idea of the meaning of the word "degradation" when applied to souls on whom the chill and deep gloom of spiritual death have settled for ages, the iniquities of the fathers visited on the children of those that hated him? I fear not, for I remember one of my correspondents thought that if I only preached the "simple gospel" conversions would follow every sermon.¹

Livingstone knew that he had to help the Africans escape from the dark horrors of their isolation, to free them from the inhuman exploitation of the slave trade, and to lead them out of the superstitions and hatreds of their tribal customs.

Because his travels were so far afield from the usual missionary grounds of South Africa, and because two of his three major journeys were underwritten by the British government and/or the Royal Geographical Society, Livingstone has been accused, both during his lifetime and after his death, of being primarily an explorer and only secondarily a missionary. This is far from the truth, however, and such charges sorely vexed him. As Blaikie convincingly pointed out,

He felt that Providence was calling him to be less of a missionary journeyman and more of a missionary statesman; but the great end was ever the same--"THE END OF THE GEOGRAPHICAL FEAT IS ONLY THE BEGINNING OF THE ENTERPRISE."²

1. Livingstone, Family Letters . . ., II, 226.

2. Blaikie, op. cit., p. 206.
Cf. James I. Macnair with geographical sections by Ronald Miller, Livingstone's Travels (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1955), p. xiii.

As Livingstone himself pointed out, in a letter to his father-in-law, Robert Moffatt, on July 8, 1850, "As regards my own feelings I am regardless of the fame of discovery. . . . feel an unquenchable desire to introduce the gospel into the immense & well peopled region beyond."¹

Perhaps the primary reason for these common misunderstandings of Livingstone's missionary purposes was his personal individualistic idea of missionary strategy in Africa. Before Livingstone's time the prevailing practice was to send missionaries to establish stations in the already settled regions. Livingstone, however, believed that the true missionary was to carry the word of God in advance of explorers and settlers so that, once civilization advanced into the hitherto unexplored regions, the second wave of missionaries--those who were to establish and maintain permanent stations--would find the natives already predisposed to Christianity. He wrote:

They are sensible men, and as every opportunity is seized of enlightening their darkened understandings I am not without hope that they may be made partakers of a grace of which they have now no idea.

.
We are like voices crying in the wilderness. We prepare the way for a glorious future in which missionaries telling the same tale of love will convert by every sermon.²

This idea of Livingstone's-- that spreading the knowledge

1. Livingstone, Family Letters . . ., II, 85.

2. Ibid., II, 227-228.

of Christianity was in the beginning more important than converting souls--was not a speculative theory, but a conviction born of experience in the field.

This practice of deriving his missionary ideas from experience is what set Livingstone apart from his contemporaries as a missionary strategist. The only preconception that he took with him to Africa and preserved in the face of hard experience was his faith in God and His will. Seaver wrote of this faith:

In the first place it is necessary to notice the extreme simplicity of his faith. It was a faith which became ever simpler and also more personal as his life progressed, so as ultimately to require no doctrinal formulation.¹

Livingstone's career in Africa is a demonstration of this faith in action, which is the proof of his Devotional Life.

B. Distinguishing Marks of the Devotional Life of David Livingstone

In Chapter II the Devotional Life was considered according to various elements in it: love, self-surrender, dedication, self-examination, and humility. The distinguishing marks of the Devotional Life of David Livingstone will now be investigated according to these same categories.

1. Love

David Livingstone's life was in no small way a life of love. He loved Africa, he loved his fellow men, and he

1. Seaver, op. cit., p. 20.

loved his heavenly Father. In Chapter II it was pointed out that all true devotion springs from the love of God, and that out of this divine love must spring a love for one's fellows on earth, for they, too, are His children. Therefore, an examination of the force of love in Livingstone's career will be undertaken.

For purposes of clarity, this section will treat of Livingstone's love in two parts: his love for God and his love for his fellow man, both friend and foe.

a. Love for God

As Livingstone himself has pointed out, his own sudden and powerful understanding of the necessity and value of Christianity to his life, a feeling which overcame him in his youth, inspired in his soul a flame of love for God and His mercy. He wrote:

The perfect freeness with which the pardon of all our guilt is offered in God's book drew forth feelings of affectionate love to Him who bought us with his blood, and a sense of deep obligation to Him for his mercy has influenced, in some small measure, my conduct ever since.¹

His whole career as a missionary sprang from this lightning faith and love; he wrote of his nearly superhuman missionary struggles as "the evangelistic labors to which the love of Christ has since impelled me."²

Livingstone's love for God persisted throughout his

1. Livingstone, Missionary Travels . . ., p. 4. 2. Ibid.

career, in times of illness and extreme hardship as well as in happier moments when he knew his life was to be spared again or that he was about to accomplish something worthwhile for his beloved Africa and for his adored Saviour Jesus Christ. His unremitting love for God was truly the love of a devout soul.

That love for God is a reflection of His love for man, Livingstone understood completely. He knew that this divine and reciprocal love was the key to holiness and to God's kingdom, and that all the joys of Christianity were bound up in this one word.

In the remarkable period in 1872, while waiting at Unyanyembe for the men and supplies that Stanley was to send from the coast, Livingstone made several notable entries in his Journal, among them this enlightening passage on his experiential understanding of the nature of the Christian atonement:

What is the atonement of Christ? It is himself: it is the inherent and everlasting mercy of God made apparent to human eyes and ears. The everlasting love was disclosed by our Lord's life and death.

.
 . . . the Gospels reveal Jesus, the manifestation of the blessed God over all as minute in his care of all. He exercises a vigilance more complete, and comprehensive, every hour and every minute, over each of his people than their utmost self-love could ever attain. His tender love is more exquisite than a mother's heart can feel.¹

1. Livingstone, The Last Journals . . . , pp. 453-454.

In return for this heavenly love, Livingstone felt a debt of gratitude that was born out of his love for God:

What a mercy to be guided by the overuling [sic] hand of Him who is omniscient. We are often delivered from dangers & know nothing of them. How much gratitude we owe for the deliverances of which we are aware.¹

This grateful love for God was for Livingstone, as for all devoted souls, a great freedom and not a burden. It was for him the ultimate freedom from earthly cares and the great sustaining power in his hours of torment. Of this chief passion of his soul, he wrote:

It is not success nor gratitude nor praise that upholds missionaries. If we are faithful it is our love to our Redeemer which influences us. Aye, and to Him we shall cleave, Him we shall love for ever & ever. God grant that his love may never be quenched in our hearts.²

In these sentiments, expressed in a letter to his sister Agnes from Kuruman at the end of the year 1851, one can see Livingstone's total commitment and devotion to God: in love for Him was his sustenance, his duty, and his love for his fellow man.

b. Love for man

Livingstone's love for his fellow man was only exceeded by his love for God, and the former was dependent on the latter. Of this relationship between his two loves,

1. Livingstone, Family Letters . . ., I, 235.

2. Ibid., II, 161-162.

Sangster wrote:

Men . . . have wondered what kept David Livingstone in the jungle of Africa for thirty-three years. . . . It was the love of souls which held [him] to [his] work: the supernatural love of souls. It is not in normal nature to love like that: it is a given love. [He] had sought and received it from God and [was] consumed by its scorching flame.¹

To interpret Livingstone's love of souls as merely an all-consuming desire to convert the heathen tribesmen to Christianity is a mistake. He loved the Africans as his true brothers under God; he loved them because God loves them. If he had gone into Central Africa with the burning desire to make conversions uppermost in his soul, he surely would have failed on all counts. Sangster comments:

Missionaries have gone abroad, at a great personal sacrifice, to show people in heathen darkness the pure love of God but, in subtle ways, the love has not remained pure. They have loved them in order to convert them. The background of their effort has been "Share my ideas": "Embrace my faith": "Do as I do"--and even though the ideas, the faith and the action thus commended are all noble, it ceases by that very implication to be the pure flame of love.²

The inward manifestation of this pure love was Livingstone's holiness and his joyous peace of soul; its outward manifestation was the manifold demonstration of loving-kindness in his daily dealings with the natives. Drummond testifies to this:

It is the man who is the missionary, it is not his words. His character is his message. In the Heart of Africa,

1. Sangster, The Pure in Heart . . . , p. 105.

2. Ibid., p. 245.

among the great Lakes, I have come across black men and women who remembered the only white man they ever saw before--David Livingstone; and as you cross his footsteps in that dark continent, men's faces light up as they speak of the kind Doctor who passed there years ago. They could not understand him; but they felt the Love that beat in his heart.¹

Livingstone's love for his fellow men in Africa was the true missionary love: he loved them as brothers, not just as potential Christians. He moved across Africa instinctively heeding the injunction of these more recent words from Sangster:

He must love them for themselves alone, and go on loving though they despise the gospel he preaches, impugn the motives which move him, and openly say that they discover some self-seeking purpose beneath all that he does.²

To maintain love for one's fellow men in the face of frustration and animosity, as Livingstone did again and again in his dealings with the various tribes, is the true test of love. Like the true saint, Livingstone, in the words of Sangster,

. . . never gives up. He goes on serving, loving, helping. . . . He aches for souls. Neither indifference, nor slander, nor injury can stop him. He does not make a motive of gratitude. His great motive is his utter love for God.³

Even in the direst circumstances and situations, as when his medicines were lost to him through the knavery of

1. Drummond, op. cit., p. 11.

2. Sangster, The Pure in Heart . . ., pp. 245-246.
Of. ibid., p. 104.

3. Ibid., p. 104.

two native bearers, Livingstone managed to love those who would do him harm; yet he himself did not think that he had enough love. He never thought that he loved enough.¹

2. Self-surrender

To love God is to partake of the highest good of life--to love Him who is always and infinitely greater than this world and all things in it. Therefore, truly to love God enobles one so that his eyes are turned upward and away from the temptations and evils of this world. The love for God then is self-denying.²

When Livingstone, at the age of twenty or twenty-one, was suddenly overtaken by that "interior illumination" which confirmed his nascent Christian convictions, he found himself instantaneously bathed in self-surrendering love: "In the glow of love which Christianity inspires, I soon resolved to devote my life to the alleviation of human misery."³ His love inspired him to devote his whole life and entire being to serving God's will in an act of love for His other children. Of Livingstone's loving self-surrender Seaver wrote:

It came to him with the force of an inner conviction: the giving of himself and of his life to Christ, which

1. Cf. Campbell, op. cit., pp. 270-271.

2. Cf. I John 1:15 and Whyte, Characters and Characteristics . . ., p. 176.

3. Livingstone, Missionary Travels . . ., p. 5.

is the service of love in action. For he would never know Christ fully as his Redeemer until in some way--"in some small measure" (the words are startling in their humility)--he could begin to participate in the self-same act of redemption.¹

Livingstone's life was in no small measure one of goodness; however, the goodness was secondary to his Christ-centered life, in fact a product of it. His very goodness stemmed from his habit of living for Christ and according to His way, rather than from a desire to be ethical or kind. Campbell wrote, "Livingstone had disciplined himself through the consistent exercise of a working faith in Christ until all his natural faculties were co-ordinated therewith."²

Livingstone's life, being Christ-centered, was given over to living as nearly as possible according to His model. He is quoted by Seaver as having said,

I am a missionary, heart and soul. God had an only Son, and He was a missionary and physician. A poor, poor imitation I am or wish to be. In this service I hope to live, in it I wish to die.³

In this wish to live the Christ-like life, David Livingstone succeeded to a considerable degree, as Houghton testifies:

Livingstone's whole career of willing service for humanity, the hardships he gladly endured for the benefit of the lowest of mankind, his care of the bodies no less than of the souls of men, his turning away from all the honors which the world would have delighted to

1. Seaver, op. cit., p. 21.

2. Campbell, op. cit., p. 271.

3. Seaver, op. cit., p. 632.

heap upon him to go back to the Dark Continent and die in his efforts to heal "that open sore of the world," the slave-trade,--were in a wonderful degree an "imitation of Christ."¹

3. Dedication

Aflame with love for God and for His children, his whole being centered about Christ, and his life devoted to following in His footsteps, David Livingstone was possessed of an uncommon zeal to see the will of God carried out on earth. With his eyes blinded to the honors and glories of the temporal world, he dedicated himself wholly to God's will and knew no other motive. As Coupland says, "There is scarcely a page of his private journal which does not betray his unshakable belief that, wherever he went, he was watched and guided by his Maker."² Livingstone knew that his duty lay in carrying out God's will, and he was unwavering in his belief that his actions and decisions were guided by Providence: "I think I am in the line of duty. . . . I have never wavered in my conviction that this is the case."³

Being essentially an activist, Livingstone could not surrender himself to Christ and wait for His will to manifest itself in unmistakable clarity before his eyes. Livingstone had faith that Providence, or its signs, were ever present, and that it was the duty of a true Christian

1. Houghton, op. cit., p. 8.

2. Coupland, op. cit., p. 14.

3. Seaver, op. cit., p. 633.

to look for those signs of guidance. Not long after coming to Africa (May 16, 1849), Livingstone wrote to his brother Charles from Kolobeng:

My dear brother, I think you are not quite clear on the indications of Providence. I don't think we ought to wait for them. Our duty is to go forward and look for the indications as to where.¹

For Livingstone, Providence was clearly guiding him to enlighten the remote, backward tribes of the interior: to call their attention to the loving God of Christianity and to the message and example of the Redeemer Jesus Christ; to free them from the savage suppression of the slave trade and their evil tribal superstitions; to open their minds to the benefits of true civilization, a civilization enlightened by the practice of His tenets.²

In giving himself over wholly to God and His work, Livingstone exposed himself to much travail and hardship: twenty-nine years of marching through disease- and danger-ridden central Africa, amid hostile tribes and often without European companions; several serious injuries and untold numbers of attacks of serious illness; the deprivation of his family, friends, and all the blessings of the civilization he would bestow upon the Africans; frustration and disappointment; envy and animosity toward him and his achievements; finally death. During his career Livingstone, like

1. Livingstone, Family Letters . . ., II, 50.

2. Cf. Campbell, op. cit., p. 56.

other saints, suffered and passed, as Sangster expresses it,

. . . the fiercest tests that can fall upon human nature. . . . the hardest things this mortal heart and flesh are called to bear: humiliation . . . suffering . . . bereavement . . . estrangement . . . doubt . . . failure . . . unilluminated death.¹

These sufferings he endured and these sacrifices he made, because he had devoted his life to God and His will; and he suffered and endured gladly. From Linyanti in 1855 he wrote to Moffatt:

It would be a queer country if there were no darts in the hand of death. The fever is, I am sorry to say, very fatal, yet not so bad as would deter a missionary having ordinary pluck in him, i.e., a real missionary, and not one by courtesy merely.²

Livingstone himself, however, would never admit that he had sacrificed anything:

I never made a sacrifice. Of this we ought not to talk when we remember the great sacrifice which He made who left His Father's throne on high to give Himself to us.³

Again he said, "Our talk of sacrifices is ungenerous and heathenish."⁴

There are those who see holiness and devotion in the mere fact of Livingstone's having suffered so much. Yet it is clear that holiness is not the fact of suffering,

1. Sangster, The Pure in Heart . . . , p. 148.

2. Livingstone, Family Letters . . . , II, 261-262.

3. Northcott, op. cit., p. 81.

4. Blaikie, op. cit., p. 495.

but a condition that may surround suffering, as Sangster observes:

The nature of pain is not altered by a metaphor. If pain refines one soul, it embitters another. It cannot be suffering as suffering which works a blessed work in the soul of the saint. It must be suffering received in the meekness of the Holy Spirit: suffering willingly accepted in the belief that God can do something with it.¹

Livingstone was ennobled by his suffering because he bore it gladly, in the knowledge that it was all part of God's will. In this faith Livingstone found the courage for which he has been universally admired. Coupland testifies: "In this profound faith in the working of God's will on earth and in the life to come his courage and his determination were rooted."²

4. Self-examination

Although Livingstone's dedication to God and His will led to much suffering, he was not prone to self-pity or to blame others for his misfortunes. His inclination was rather to examine and criticize himself, as Campbell wrote of him, "Livingstone was severer with himself than with anyone else, and a rigorous censor of his own conduct and spiritual states."³ The missionary did not unrealistically ignore or gloss over the baseness of acts committed

1. Sangster, The Pure in Heart . . ., p. 124.

2. Coupland, op. cit., p. 15.

3. Campbell, op. cit., p. 270.

against him; but as he described the evil deeds, he also recorded that the experiences led him to self-examination and to feelings of mercy toward the wrongdoers. Campbell observes:

. . . his expressions of indignation against other people's unrighteous behaviour were habitually tempered by reminders of his own frailty and imperfection. Nothing is more frequent in his diaries than reflections of this kind subjoined to the bald narrative of acts of poltroonery or pure scoundrelism of which he had been the victim. "The recollection of my own shortcomings makes me charitable," is his comment when faced with suffering and death through the wanton theft of his medical stores. And in the midst of his consternation at the treachery, truculence, and callousness of followers who had abandoned him a thousand miles from the nearest base of supplies and left him to die he meekly observes: "Consciousness of my own defects makes me lenient." Apostolical charity could no further go.¹

In his prayerful supplications, Livingstone often asked that he be made a better person. He wrote in his Journal: "May He who was full of grace and truth impress His character on mine. Grace--eagerness to show fervor; truthfulness, sincerity, honor--for His mercy's sake."²

5. Humility

A holy and devoted life of selflessness is, of course, a humble life; in surrendering one's life and works to God for His glory, pride automatically vanishes. Livingstone's humility is legend and a subject of worthy scope for a thesis of itself. It suffices to quote Worcester

1. Ibid., pp. 270-271.

2. Livingstone, The Last Journals . . ., p. 142.

who says that "although the recipient of prizes, degrees, gold medals and honors of many kinds, Dr. Livingstone still preserved an unusually childlike, humble spirit."¹ He was so devoid of self-pride and self-love that when Stanley arrived at Ujiji and certainly saved him from an untimely death he could write in his Journal, "I really do feel extremely grateful, and at the same time I am a little ashamed at not being more worthy of the generosity."²

To those few skeptics who would accuse Livingstone of "egotism" in his writings and of diluting his humility with egotism,³ this assertion of Sangster's is recommended:

There is really no such thing as "pure" altruism. Any end with which I identify myself becomes my end even though I am seeking something for others. It must! On this basis, there was sublime self-interest in the Cross. Christ identified Himself with us. We are not "those people" but "His people". His love involved Him.

 Pure altruism is a moral absurdity, as grave, though by no means as common, as pure egotism.⁴

6. Joy

Because of the strength of David Livingstone's love and devotion, his life, surrendered to God, was a life of joy. By this is meant that Livingstone retained, even magnified, that warmth of pure love that he first felt as a

1. Worcester, op. cit., p. 122.

2. Livingstone, The Last Journals . . ., p. 400.

3. Cf. Campbell, op. cit., pp. 264-265.

4. Sangster, The Pure in Heart . . ., pp. 229-230.

young man when he came to a personal understanding of God's love for man. Just as gladly as he surrendered his whole being to God, so equally gladly did he accept the suffering as well as the successes.

In Chapter II it was pointed out that self-surrender was a glad abandonment of self to God's will, and not a stoical submission to it. This "glad abandonment" was evident in Livingstone's life as the result of his utter conviction that God was in control and that His will was the highest good. His joyful trust in God was also the source of his fearlessness. Northcott wrote of these elements in Livingstone's life:

He had the practical piety of a Victorian Christian, who believed that all things would work together for those who trusted in God. His profound belief that God was with him all the time in Africa was unshaken even at moments of critical danger, and gave him that fearlessness on which people like John Kirk remarked.¹

This fearlessness is worthy of closer study. It was true fearlessness born of his trust in God's guidance, and not the usual physical stoicism that is associated with "heroes" and called fearlessness. That Livingstone's fearlessness was truly founded on the firm base of his trust in God can be seen in a letter written by him in 1855 to Mrs. Moffatt:

As for the fears you express about my life, I believe that it is not my "look out". Are we not invited to cast all our cares on the Lord, for he careth for us? Commit thy way unto the Lord, and He shall

1. Northcott, op. cit., p. 75.

direct thy steps. Is this all gammon? or part of God's gospel to us poor sinners? Then "the earth shall be covered" &c, "All nations shall see his glory", &c &c, coupled with the command, "Go ye into all the world", and, "Lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world". If these are taken together with the fact of our having been sent in obedience to the command, and in order to the fulfillment of the gracious promises of our Redeemer, I imagine there remains not the shadow of a doubt as to being in the path of duty in trying to¹ open this immense and populous region to the gospel.

This is a joyful confidence that sprang not only from his faith in God's care of him but also from his conviction that God's will will prevail.

Less than a year before his death, Livingstone made an entry in his Journal that sums up his contentment in trusting God: "I do not know how the great loving Father will bring all out right at last, but he knows and will do it."² As was shown in Chapter I, even when the loss of his medicines certainly doomed him to suffering and possibly to death, his trust in God remained firm.³

Livingstone's joy, peace, and contentment are amazing when one considers not only his physical suffering and the extreme danger to which he was nearly always exposed, but also the very unspiritual environment of paganism in which he lived and worked for many years. Blaikie comments:

His being enabled to reach the sanctuary of perfect peace in the presence of his enemies was all the more

1. Livingstone, Family Letters . . ., II, 271.

2. Livingstone, The Last Journals . . ., p. 421.

3. Supra, pp. 24-25.

striking if we consider--what he felt keenly--that to live among the heathen is in itself very far from favorable to the vigor or the prosperity of the spiritual life. "Traveling from day to day among barbarians," he says in his Journal, "exerts a most benumbing effect on the religious feelings of the soul."¹

Nowhere is Livingstone's peaceful joy made more manifest than in the prayers and worshipful ejaculations of his Journal, as for example:

He will keep His word--the gracious One, full of grace and truth--no doubt of it. He said, "Him that cometh unto me. I will in nowise cast out," and "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name I will give it." He WILL keep His word: then I can come and humbly present my petition, and it will be all right. Doubt is here inadmissable, surely.²

These lines, written on May 13, 1872, less than a year before his death, express a genuine spiritual comfort and security that was in vivid contrast to the misery of his physical condition and surroundings in the jungles.

C. Preparation for Fruit-Bearing in the Life of David Livingstone

As was shown in Chapter II, the Devotional Life must be not only an inner life but must lead to action as the Christian works out his responsibilities to God and to society. Therefore an investigation will now be made of those aspects of David Livingstone's life which prepared him for service to God and to man, for "fruit-bearing": prayer, study of God's word, and devotion to mission.

1. Blaikie, op. cit., p. 199.

2. Livingstone, The Last Journals . . ., p. 423.

1. Prayer

Like every truly devout person, David Livingstone gave himself constantly to prayer, which Law defines as "the noblest exercise of the soul."¹ Through constant prayer, he sought to rededicate himself to God, to express his love for Him, to adore Him, to know His will ever more perfectly, and to shut himself away from the evils and temptations of the heathen surroundings in which he lived for many years. Campbell wrote of the missionary:

He had to think for himself, and, man of action as he was, his thinking was the concomitant of his constant habit of prayer--prayer that was scarcely ever concerned with the definition of abstract truths, but almost wholly with the practical problems of character and service.²

The simplest and best way to discover the nature of Livingstone's prayer-life is to examine the prayers themselves, because, as Blaikie says, "he was very clear and very minute in his prayers."³

Full of zeal to see that God's will come to pass in Africa through the enlightenment of the natives and the abolition of the slave trade, Livingstone's most typical prayers, among those committed to his Journal, particularly on Christmas, at the end of the year, and on New Year's Day,

1. Law, op. cit., p. 163.

2. Campbell, op. cit., p. 276.

3. Blaikie, op. cit., p. 132.

were those asking God for His aid. An example follows:

We now end 1866. It has not been so fruitful or useful as I intended. Will try to do better in 1867, and be better--more gentle and loving; and may the Almighty, to whom I commit my way, bring my desires to pass, and prosper me! Let all the sins of '66 be blotted out for Jesus' sake!¹

Besides the supplication for divine guidance, this prayer also shows several other characteristics of Livingstone's prayers: humility, rededication of himself to God, and an earnest appeal for absolution from sin.

On his last birthday, March 19, 1873, Livingstone wrote in his Journal:

Thanks to the Almighty Preserver of men for sparing me thus far on the journey of life! Can I hope for ultimate success? So many obstacles have arisen. Let not Satan prevail over me, oh! my good Lord Jesus!²

About a month earlier he had written in the same vein: "I am devoutly thankful to the Giver of all for favoring me so far, and hope that He may continue His kind aid."³

On his last journey, fully aware that without medicines his health had been seriously impaired and that his days were numbered, Livingstone's supplicatory prayers expressed his haste to finish his, and God's, work:

January 1st, 1871.--O Father! help me to finish this work to thy honor!⁴

1. Livingstone, The Last Journals . . ., p. 142.

2. Ibid., p. 497.

3. Ibid., p. 492.

4. Ibid., p. 354.

January 1st, 1872.--May the Almighty help me to finish my work this year for Christ's sake.¹

[April 10, 1873, less than three weeks before his death] I am pale, bloodless, and weak, from bleeding profusely ever since the 31st of March last: an artery gives off a copious stream, and takes away my strength. Oh, how I long to be permitted by the Over Power to finish my work!²

In his prayers, Livingstone was often given to expressions of pure worship and devotion--thankfulness, praise, and loving adoration--as in this prayer, committed to his Journal on Christmas, 1872: "I thank the good Lord for the good gift of his Son Christ Jesus our Lord."³

As a missionary, Livingstone was regular and constant in leading worship services for his men and the native tribes he visited. Every Sunday, except when serious illness prevented him (and, it must be admitted, on one notable occasion aboard the Ma-Robert on the Zambesi expedition), Livingstone conducted Christian services among the heathen tribes. Although most of the native chieftains were glad to let this strange white man introduce this custom of worship among their peoples, and although his telling of stories from the Bible rarely failed to arouse the natives' interest, Livingstone encountered some amusing problems in leading the blacks in prayer. Two of those recorded by him are here given:

At our public religious services in the kotla, the Makololo women always behaved with decorum from the

1. Ibid., p. 405.

2. Ibid., p. 503.

3. Ibid., p. 476.

first, except at the conclusion of the prayer. When all knelt down, many of those who had children, in following the example of the rest, bent over their little ones; the children, in terror of being crushed to death, set up a simultaneous yell, which so tickled the whole assembly there was often a subdued titter, to be turned into a hearty laugh as soon as they heard Amen.¹

The Prayer-book does not give ignorant persons any idea of an unseen Being being addressed; it looks more like reading or speaking to the book; kneeling and praying with eyes shut is better than our usual way of holding Divine service.²

Livingstone's career was truly in the tradition of the apostolic life as recorded in the Bible: "But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word."³

Sometime in the early morning hours of May 1, 1873, David Livingstone died. His body was found by his faithful native companions, as Seaver reports, "kneeling by the bedside, his body stretched forward, his head buried in his hands upon the pillow."⁴ Worcester also comments on the manner of his death:

Praying as he went, he had gone on his last journey, and without a single attendant. Alone, yet not alone, for He who had sustained him through so many trials and dangers had gone with him through the "swelling of the Jordan," and brought him safe to the celestial country.⁵

2. Study of God's word

For Livingstone the study of the Bible was as fully

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1. Livingstone, Missionary Travels . . ., p. 205.
 2. Livingstone, The Last Journals . . ., p. 94.
 3. Acts 6:4.
 4. Seaver, op. cit., p. 627.
 5. Worcester, op. cit., p. 103.

a necessity of life as was prayer. Although, as Seaver testifies of him, "at the age of 23 . . . he knew his Bible from beginning to end,"¹ his study and re-study of God's word continued to be a prominent part of his life all his days. For instance, at the age of fifty-eight, after two months of serious illness at Manyuema, he reported in his Journal: "I read the whole Bible through four times while I was in Manyuema."² In his writings the many quotations from and references to the scriptures give abundant evidence of his constant use of the Bible, and it is clear that God's promises of love and guidance that he found in it sustained him through his many trials and temptations. A thorough consideration of Livingstone's use of the Bible would in itself be a thesis-size study, and so only this brief treatment is given here.

3. Devotion to mission

The life of David Livingstone was a life totally committed to God, out of love for Him, and from this love sprang a desire to do His work by working in the service of His most unfortunate people. Horne observes, "The absolute surrender of his own will and mind to 'his fair Captain Christ' was the fact most fundamental to Livingstone's whole

1. Seaver, op. cit., p. 24.

2. Livingstone, The Last Journals . . ., p. 398.

career."¹ A similar thought is expressed by Campbell:

He dwelt in the presence of God and breathed the air of devotion; his was the worshipful attitude to life which forbids making light of opportunity or proving recreant before stern duty.²

In a previous section it was noted that Livingstone was convinced that it was God's will for him to take the gospel of Christ to the heathen of interior Africa and to bring to them the benefits of true Christian civilization.³ Chief among his goals, and the first step needed to bring about the civilization of interior Africa, was the elimination of the slave trade, which, according to him, "may be said to reverse every law of Christ, and to defy the vengeance of Heaven."⁴ From his first contact with the villainous traffic in human misery Livingstone knew that civilization and Christianity could make no permanent inroads until the slave trade was abolished. With the passage of time and with his increasing contact with its horrors, the slave trade came more and more to dominate his thoughts. Northcott notes that "as Livingstone's years in Africa moved to a climax, so the dominant motive of ending the slave trade grew more powerful until it became a life dedication."⁵ He was

1. Horne, op. cit., p. 236.

2. Campbell, op. cit., p. 276.

3. Supra, p. 86.

4. Livingstone, Narrative of an Expedition . . ., p. 637.

5. Northcott, op. cit., p. 73.

convinced that dedicating himself to the abolition of the slave trade was directly in the line of his duties as a missionary and that it was God's will that he do so. Blaikie quotes him:

No one can estimate the amount of God-pleasing good that will be done, if, by Divine favor, this awful slave-trade, into the midst of which I have come, be abolished. This will be something to have lived for, and the conviction has grown in my mind that it was for this end I have been detained so long.¹

Livingstone attributed the failure of earlier missionaries in Africa to their indirect toleration of the slave traffic:

Since the early missionaries were not wanting in either wisdom or enterprise, it would be intensely interesting to know the exact cause of their failure to perpetuate their faith. . . . Can it be that the missionaries of old, like many good men formerly among ourselves, tolerated this system of slave-making, which inevitably leads to warfare, and thus failed to obtain influence over the natives by not introducing another policy other than that which had prevailed for ages before they came?²

It was Livingstone's devotion to mission that led him forward in his geographical explorations, as was seen in Chapter I, in spite of all the suffering and other extreme hardships that he had to endure on the expeditions.

D. Weaknesses in Livingstone's Life

No matter how devout and high-minded he was, Livingstone was a human being, and therefore his life was marked

1. Blaikie, op. cit., p. 463.

2. Livingstone, Narrative of an Expedition . . ., pp. 222-223.

by human weakness. His early biographers, Blaikie included, were largely uncritical, and their works are beclouded with, as Seaver says, "an aura of hagiography."¹ To deal with Livingstone's failings is not to belittle his great accomplishments nor to underestimate the depth of his Devotional Life. That he was able to triumph over many of his weaknesses is the truly significant factor of his personality. Campbell observes:

Livingstone's character can take care of itself; it needs no whitewashing. The massiveness of his personality stands out the plainer and nobler from the acerbity and unreasonableness into which he occasionally breaks.²

One of Livingstone's earliest weaknesses was the unwitting hypocrisy of which he was guilty in his attitudes toward missionary unity. In a letter written from the Cape not long after his first arrival in Africa, he wrote his friend, George Drummond: "I see it is of great importance that missionaries should be united."³ In his early correspondence there are many similar references to this problem, such as Seaver mentions:

The burden of his complaint is "the most disgraceful" tension prevailing between missionaries north and south of the Orange River, and also amongst themselves on each side of it.⁴

1. Seaver, op. cit., p. 10.

2. Campbell, op. cit., pp. viii-ix.

3. Seaver, op. cit., p. 39.

4. Ibid., p. 46.

Despite his criticism of other missionaries, Livingstone was guilty of the same divisiveness, as Schapera noted:

Livingstone's letters show clearly that he despised several of his colleagues. . . . The factionalism to which Moffatt was a party proved contagious, and before long the man who had once noted with disgust the evils of missionary gossip was himself regaling his father-in-law with spiteful comments on his colleagues, often merely repeating hearsay.¹

Another early example of possible hypocrisy, perhaps even duplicity, was Livingstone's handling of the accusations that he was arming the natives against the Boers. Although he was consistent in denying all guilt of the charges, he was not entirely innocent. Schapera points this out:

In 1853, for example, a Cape Town newspaper [Cape Town Mail, April 26, 1853] published a statement (written the year before) in the course of which he said: "My reply to both Missionaries and Boers was, and is, if you can prove that I either lent or sold, or gave a gun . . . to Secheli, I shall willingly leave the country." Although faithfully echoed by almost all his biographers, the denial was literally untrue: Livingstone's letters to Moffatt show that he did in fact occasionally supply arms and ammunition to Secheli and other Natives.²

Livingstone's seemingly little concern for his family's welfare was another weakness. In 1850 he went on a trek to the upper Zambesi, a fever-ridden territory, with a party that included his wife, who was pregnant, and his children. When Mary gave birth in August, she was stricken by a post natal paralysis of the right half of her face.

1. I. Schapera, in the introduction to Livingstone, Family Letters . . . , I, 11.

2. Ibid., p. 12.

His letter to Moffatt, Mary's father, is singularly devoid of any real expression of concern, and must have caused the old missionary much anxiety. In the letter only one of the six paragraphs is devoted to Mary's illness, and that is written in a cold, unaffected prose that merely describes her symptoms. When the child died, Livingstone wrote to Moffatt thus:

Have just returned from burying our youngest child. Never conceived before how fast a little stranger can twine round the affections. She was just six weeks old when called away to see the King in his beauty. I have not the smallest doubt but that she is saved by one whom she could not know. . . . Wish we were all as safe as she is now.¹

In spite of the gracious acceptance of God's will, admirable in itself, Livingstone's emotions seem shallow. His Journal entry, apparently intended for posterity, makes one even more uneasy. Seaver quotes it and comments about it:

"It was the first death in our family, but just as likely to have happened had we remained at home, and we have now one of our number in heaven." It is difficult to read these sentiments thus expressed without distaste; yet they were deeply and sincerely felt.²

Again he took his family with him to the Zambesi; again Mary gave birth while in the wilds; and again she was stricken with paralysis. This time the child lived, however. Of this failure to profit by experience, one biographer defends him:

It is true that, judged by any normal standards of matrimonial responsibility, his conduct must be deemed

1. Livingstone, Family Letters . . . , II, 103.

2. Seaver, op. cit., p. 129.

indefensible, but he had a faith in the Providence of God which, though to us may seem fanatical, inspired all his aims and without which he would never have attempted, much less could have accomplished, what he did. This faith included trust in divine providence for the welfare of his wife and children.¹

Finally Livingstone learned from these unfortunate experiences that central Africa was no place to raise a family. This realization led him to send his wife and children back to England--to live as virtual widow and orphans. This time, however, Livingstone understood the implications of his decision:

The country explored is unfit for a European family. I might live to do good in it, but it would be subjecting those whom God has committed to my care to an extended orphanage. . . . For I always, since I knew the value of Christianity, wished to spend my life in propagating its blessings among men. I have the same desire now undiminished, but to leave my family to the tender mercies of a charitable institution--some of whose members have a sort of spite at my success in exploration--seems hard. I can only hope that He who has helped and guided me hitherto will be with me still.²

Of Livingstone's decision to stay in the interior of Africa and send his family back to England, rather than to remain on the coast with his family, it must be said that the choice was the sacrificial one of loving God more than family.³

When Mary Livingstone died, while Livingstone was on the Zambesi expedition, he reopened the subject of his family for criticism by making little mention of her death

1. Ibid., pp. 132-133.

2. Ibid., p. 230.

3. Cf. Sangster, The Pure in Heart . . ., p. 104, and Seaver, op. cit., p. 133.

in his book. The single paragraph referring to her death ends thus: ". . . in the disinterested and dutiful attempt to renew her labors, [she] was called to her rest instead. 'Fiat, Domine, voluntas tua!'"¹ However unemotional this public statement may seem, his letters and Journal, published later, indicate that he sorely missed his wife and grieved for her often. Perhaps it was merely his Scottish reticence that kept him from expressing his true feelings.

Seaver considers whether Livingstone ought to have married at all and concludes:

In the view of the present writer the answer would be emphatically No, were it not qualified by the consideration that this man like others (and more than most, with his masculinity) was a creature of flesh and blood with a man's emotions that required satisfaction and fulfillment. We are presented here with an abstract dilemma, but to him it must have been a very real and concrete one.²

It was on the ill-fated Zambesi expedition that Livingstone revealed the greater part of his personal failings. Impatience, ill temper, obstinacy, dogmatism, all showed their ugly faces during this crucial period. The great Dr. Livingstone, who was peerless in gaining the cooperation and respect of the Africans, was a complete failure as a leader of white men. Many of these personality failings were traits that showed less obtrusively throughout other phases of his career.

1. Livingstone, Narrative of an Expedition . . ., p. 438.

2. Seaver, op. cit., p. 133.

The "apparent irrational doggedness"¹ on which John Kirk remarked can explain, in part, many of Livingstone's other weaknesses. It was not long after the expedition had begun having trouble that even Kirk became "aware that he would be sacrificed without mercy to his chief's obsession if he ventured to go counter to it in any way."² Coupland observes that Livingstone was

. . . altogether lacking in the good leader's ability to combine tact with firmness, to share his mind with his subordinates, to imbue their comradeship with faith in himself and in one another.³

Furthermore he was quick to become angry whenever anyone failed. A comment of Drummond's may be applied to him:

"The peculiarity of ill temper is that it is the vice of the virtuous."⁴ Nevertheless, Campbell wrote of Livingstone, "In his relations with Bishop Mackenzie, Bishop Tozer, Dr. Kirk, and Dr. Stewart . . . he was over-anxious to show himself in the right."⁵

The impatience which was manifest on the Zambesi expedition was what made Livingstone a failure as a missionary in the ordinary sense of the word. During the time that he was living in Cape Colony at the London Missionary Society stations, Livingstone made only one convert, Sechele,

1. Campbell, op. cit., p. 266.

2. Ibid.

3. Coupland, op. cit., pp. 17-18.

4. Drummond, op. cit., p. 23.

5. Campbell, op. cit., p. 265.

who soon after broke his vows of monogamy. Although Livingstone knew that time and effort would be required to produce lasting results, he did not stay among any single tribe for any length of time. From Kolobeng in 1849 he wrote to his brother Charles:

The people here have little to recommend them to any one unless he is a Christian. . . . Uphill cross the grain work this is. . . . I love them much and my heart is always sore when I look at them. I try every shade of illustration I can conceive, yet no apparent result. . . . We have need of patience.¹

Despite his favorable situation and his knowledge that patience was required, Livingstone's impatience led him away from tribes before he could accomplish what he had set out to do. He was with the Bakwena people less than six years, his longest association, but much of the time he spent away from them on excursions to the north.² Perhaps this impatience was fortunate, for had he been more patient, he would have become a better missionary, but probably not the great man of Africa for which he is remembered.

E. Summary

David Livingstone was a devout and holy man, and his life was in no small measure an exemplary Devotional Life. His personality failings and faults of character cannot

1. Livingstone, Family Letters . . . , II, 52-53.

2. Cf. I. Schapera, in the introduction to Livingstone, Family Letters . . . , I, 14.

obscure this fact, because, as Campbell notes, his failings "were held in subordination to Christian principle."¹ This is not as paradoxical as it may at first seem, especially in the light of Sangster's discussion of the "saint":

Kindly disposed people, a little loose with words, are very ready to say of a good man living for God a healthy and sequestered life that he is a "saint". It does not occur to them to use the term of [for] some forceful personality fighting ill-health but called to great leadership; someone compelled to constant decision; to the unlifting burden of responsibility; to the handling of awkward people who try his patience a hundred times a day because, on occasion perhaps, he is peremptory or does not always suffer fools gladly. Yet the one may have much more of sanctity than the other.²

This was true of Livingstone. A man whose whole life was given to God in love and uncommon zeal to do His will, Livingstone remained a man and therefore subject to the errors, temptations, and failings of life on earth. A quotation from Seaver is a summary of the quality of Livingstone's life:

Despite his obvious faults of character, which it would be injustice to him to palliate; despite his massive common sense and practical sagacity (except in the superintendence of others)--his was the other-worldly wisdom of a dedicated life. That it led him in the end, and others indirectly, to death and disaster is a fact which constitutes the paradox of the spiritual life. . . . Livingstone is conspicuous among many other examples of that antithesis between the spiritual and the natural that underlies our dual life, and of which the supreme example for mankind is epitomized in the Life that led to Calvary.³

1. Campbell, op. cit., p. 270.

2. Sangster, The Pure in Heart . . ., p. 85.

3. Seaver, op. cit., p. 471.

Seaver also wrote of how to evaluate Livingstone's life:

He was a man in holy orders on active service under divine obedience, and as such it is utterly inconceivable that he would allow himself to be deflected from the course of duty by any mischance, even the prospect of imminent death. He had dedicated his life to, and identified himself with, his cause--God's cause. Such a man is not to be judged by conventional standards, because he could never be influenced by prudential motives.¹

1. Ibid., p. 505.

CHAPTER IV
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

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In the life and career of David Livingstone can be seen a great exemplary practice of the Devotional Life, as was demonstrated in Chapter III. That his life was extraordinary and worthy of the world's attention in other respects was indicated in the brief chronicle of his career in Chapter I. Given the characteristics of the Devotional Life as outlined in Chapter II, a consideration of David Livingstone's heroic and nearly superhuman practice of it can be of direct and massive benefit to Christian men and women leading "normal" lives in diverse walks today.

Certainly David Livingstone lived an extraordinary life, extraordinary in nearly every facet of his varied career. To attempt to follow Livingstone in the particulars of his life would be utter folly; few indeed are those who could survive the extreme hardships of his life. Even in his Devotional Life, it is the particulars that stand out. In the nature, sincerity, and depth of his devotion, however, there is an exemplary model. One may despair of being as courageous or as longsuffering as David Livingstone, but one can recognize and aspire to his example and commit himself to being as courageous and longsuffering in devotion as the

more "normal" and humdrum circumstances of life demand.

One can profit by looking to Livingstone's example if he will but look behind the extraordinary facts and circumstances of his career in Africa and consider the still extraordinary person that is often obscured by his epic deeds as a missionary explorer. One need not be a pioneer missionary in dangerous Africa to follow in Livingstone's footsteps. For instance, one clearly does not have to undergo his ordeals in order to take advantage of the great privilege and fulfill the sacred duty of reading the Bible. In Livingstone's life, however, it can be seen how the love of God can sustain a human being through nightmares of pain and suffering, and that this suffering can not deter the supremely devout person from performing the simple, yet necessary duty of reading the word of God.

In David Livingstone there was a total surrender of self to God out of love, which is the essence of the Devotional Life. In his Christian zeal to do God's will, some critics, including at least one of his biographers, find an excess which might keep people from looking to Livingstone's life for guidance of their own. Seaver questioned:

Throughout [his life], from first to last, he had sincerely sought to know and do the Will of God. Had he really merged his will in God's Will, or had he mistaken it for his own?¹

1. Seaver, op. cit., p. 630.

Seaver even used Livingstone's own words to express his mild censure: "Cautious reverence is required in ascribing human movements to the influence of divine Providence."¹ Livingstone, however, was an activist, a man whose love for God drove him to a worship far more active and therefore more conspicuous than private prayer. In doing so, he acted in the tradition of the Protestant saints, as Sangster observed:

Many of them were obsessed with a mission in this world which they felt God had laid upon them. . . . In David Livingstone one sees God streaking a dark continent with light.²

Christian scholars see great sanctity in Livingstone's life. Campbell concludes about him: "He was a Moses and an Isaiah rather than a Francis de Sales or a George Herbert. But if we have regard to other criteria of sainthood, few have better deserved the title."³ The Christian aspiring to be devout can benefit from regarding the lives of saints, such as Livingstone, for "they see steadily what he barely glimpses."⁴

Certainly the life of Livingstone or any other saint must represent a seemingly unattainable degree of devotion which few ordinary Christians shall ever know. An

1. Ibid., p. 633.

2. Sangster, The Pure in Heart . . ., p. 88.

3. Campbell, op. cit., p. 276.

4. Sangster, The Pure in Heart . . ., p. xii.

observation by Sangster is pertinent:

It should not surprise us if we find something of extravagance in these elect souls: an utterness in giving which is, at times, overwhelming, and a devotion not easily distinguished from fanaticism. It is in their sanctified nature to be utter. They believe utterly. They love God utterly. They serve men utterly.¹

Certainly "utter" is the best word to describe this statement by Livingstone of his devotion: "Soul and body, my family and Thy cause, I committ all to Thee."² Of course, such "utterness" is rarely attainable, but holiness and devotion are not reserved only for those who are blessed with saintliness. William Law assures, "This is the perfection that is required of us; . . . the perfection of our best endeavours, a careful labour to be as perfect as we can."³

In Jesus Christ God gave the Perfect Man so that one might have a model of holiness on earth, and striving to follow in His steps is the surest means of arriving at a state of true devotion. This is precisely what Livingstone did:

I am a missionary, heart and soul. God had an only Son, and He was a missionary and physician. A poor, poor imitation I am or wish to be. In this service I hope to live, in it I wish to die.⁴

Because Livingstone succeeded in no small way, his life then becomes another model, less nearly perfect, but more nearly approachable. Again, it cannot be stressed too much that

1. Ibid., p. 99.

2. Northcott, op. cit., p. 79.

3. Law, op. cit., p. 23.

4. Seaver, op. cit., p. 632.

the degree of suffering and sheer physical triumph of his life is not to be a goal. One must look to the purity of heart, soul, and motive that he maintained under great pressures, and then one shall better know how to keep devotion unsullied under the lesser pressures of ordinary life.

There must, of course, be suffering in the Devotional Life, in order that God may test the strength of the devotion and the force of the love for Him. As Livingstone himself said, "We don't know how bad some people are until they are tried, nor how good others are till put to the test."¹ It will, however, be a suffering in keeping with the station and condition of one's life, both in kind and degree. To quote Livingstone again: "A hard bed might be a greater sacrifice to one than sleeping on the ground to another."²

The Devotional Life is not necessarily a life of extraordinary adventure and danger, not necessarily a life of jeopardy and sacrifice. The Devotional Life is a life, any reasonable and honest life, devoted to God out of love for Him. The devout Christian might be a missionary explorer in Africa, a Biblical scholar, or a common laborer. No matter what the differences in their outward circumstances, the characteristics of their Devotional Lives will be the same. Although the specific manifestations will vary, each life will be full of love, self-surrender,

1. Northcott, op. cit., p. 80.

2. Ibid., p. 81.

dedication, humility, self-examination, prayer, and the study of God's word.

Devotion is the duty of all Christians and not just a supreme good that a few of God's elect might choose to pursue. Holiness increases as devotion does, and perfect devotion is the perfect Christian life.

God sent His only Son so that man might know how to lead a life of holiness. Besides the perfection of Jesus Christ, He has also sent as models of devotion such saints and holy men as David Livingstone, of whom Blaikie wrote: "Nothing can be more telling than his life as an evidence of the truth and power of Christianity."¹

The greatest thing to be learned from the example of David Livingstone is to put into daily practice, in spite of all obstacles, the tenets of the Christian faith, to live life in and for God, to subjugate human weaknesses to the principles of Christianity.

One shall possess the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven if he will follow Livingstone's example and repeat wholeheartedly in perfect love these words of Livingstone's:

I will place no value on anything I have or may possess, except in relation to the kingdom of Christ. If anything will advance the interests of that kingdom, it shall be given away or kept, only as by giving or keeping it I shall most promote the glory of Him to whom I owe all my hopes in time and eternity.²

1. Blaikie, op. cit., p. 111.

2. Northcott, op. cit., p. 69.

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