



LIFE OUT OF DEATH

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**An account of the resurrection of the
Heart of Africa Mission from the
moment of its greatest weakness at the
time of the death of C.T. Studd in 1931**

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I

Life out of death! What must have been Jack Harrison's feelings as he sat on the edge of that little native bed in the heart of Africa five years ago? He was supporting in his arms the one who had been his leader for the past nine years and infinitely dearer than a leader—a beloved father, and he a much loved son. C.T. Studd was dying, and "Harri"* knew it. And Harri also knew that the mantle of leadership was to fall on his shoulders—leadership of the thirty-five missionaries and all the problems of a widely extended native work and himself only in the early thirties.

The voice great fainter. Only one word could be distinguished, "Hallelujah!" "Hallelujah!" Silence. The "marriage bells" had begun ringing for Bwana (C.T. Studd), for had he not often said that his death-day would be his wedding-day—to Jesus?

Harri slipped out into the adjoining room. He wanted a moment of quiet. Bwana gone. Now what? Another slipped out and followed him. It was "Villi" (Harold Williams), who of all the workers on the field was greatly loved and honoured, for he was voluntarily the servant of all, giving his whole time to the management of the Mission transport so that others might be free to evangelize. Laying his hands on Harri's, he quietly said, "Harri, you know I am just here to do anything that will help you." And within a few minutes he was speeding through the night, fifty, a hundred, two hundred miles, to Imbai, Badua, Wamba, Nala, to tell them of this new day of opportunity. "Moses My servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over and possess the land; . . . be strong and of a good courage: . . . I will not fail thee."

By foot, cycle and sedan-chair they came, while Harri and the others at Ibambi were working through the night preparing the coffin. The only plan in his mind had been that the missionaries would lay the beloved earthly remains to rest the next morning and then meet together to face the future. But this had quickly to be changed. As they gathered round the graveside, it was not just a little group of missionaries, but a great congregation of more than two thousand natives who stood there, who had poured in from the surrounding villages, for news travels like lightning in Congo. The quiet little burial service became a great celebration of a fight magnificently fought and won and a re-consecration of hundreds to take up the sword now laid down, to bring Christ and His salvation to every soul in the heart of Africa. It was not death they were celebrating, but life out of death. As for Bwana, he was alive for evermore. As for them, hundreds would now do what one did previously. By faith they claimed that Bwana's death should fulfill the law of all sacrificial dying: "If it die . . . much fruit" (John 12:24)—the law which was perfectly revealed to mankind in the Greatest of all Deaths. Jesus died—millions live for evermore. Death worketh in us, but life in others. The simple way the natives put it was: "If a man plants a garden and dies, his children eat of the fruit. Bwana planted for God; we will enter in and reap the harvest."

For the missionaries it was the moment of greatest weakness in the history of the Mission. Their founder and leader had been taken from them. Grave difficulties at home

* The native form of "Harrison," pronounced "Harry."

made the prospect of advance look absurd. The number of missionaries had been severely reduced from some fifty to thirty-five. There had been six months of by far the greatest financial shortage in the history of the work—indeed, almost destitution. The outlook was as black as night. And it was then that faith shone out. “Out of weakness made strong.” As one man, the missionaries took up the sword that had been laid down. “We were constrained to renew our vows to God and to one another,” wrote Harri; “never would we lower the standard shown in the Word! Never would we break the fellowship in the Gospel! Never would we cease our labours for the furtherance of the Gospel! Should we have less blessing in the future? Need we have less? Shall we have less? No! For the Blood shall never lose its power and the Spirit shall always lead to victory and we shall, God enabling us, go on!”

The story that follows is the story of the six-fold increase in the work, which was God’s answer to this act of faith.

II

One incident right on the spot was like a sign of the coming blessing. Amongst that crowd of natives was an old man, as old as Bwana himself, curly white hair and beard, wrinkled old body, draped round the waist with the usual native bark-cloth. In outward appearance those two had been as far apart as the poles—the one-time Eton and Cambridge cricketer and the other a follower of the terrible Bili cult of witchcraft. But the grace of God is a drastic leveller, both up and down and these two, so different in body had become one in spirit under the shadow of Calvary. The old man had been both saved and healed, when he crawled one day, too weak to walk, from his sick-bed of leaves in the forest, to listen to the message of salvation through the cracks of the bamboo wall of a native evangelist's hut. Later Bwana, greatly impressed by his remarkable grasp of the Scriptures and answers in the meetings, never being able to resist a joke, had nicknamed him "Solomono."

Now he stood by Bwana's graveside. He was troubled. He had often talked of heaven with Bwana and always said that he would go there first and now Bwana had outrun him. What was there left in life for him? Why had God done this? Exactly how the still small voice spoke to him, we do not know. But it was as clear a revelation as on the road to Damascus. He was left behind *for a purpose*. His was a very great honour and very great opportunity. If an old white man had fought for God and souls to his last breath, why should not an old black man do the same? If a white man gave his last remaining years to live far away from his own home and people for the Gospel's sake, why not a black man also? He went straight up to Harri after the service and said, "God has called me to go and preach the Gospel in the Medje tribe and never come back. Give me a letter of introduction to the missionary in that area." This perhaps might not seem a great thing to us, so used to travelling, but any who understand the natives know that nothing but a spiritual earthquake could bring an old African to such a decision. Harri was busy and said, "Well, go to your village and pack up your 'wealth' (bed, cooking-pot, etc.), and then come back." "What does a man need more than the wealth that I have here?" was Solomono's surprised and indignant answer, as he pointed to a bag of Scriptures under his arm. "This is all I need, and I am prepared to go immediately and not come back again."

"This was such a blessing to me," says Harri, "that I gave him his letter at once and sent him off." That was five years ago and it is literally true that he has never returned.

Harri met him again some months after and asked him how he was getting on with the language, living in a strange tribe and an old man at that. But Solomono knows the meaning of prayer and his answer was "First of all I prayed God to give me Kingwana (an inter-tribal language), and he has done it. Then I saw my need for knowing Bangala (another inter-tribal language), so I asked the Lord to give me Bangala and He has done that. Then, as I realized the difficulty of speaking through an interpreter, I asked the Lord to give me a knowledge of the tribal tongue of the Medjes and I am getting on well with that!" He told Harri too the original way in which he

aroused the interest of the villagers. All Africans have a great fear of death and Solomon said, "When I enter a village, I look here and there around the houses, as if I had lost something. Then somebody calls out, 'What are you looking for, Solomon?' And I answer, 'I am looking for death! I am looking for death!' 'For death?' they say; 'what do you mean?' 'Why, you see, I am looking for death because to die is gain and death will bring me into the presence of God, and to Bwana Makubwa.' And then I tell them the Gospel." He also pointed out to Harri one man about as old as himself and told how he had won that man for the Lord by the simple prayer of faith. Kneeling down on the floor in front of Harri, he described how he had sought the Lord for this particular soul, crying, "Lord, give me *that* man, just *that* man," until the man had been brought into the Kingdom.

III

About a year later, Harri went on a visit to north of our area and spent a few weeks with "Soli" (Jack Scholes) at Poko, our most northerly station. Out on trek one day, they were in a house, with a map of the province open before them. Their eyes turned to a great westerly area, as large as the whole of the existing work. For ten years we had looked in that direction. But it had never got beyond looking! There was Zobia, the place Bwana had always indicated as an ideal centre. Was it possible now to do what had not been done in ten years? And this is in their weakness? Harri turned to Soli: "You see this place that Bwana so often pointed out to us? Will you put your finger on it and I will also put mine? For if we ask in the name of Jesus we can have for God's glory those things that are needful for His work." They prayed a short prayer, each asking God to give the place where their fingers rested. Within twelve months a visit had been paid there, the chief's consent gained, the concession granted and the first two missionaries established, at a place called Kesanga. The first move had been made in a territorial advance which has now resulted in the whole of that area being opened to the Gospel.

It was an undersized lame native, unable to put one heel to the ground, who blazed the trail southward, the direction in which the greatest advance has been made. Two hundred miles through thick forest he limped, till he came to a tribe called the Balumbi. Here he stayed, called "The Strange Man" by them, his holy and selfless living being yet more strange to the eyes of these people so accustomed to all manner of devilry. A visit by one of the missionaries a few months later and a glowing report brought back, convinced Harri that this open door must also be entered. A central spot was chosen, at a place called Opienge. To obtain this concession it was necessary for Harri and "Sta" (Mr. Staniford) to go a long journey to the town of Stanleyville on the Congo River, to see an important official. On arrival they stayed with some missionary friends. In these civilized centres it is always the custom to appear before officials elegantly dressed in white! But H.A.M.-ites own no clothes but khaki! So they were assured that it would be absolutely impossible for them to get into the presence of the Important Official. "When his secretary sees you, he is bound to stop you." "Never mind," answered Harri, "God will work for us." They went. They approached the secretary, who said the Great Man was out and told them to come at another hour. They did not know whether to take this as a polite "put-off" or a genuine appointment. But they turned up. The G.M. came out of his office—and greeted them like long-lost brothers! He was Monsieur L----, who had been previously a junior official in their own area and knew them both, whilst they had been ignorant of his high promotion! As for the permission for Opienge, a stroke of the pen did that. And, as Harri remarks, "When one thinks of the seven years delay in getting papers for Ibambi and sometimes five or six years delay in the case of other stations, it was a miracle to us that Opienge and Kesanga papers could have been obtained so quickly."

West, south and then south-west. Here the vision was given to Harry Jones to enter an area of unusually thick forest, peopled by most primitive tribes. He came from what most almost his death-bed to plead the cause of these people at a conference. Harri

and all the missionaries recognized it as a call of God. Harri accompanied “Jona” to the place, called Kondolole, fourteen days trek through the forest. The site selected was such dense forest that they had to choose a monstrous tree as a landmark for their measurements, for fear of losing their bearings. Today, Harry Jones and two others are there, the site cleared and built upon and last Christmas six hundred natives gathered to worship.

IV

Increased sale of the Scriptures! There does not sound much of a thrill about that to us at home! But then we are all sophisticated readers, with Bibles and every kind of book at our elbows. But when you go where a book has never been seen and where reading and writing are unknown and see, as Bwana and his co-workers have done, languages patiently reduced to writing, thousands taught to read, the first Gospel haltingly produced, another Gospel for maybe an Epistle attempted, and then the great day when the time has come to give the complete New Testament to the people. There is thrill enough in all that for a lifetime! That production of the New Testament in Kingwana was Bwana's last work on earth. He slaved at it night and day for three years, with Harri by his side all the time, typing, revising, re-typing what Bwana had written. For nights on end their sleep was confined to four or five hours. After a day at his desk, the old head and neck would grow so stiff with bending that he could not sit upright until Harri's gentle stroking had relaxed the muscles. There was "death" in that translation, for it drained his remaining strength. And "life out of death." The Scripture Gift Mission produced the books: beautifully clear print and strong, insect-resisting covers. Some twenty thousand of them. And the distribution of these Scriptures has been the firm foundation under this rising young Church of today. Since Bwana's death another outstanding increase has been in the sale and distribution of these to such an extent that a second edition of the New Testament is now a necessity.

Then the conferences. Bwana revelled in these. Whether in Ibambi, or some out-station, the natives would come crowding, each with his bed-mat rolled on his back, his bunch of plantains and cooking-pot. What a sight it used to be to see those crowds of eager faces, to hear the tremendous volume of sound as he led the singing on his banjo, then one after another standing up to pray and then the hour or more's talk, packed with native illustrations and homely questions. The largest conference Bwana ever had was four thousand. A year after his death, Harri called another—five thousand came. But the year after that, 1933, "the Lord impressed upon us that we should not be satisfied even with this. And so after much prayer, we asked the Lord to give us what seemed at the time an absolutely impossible number—ten thousand. We were there months preparing for this in faith, building large sheds for sleeping-rooms, making an open-air meeting-place which had something like fifteen hundred poles in it. To call in such a large number of people it was necessary to have official permission from the Government and so all this was attended to and we had the joy of seeing this great company assemble at Ibambi." "The first natives to arrive were the fourteen or so raw-looking believers from Kondolole, who had been on the road for a month, actually starting in November to get here at Christmas. Next we heard singing in the distance and shouts of "Hallelujah!" We all rushed out to see who were coming. My, what a sight! Here were the Amadi people with Mama Yangu, together with the Poko people, who had walked two hundred miles. Next day we were continually running out of our houses to witness the arrival of this party and that. The roads were all black with people. As each company arrived, the 'Hallelujahs!' rent the air. Forty-five of the lepers from Nala came, having walked, in

spite of their crippled limbs, for about fifty miles. My! It was a sight to see them all.” Of the meetings Harri wrote: “It is all so beyond description. The crowds, the beaming faces, the eagerness, the singing, the roars of ‘Hallelujahs’—one could only stand before them amazed and awed.” No human voice could carry over that multitude and although interpreters were stationed out in the crowds to pass the message on in the relay system yet many could not hear. So in the evenings, groups used to gather round the fires, where those who had heard could repeat the message to those who had not. “Many of these meetings went on till past midnight. We could hear them bursting into singing away in to the night.

“Eight tribes were represented in this multitude and one of the local officials went so far as to say that it was a most unwise thing, because we were only helping the natives to get back to tribal warfare and similar troubles, as they were sure to quarrel. We tried to explain to him about the love of God in the hearts of men breaking down tribal barriers, but the point was somewhat lost. However, he attended one meeting with his wife and saw it all for himself. The different tribes were asked to stand in turn, to show him how many there were. First, the Barambos, then Bazandes, Medjes, Balikas, Babaris, Bayogos, Babudus, Balumbis and all so obviously happy. He had to admit that he had thought previously such order and love and harmony were absolutely impossible among the natives.

“It was at this conference that we decided to lift the standard higher than ever, lest we should seek to keep the large numbers and not get them to live the life. We aimed at the questions of polygamy, wine-drinking, tobacco-smoking and suchlike evils that we knew were in the Churches. We had special meetings for the evangelists and leaders and condemned these things in them, besides their laziness, lack of zeal for evangelization and the paucity of their giving to God.”

“Harri spoke to them with no uncertain sound (wrote Mrs. Scholes) and the Holy Ghost brought them under deep conviction. Harri sent a native to cut banana leaves; these were laid on the platform. Some of the missionaries who had been addicted to smoking before they were converted, stood up to show that God had mightily delivered them and taken all desire for it out of their hearts. An appeal was made. What a sight! We shall never forget it! Men and women from all over the gathering pulled out tobacco, cigarettes and snuff from pockets, bags, etc. and then came forward to the platform, placing them on the leaves, until a big pile was there. Others ran off to their sleeping-quarters to bring out what was hidden there.”

The later result of this attempt to bring them up to the standards of God’s Word was “a tremendous pruning throughout all the Churches, with much backsliding and renunciation of the Lord. It seemed there was no station or out-church that escaped. Makombaya and Mitambova were two outstanding cases of this. They had both been evangelists and done good work, but they were not willing to pay such a high price as we were aiming at and right in the midst of that conference turned their backs on us and have not been with us since. Then there was Ezeno, Mr. Studd’s right-hand man, who took it into his head to go away from us, declaring that as Daniel was delivered from the den of lions, so God was able to deliver him in this village amongst the temptations and devilry. So God would have done if He had sent him, but it was his own self-will. We pleaded with him: nothing would move him and it was not long before we heard that he had fallen right into sin, taking extra wives, with whom he is still living. One could cite many other

instances of this. Mukwali, who wanted to be an ass for Jesus and carry Jesus to the people, as the ass bore Him to Jerusalem; Mabema, who had been in the work since 1921; Fataki, Manzadapa and other outstanding ones, went rapidly backwards after this conference. Of course the Lord promises that after pruning there will be more fruit and fruit that will remain and so we are not put off by these fallings away, but rather do we look upon it as part of the great blessing that God is giving us.”

The natives are now calling for another conference, to take place, God willing, in 1937, at which even greater numbers are expected.

V

Hilarity and church collections do not seem to go together, but they do, according to Paul, who wrote, “God loveth a hilarious giver”—a translation of 2 Cor. 9:7 of which Mrs. Studd was especially fond. Certainly receiving is hilarious when one is fed daily at the hands of a heavenly Father, as Harri and many others can testify! And giving still more so, for “it is more blessed to give . . .” Nor are these simple natives behind us in the joy of giving. Each church has a “God’s box,” as they call it. A special day of opening these boxes amongst the Ibambi out-churches is thus described by Mrs. Harrison: “Oh my! The crush to get into the building (holding five hundred). The sun was very hot and many folks could not get in, so we told two men to get knives and slit the string that tied the bamboo together and so take away a portion of the wall. What a heat and what a smell! But what singing and what joy! Then came the box-opening. Each out-church passed up the little wooden boxes that Harri had made here. Can you imagine the expectancy there was on each face as the seal was broken and the contents emptied on the table? On all hands we heard that the money could not possibly be as large as last time, as the cotton season is not over yet, so the people had not been paid. However, seeing is believing and as each box was emptied we could only say ‘Hallelujah!’ Every box had more than last time, except one. This was only seven francs less. You can imagine our surprise when we counted the collections together and they came to over eight hundred francs.” Then she goes on to describe how the natives dedicated their gifts to “capture the land for Christ,” allocating amounts to send evangelists to distant tribes. “Ten years ago these people were steeped in witchcraft and all kinds of devilry, knowing nothing of God, or Christ, and hating every other tribe but their own. Now they are breaking down all barriers and are sending three hundred francs to help the Babari tribe and three hundred francs to a man who is a Muzandi. Almost unbelievable. Jesus is reigning and what a difference it is making.”

All the money given in the churches had been used for sending out their own evangelists. But some churches were richer than others and this resulted in an inequality so great that when some were receiving three francs a month, others had fifteen.

But now Harri proposed a central fund, so that, as the natives say, “all the evangelists should eat off the same plate.” The evangelists held a meeting. A few demurred, but the big majority accepted the proposal. Fear, that enemy of faith, made some say that they would starve; others, even missionaries, said that the churches would not give so well if the money did not go to their own evangelists. But the step was taken. And the results? The churches have given such an abundance that after all the evangelists have received a regular and equal monthly sum these years, there remains a surplus in the fund of some eighteen thousand francs. Indeed, the need is not means, but men!

VI

The most striking method of giving has been at Imbai's. Indeed, it can be an example to many at home that there are other methods of giving to God, besides money. "These natives at Imbai's (Harri writes) took it upon themselves to prepare a huge Garden of God in which to grow rice to be sold, the proceeds to go to the support of evangelists. It was not easy work preparing such a tremendous piece of ground; it was in virgin forest, huge trees had to be felled and much labour put into the preparation of the soil, before the rice could be planted. All this labour was in addition to their ordinary work for the chief and the Government and their own food gardens. As many as seventy-five people took 'allotments' in this huge garden and really gave themselves to get all they could out of it for God's work. Last year the magnificent sum of over five thousand four hundred francs was given to the evangelists fund by these Imbai Christians. The thing was so blessed that the chief himself objected, possibly through jealousy. He lodged an official complaint with the Government, saying that we were taking all his people for this sort of work and they were not being paid by us. It sounded serious; but again the Lord undertook and we were able to arrange for the official concerned and the chief to come to the Imbai station to inquire into the matter. We were a day late getting there and fortunately so, because the Christians had arranged among themselves for certain of them to act as spokesmen to present their side of the case. By the time we arrived these special orators had gone to their homes again and the only people that the official could question were a few simple men and women who had been left behind. He sat down on a fallen tree and called one of these women to him. He started off with, 'What is your name?' 'Did you plant a garden last year?' 'How much did you get from it?' etc., in order to find out just how much this matter of gardens was organized. The woman assured him that there was no compulsion in the thing at all and that she herself, because she loved God, wanted this service to help on God's work. 'But what did you do with your money?' asked the official. 'I suppose you kept some for yourself for tobacco and drink?' But she would not have this. Her testimony was as clear as anything. 'I did it for God because I love Him, and I gave all the money to the missionary here, Bwana Roba (Mr. Roberts).' And then the official asked, 'And what do you think Bwana Roba did with the money?' 'Why.' She said, 'he passed it on to Bwana Harri.' Thinking still to catch her out, he asked again, 'And what do you think Bwana Harri did with it?' 'Why,' she replied, 'isn't Bwana Harri evangelizing the world and don't the evangelists receive this money?' 'Of course the official could say nothing further, but demanded to see her husband. He happened to be standing near and had to come forward and go through the same interrogation. 'I suppose you spent some of your money on your tax as well as drink?' But no, the man said that he had finished absolutely with sin of all kinds and had paid his tax from the proceeds of his own cotton garden and not from his plot in the 'Garden of God.' The official turned to the wife again and said to her, 'You love God, but why? And why do you want to work for Him like this?' And then came the ringing testimony as clear as anybody could state it: 'Wasn't I a bad woman? Didn't I follow a life of sin? Wasn't I known as a bad woman in all this district round about and

didn't God come into my heart and change it and make it new and take away all the old desires and I am different today?' We were all thrilled to hear this poor ignorant native speak up so well before this official of the Government and her own chief, without any fear whatsoever. How the other natives cringe before their superiors! How fearful they are of their chief's power! But here she was, despite all this, with a testimony that they could not gainsay. The official had to admit afterwards that the idea of the 'Garden of God' was perfectly proper and quite a good and useful thing and that the native had the right to serve God in this way. He summed it all up by making this telling remark to the chief, 'Remember, you are the chief over these people's bodies, but not over their hearts. Their hearts are their own and so long as they do their work for you and the Government they can serve God as they like.'" The "Garden of God" is ours today.

VII

An evangelist's school also sounds more humdrum than adventurous! But the glory of a God-guided life is that everything becomes an adventure. Indeed, if there is not a thrill in our everyday Christian life, it is a sure sign that there is something wrong. We have not got to fake romances: the whole Spirit-led life is a romance. Yes, even the building of an evangelists' school! Actually, from the point of view of consolidation of the work, the formation of this central school for evangelism is the most important event of these five years. Mr. Harrison writes, "Formerly each station had trained its own men and what time could be spared had been given to the men for Bible study and to their wives as well. But it was plain that all these small efforts had to be absorbed into one central place where we could specialize in this particular branch of the work and where the men and women could give themselves in a better way to the study of the Scriptures. But doubts came in. How will it affect the stations? What will the missionaries think if it is suggested that they hand over their prospective evangelists to a central training school? How will the natives themselves take it? Will they literally eat off the same plate, considering all the tribal barriers of fear and superstition in the matter of foods? Yet it was plain that God was urging us to take these steps. We were so positive about this that we prepared a circular letter for all the missionaries. Yet somehow we were not free to dispatch the letters, so we left them undated and put them on one side. But the pressure would not leave us. God was forcing us to this thing and led us in a very hard way. He cut off personal supplies for three whole months. Then, as we inquired of Him the reason of this, the answer came, 'You *must* take this step or be displeasing to me.'

"Because of our fears we asked the Lord to give us a final definite sign and on a certain Tuesday we dated the letters, signed them, and put them into their envelopes to go round to the various stations. On the following Thursday, which was mail-day, we received gifts, the first for three whole months, one from Uganda and one from London and both gifts were actual Congo bills, as if the Lord were saying 'Here is the ready money; get on with the business.'

"We needed special ground and yet we could not see how we were to get it. Our station was surrounded with pagans and their gardens came right up to our limits. We used to walk along the road in front of the station each evening, pacing out three hundred metres (three hundred and fifty yards) of ground and claiming this as ours for the evangelists' school. As a further seal that God was with us, we asked one day that He would make the Government official come to us and that when he came he would be constrained to speak about ground and extension for the work. It was an impossible thing and there was no likelihood whatsoever of any official coming our way or speaking of such a matter, but the very next day one appeared. He spoke generally about the work, the weather and all sorts of things and we thought that his visit was going to prove useless. He actually said good-bye and shook hands and I accompanied him to the road to see him off the place. Just before taking leave of me he asked about the various buildings and I explained, 'This is the school, that is the printing shop,' and so on. And then he added 'But your place is very small; why don't you apply for an extension?' It

was as if God had put the very words into his mouth. We took the matter up with him on the spot and in a very short time the ground that we had paced out had become our own property. We found out afterwards that the natives on the site had been practising witchcraft and doing their sorceries in order to keep the ground themselves and they had actually declared to the people around that they believed it utterly impossible for us to turn them out and get the property. Since then over twenty thousand francs has been received by us in gifts earmarked for the school and what was, a short while ago, utterly impossible, has now actually happened. The place is cleared, many buildings are up and the work proceeding apace. To God be the glory!”

VIII

And now for the last and greatest example of “life out of *death*.” Life out of *death*? But is not death our enemy and the devil its author? Yes; but this is just where God laughs (Ps. 2:4), for His very enemies are his servants! Did not the devil crucify Christ! And thus become an instrument for the world salvation! Life out of a death, of which the devil was the direct instrument! If one’s friends are one’s friends, and one’s enemies are one’s friends, what weapon remains to harm us? The foolishness of God is wiser than man and the weakness of God is stronger than men! And Harri was to have a magnificent proof of this. “I received a Government letter one day, announcing to us the fact that they considered our number of missionaries too small to properly cater for the number of stations we occupied and that in the future we would only be allowed twelve. At that time we actually held sixteen posts, fourteen of which were occupied by whites and so one could see that this was going to mean to us a tremendous upheaval.” The first thought inevitably must have been—the devil: retreat: the unfinished task to remain unfinished. But Harri knew the path to take. “With the letter in my hand I bowed my head as I stood there and asked the Lord, ‘Is this for evil or for good?’ and the assurance immediately came, ‘All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose’; and from that moment I had not the slightest doubt that this apparent setback would really turn out to the advancement of the work.

“We called a conference of all the missionaries to decide which of the stations had to be given up or could we in any way retain them? All kinds of thoughts passed through our minds. Perhaps an appeal to the Consul would help, or to the Brussels Colonial Office, or to the Council of Protestant Missions in the Congo. But no, we were unable to work along any of these lines and cast the whole matter back on God. It was His work and He must see it through.” Then came the vital revelation. “As we thought on the matter and prayed for guidance, the Lord revealed to us that other stations might be closed as well and the same number claimed from the Government to take their places.” In other words, apparent retreat turned into advance. The proposition was made to the Government, who expressed agreement. Then the whole area already occupied and the regions which still remained as gaps between ourselves and our nearest missionary neighbours were thoroughly surveyed. Several stations which, though flourishing, were close together and in the same tribe, such as Deti, Imbai and Badua, were selected for evacuation by the missionaries, the churches being left in the charge of native evangelists and church leaders—a step which, though a wrench at the time, will undoubtedly be a blessing and help to build up the Native Church. Scouts were dispatched to survey the three unevangelized areas and to arrange for them to be bridged by opening a new centre in each. The Mbekus (Mr. and Mrs. Grainger) went a hundred miles to the south and were remarkably led to an ideal spot. Lubutu, thus completing the necessary advance in this direction, for south of Lubutu the area is being worked by another mission. Soli (Mr. Scholes) went a hundred and fifty miles to the west, till he reached the boundary of the work of the Norwegian Baptists; then with their permission he chose a central place,

Korosa, from which that hundred-and-fifty miles gap can be evangelized. Harri himself went to the east and made the same arrangements with two American missions, from which the gap between them and us is to be closed by a new station at Alambi. The papers for these have been sent in and the one at Alambi is already granted.

IX

Thus, by one final leap, by catching the devil in the net he himself spread, the whole area to which God originally sent Mr. Studd will now have Gospel centres and centres so situated that the whole population can be reached. This does not mean that they have been reached, or that fresh reinforcements are not needed. But it does mean a call to prayer to all who read this. The work is now, as Harri has said, “like a bud ready to burst into blossom.” More white workers will be needed, but, above all, an army of native evangelists and the upspringing of a Holy Native Church. So if God has blessed and inspired you by the reading of this record of God’s goodness, will you yourself, join in the fight and become a prayer-ally? You have read the story of a Five-Year Advance. You have seen a little band who five years ago gathered round a grave, but could see only a resurrection. By faith . . . out of weakness made strong. Now God is calling them to another Five-Year Plan. This time to see a Warrior Army of Native Evangelists and a Holy Ghost-filled Native Church. And they ask you to share with them steadily these five years, especially by prayer and faith, in the vision, the toil and the glorious reward of seeing a native Crusader Church fully established in the Heart of Africa.