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THE APOSTLE OF SOUTH AFRICA

Robert Moffat, for more than fifty years a laborious and useful missionary in South Africa, died August 10, in his British home, at the great age of eighty-eight years. He was born at Ormiston, East Lothian, Scotland, in 1795. Religiously brought up by pious parents, his attention was turned to the missionary work by a placard on a wall announcing a missionary meeting. The meeting had been held before young Moffat read the placard, but the poster did its work. Early in October, 1816, the youthful missionary was set apart to his work in Surrey Chapel, London. John Williams, the "Martyr of Erromanga," and seven others were ordained as missionaries at the same time.

In due time he reached the Cape of Good Hope, and after some delay, which he improved in learning something of the Dutch language he was permitted to go to work in the interior. Much of his early work was done under great hardship. The Chief, Africaner, was his first parishioner—of whom the missionary had been warned that of the teacher's body he would make a target, and of his skin a drum, and of his skull a drinking-cup. But Africaner was converted, and

became useful in working for his people. The greater part of Dr. Moffat's missionary life was passed at Kuruman, among the Bechuanas. He describes the work of translating the Scriptures which he was led into undertaking. We quote his

own language: "I still remember distinctly when I first became a missionary the great undertaking it seemed to be to learn the language of the people among whom I was placed. There were no interpreters to teach us a single

word, and great difficulties were thrown in the missionaries' way. However, I labored on, gathering a few words at a time from one and another until I could string sentences together, and make my wishes known to the natives. I could make you laugh, as

I laughed when I discovered them, at jokes perpetrated toward us by the natives, and amusing things that occurred to us during our enquiries; but I labored on. During all this time we had not a friend in the whole nation, not an individual that loved or respected us, or who wished us to remain among them; and, although they tried to drive us out, we persevered, and by God's grace and assistance overcame every difficulty. How ardently I desired to see the New Testament in Sechuana, that I might read it to the natives, and that they might learn to read it for themselves. I managed after a time to translate small portions and read them to the people in their own tongue. The mission, I saw, could make no firm footing among them unless the Scriptures were translated. The task of accomplishing this you can scarcely imagine. When I first came out to Africa I had not the slightest intention of ever engaging in such a work. I never



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