

real values."

In the spring of 1887, Goforth went to scores of churches to plead the cause of China. He was on fire for missions and his holy enthusiasm melted thousands of indifferent hearts. When he was speaking on the needs and claims of the unevangelized worlds, he had the face of an angel and the tongue of an archangel. He used many methods – Scripture, charts, pictures, logic – to enforce his message. He often closed an address by a powerful illustration from the feeding of the five thousand. He pictured the disciples taking the bread and fish to the hungry people on the first few rows, then going again and again to those same people, leaving those on the back rows hungry and starving. Then he would ask a burning question, "What would Christ have thought of His disciples had they acted in that way, and what does He think of us today as we continue to spend most of our time and money in giving the Bread of Life to those who have heard so often, while hundreds of millions in China are still starving?"

Years later, when Goforth was home on furlough and speaking in a Presbyterian church in Vancouver, the minister who was introducing him said, "This man took an overcoat from me once." He went on to explain how he had gone to Toronto to buy a new overcoat and how, at a missionary meeting, he was stirred as never before upon listening to the impassioned appeal of Jonathan Goforth. "My precious overcoat money went into the missionary collection," continued the minister, "and I returned home wearing my old coat."

October 25, 1887, Jonathan and Rosalind were married. After a memorable farewell service in the historic Knox church of Toronto, the Goforth's sailed for China, February 4, 1888, under the auspices of the Presbyterian Church of Canada.

The Goforth's settled first at Chefoo for nine months of language study. While living there, some valuable lessons were learned. About two weeks after settling in Chefoo, their house burned to the ground and practically everything they had was destroyed. Mrs. Goforth was distraught, but her husband simply said, "My dear, do not grieve so. After all, they're just things." Thus Rosalind learned another lesson in tithing. She had considered themselves generous in tithing their missionary salary. But when they had been married six months, it was discovered they had already given a tenth of a year's salary. "We'll simply close the account and keep on tithing," he said. So they gave two tithes instead of one.

With elation of spirit, the Goforth's moved further and further into the interior on the way to the remote province of Honan to set up a home and a mission station. Their early years in China were marked by sweet joys, piercing sorrows, and significant manifestations of character. Chief sorrows

were connected with the untimely passing of their first two children. Their severe heartache was swallowed up in their travail over the woes of the Chinese masses. The word "without" was written in giant letters over the blackness of heathenism on every side as the Goforth's moved along.

Men and women are toiling without a Bible, without a Sunday, without prayer, and without songs of praise. They have homes without peace, marriages without sanctity, little children without innocence, young men and girls without ideals, poverty without relief or sympathy, sickness without skillful help or tender care, sorrow and crime without remedy, and death without hope.

Before reaching Honan, Goforth had received a cordial letter from Hudson Taylor, telling him of the tremendous obstacles ahead and reminding him of his need of supernatural assistance. "Brother, if you would enter that province," Taylor wrote, "you must go forward on your knees." Goforth did just that. Not a day passed but that circumstances and events caused him to recall his life text and to rely on its promise. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the LORD of hosts" (Zechariah 4:6).

By means of prayer and dependence upon the Holy Spirit, he witnessed and experienced many miracles. One of these was in connection with language study. In college in Toronto, he was weak in languages. In China, he made little progress in the use of the language, although he applied himself to the task with great diligence. Repeatedly, when he was trying to preach to a group of people, the Chinese would point to another missionary who had reached China a year after he did, and say, "You speak. We don't understand him." This was mortifying, but Goforth refused to be discouraged. "The Lord called me to China," he said, "and I expect His Spirit to perform a miracle and to enable me to master the language." He picked up his Chinese Bible and went to the chapel. As he began to preach the miracle happened; He spoke with a fluency and power that amazed the people. Thence forth, his mastery of the Chinese language was recognized everywhere. Two months later, he received a letter from Knox College telling of a prayer meeting in which the students prayed "just for Goforth" and the presence of God was manifestly among them. Looking into his diary, he found that the prayer meeting was at the very time his tongue gained such sudden mastery over the Chinese language.

**Part 2 coming up next month!!!**



**BIRTHDAYS & SPECIAL EVENTS IN:**

**August**

August 4<sup>th</sup> – International Friendship Day

August 6<sup>th</sup> – Tabitha Schoolfield

August 8<sup>th</sup> – Melissa Santiago

August 9<sup>th</sup> – Peggy Flores

August 23<sup>rd</sup> – Annalise Sophia Kirby

August 29<sup>th</sup> – Simone Wiley

**NCOKids**

Monthly News

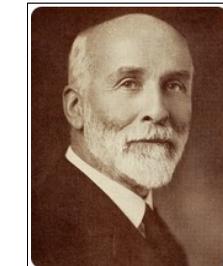


August 2013



**Jonathan Goforth**

Friends, if you and I take glory to ourselves which belongs only to God, we are as foolish as the woodpecker about which I shall tell you. A certain woodpecker flew up to the top of a high pine tree and gave three hard pecks on the side of the tree, as woodpeckers are wont to do. At that instant, a bolt of lightning struck the tree, leaving it on the ground a heap of splinters. The woodpecker had flown to a tree nearby where it clung in terror and amazement at what had taken place. There it hung expecting more to follow, but as all remained quiet, it began to chuckle to itself saying, "Well, well, well. Who would have imagined that just three pecks of my beak could have such power as that! That was one of Jonathan Goforth's favorite stories and with good reason. Few Christians have been so tempted to carnal pride as was he, for few have been the human instrument of such remarkable revivals or the object of such praise. A Roman Catholic servant girl, in a home where the Goforth's often revisited, said, "I have often watched Dr. Goforth's face and wondered if God looks like him." Charles G. Trumbull said of him, "He was an electric, radiant personality, flooding his immediate environment with sunlight that was deep in his heart and shone on his face. And God used him in mighty revivals."



It was as true of Goforth as of Robert M. M'Cheyne that all who knew him "felt the breathing of the hidden life of God." He knew the folly of self-reliance. He knew whence power came and to whom the

praise belonged. So as a young man he chose Zechariah 4:6 as his life's motto.

The sunlight in his heart! The divine reflection on his face! The breathing of the hidden life of God! "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD."

Everything in the character and career of this amazing man can be outlined in terms of the work and witness of the Holy Spirit in his yielded, trusting life.

Jonathan Goforth, the seventh of eleven children, was born February 10, 1859, on his father's farm near London, Ontario, Canada. His devout mother influenced him to pray and to love and to read and memorize the Scriptures. Something of the hardships endured by the family is indicated by the fact that the father once went to Hamilton for food and walked through the bush all the way back, a distance of seventy miles, with a sack of flour on his back. By diligent effort, Jonathan managed to keep up with his class in school, although he was under the handicap of being obliged to work on the farm each year from April to October.

When he was fifteen years of age, his father put him in charge of their second farm which was twenty miles from the home farm. "Work hard," said his father. "At harvest I'll return and inspect." In later years, Goforth stirred many an audience as he told of his arduous labors that summer, of his father's return in the fall, and of how his heart thrilled when his father, after inspecting the fields of beautiful waving grain, turned to him and smiled. "That smile," he would say, "was all the reward I wanted. I knew my father was pleased. So will it be, dear Christians, if we are faithful to the trust our Heavenly Father has given us. His smile of approval will be our blessed reward."

At the age of eighteen, while Jonathan was finishing his high school work, he came under the influence of Rev. Lachlan Cameron, a true minister of Christ. He went one Sunday to Rev. Cameron's church and heard a sermon from God's Word that cut deeply and exactly suited his need. The Holy Spirit used the Word to bring him under conviction and that day he yielded to the tender constraints of Christ. "Henceforth," said he, "my life belongs to Him who gave His life for me."

Under this impulse, he became an active, growing Christian. He sent for a supply of tracts and startled the staid Presbyterian elders by standing Sunday after Sunday at the church door, giving each person a tract. Soon thereafter, he began a Sunday evening service in an old school house about a mile from his home. He instituted the practice of family worship and besought the Lord for the salvation of his father. Several months later his father took a public stand for Christ.

About this time, his faith was subjected to a severe

testing. His teacher was a blatant follower of the infidel Tom Paine, and his classmates, influenced by the teacher, made his life miserable by their jeers and mockery. The foundations seemed to be giving way and in a mood of desperation Jonathan turned to God's Word. In consequence of an earnest, day-and-night search of the Word, his faith was firmly established and all his classmates, also his teacher, were brought back from infidelity. The next great influence in Jonathan's life came through a book and then a collection of books. A saintly old Scotchman, Mr. Bennett, one day handed him a well-worn copy of the Memoirs of Robert Murray McCheyne, saying, "Read this, my boy; it will do you good." It did! Stretched out on the dry leaves in the woods, he was soon so absorbed in the book he did not notice the passing of the hours. When the lengthening shadows of sunset aroused him, he arose a new man. The story of McCheyne's spiritual struggles, sacrifices, and victories stirred him to the depths and was used of God's Spirit to turn his life from selfish ambitions to the holy calling of being a seeker of souls. In view of his intention to enter Knox College to prepare for the ministry, Rev. Cameron arranged to give him lessons in Latin and Greek. He also loaned him a number of books by Bunyan, Baxter, Boston, and Spurgeon. Goforth "devoured" them with rich blessing. But his main book was the Bible. He arose two hours earlier each morning in order to have unhurried time for the study of the Word before going to work or to school.

Young Goforth was now spiritually ready for God to deal with him again. One epochal day, he went to hear an address by the heroic missionary pioneer, George L. Mackay of Formosa. Full of the Holy Spirit, like Peter and Paul and Stephen of old, Dr. Mackay pressed home the needs and claims of the heathen world, especially of Formosa. He told how he had been going far and wide in Canada, seeking missionary reinforcements; but so far, he had not found even one young man willing to respond. Simply but powerfully, he continued, "I am going back alone. It will not be long before my bones will be lying on some Formosan hillside. To me the heartbreak is that no young man has heard the call to come and carry on the work that I have begun."

As Goforth heard these words he was "overwhelmed with shame." He describes his reactions as follows: "There was I, bought with the precious blood of Jesus Christ, daring to dispose of my life as I pleased. Then and there I capitulated to Christ. From that hour I became a foreign missionary."

Note well the words, "From that hour I became a foreign missionary." An ocean voyage does not transform a lukewarm Christian into a glowing brand for God.

Jonathan's mother was a capable seamstress and in the last days before his departure for Knox College she often worked far into the night preparing his wardrobe. Little did she imagine how the cut of his garments and the fine hand

stitches would cause him to be an object of ridicule in the city. He arrived at the college with ardent expectations concerning the friendly reception and Christian fellowship that awaited him. However, he was soon disillusioned by the glances and guffaws of the students. Despite his very limited finances, he determined to alter the situation. He purchased a quantity of cloth which he planned to take to a city seamstress in order to have a new outfit made. Learning what he had done, his college mates one night took him from his room by force, put his head through a hole they had cut in one end of the material and made him drag the cloth up and down the hall through a gauntlet of hilarious students. In his humiliation that such a thing could happen in a Christian college, he spent hours over his Bible and on his knees in the first great struggle of his life.

On his first day in Toronto, Jonathan walked through the slum section praying that God would open a way whereby he might take the Gospel to the needy homes and hearts of that area; and the first Sunday morning found him preaching in a jail – a practice he continued throughout his college course. An unreservedly, as his studies would allow, he gave himself to evangelistic calling in the homes of the slums and to the work of different rescue missions. The stories he told of his experiences with degraded sinners caused much mirth among the students. It is significant, however, that later the students of Knox College sent him out to China as their missionary – a remarkable tribute to the reality and power of his Christian character.

He exhibited a fervent zeal for souls. At the opening of a new fall session at college, the principal asked Jonathan how many homes he had visited during the summer vacations. "Nine hundred sixty," was the reply. "Well, Goforth, if you don't take any scholarships in Greek and Hebrew, at least there is one book that you are going to be well versed in and that is the book of Canadian human nature." Indeed, not only were many souls saved but many valuable lessons learned, for as he discovered later, there is no essential difference between Canadian and Chinese human nature. During his years in college and in slum work, he was often down to the last penny; but God proved faithful in every test. Like George Mueller and Hudson Taylor, he learned to trust God utterly for all his needs.

He also learned to trust the Spirit's guidance in all circumstances. On one occasion, when scheduled to speak at a certain place on Sunday, he found he had only sufficient money to buy a ticket one station short of where he was to speak. After praying for divine guidance he bought the ticket and rode to that station, then began to walk the remaining ten miles. When he had covered approximately eight miles, he came upon a group of men repairing the road. He engaged them in friendly conversation, pointed them to the only "name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved", and invited them to the service the following day. To his great joy, several of them turned up and at least one of them was saved. In referring to this later he would say, "I would gladly walk ten

miles any day to bring one lost soul to Christ." He was indeed a missionary long before he reached China. It was said of him, "When he found his own soul needed Jesus Christ, it became a passion with him to take Jesus Christ to every soul."

He did not hesitate to enter saloons and brothels. In these places, he won for Christ a number of broken, disreputable persons. One night as he was coming out of a street that had a particularly evil reputation, a policeman met him and said, "How have you the courage to go into those places? We policeman never go there except in two's or three's." "I never walk alone, either," replied Goforth. "There is always Someone with me."

At one time he was walking along the road from Aspidin to Huntsville, a distance of ten miles, calling at every house. Years later, a lady wrote of the abiding blessings that ensued upon the visits of this "Spirit-filled young man" and she concluded, "He walked in the power of the Holy Spirit."

"I never walk alone! I would walk ten miles any day to bring one soul to Christ!" He walked in the power of the Holy Spirit!

It was in connection with his mission work in Toronto that Goforth met Rosalind Bell-Smith. She was an Episcopalian, a member of a cultured and wealthy family, and an artist. She was also a born-again Christian and longed to live a life of service to God. The day she met Goforth, she noted both the shabbiness of his dress and the challenge of his eyes. A few days later at a mission meeting, she picked up Jonathan's Bible, which was lying on a chair, observed that it was marked from cover to cover and noted that parts of it were almost in shreds from frequent use. "That's the man I want to marry," she said to herself. A few months later she accepted his proposal of marriage upon the condition he himself stipulated, namely, that in all things he should put his Master's work before her. Little did she dream what that promise would cost her through the long years ahead. The first, though not the greatest, price it cost her was the engagement ring of which she had dreamed. Jonathan explained that he needed every penny for his ministry of distributing Testaments and tracts. "This," she said, "was my first lesson in