

**CLIMBING:**

MEMORIES

of

A MISSIONARY'S WIFE

by

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**CHAPTER FOURTEEN**

**THE HOLY OF HOLIES**

**"Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27)**

OUR 1916-17 furlough was an enforced one, owing to my husband's serious break in health. (*Goforth of China*, chapter 17) On arriving in Toronto, we found the Missionary Rest Home a welcome refuge. Ruth was with us, and Paul soon joined us, a semi-invalid from the Great War. Helen, taking her nurse's course in the Toronto General Hospital, spent most of her off time with us. Our own room, a small one, became the rendezvous for us all.

It was while living under these circumstances that I received an urgent request for a brief story of GOD's dealing with me in a spiritual experience I had just passed through. I shrank from writing of such a sacred experience, but finally consented, only on condition that the Lord make it unmistakably plain it was according to His will. To attempt to write such a story without time for quiet waiting on the Lord, I could not; so, without saying a word to anyone, even my husband, I asked the Lord for a sign - it was to give me our room, all to myself, for one week! I just left the matter in this way and waited.

Two days later, a friend called. Before she left, it was arranged that all of us would accompany her to Muskoka for the summer. We were to be ready to start two days later. I thought: "This means I am not to write that story." Then Helen arrived, and, on hearing our plans for Muskoka, exclaimed: "But, Mother, you are not to go with the others. I'm to have my tonsils out, and I want you to visit me each day of the week I am to be in bed!" As I listened to my daughter, I could only sit quite still in wonder and awe at the way the Lord had wrought for me. Of that God-given, quiet, restful week, alone with GOD, I cannot write except to say the story was written as He guided.

The experience I am about to record covers, in part, the testimony referred to. It was written and published over twenty years ago but is such a vital part of my life's story that it cannot be withheld from these pages.

On our first arrival home, many requests came for my husband to take meetings. When it became known that he could not, I was urged to take his place. But the months of ceaseless overland travel through Inland China with my husband, who was evidently breaking, the nursing, and the anxiety, had all told on me. I felt physically worn, spiritually dead, mentally numb. But deep in my heart I craved for some fresh spiritual blessing, for fresh vision that might enable me to speak once more out of an overflowing heart.

How true, how very true is the sentiment expressed in the following lines:

*Thy soul must overflow  
If thou another soul would'st reach;  
It needs the overflow of heart  
To give the lips full speech!*

The tender, loving Lord saw just what His child needed and once again worked for her beyond all she could ask or think.

We had been but a short time at the Rest Home when a friend carried me off, insisting that I needed a rest. She took me to Niagara-on-the-Lake, where a Bible conference was being held. There I found myself in a beautiful hotel room with my friends near by. The following morning we gathered under some trees by the auditorium, before the meeting. The scenery was wonderful to me after poor, dried-up China. Through the trees could be glimpsed the beautiful Niagara river flowing down till it entered the lake. Begging my friends to leave me there, I gave myself to the exquisite enjoyment of my surroundings.

A short time passed. Suddenly there came an impelling to enter the auditorium. I obeyed, but the place being full, I walked forward and finally found a seat immediately in front of the pulpit. The speaker was just beginning his address. He was a stranger, but from almost his first sentence his message gripped me.

He drew simply but vividly, first a picture of an ordinary, all too common Christian life. If he had drawn the picture from my everyday life experience, he could not have given it other than he did. Sometimes on the mountain-top with visions of GOD and His mighty power; then the sagging, the dimming of vision, coldness, discouragement, even definite disobedience and a time of down-grade experience. Again through some sorrow or trial, there would come a return and seeking of the Lord, with again the higher Christian experiences. In a word, an up and down life of intermingled victory and defeat.

The speaker then asked all who truly sought for GOD's highest and best, yet who knew the picture he had drawn was true of their Christian life and experience, to hold up their hands. Being in the front seat and realizing many behind knew who I was, and that they thought of me as a "good missionary," I kept my hand down. It was too humiliating to acknowledge that picture as representing me! But the Spirit of GOD strove with me. "If you keep your hand down you are a hypocrite! If you truly want GOD's best, humble yourself." So up went my hand.

Then the speaker drew another picture: it was the Christian life as GOD had not only Planned it for His children, but had made abundant provision for their living it. He described it as a life of Victory, not defeat, of peace and trust, not struggle and worry. All through his address, I kept

thinking, "Yes, it's wonderful, but I've tried so often and failed, I doubt if it is possible." Then the speaker ended by urging us to go over the texts listed on a slip of paper to be given free at the close of the meeting. He emphasized the importance of standing on GOD's Word.

The following morning I rose early, as soon as it was light enough to see. On my knees, I read from the list I have mentioned, all the texts given. But before I had gone half way down the list, I saw clearly GOD's Word taught, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that ***the overcoming, victorious life in CHRIST is the normal life GOD has planned for His children***. In the two days that followed, clearer light came, with a dawning hope that this life might be possible for me.

When returning home by boat to Toronto, an American tourist from the southern States and I discussed what we had been hearing at the conference. Our experiences were very similar. On parting, we gave each other our addresses, with the compact that if he found the secret of the victorious life he would write to me and if I found it I would write to him. (Unfortunately I lost his address.)

The day after reaching home, I picked up the little booklet, *The Life That Wins*, and, going to my son's bedside, I asked him to allow me to read the booklet aloud, as it was the personal testimony of Charles G. Trumbull, editor of the "*Sunday School Times*," the man who had been a great blessing to me at the conference.

As I began to read, quite a number gathered around, listening with deep interest. I read on till I came to the words: "At last I realized that JESUS CHRIST was actually and literally within me." I stopped amazed. The sun seemed suddenly to come from under a cloud and flood my soul with light! How blind I had been! I saw as in a flash the secret of victory. *It was just JESUS CHRIST Himself!*

But the thought of victory was for the moment lost sight of in the inexpressible joy of the new vision and realization of CHRIST.

For days I seemed as if in a dream. Fearing lest I be, as it were, "carried off my feet," by what had come to me, I determined to seek the advice of one, who had for many years been our beloved and honored foreign missionary secretary, Bro. Dr. R. P. McKay, a man known for his sanctity and common sense. (My husband was away, as I remember.)

Never can I forget a detail of that interview. Dr. McKay listened sympathetically while I told all. I ended by saying, "Do you think I am going too far in this? I have just sent off to missionaries in China fifty copies of the booklet, *The Life that Wins*."

Dr. McKay smiled as he replied, "No, Mrs. Goforth, for I have just sent out to ministers and others several hundred copies of the same booklet."

Then he gravely added: "Mrs. Goforth, I am amazed; amazed that you have only now come to apprehend this truth of CHRIST's indwelling. You have been the wife of Jonathan Goforth for many years. His messages were aglow with this truth. ***IT IS THE HOLY OF HOLIES OF OUR CHRISTIAN FAITH.***"

"Yes, Dr. McKay," I replied humbly, "I begin to realize this and wonder at my blindness. One sentence my husband so often uses has come back to me these days: all the resources of the Godhead are at our disposal!"

Dr. McKay then said: "*It seems that this, the deepest truth, the union of the Divine and human, is not received by simple head knowledge but must be apprehended through the HOLY SPIRIT's revealing.*"

I left Dr. McKay strengthened in the belief that what had come to me was indeed of the HOLY SPIRIT. But I was determined to search the Scriptures and stand only on them. That summer I laid aside all secular reading and, with a concordance, dug into my Bible; and, oh, the wonderful treasures I found! The line of study was entirely on the union of the Divine and human. (*How I Know GOD Answers Prayer*, page 139).

Later I discovered that the words: GOD would "**make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; WHICH IS CHRIST IN YOU, THE HOPE OF GLORY**" (Colossians 1:27) had changed the lives of many who later became marvelously used of GOD. Dr. A. B. Simpson was but one of these.

Beloved fellow climbers, oh, let us ask ourselves "WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF WE ALL BELIEVED GOD? Would we justify ourselves in speaking the irritable and irritating word? Would we dare spend time in dwelling upon our reading that which would soil or desecrate the temple of CHRIST's pure HOLY SPIRIT?"

More than twenty years have gone by since I passed through the experience of which I have just written. Many, many times in these years have I been humbled and brought low because of disobedience to the heavenly vision, but, praise GOD, His fountain of cleansing always has been open, and His heart of love always ready to forgive and renew. Indeed, as I look back over these past twenty years, the goodness of the Lord to me has been so great, His sustaining, protecting, guiding presence so manifest, I seem to lose sight of my failures in the multitude of His mercies. Truly, "**He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities**" (Psalm 103:10).

The following story has been such a blessing to myself, that I want to pass it on to other climbers.

In a certain small town lived a blacksmith, a bad man, leader of the wildest set. This man became soundly converted, out and out for his new Master. One day, some months after the great change came, an old "pal" appeared at the forge.

"Look here," he said; "why don't you give up this whole religion business and come back to us. Ye have had a sight of trouble these months; sickness and death and what not, the like ye never had."

The blacksmith was working at an important spring. He motioned to the other to watch while he worked, silently heating pieces of metal red hot, then joining to the spring. But at last a piece would not join, though he heated it again and again. It would not take the "temper" and had to be

thrown on the scrap heap. Then, turning to his old comrade, the blacksmith said: "Since I gave myself to the Lord JESUS, I see *that's the way He deals with His children. So I sez, O Lord, hammer me all ye will, but don't throw me on the scrap heap!*"

Years have passed since hearing this story of the blacksmith; and many times when passing through some furnace experience have I, too, raised the cry, "Lord, hammer me all you will, but don't throw me on the scrap heap."

How often, throughout my long, changeful life, have I wondered at the Lord's patience with me! I know now why He *never threw me on the scrap heap.*

He knew when I confessed Him in the little Cross Sunday-school room and took Him publicly as my Master, I was as sincere and wholly yielded as a child could be. He knew I based my acceptance on His own words: "**Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out,**" and HE KEPT HIS WORD.

We were still at the Missionary Rest Home in the summer of 1916 when I met with the following blessed experience, which taught the important lesson of being always a ready channel for GOD to use.

One morning, when ready to start for a day's shopping in the city (Toronto), I asked the Lord to enable me to bring a blessing to someone that day. But to my disappointment, though I watched closely all day, no opening came. About sundown I reached the car terminal to see the Mimico car just disappearing. There would be a wait of twenty-five or thirty minutes, so I returned to the waiting-room and seated myself on a long bench not far from a woman intent on reading a newspaper, which, to my surprise, proved to be the "Sunday School Times"! A thrill of joy came with the realization that this was my opportunity. So, sidling up to the woman, I said, "What a wonderful paper that is!"

For a moment, the woman looked resentful, but softened and replied, "Yes, but there is so much I can't understand. How I wish I had someone to explain about this victorious life of which Mr. Trumbull writes so much."

Struggling with the deep emotion I was feeling, I told her of my prayer that morning and of what Mr. Trumbull had meant to me at the Niagara Conference: how GOD had used him to open my blind eyes to the glorious teaching of CHRIST's indwelling through the HOLY SPIRIT. The woman grasped my hand in both of hers and listened hungrily as I was speaking. All too soon the Mimico car was heard.

As we parted, the woman said, "Surely GOD led you to me. You have given me just what I needed."

We parted like old friends, though knowing each other but a few brief moments, bound by the marvelous tie of Christian love. Oh, the inexpressible joy of such an evidence of CHRIST's own presence!

One of the great regrets now as I look back on life, is that I so seldom gave the Lord a chance to

use me - so often too busy - too much taken up by lesser things to heed the cry of souls at hand!

In closing this most sacred, intimate chapter of these memories, the question faces me, Should I withhold an incident which tells of progress - of victory? I have been frank in revealing struggles and failures. Surely it will encourage you, my fellow climbers, to tell also of what the apprehension of the Lord JESUS CHRIST meant in after life.

On our journey back to China after that 1916-17 furlough, often I talked with my dear husband of the future, wondering if the Lord would ever give me the joy of knowing I had in some measure retrieved that which I knew had followed me down through the years: "*If she would only live more as she preaches.*" Oh, how I longed to live so that the Chinese could see CHRIST in me. My impatience and quickness of speech were my besetting sins.

Many a man had I trained to be an efficient cook and really valuable servant only to lose him suddenly because of my lack of patience, giving a rebuke well deserved perhaps, but given in anger.

Many months (I forget just how long) had passed after our return to our Changte station when one evening one of our leading evangelists came in just when my husband was about to start for the street chapel. The evangelist showed plainly he wished to speak to my husband alone, so I left the room. When he had gone, I returned to find my husband standing by the table with a strange look on his face. He seemed deeply moved, yet glad. I exclaimed, "Whatever is the matter?"

"Rose," he said "you could never guess what he came for. He came as a deputation from the other evangelists and workers, yes, and servants, too, to ask what is the secret of the change in you. Before you went home, none of the servants wanted to serve you, but now they all want to be your servants."

Is it any wonder tears flowed for very joy? But as if to test to the utmost, the Lord was even then preparing a furnace "**seven times heated**" through which, in the days soon to come, we were to pass.

Later that wonderful passage in the Book of Joel came to have a new and blessed meaning to me:

**"I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten"** (Joel 2:25)

~ end of chapter 14 ~

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