

# Ten Years in Canaan

by Daniel Steele

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*Daniel Steele reflects on a decade of unwavering joy and spiritual growth in Christ, emphasizing the balance between zeal and wisdom in ministry.*

**Scripture:** Proverbs 16:9, Ecclesiastes 3:1, John 4:14, 1 Corinthians 6:19, 1 Corinthians 9:24, 2 Corinthians 4:16, Colossians 3:16, 1 Timothy 4:8

**Topics:** "Spiritual Growth", "Holy Spirit"

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## Description

Daniel Steele reflects on a decade of spiritual growth and freedom from doubt, fear, and sin, emphasizing the abiding glory and joy found in Christ through the Holy Spirit. Despite facing physical challenges and life's trials, Steele's inner peace and joy remain unshaken, illustrating the deep well of everlasting life within believers. He highlights the importance of external worship, sacraments, and confession of Christ as vital expressions of the hidden life in Christ, rejecting a mysticism that disregards these practices. Steele also shares a cautionary tale about balancing zealous work for God with physical limitations, urging for sanctified common sense in serving God without neglecting self-care.

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## Transcript

A DECADE in the land which floweth with milk and honey is completed this day. Greater indeed than my spiritual birthday is this anniversary of my emancipation from the triple despotism of doubt, and fear, and sin, when, in the words of Frances Ridley Havergal, "My whole life was lifted into the sunshine, of which all I had previously experienced was but as pale and passing April gleams, compared with the fullness of summer glory." My adorable Saviour and King, this morning, gives my long unused pen the power to put on record, the testimony that this glory has not been done away. It is not the transient glory of Moses' countenance, but rather the perpetually-abiding, and hence, rather glorious ministration of the Spirit. My summer does last all the year. My joy in Christ has waxed, not waned, during these ten blissful years. As if to prove that this is not mere animal feeling, the result of favorable bodily conditions and an agreeable environment, God has been pleased to put forth His hand and touch my body, taking away my strength, while He has given to me no exemption from what men call troubles, crosses and disappointments; yet none of these things move me. The storms which rudely sweep the earth's surface produce not even a ripple on the face of the water in the deep well, "And your joy no man taketh from you;" nor do life's changes and reverses. While abroad in foreign lands in quest of health, a week amid the thick fogs of the Atlantic and the thicker fogs and social desolation of a stranger in the streets of London, there was constant sunshine in my soul. Amid the glaciers of the high Alps, how my heart did glow like a furnace,

with love divine.

"No changes of season or place

Could make any change in my mind."

How emphatically does my experience confirm Tholuck's comment on John 4. 14: "But the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." "The figure means this water will once for all be received into the inner nature, will be immanent in man and will attend him through every stage of his being, even to eternity. The water of life which Christ gives will be a self-dependent spring within the heart. To take another image: the spark which goes forth from the fire of the Redeemer becomes in every human breast a self-existent flame." I find it more and more in my power to do what Gavazzi, the Italian, once said in my pulpit that he was enabled to do amid the multitude: "to create a little solitude around me, and hold delightful communion with my Heavenly Father." I do not find in this enthronement of Christ within, through the abiding Comforter, any tendency to that perilous mysticism which rejects outward worship, and finds the sacraments no longer a means of grace. Yea, rather, I find that external worship and the Lord's table are the needed means for manifesting this hidden life; for all life has its appropriate modes of expression. The constant confession of Christ, mighty to save, is my vital breath. Without this my soul would fall into spiritual asphyxia. My tongue and pen are my spiritual lungs. If God should let me survive the paralysis of both of these, I will spell out to the world the unutterable love of Christ with the deaf alphabet. When I cannot do this, He will give me an immortal tongue, and He will never hear the last of my praises for His unspeakable gift.

I cannot close without a word of caution. The experience of love made perfect is an impulse to incessant work; not as some vainly say, an inclination to the lounge and the rocking chair. My error should be a beacon to others. I felt that I could not rest, but must be constantly proclaiming with voice and type this full salvation. After eight years of vacationless speaking, public Bible readings, and writing sermons, tracts, commentaries and books, some of which are published and others in manuscript, I found I was driving at such a speed that my axles were ablaze, and my chariot in danger of being consumed before I had reached the goal. It is good to be zealous, but not wise to let the zeal of the Lord's house eat us up, yet this is better than rest. But there is a medium between these extremes. It is the business of sanctified common sense to find this middle way and walk therein. The church militant might have had Alfred Cookman's plume waving at the head of the column a score of years longer, if he had found this path. There is a limit to our physical powers. It is desirable to work nearly up to this limit; it is perilous to over-step it. Entire sanctification to God will not neutralize the sad sequences of violated physical law. Nature will inflict her penalty, though the soul may be walking arm in arm with nature's Author, -- the Son of God. There is guilt only in the infraction of moral law; there is suffering and loss in every violation of natural law however holy the aim. We acknowledge a feeling of admiration for the heroic advice of Bishop Thomson to the missionaries in India, "Go ahead and accomplish all you can for Christ, and die, and go to heaven the first good chance you get." More wise was Cromwell's advice to his army, "Trust in God and keep your powder dry." The Christian warrior should fight valiantly, and yet retain his power as long as possible. Let no man be eager in fighting to grasp a martyr's crown, but if God selects you for a martyr, flinch not at the flames.

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