

Testimony

by Daniel Steele

The sermon emphasizes the importance of testimony in the Christian faith and the need for a witnessing Church and ministry.

Scripture: Acts 1:8, Romans 8:16, 1 Corinthians 2:4, Ephesians 5:18, 2 Timothy 1:7

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Personal Testimony"

Description

Daniel Steele preaches about the transformative power of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers, emphasizing the importance of personal testimony as a powerful tool to witness to others. He highlights the need for a witnessing Church and ministry, urging Christians to seek the baptism of the Holy Spirit for a deeper spiritual experience. Steele shares personal experiences and reflections on his journey to spiritual fullness, emphasizing the joy, freedom, and power that come from a close relationship with Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Transcript

"I testify the Gospel of the grace of God." ---St. Paul.

A philosopher has said, "The experience of one rational being is of interest to all who become cognizant of it." This is because we are so constituted as to be singularly affected by like causes. Let half a dozen persons, far gone with pulmonary consumption, publish to the world their complete cure by the same remedy, and the glad news would flash across the continents and beneath the seas, irradiating with hope myriads of sick chambers. Hence the value of testimony. Justice, in her walk through the earth, leans upon this staff. The entire science of medicine and art of healing have been founded upon it. The pharmacopeia has been filled through the attestations of cures. Who can better authenticate the healing than the healed patient? Who better than the cleansed soul can certify his spiritual transfiguration, and the power by which it was accomplished? Experience is one of the chief elements of evangelical power. On the critical occasions St. Paul, the master logician, when liberty, or even life, hung on the balance of a Roman governor's will, and some most persuasive argument was needed, told the simple story of his conversion from being a persecutor to a preacher of the faith he once destroyed. In fact, his commission, three times renewed, was not to preach but to testify. "When the omnipresent Jesus," as Bishop Simpson graphically describes him, "standing as picket-guard for the little Church at Damascus," took Saul of Tarsus prisoner, he said to him, "I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee." Ananias

assured him that he should be a "witness unto all men;" and years afterward, while slumbering in the castle of Antonia, a prisoner, the Lord Jesus stood by him and said, "Be of good cheer, Paul, for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so mayest thou bear witness also at Rome."

Testimony is the most cogent argument. A herald is useful to make proclamation of the law, and of the will of the court, but, make way! here comes one more important to the ends of justice -- an unimpeachable witness. All jurists tell us that one word of authentic evidence outweighs ten thousand words of professional pleading. The witness must speak, the plea may go to the jury without argument, but it will be folly to send the argument without the testimony. We fear the modern Christian Church is making this sad blunder, when, respecting the question of full salvation in this life, she listens more attentively to the speculations of theorizers than to the declarations of witnesses attesting that Jesus is a complete Saviour.

It is not often, as we know, that the witness and the advocate are, in our courts, combined in the same person. But all jurors know how much more weighty are an advocate's words, when summoned from the bar to the witness stand, he, with uplifted right hand, solemnly swears to the facts. There is now no professional quibbling, no insincere and cunning speech. O if every Christian pulpit could be for only one Sunday converted from an advocate's stand to a witness box, and each anointed preacher should say, "Come, and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul," What a stir there would be in the unbelieving world! We verily believe that they would give the verdict of truth to the Man of Calvary, "and falling down would acknowledge that God is with us of a very truth." The great want of the age is a witnessing Church and ministry. The want lying back of this is something to speak of an overwhelming visitation of the Divine Spirit.

The Church of Christ as it is visible in the world, exhibits nowadays much of the aspect worn by the nation of the Jews in the time of our Saviour; there is, with an almost universal profession of Christianity, much Sadducean infidelity and licentiousness, as well as much Pharisaic display and outside godliness. It is only a few who, in hope of being like the Lord at his appearing, are now purifying themselves, as He is pure. There has been a great falling away from the faith -- from the living, world-conquering faith. The nutshell of orthodoxy remains, but the kernel of vital godliness has shrank almost into a thing of naught. Individual and local revivals testify that the gift of the Spirit has not been withdrawn from the Church; but the gift was made to the Church as a whole, and has not the Church as a whole resisted, and grieved, and well nigh quenched the Spirit?¹

To awaken and quicken the whole Church, every anointed soul is called to testify with tongue and pen to the reality of the Divine anointing, attainable now by all who seek for it with the whole heart, trusting in the promise of the Father for the mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit. In all humility, and solely for the glory of Christ, the marvelous world of the Holy Spirit is put on record. Surely he who has had this experience has been led by a way which he knew not! But the path is known now, and the retraced footprints may encourage some desponding soul: --

"Footprints that perhaps another,
Sailing o'er life's stormy main,
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
Seeing, may take heart again."

In November, 1870, a college professor,² after an earnest and persistent struggle, entered into a spiritual enlargement utterly inconceivable before, a permanent spiritual exaltation and fullness which found an outlet through tongue and pen. Distant friends were notified by private letters. One of these was addressed to Gilbert Haven, editor of "Zion's Herald," who assumed to publish it to the world with an editorial preface, entitling it, THE FULLNESS OF BLESSING. The preface by the editor is retained: --

Much is said about the Higher Life; less is felt of its great fullness. An experience is worth a thousand theories. The following letter, written for private eyes, is worthy of note as a testimony to this Divine filling of the soul by the Holy Ghost. The writer is one of the first scholars and writers in the Church, holding high official position in one of her colleges, a man of great sobriety of temper and evenness of character. He has been a steadfast, devout Christian for many years. An anthracite coal he would be called by all his acquaintances. An anthracite coal on fire this letter shows him to be. Many who are incredulous as to the possibility of such experiences would not doubt the credibility of this witness, nor should it be doubted of many others.

That there is a Pauline experience of the heights and depths of grace divine, that the Holy Ghost can now fall on the believer in fullness of power, it is impossible to doubt in the face of multitudinous testimony from all ages and branches of the Church. May this experience win many to a like consecration of faith and power. The familiarity of its style arises from its privacy. It will not make it any the less attractive. There is also a deprecatory vein as to past experience and efforts which his many admirers will not accept as quite the fact, his word having often been with power. -- Ed.

"I have experienced a most marvelous manifestation of the love of Christ to me. O the unsearchable riches of Christ! Do you know how unspeakably precious Jesus is when you trust him fully? My experience was never marked. I never could tell the day of my conversion. My evidence was chiefly an inference, rarely the direct testimony of the Spirit. Hence my utterances have been feeble and destitute of power. But all this is gone by. God has so certified this blessed Gospel to my soul, that I shall no more blow the trumpet with an uncertain sound.

"Rev. Mr. Earle spent four days here a month ago. The spirit of his preaching, and his success, and his remarks at his farewell on what he styles "the rest of faith," set me thinking and praying, and confessing the coldness of my heart, and my satisfaction in past days with the mere perfunctory performance of Christian duty. I began to pray for the baptism of the Spirit to enable me to carry on the revival which has broken out in the village. God answered my prayer most graciously. I am at times so overwhelmed with the love of God that I cannot stand the pressure on the earthen vessel, and have to beg God to stay his hand.

"The joy is indescribable. I am a free man in Christ Jesus -- "free indeed;" free from the fear of man. I can approach any person anywhere. I am free in my utterance. My mouth is opened, my heart is enlarged toward sinners. I can't help preaching. As the boy said of the whistle, "It whistles itself." Every body is astonished at the complete and wonderful transformation through which I have passed. There is a new meaning to the hymns of Charles Wesley especially to 'Wrestling Jacob,' which I always admired aesthetically, but was never in experimental sympathy with. O how real the promises are! I have been treating them like our irredeemable greenbacks, not representing gold today, but payable in coin at some indefinite future time. I have found out, to my unspeakable Joy, that God never has suspended specie

payment; that behind every word of promise there is gold coin in the treasury of heaven.

"I can't interpret the blessing; whether it is the second or third, it certainly is the greatest that I ever received. IT STAYS. It is very strange that my mouth should be filled with laughter, and my tongue with praises -- the coolest and least demonstrative man in the Methodist Episcopal Church.

"Last Thursday, November 17, I think I went where Paul did when he heard things not lawful, not possible to utter. My whole being, soul and body, was pervaded with the indescribable joy of the Holy Spirit. The nervous sensations were delicious, a thousandfold more than any I ever experienced before. I believe that on that day -- though the Divine influence had been descending for two weeks -- my great Joshua brought me in, and allotted me a portion in the mountain of God. If I should derive my theology from my feelings I should have to adopt one of the five points of Calvin,

"But this I do find,

We two are so joined

He'll not live in glory and leave me behind."

"The same feeling appears in "Wrestling Jacob;" after his victory he exclaims: --

"Nor have I power from Thee to move;

Thy nature and Thy name is Love."

This private letter, published anonymously, having been ascribed to another, who would have the ungracious task of disowning a work of grace unless the author should avow himself, made it necessary to publish the following CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE: --

"I have been content with a daily confession with the mouth, and private letters to my friends, carefully refraining from any appearance of seeking to be lionized in the public prints. But my friends urge me to run this risk for the strengthening of my brethren in this age, when a subtle skepticism respecting Christian experience is poisoning and paralyzing myriads of professed followers of Christ. At my conversion, thirty years ago, through weakness of faith, the seal of my justification was impressed so slightly, that the word Abba, my Father, was scarcely legible; yet, in answer to a mother's prayers in my infancy, consecrating with conscious acceptance her son to the Christian ministry, I was called to preach, but called with a 'woe unto me,' instead of an 'anointing with the oil of gladness.' I will not dwell upon the unpleasant theme of a ministry of twenty years almost fruitless in conversions through a lack of an unction from the Holy One. My great error was in depending on the truth alone to break stony hearts. The Holy Spirit, though formally acknowledged and invoked, was practically ignored. My personal experience during much of this time consisted in

'Sorrows, and sins, and doubts, and fears,

A howling wilderness.'

But an evangelist of extraordinary power to awaken slumbering professors and to bring sinners to the foot of the cross, came across my path. I sought to find the hidings of his power, and discovered that it was the

fullness of the Holy Spirit enjoyed as an abiding blessing, styled by him 'the rest of faith.' I was convicted. I sought earnestly the same great gift, but could not exercise faith till I had made public confession of my sin in preaching self more than Christ, and being satisfied with the applause of the Church above the approval of her Divine Head. I immediately began to feel a strange freedom daily increasing, the cause of which I did not distinctly apprehend. I was then led to seek the conscious and joyful presence of the Comforter in my heart.

"Having settled the question that this was not merely an apostolic blessing, but for all ages, 'He shall abide with you forever,' I took the promise, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, He will give it you.' The 'verily' had to me all the strength of an oath. Out of the 'whatsoever' I took all temporal blessings, not because I did not believe them to be included, but because I was not then seeking them. I then wrote my own name in the promise, not to exclude others, but to be sure that I included myself. Then writing underneath these words, 'Today is the day of salvation,' I found that my faith had three points to master: the Comforter; for me; now. Upon the promise I ventured with an act of appropriating faith, claiming the Comforter as my right in the name of Jesus. For several hours I clung by naked faith, praying and repeating Charles Wesley's hymn --

'Jesus, shine all-victorious love,

Shed in my heart abroad.'

I then ran over in my mind the great facts in Christ's life, especially dwelling upon Gethsemane and Calvary; his ascension, priesthood, and all-atoning sacrifice. Suddenly I became conscious of a mysterious power exerting itself upon my sensibilities. My physical sensations, though not of a nervous temperament, in good health, sitting alone and calm, were like those of electric sparks passing through my bosom with slight but painless shocks, melting my hard heart into a fiery stream of love.

"Christ became so unspeakably precious that I instantly dropped all earthly good-reputation, property, friends, family, everything -- in the twinkling of an eye, my soul crying out, --

'None but Christ to me be given,

None but Christ in earth or heaven.'

He stood forth as my Saviour, all radiant in his loveliness, "chiefest among ten thousand." Yet there was no phantasm, or image, or uttered word, apprehended by my intellect. The affections were the sphere of this wonderful phenomenon, best described as 'the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost.' It seemed as if the attraction of Jesus, the loadstone of my soul, was so strong that my heart would be drawn out of my body, and through the college window by which I was sitting, and upward into the sky. O how vivid and real was all this to me! I was more certain that Christ loved me than I was of the existence of the solid earth and shining sun. I intuitively apprehended Christ.

"My college class were just then discussing the subject of the intuitive cognitions. I began to apply Sir William Hamilton's tests of these, namely, that they are simple, incomprehensible, necessary, and universal. The last adjective, of course, could not apply to the intuitive belief of one individual, though subsequent observation abundantly demonstrates that all believers who fulfill the conditions required for awakening the spiritual perceptions have the same intuition of Christ.³ But my consciousness testified that my certainty of Christ's love had the three first-named characteristics, that it was to me even a necessary

truth, the contrary of which was as unthinkable as the annihilation of space. The last remarkable peculiarity remained more than forty days, after which I had hours in which I could conceive the contrary of the proposition, 'Christ loves me.' On such occasions my firm conviction of his love was not an intuition, but an inference from my past experience with the absence of any feeling of condemnation. I no longer doubt Wesley's doctrine of the direct witness of the Spirit as distinct from the testimony of my spirit discerning the fruits of the Spirit and inferring his presence and work. I cannot to this day read the promises without feeling a sudden but delightful shock of an invisible power sweetly applying them to my heart.

"Thus much I think is due to those who would study this manifestation of the Spirit from the standpoint of theology and mental philosophy, a point of view I myself have often wished that remarkable experiences could be seen from. But language is wholly inadequate to express a manifestation of Christ which did not formulate itself in words, but in the mighty, overwhelming pulsations of love. The joy for weeks was unspeakable. The impulse was irresistible to speak of it to everybody, saint or sinner, Protestant or Papist, in public and in private. At the time of this writing, seven weeks from the first manifestation, the ecstasy has subsided into a delicious and unruffled peace, rising into ecstasy only in acts of especial devotion. I find no fear of man, nor of death. I can no longer accuse myself of unbelief, the root of all sin. What may be in me, below the gaze of consciousness, I do not know. I must wait till occasions shall put me to the test. It would not be wise for me to assert that all sinful anger -- there is a righteous anger -- is taken away till I have passed through a college rebellion, or something equally provoking. If sin consists only in active energies, I am not conscious of such dwelling in me. If sin consists in a state, as some with truth assert when they describe original sin, I infer that I am not in such a state, from the absence of sinful energies flowing therefrom, and more especially from the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. This has been accompanied with such a feeling of inward cleanness, that I doubt not that the Purifier has taken up his abode in the temple of my heart. But the direct testimony of the heavenly Guest is love, LOVE, all-consuming LOVE, flaming in the heart of Jesus -- love to me. I feel that sin cannot abide the flames of this furnace kindled to such an intensity about me. If others should insist that it is the direct witness of entire holiness, I could not dispute the assertion, so assured am I, beyond a doubt, that, by the grace of Jesus Christ, I have lived to see the death of the old man, the extinction of 'all filthiness of the flesh and spirit.'

"My personal friends do not need to be informed that the doctrine of entire sanctification, as a specialty, has not been my hobby, but rather my abhorrence, in consequence of the imperfect manner in which it has been inculcated and exemplified. Hence, if there is anything in this experience confirmatory of that doctrine as a distinct work, considering my former attitude toward this subject, my testimony is something like that of Saul of Tarsus to the truth of Christianity. If I have any advice to give to Christians, it is to cease to discuss the subtleties and endless questions arising from entire sanctification or Christian perfection, and all cry mightily to God for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This is certainly promised to all believers in Jesus.

"O that every minister and layman would inquire the way to the upper room in Jerusalem', and there abide till tongues of fire flame from their heads!"

After walking in this marvelous light for the space of a year, the following testimony of the same person was published in order to magnify the grace of our blessed Lord Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit.

A YEAR WITH THE COMFORTER.

"If 'the greatest debtor to grace may speak first,' I arise to testify to the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to the 'rapturous height of that holy delight,' which the abiding Comforter bestows upon me, even me. It is a year the blessed 17th of November since

'Down from on high the blessed Dove

Did come into my breast,

To witness God's eternal love

This is my constant feast.'

"Such an anniversary cannot be permitted to pass by without the grateful erection of a stone of help, a monument of praise to God, 'a spectacle unto angels and to men.' So glorious was the visitation of the Spirit, and so joyful was my soul while entertaining the carrier dove of heaven, bearing the glad evangel of Christ's boundless, fathomless love, that both tongue and pen were kept busy in spreading the ineffable joy. That testimony seems to require another, lest any person, from my silence, may suppose that the fire then kindled has quickly burned out, like a basket of shavings, and left me in darkness.

"There is another reason why I wish to reappear for a moment on Christ's public witness stand. The 'new departure' which the doctrine of full salvation has recently taken, is remarkable for the prominence which it gives to testimony, to the exclusion of speculative theories. The movement so providentially and powerfully begun will lose its momentum just in proportion as it becomes disputatious, and substitutes wrangling for witnessing.

"Never before were there so many believers, of every denomination, honestly and earnestly calling for really clear light on the subject of the higher life. Therefore, let every one who has a heaven-lit torch now lift it high, and keep it aloft, that all may see the light and rejoice therein. 'Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all tribulation, that we may be able to, comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.' Let there be laid before the Church, especially before souls panting after 'all the fullness of God,' the exact transcript of each Christian consciousness under the illumination of the Holy Ghost, so far as language can be a vehicle of that which 'passeth knowledge,' and not only will souls in trouble be comforted, but there will be accumulated a mass of facts out of which some analytic mind -- some theological Sir William Hamilton -- may do what all systemizers have hitherto failed to do, construct out of the Bible and experience a consistent and symmetrical science of Christian perfection.

"When preconceived theories modify testimony, its value is proportionally diminished. This serious defect inheres in the statements of many, who under a dogmatic bias, have unconsciously shaped their expressions to suit the demands of a supposed orthodox ideal. I suppose that it is not possible for me to divest myself entirely of the influence of opinions, and to detail in unmixed purity the changes which the transforming Spirit has wrought in my consciousness. Of this the reader may be assured, that as a witness on a most important question I will endeavor to speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Let him who values his theories more than the truth, not expect me to color my statements to suit the complexion of his opinions.

"In some important particulars my recent experience contradicts my own lifelong beliefs. Sharply defined transitions after regeneration, sudden uplifts in the divine life, had been excluded from my creed as

unphilosophical and unnecessary. I had never, though I had read such things in Christian biography, really believed it possible for a soul to tabernacle on earth a whole year without a cloud, or a doubt, or a temptation, other than an occasional momentary thrust of the adversary, easily parried with the shield of faith. Twelve months ago I should have received with utter incredulity the statement that any one could utter, mentally or orally, a doxology to Jesus three hundred and sixty five days long, with no intermission save that of sleep, and that balmy sleep itself would often flee from the presence of a sweeter delight, the luxury of praise. I find my mistake corrected, that the witness of the Spirit, in its higher manifestations, is intermittent. The reverse is true. It is intermittent in its lower manifestations; in its highest it is constant. All the philosophies I find at fault in the assertion that the human mind cannot endure the strain of high Joy for a long period; and that the more intense, the more evanescent it is.

"I have from the first moment till this hour been impressed with the permanence of this blessing, as if a ceaseless fountain had been opened in my soul. See John 4:14; 7:38, 39. The voice of Jesus to my inward ear is: --

Mine is an unchanging love,

Higher than the heights above,

Deeper than the depths beneath,

Free and faithful, strong as death.'

"Whatever this confidence may be called -- whether the full assurance of faith or the full assurance of hope -- as defined by Wesley in Tyerman's Life, vol. ii, page 491, I am convinced that it is attainable by all, though not necessary to saving faith. God has reserved to himself the prerogative of doing "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" in the outpouring of his wondrous love, and the exhibition of the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe."

"I have been catechised respecting the mental state, or act, immediately previous to the coming of the Comforter, whether there was a specific act of faith. I reply, that my soul had been for three weeks the furnace of intense desire, and it had been during that period in the attitude of trust. I was, at the moment preceding the great blessing, reviewing Christ's earthly life, and noting the grounds of faith which it affords, as I had often done before. I did not at that time put forth a distinct and specific energy of faith differing from that attitude of voluntary trust, in which I had been for several days.

"I am convinced that a hungry, longing, earnest soul, in the general attitude of trust, may be surprised, as I myself was, by the sudden unction of the Holy One. At no time did I believe that I received the desired blessing till I knew that it was mine. The promise in Mark 11:24, was not opened to my faith then as it is now. I did for several days, either orally or mentally, assert that Christ is true, and that he is now offering the very boon which I crave. At length I reached a point where I was assured, beyond a doubt, that he would speedily come into blissful realization. Over and over again did I pray the hymn: --

'Jesus, shine all-victorious love,' etc.

"Pausing at the epithet 'all-victorious,' I begged the mighty Saviour to conquer me wholly, and thoroughly reconstruct me from top to bottom, from center to circumference, and to leave not one disguised rebel lurking within. That prayer was graciously heard. So thorough was the conquest, that not one masked Ku-Klux has come forth from his hiding-place to torment my loyal soul, and to render a second war of

extermination necessary. To be sure, I have not been tested by passing through a college rebellion, as I cautiously intimated a year ago, and I begin to think that I never shall pass through this ordeal, if the Comforter dwells in the hearts of us professors. For there is always more or less pride at the bottom of both parties to every war.

"A year ago I said that I did not know what was below the gaze of my consciousness. I still say the same, adding the testimony that the varied changes and perplexities through which I have since passed have failed to reveal any proof that Jesus is not king over the domain of my unconscious, as he is over my conscious, self. I have been questioned respecting my religious state previous to the Divine anointing, by persons interested in confirming the theory that I had then, for the first time, experienced the joys of pardoned sin. To them I reply, that I believe myself to have been in the pre-pentecostal state. It is objected that this is impossible eighteen hundred years after the effusion of the Holy Ghost. Perhaps those who doubt my testimony will accept that of so eminent a theologian and deeply experienced a Christian as the 'seraphic Fletcher.' He says, vol. iii, page 171: 'Converted sinners, or believers, are either under the dispensation of the Father, under that of the Son, or under that of the Holy Ghost, according to the different progress they have made in spiritual things. Under the dispensation of the Father believers constantly experience the fear of God, in general, much greater degree of fear than love. Under the economy of the Son, love begins to gain the ascendancy over fear. But under the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, perfect love casteth out fear.'

"This quotation abundantly justifies the assertion that I was in the pre-pentecostal state of Christian experience. I believe that I dwelt a long time in the dispensation of the Father, a shorter period in that of the Son, and that now, at length, by the grace of God, I have entered that of the Holy Ghost. In the first, I enjoyed the first element of the kingdom, righteousness or justification -- *dikaiousune* -- the act of the Father; in the second, peace, the legacy of the risen Jesus; and in the third, joy, the endowment of the Holy Ghost. To those who object to this assignment of distinct blessings to the persons of the Trinity, we would quote the apostolical benediction, where the same distinction is made, the communion of the Holy Spirit always being the climax.

"Thus much theorizing seems necessary to make good my assertion respecting my previous experience. A more practical question some soul propounds to me, 'How to keep the blessed Comforter?' He will keep himself, and you too, if you will let him. 'Kept by the power of God through faith,' the human and Divine agencies beautifully blend. He is not so capricious as many imagine. He is in no haste to leave any bosom, after so long an endeavor to get an invitation to enter it. Nothing but sin can dislodge him. The soul which holds him by faith will be upheld by him.

That beautiful device, a hand grasping the cross, with the motto, 'Teneo et teneor,' 'I hold and I am held,' expresses it all. Every day, yea, almost every hour, I find myself repeating the couplet:

"Thy grace can full assistance lend,

And on that grace I dare depend.'

"The unwise query has been raised why I write my sermons if I am conscious of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the fountain of spiritual light. There is a vast difference between the grace and the charisma, the theopneustic gift of the Spirit conferred on the soul for the purpose of making it the organ or medium of revelation to the human race. The grace of the Spirit, while it floods the soul with light on its personal relations to God, communicates no dogmatic truth. Though it assists in the study and application of

revealed truth, it does not modify the intellectual faculties, any more than it changes the manual dexterities of the craftsman. Hence, the Holy Spirit affords no dispensation from hard work. He is not bestowed as a premium to laziness. The preacher will yet be under the necessity of laboriously preparing the beaten oil for the sanctuary. But he will find this toil wonderfully alleviated by the removal of all inertia, and of every antagonism within himself, and by the sweet delight of the labor of love. Often, with his Master, he will exclaim, 'My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me.'

"Let me say, in conclusion, that my spiritual life is no longer like a leaky suction pump, half the time dry, and affording scanty water only by desperate tugging at the handle, but it is like an artesian well of water, 'springing up unto everlasting life.

"The fountain of delight unknown

No longer sinks beneath the brim,

But overflows, and pours me down

A living and life-giving stream.'

"The Scriptures are sweeter than honey. Prayer and praise are a delight; the closet with the door closed is paradise regained; the glory of Christ has become the all-absorbing passion of my soul. Never before could I appreciate the paradox of Pascal, 'The things of this world must be known in order to be loved, but Jesus must be loved in order to be known.' My only apology for the use of the pronoun in the first person singular, instead of the impersonal and editorial we, is, that I have been relating to my experience.

"Glory to God the Father be,

Glory to God the Son,

Glory to God the Holy Ghost,

Glory to God alone.

"I need not go abroad for joy

Who have a feast at home;

My sighs are turned into songs;

The Comforter is come."

EXPERIENCE OF A PASTOR -- FOUR YEARS ON WINGS.

"They shall mount up with wings as eagles."

To ascribe praise to our Lord Jesus, to glorify the Father, and to honor the ever-blessed Spirit, the promised abiding Comforter, in order that all other believers may be induced to trust fully in the Triune God, I give public testimony. There is, in the estimation of some persons, the feeling that such a testimony shows a lack of good taste, an absence of that refinement and delicacy of sensibility which instinctively shrinks from exposing to public view the inmost chamber of the soul where Christ reveals his unutterable name. I have always had sympathy with this feeling; but I have learned with the great Apostle to "count all

things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus." Was St. Paul immodest in the frequent narration of his experience? Then let me, for Jesus' glory, share in such shamelessness. During twenty eight years I plodded wearily along the uphill path of spiritual life; but four years ago the Holy Spirit endowed my soul with wings, and bade me mount upward with mine eye fixed upon the open gate of heaven. But even a bird of paradise may become weary in her long flight toward her native home, and fold her pinions and rest on some lofty mountain peak. In the "higher life" there is danger of dropping down from the wing to the foot again, unless the strength is constantly renewed by waiting upon the Lord. Faith is the atmosphere which bears up the soul. If the atmosphere becomes rare the eagle naturally sinks earthward. My soul has neither sought nor found an earthly object to rest upon. There is no weariness nor faintness. The air of the regions through which I pass is very bracing; it buoys me up. Nor have gusts of adversity beaten me from my course, for God has permitted the head-winds of persecution to test the strength of my wings.

Socrates, in the Gorgias of Plato, is represented as saying, "If I happened to have a golden soul, do you not suppose that I would be glad to find the very best touchstone which men use in the testing of gold, which I might apply to my soul to be assured that it was well cared for, and that no other ordeal was necessary? If the soul is golden, the touchstone to demonstrate its genuineness is indispensable. God, in wisdom and goodness, very soon provides every one of his golden-souled children with some infallible touchstone. Perfect love will not long go untested. In my year with the Comforter, I had not been called to suffer distinctly for Christ from the opposition of that hostile spirit which nailed him to the cross and slew his apostles. The lion was not dead, but asleep. He awoke and glared upon me with fiery eyes, and gnashed upon me with his cruel teeth. My soul was calm as a summer's evening. But when it pleased the blessed Master that I should be numbered among "the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the word of God" -- to suffer reproach and vilification for the advocacy of an earnest Christianity against a proud and world-pleasing formalism -- then it was that the river of joy which flows from the throne, clear as crystal, flowed through my heart as never before. It was a new experience -- the quintessence of delight. My soul bathed in an ocean of balm, which not only removed every pain, but made each wound the avenue of positive and ineffable joy, new in kind and in degree. The shouts of burning martyrs are no longer a mystery. I stagger no more at the account of the saints, "who took joyfully the spoiling of their goods." It does not now require an extra effort of faith to receive the promise of Jesus, "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake." I will no more question the possibility of obeying this command to the persecuted, "Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven." The jubilant song from the Philippian jail is a phenomenon as natural as the warbling of the bobolink in a June morning. The wonder, how the beaten apostles could go forth from the council "rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer for his name," is all dispelled. No surprise to me are the words of Faber: --

"The headstrong world, it presseth hard

Upon the Church full oft;

O then how easily thou turn'st

The hard ways into soft."

Yet in this exultation of soul I have had one intense, all-consuming, and sometimes distressing, desire for spiritual power in such measure as shall break hard hearts all about me. As a preacher, my daily and

hourly prayer has been the cry of St. Paul, "that utterance may be given unto me" commensurate with the greatness of that salvation with which I have been personally saved. I have seemed to be plunged into the mid-ocean of the sweet waters of Divine love with a voice too feeble to reach the ear of my thirsty fellow-men wandering with parched tongues in distant Saharas, and to draw them to this shoreless, fathomless immensity of living waters. The great wonder and grief of my life during these four years has been the stolid unbelief of impenitent sinners, and the manifest skepticism of multitudes in the Church when the richness and fullness of the provisions of the Gospel are presented for their acceptance. Yet I find that I am not alone. Some sinners were hardened under the appeals of the great Apostle to the Gentiles, who had been caught up into the third heaven and heard things not lawful for him to utter; and some believers were so "beguiled with the enticing words of man's wisdom" as to loath the preaching of God's word "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." I have made this observation in order to guard against an error into which many are falling who confound purity with power, and expect every fully-saved soul to become, in Christian efficiency, a Wesley, a Whitefield, or a Finney. Both purity and power are attainable by faith in Christ, but the degree of the latter seems, like various kinds of intellectual power, to be dispensed in a sovereign manner by the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.' In no marked degree has the endowment of power to convert sinners been divided unto the writer, though he has coveted it with intense desire, with strong cries and tears. Yet the withholding of this gift has not for a moment interrupted the repose of his soul in the blood of Christ, or shaken his tranquility and peace, or diminished the "joy unspeakable and full of glory." In his power to edify believers and "to perfect the saints," and in the impulse to constant toil for Christ in proclaiming distasteful truths, he gratefully acknowledges a wonderful increase.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/daniel-steele/testimony/>

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