

# Twelve Years From Glory to Glory

by Daniel Steele

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*The sermon explores the journey of spiritual growth from glory to glory, emphasizing the importance of love, joy, and a deep relationship with God.*

**Scripture:** John 15:11, John 16:24, Romans 14:17, 2 Corinthians 3:18, Ephesians 2:10, Ephesians 3:19, Colossians 2:2, 1 Peter 1:8, 1 John 3:2

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

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## Description

Daniel Steele reflects on the overwhelming revelation of Christ's love experienced by Thomas Aquinas, leading him to pause his work and be filled with the rapture of the Holy Spirit. Steele emphasizes the continuous growth in glory and joy for believers, highlighting the aim of the Gospel to make men perfectly holy through love and fullness of joy. He encourages believers to seek the fullness of joy promised by God and to ascend to the third story of God's kingdom, where they can dwell in the gracious presence of the Lord. Steele aspires to be a perfectly rhythmic line in God's grand poem of human history, embracing the mystical experience of knowing God through spiritual intuition.

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## Transcript

WHILE that eloquent preacher and voluminous writer, Thomas Aquinas, "the Angelical Doctor," was composing his "Summa Theologiae," he left off to celebrate the Lord's Supper, in which he was over-whelmed with the revelation of Christ's love, and filled with the rapture of the Holy Spirit. After this he could be persuaded neither to resume his pen nor to dictate anything for the completion of the work in hand, which was then almost completed. His attendant urged him to finish the volume. He replied, "I cannot, for everything I have written seems to me worthless compared with what I have seen, and what has been revealed to me." As chisel in hand I approach my Twelfth Mile-stone in the way of holiness, to inscribe my "Gloria Patri," I find myself in deep sympathy with this great Christian philosopher. In my former writings I have exhausted all the English superlatives in portraying the loveliness of Jesus in His spiritual manifestation to my heart. Hence I hesitate to speak in weaker phrase of a still more excellent glory. But I attempt the task not with the hope of success, but lest my silence may be construed as the effect of a fading away of the brightness of the Shekinah within. Waning is not characteristic of the dispensation of the Comforter, though it was true of the glory on the face of Moses. The Revision brings out the fact that the veil was put on, that the people might not see the glory fade away from his face, typical of the transitoriness of his dispensation, and hold him in less respect in consequence. But we do not need any veil, for the glory on our faces is undying. Says Paul: "But we all, with unveiled face,

reflecting as a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord, the Spirit." Thanks to the great Apostle and to the Spirit of inspiration for that word ALL. It answers those who write to me saying that my experience is exceptional and extraordinary. "We all" means all who insist on receiving, at any cost, their full heritage in Christ.

Then, again, Paul's portraiture of experience common to all in the Pentecostal era, is not that the resplendence is waning, or stationary, but increasing "from glory to glory," year by year, and day by day, evermore.

"Like a river glorious

Is God's perfect peace,

Over all victorious

In its bright increase,

Perfect -- yet it floweth

Fuller every day;

Perfect -- yet it groweth

Deeper all the way."

The aim of the Gospel is to make men perfectly holy in this life. The element in which this purity exists is love. Perfect love is always accompanied by fullness of joy; or, in Peter's words, "joy unspeakable and full of glory." This is certainly a general promise to all believers, without one exception, down to the end of time. "Ask and ye shall receive that your joy may be full." The repetition of this promise in varied forms strengthens our belief that it is God's desire to fill to the brim every soul of the fourteen hundred millions on the earth, and keep them all full for ever. "These things have I spoken unto you that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." Twice does John take up his pen to write his epistles -- one of them a general epistle -- with this sole purpose, that your joy may be full." Paul goes a step further and insists that joy is a duty. He uses the imperative mood: "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, Rejoice." But he only reiterates the command of his Master, "Rejoice and be exceeding glad" (Greek, "jump up and down much"). In fact, the dispensation of the Paraclete is a joyful dispensation. The reason why all Christians are not overflowing with joy, is because they have not mounted up into the third story of God's kingdom: for that kingdom is a three-storied palace, "Righteousness, Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost," the Rock of Ages being the foundation. In the basement dwell those chronic penitents who fear God and work righteousness in the spirit of servility and not of sonship. In this cellar-experience, in much unrest and longing for a better state, during his early years, John Wesley wrought sorrowfully "as a servant," till that good Moravian minister, Peter Bohler, was sent by God to tell him that it was his privilege to climb the stairway of justifying faith leading into the apartment of Peace, where the Spirit of Adoption makes His occasional visits to the sons of Peace. A sunny and cheerful place is this in contrast with the gloomy room beneath, where hirelings toil. But this joyful place, resounding with the gleeful voices of childhood, is only a nursery where infantile weakness lies in the cradle with its milk-bottle, and childish way-wardness is chastised into wisdom and manliness.

Some of these children, yielding to the Spirit's guidance, ascend into the third story, the sky-lit parlour, into the gracious presence of the Lord of the mansion, even the Father in His Incarnate Son, manifested through the Comforter. "And We will come unto him, and make our abode with him." A blessed upper chamber this! Here I have dwelt as in a permanent home twelve beatific years, so satisfied with "strong meat and so enraptured with the abiding Comforter, that I have not left it for a moment. I purpose to remain here till the celestial chariot shall be sent down to convey me up to the presence of the glorified God-Man, to enjoy the inheritance of the saints in light, a row of glorified brothers with Jesus at the head."

To some of my readers these words may seem not as a sober description of the real life of a soul still prisoned in the body, but rather as the flight of a poetic imagination. Well, call it poetry, -- you do not destroy its reality. Do you not know that God is composing a grand poem in human history, and that the Saints are verses? "Ye are His poem." See the Greek of Eph. ii. 10. My supreme ambition is to be a perfectly rhythmic and mellifluous line in the glorious epic of redemption. Many years I was a discord, full of redundant syllables and erroneous quantities. How quickly the great poet brought me into harmony and rhythm when I fully submitted myself to Him! May the angels and archangels, the seraphim and cherubim, find no blemish in my verse when with wonder they read the finished poem!

A Christian friend writes to me asking me whether I am not a Mystic. I reply, Yes. All men are religious Mystics who know God through spiritual intuition, a gift of the Holy Ghost far transcending the Reason and the Understanding. I have a warm side for the Christian Mystics, so utterly misunderstood by that blind generation in which they lived. They dwelt on the mountain-tops in a dark age, and never lost sight of the vision of a glorified Christ. Such a Mystic I would be as Rudolf E. Etier professed to be, when a company at an inn hinted that this reproachful epithet belonged to him, by asking his definition of the term. He replied: "The Mystics were preachers who lived as they preached." Perfect love has worn many an opprobrious name without receiving any detriment. This Rose of Sharon blooming in my heart is just as sweet under any other name. My feeling towards the Mystics is much like that of Wesley towards the Montanists. He is their only modern defender, because his mind was sufficiently large and catholic to look beneath certain exaggerated excesses and to discover that these vilified people were really filled with the Holy Ghost, and that amid a formal and worldly church they preserved a spiritual type of Christianity.

It seems to me that I never knew what it is to grow in grace till I plunged into the shoreless and fathomless sea of Love divine in 1870. Since that date each new height gained has shown above me Alps on Alps arising, betokening an endless career of progress in the ceaseless cycles of eternity.

The fullness of His blessing encourageth my way;

The fullness of His promises crowns every brightening day;

The fullness of His glory is beaming from above,

While more and more I realize the fullness of His love."

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Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/daniel-steele/twelve-years-from-glory-to-glory/>

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