

Steadfastness

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Steadfastness (#1)

Gen. 18: 1, 2; John 1: 26; Rev. 3: 20.

The following short summary of an address may be used of the Lord to afresh stimulate our hearts and strengthen our faith as we commence another year, and as we await the precious moment of His coming again.

There is an urgent need, amongst believers, for the feature of steadfastness. God Himself is spoken of as "the living God, and steadfast for ever" (Daniel 6: 26); and it is applied to the saints of God too — indeed the first Christian martyr (Stephen) was said to be marked by steadfastness.

There never was a day in which the feature of steadfastness was more called for than to-day; and the word "steadfast," in the original language, involves not merely having our attention focused on an object, but it includes having our feet firmly planted on the earth. Our affections, our attention, our wills are held by a blessed Man in the glory, and in consequence our feet are firmly planted in our pathway here. We need not to be carried about by every wind of doctrine. There are many things being said to-day which tend to disrupt the serenity of the Christian pathway; to undermine the faith of the saints of God; and hence the importance of the verse in John's gospel — the thought of divine Persons *taking a stand*. We notice it first in Genesis 18, where three men stood at the tent door in the heat of the day after Abraham had removed his tents to Mamre. A very interesting matter, that, because Mamre itself suggests stability — the *oaks* of Mamre. Does it not suggest, dear brethren, that if we are prepared to take on this feature of steadfastness, we shall get increased encouragement from divine Persons on that line; because divine Persons, or at least, *a* divine Person — for we know that One of the three was Jehovah Himself — came and *stood* at the door of Abraham's tent, and that for a specific purpose. The word "stand" in that chapter indicates a position that will not be given up; not a casual stance, but a position taken permanently with a definite object in view. If we read carefully the whole of the chapter, we too will be encouraged to take a definite stand in our day. Two things stand out in the chapter most markedly. God was prepared to reveal His own thoughts to His servant. "Shall I hide from Abraham" He said, "what I am doing?" You know, dear brethren, what will help us to be steadfast and to stand in this evil day is the conscious knowledge that God is doing something! And God *is* doing something, and in these days what will help us to be steadfast in the pathway of faith is to know *what God is doing!* We are so apt to be occupied with what the *enemy* is doing, even what the saints are doing, and the consequent condition of brokenness that has come in. We cannot close our eyes to it, but over and above all that, *God* is doing something! There are two things that God is doing in that chapter which He makes known to His friend Abraham. It is a good thing to be friendly with God. One would like to say to the young people especially — "Be careful in your choice of friends!" Abraham was the friend of God, and God would not hide from His friend that which He was doing. One of the things He told Abraham was that He had knowledge of all the wickedness going on in that day and in due time He would bring it into judgment. "Their sin is very grievous" is God's own estimate, and the awful sin of Sodom and Gomorrah is raising its head in these Western lands to-day! But God knows all about it, and we can depend upon it that God is doing something in relation to it. The day is coming when God will eradicate from this world, and from the whole universe, every principle of sin! *God* has the matter

in hand, and whatever we may see and however we may feel depressed by the condition of things around us, the way in which evil, and violence, and corruption is rising on every hand, let us not be moved from the steadfastness of our pathway, knowing that *God* has the matter in hand, and He will deal with it in His own way and in His own time!

God had already said "Sarah shall have a son" (v.14). Both Abraham and Sarah laughed at that; but we have to recognize that with God nothing is impossible, and when God said "Sarah shall have a son," He had Isaac in mind. We read in Galatians that that "seed is Christ," and so we see in typical language not only that God will judge the whole scene which is contrary to His mind, but that He will bring in a blessed Man and introduce in Him another scene in absolute accord with His own heart and mind. the knowledge of this would surely keep our feet steadfast as we tread our Christian pathway. Evil around! Yes — God will deal with it! God is bringing in — has brought in His own blessed Son, the Christ of God, the One in whom He will head up all things for Himself; the One who will hold everything in the universe for the pleasure of God and for the blessing of God's people.

In John 1 we have the wonderful fact of the incarnation. We see a blessed Man here in this world, and He has come into manhood permanently. Everything is in His hand, and God will triumph in the scene where man has dishonoured Him. He will triumph in a blessed Man, and the world-to-come will be put under that glorious Man. Then when the kingdom is handed over to God, that God might be all in all, that glorious Man will be seen as Man for ever. He has come into Manhood; and a blessed *Man* throughout all eternity will be the centre of the glory of God, and the centre of the praises of His people!

In the address to Laodicea (Revelation 3) we see a condition of things in which there is a complete lack of appreciation of Christ, and yet in such conditions He is saying most graciously, "Behold I stand." This is the same word, indicating a permanent stance. He is standing at the door, He has the whole situation in mind, and in infinite grace He has taken up a position from which He will not move; He is *standing* right on to the end of this dispensation, appealing in love to any *one* who will open the door to Him, allow Him to come in that there might be mutual supping together. Oh! What infinite grace — what wonderful love, what constant love in the attitude of our Lord Jesus Christ towards His Church collectively, towards each one of us individually; waiting upon us in the constancy of a love that will never let us go! *Standing* as available to us, in order that we might be brought into happy enjoyment of fellowship with Himself.

Occupation with our Lord Jesus Christ — the glorious Son of God, loved by the Father, and into whose hands God has committed "*all things*" (John 3: 35) is essential to "steadfastness" in our pathway through this world. If the Lord will a further short paper may refer to the essentiality of the Holy Spirit's work *in us*.

Steadfastness (#2)

Romans 5: 2; 2 Cor. 1: 20-22.

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How blessed indeed to know not only that God is love, but that God *loves*! Love is of God. And we stand before God in the favour that Christ has brought (John 1: 17), for grace involves love in movement. The reservoir of love was ever in God's eternal heart, but Jesus took that journey from Godhead's fullest glory to Calvary's depth of woe, in order that the realm of love *in which we stand* might be established. And as justified we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. That is to say we look on

to the day to come, when every ray of God's penetrating glory may be focused upon us, and it will but reveal the perfection of the work of God, and the wonderful way in which He has loved us!

In the meanwhile it is written that Christ has left "us an example that we should follow His steps" (1 Peter 2: 21). Now, how are we to do it? How are *we* to be steadfast, and move here in a path of fidelity to the will of God? There are two things we need. We need faith. We need to have the vision of our souls fixed on that blessed Man who is the Yea and the Amen of all the promises of God. We need to be established in confidence in that blessed Person; we need also the presence and help of the Holy Spirit of God. Hence the importance of what is brought before us in Paul's letter to the Corinthians. We have these three most blessed references to what God has done in giving to us His Spirit. He has anointed us; He has sealed us; and He has given us the earnest of the Spirit. These are most wonderful truths, the realization of which would give stability and steadfastness to our walk through the world. God has "anointed us," that is He has given us the ability to understand what His will is; He has given us the ability to move here in the fragrance that marked the pathway of Jesus. We cannot do it in the flesh, for the flesh can never please God. But He has given us of His Spirit; He has anointed us with His Spirit, He has given to us the same Spirit that was found in Jesus here in Manhood. *He* was anointed of the Spirit — "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me because He hath anointed Me" (Luke 4: 18) — to do certain things, and the Holy Spirit has come upon us in order that *we* might do certain things. The epitome of those things is that we have intelligence as to what the mind of God is, and we have ability to follow out His will and to move in the footsteps of our Lord Jesus Christ. Can you conceive of anything more blessed than that, dear brethren? That the power by which Jesus moved here steadfastly in the will of God is the same power that is given to us: that the knowledge that He had as Man in relation to the will of God is the same knowledge that we have, for "we have the mind of Christ" (1 Corinthians 2: 16). In the anointing of the Spirit God has given us the "thinking faculty of Christ" — just as *He* thought in relation to the will of God. We need not be turned aside by men's ideas or philosophy; or the wiles of Satan, *we know*, in the anointing of the Spirit that which exactly pleases the blessed God who has taken us up for His glory, and in that same Spirit we have the power to carry out what we know! This is a very blessed matter.

But then, too, God has *sealed* us; God has put His mark upon us because *we belong to Him!* We are His! He has claimed us for Himself. There is a dignity in that which cannot be expressed in words! God has said "They are *Mine!*" How blessed to really get into our hearts that we belong to God! We are His! He has bought us with a price in order that we might be exclusively for Him. If that gripped our hearts, the glories of this world and its attractions would mean nothing to us. We belong to God — we are *His!* We have been bought with a price; we are not our own — we belong to *Him*. We are His property — and He is God!

Then God has given us the Spirit as the Earnest of the inheritance and of glory in our souls. Everything that God has promised is secure in Christ, and by the Spirit we know that all will be established in that glorious Man, and we have the joy of it now in our affections. Standing already in the conscious enjoyment of divine love, anointed — sealed — given the earnest of glory to come; these are the spiritual ingredients for *steadfastness* in the pathway of the believer.