

## The League Prayer-Meeting

APRIL 19.—CHRISTIAN STEADFAST-  
NESS.

Galatians 5: 1; 1 Cor. 15: 58.

### EXPOSITORY HINTS.

V. 1. "Liberty." The primary meaning here is not freedom from sin, but emancipation from the old Judaism. They had been freed from the bondage of rites and ceremonies, and they should by no means yield to them again. There is, however, a secondary meaning, referring to the liberty of the children of God when delivered from sin.

"Stand fast." Opposed to being moved or bowing down. Keep a firm position, and an erect attitude.

"Stand fast." The idea is do not allow, again, such a yoke to be put upon you. Do not again become slaves of any rites and customs. Guard your freedom. Prize your emancipation.

"Yoke of bondage." Of servitude to the Jewish laws. It may apply also to the slavery of evil habits. When one has been delivered from sinful ways and habits there should be the most strenuous effort to maintain the independence.

"Therefore." V. 58. Christian doctrine is a great motive force for the Christian life. All the terrors and glories of death, resurrection, judgment and eternity, are startling admonitions to the steadfast doing of duty.

"Standfast," "unmovable," "abounding." These words form a climax.

"Standfast" means positive firmness; "unmovable" implies resistance to the mightiest outward pressure; "abounding" means energetic action.

"Work of the Lord." This means the conversion of sinners, the upbuilding of the Church, and all the countless forms of Christian activity.

"Your labor is not in vain." It will be rewarded. It is not as if you were to die and not live again. There will be a re-creation, and you will be suitably recompensed then.

Success may not come at once. It may not come in the way you expect. It may be that you may never see the reward of your labor on earth, but true labor can never be in vain.

### SCRIPTURAL SIDELIGHTS.

1. Eph. 6: 23.—"And having done all, to stand." Use every means within your reach. Put forth every effort—and then having done everything possible rely upon the power of God and stand firm.

2. Rev. 2: 10.—"I will give thee a crown of life." It is not the one who begins well, but the one who struggles through to the end who will receive the reward.

3. Matt. 24: 13.—"He that shall endure unto the end the same shall be saved." Endurance is the test of strength. How much can we endure of trial and difficulty?

4. John 15: 9.—"Continue ye in My love." The importance of faithful continuance in well doing was a leading truth in our Lord's teaching. He warns us that no man who has put his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the kingdom. He depicts the pitiable state of the man who began to build and was not able to finish.

5. Gal. 6: 9.—"Let us not be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not." Note that the promise of final salvation and final reward are conditioned upon steadfastness unto the end. Some people profess to

believe that if a man once has the grace of God in his heart he must persevere in the Christian life. He must be saved. But this doctrine is not part of scriptural teaching.

### SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS.

Some Christians appear to do nothing; some do a little, others "abound" in every good word and work.

One proof of the genuineness of the change that took place in the early disciples was that "they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship (Acts 2: 42).

"Always abounding." The question is not how little we can do and be Christians, but how much we can work for Christ.

The secret of steadfastness is to strive as if everything depended upon our own effort, and to believe and pray as if everything depended on the grace of God.

If a Christian decides to fold his arms, sit down and do nothing, saying: "The Lord will take charge of me, and keep me faithful. He does not require me to do anything"—this man will certainly go wrong.

On the other hand, if a man boastingly says: "I can battle against the world. I can look out for myself. I'll let the devil see that I am master of him," he is almost certain to fall. These two ideas of divine help and human effort must be married.

If we believe that all things are working together, the light with the darkness, the sweet with the sour, the night with the day, for our good, shall we not rejoice in the one as much as the other?

### ILLUSTRATIONS.

Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, was called upon to renounce his faith. "Blaspheme Christ," the Pro-Consul said, "and I shall release you." "Eighty-six years," said the grey-headed old bishop, "have I served Christ, and He hath never done me wrong, but only good; can I blaspheme my King and Saviour now?" He was faithful to death, and received in the flames the crown of life.

The Catacombs of Rome contain many touching evidences of steadfastness on the part of the early Christians who were so bitterly persecuted. From torture, rack and burning stake the precious dust was conveyed to the tombs and deposited there in the full assurance of a glorious resurrection. To-day there may be read in the inscriptions the memorials of their fidelity. These inscriptions seem fragrant with the flowers of immortality.

Many people make a good beginning, but do not hold out. They are like humming birds that flit from flower to flower, they are caught by whatever looks attractive for the moment, and then off again before we know it. There are persons who desire an education, for instance, but have no idea of the work involved, and so become discouraged. They are not steadfast, and so lose the prize.

At the battle of Waterloo a certain regiment sent word to the Duke of Wellington that they must soon yield. The Duke sent back word, "Stand firm." "But we shall all perish." "Stand firm," again answered the Iron Duke. "You'll find us there," replied the officer as he fiercely galloped away. And they stood

firm; every man fell fighting at his post. Jesus Christ, our great Captain, calls us to stand firm.

### QUOTATIONS.

The oak tree is steadfast when the summer breeze is playing in its branches, but it is immovable when the winter storm howls and the tempest roars. The Christian may be steadfast in his work when there is nothing to oppose, but he shows himself immovable if he continues faithful in all times of temptation and opposition.—A. F. Barfield.

The Apostle Paul gives us a splendid piece of eloquence speaking of what is likely to separate us from the love of God: "Nor things present, nor things to come, nor life, nor death, nor principalities, nor powers, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God." This is what we want to hold firmly. No outside influence can cause separation.—E. J. Silvertown.

Steadfastness is likely to be secured by three things. First, by a sense of constant dependence upon God. Second, by prayer and perseverance. And lastly, by keeping the mind fixed as much as possible on the end of life, and on that which follows it. The end is indeed well worth the effort.—Canon Liddon.

The monotony of repetition, the constant dealing with little things when the goal is far off or out of sight, is what puts the stoutest heart to the test. And yet that is the test we are called to endure. A person's character is most clearly shown by the way he deals with the common-place. We must learn to meet the irksome and the ordinary in life with a determined will.—S. V. Cole, D.D.

There is no grace more needful to a Christian worker than the humble grace of fidelity that marches steadily on in sunshine and in rain, when no banners are waving, and there is no music to cheer your weary feet, no crowd to applaud, simply bent upon duty and loyalty there, that is one of the grandest qualifications.—Dr. Nicholls.

### QUESTIONS.

What incentives to steadfastness are given in the Word of God?

What helps are provided?

What relation has activity to steadfastness?

## APRIL 26.—HOW THE CALL CAME TO SOME GREAT MISSIONARIES.

### SUGGESTED PROGRAMME. (Canadian Hymnal Used.)

Hymn 182.

Prayer.—That we may live so close to God that we, too, may hear His call to us.

Scripture Lesson—Acts 9, 1-16.

Hymn 435.

Address—How Some Great Missionaries Heard the Missionary Appeal. References: This number of The Outlook; Epworth Era, March; Princely Men in the Heavenly Kingdom, 35c.; Into All the World, 35c.

Hymn 171.

Address—The Call of To-day: The Needs of the Work; Am I Called to be a Missionary? References: Missionary Outlook, February.

Benediction.

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Last month we discussed what constitutes a call to the mission field; this month we shall look into the life stories of some of the great missionaries, and see what were the motives that actuated them in the choice of a life work.