

16th August 2021

Steadfast

“Bright star, would I were steadfast as thou art.”

John Keats, Endymion

“Sure and Steadfast” is the motto of The Boys’ Brigade (BB). This international and interdenominational Christian youth organisation was conceived by a Scottish businessman, Sir William Alexander Smith, with the intention of combining drill and fun activities with Christian values. It was launched in Glasgow in 1883 and quickly spread throughout the UK, becoming a worldwide organisation from the 1890s. Despite the drop in numbers in all uniformed organisations in recent times, the membership remains around 750,000 in over 60 countries. The writer of this is pleased to relate that he reached the dizzy heights of Sergeant in the BB in the 1st Fort William Company in 1963, a role of which I will remain ever proud.

We marched better than the Scouts (a shambling bunch!) on Armistice Day parades. I remember being instructed by my Company Lieutenant that I *had* to write a letter to my girlfriend’s parents to ask their permission to invite their daughter to the annual BB Christmas bash. I had the delight of being the top person on the BB pyramid at the annual display two years in a row because I was the smallest boy in the Company. But the thing I remember most was the respect I had for the Company Captain, the late George Haggart. If “Sure and Steadfast” is the motto of the BB, then my Captain was the epitome of what that meant. For here was a man who was sure in his character, attitude and turn-out, and steadfast in his faith, patience, and nurture. George Haggart was a credit to the BB movement, and a key role-model to me as a young man.

In 1 Corinthians 15:58, St Paul writes (as given to us in the KJ version):

*Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable,
always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye
know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*

All of us, like George Haggart my BB Captain, are called on to be steadfast. And if we combine “sure” with that, what an example we set for our labour in God’s name that will never, ever be in vain.

A prayer for today

Lord, when I am sure, help me to be steadfast too.

And when I’m less than steadfast, help me to be more sure of your presence. Amen.