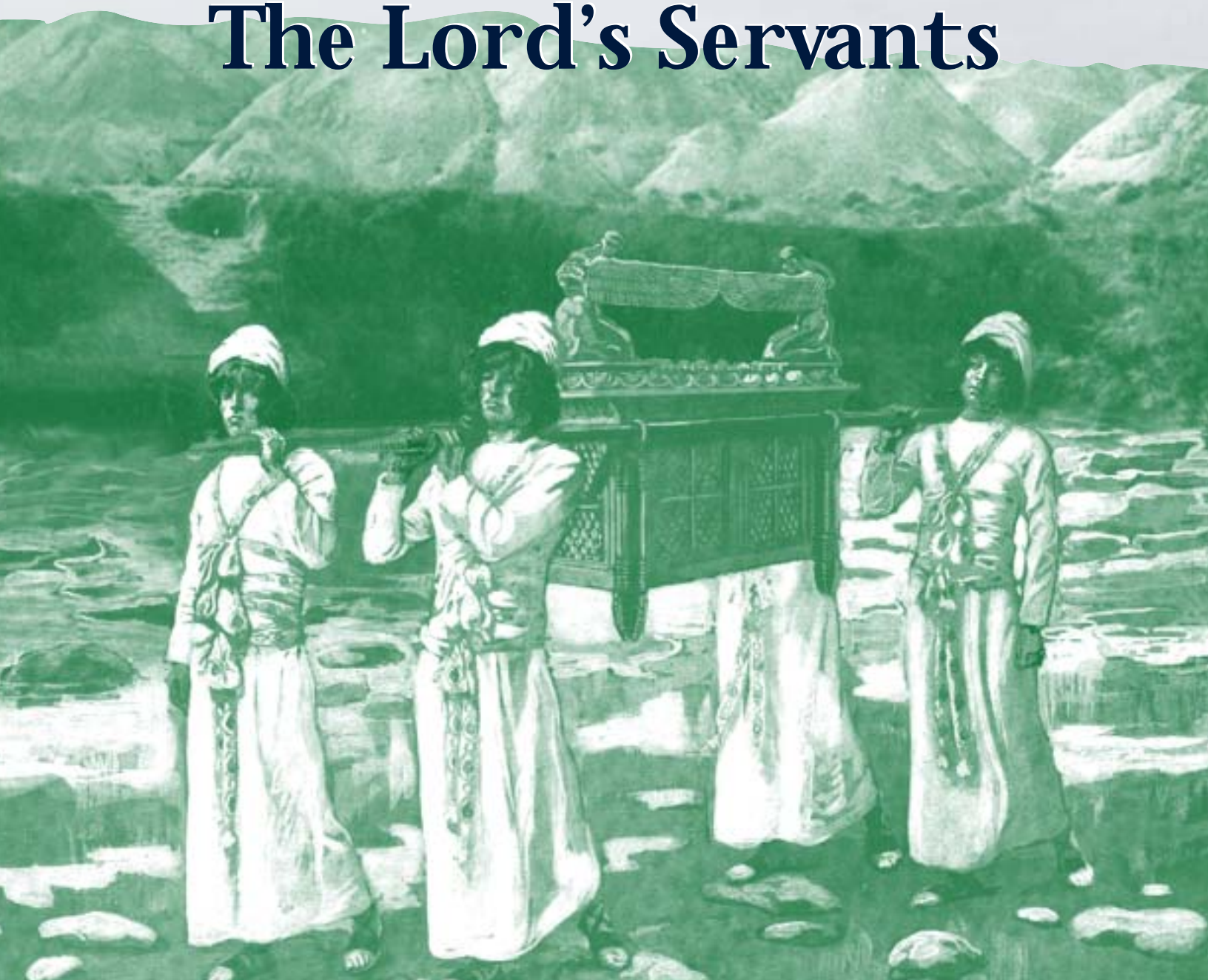


The Bible Standard

The Lord's Servants



A SERVANT OF THE LORD

“The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves.” — 2 Timothy 2: 24, 25

THE WORD *servant* often evokes the image of one who performs duties for a royal or wealthy family. We imagine butlers, maids, nannies, cooks, cleaners, chauffeurs, and others, waiting to perform the bidding of their superiors. Actually, this is not far from the common dictionary definition: *one that performs duties about the person or home of a master or personal employer.*



Our subject could be considered from many standpoints, but we will examine it from the viewpoint of certain indispensable qualities servants of the Lord must possess.

PAUL'S WISE COUNSEL TO TIMOTHY

Timothy was not only one of Paul's "spiritual sons," but also an attentive pupil, his main helper, and a most beloved friend. Timothy, at the time Paul wrote his second letter to him, was a local and a general elder, ministering to the brethren of his local congregation, and also serving the Christian church in the wider sense as a visiting pastor. The Apostle's chief purpose in writing was to prepare Timothy for Paul's imminent death and for the added responsibility that would then naturally fall upon his shoulders.

Paul knew that after his death the brethren in the churches that he had ministered to would look primarily to his close associate for guidance. Though Timothy had proved to be a good servant of the Lord and the brethren up to that time, Paul now sought to encourage and offer him further advice.

Though the Apostle was writing principally to Timothy, in a wider sense he was writing to all the Lord's local and general elders throughout the Gospel Age. In a yet broader sense, Paul's exhortation applies to all of the Lord's consecrated people — those who have accepted Christ as their personal Savior and dedicated their lives to God and the performing of His will — regardless of their sex, race, employment, or economic situation. They all are His servants. And in the ultimate sense, all of God's intelligent creatures who render allegiance to Him — whether human, angelic, or divine — are His servants.

HOW TO BECOME A SERVANT

How does one become a servant? Usually, a company in need of employees will first advertise through channels such as employment agencies, newspapers, and the Internet. After a certain date, or when sufficient applications have been received, a specified number of qualified applicants are called in for an interview. Eventually, when the interview process is completed, the most qualified are hired to fill the vacancies.

There are certain similarities in how the Lord secures His servants. Filling out an application pictures well the steps of repentance and faith in Christ which gives one justification — the standing that places us at peace with God and makes us acceptable before Him. After the interview, the employer may offer the applicant a position with the company. This pictures the Lord's offer of consecration to the justified believers in Christ (Prov. 23: 26). The applicant's accepting the offer shows the consecrating of his or her life (heart, mind, will, and body) to the will and service

“LIFT UP A STANDARD FOR THE PEOPLE” — ISA. 62: 10

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of God. Finally, the confirmation of the appointment would correspond to God's acceptance of that consecration.

Usually, during the interview process and after becoming an employee, the importance of obedience and loyalty to the company is emphasized. With the Lord and His servants, the same is true — obedience and loyalty are emphasized as of utmost importance. Rom. 6: 16 reads, "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey." If one works for a company, it is impossible to provide undivided obedience and loyalty if at the same time one works for a competitor. The analogy holds true among the Lord's servants, as can be seen in Matt. 6: 24 and Luke 16: 13.

Spiritual Apprentices

Some companies put their new employees through an apprenticeship. By definition an *apprentice* is: (1) one who is bound by a contract to serve another for a prescribed period of time, (2) one who is learning from practical experience under skilled workers a trade, art, or calling, and (3) an inexperienced person.

As spiritual apprentices hoping to become fully trained servants in the future, the above definitions fit well. As the Lord's apprentices we are:

1. Bound by our contract of consecration to serve the Lord, not for a limited period of time, but for all eternity.
2. Learning by practical experience under skilled spiritual trainers, most especially our Lord Jesus, Who is teaching us how to become good and effective servants of God.
3. Developing maturity, for even if we have been in the Christian way for many years, or even decades, we still have much to learn at our spiritual trade.

Training Courses

Often companies will send their employees to training courses so they may further develop their natural abilities. The skills required of a good employee may be technical or social, enabling them not only to do their day-to-day work proficiently, but also to maintain good relations with their peers and the company's clients. At the time of their appointment, some employees have already developed these skills to a fair degree. In other cases, the employer recognizes the potential and hopes that with proper training, that potential will be realized.

As servants of the Lord in training, we also primarily bring two general assets to our consecration: (1) certain natural talents, and (2) various qualities of character, the latter being of greater importance.

As the Lord's people, we are being trained in the school of Christ — a school that has many different courses. One of these courses trains us to become teachers and leaders in the future Mediatorial Reign of Christ. We could call

As the Lord's people, we are being trained in the school of Christ — a school that has many different courses. One of these courses trains us to become teachers and leaders in the future Mediatorial Reign of Christ. We could call this course Servant Training.

this course *Servant Training*. One of the main qualities this course teaches its pupils is humility, a Christian grace of character, which our Master Teacher demonstrated so well in His life (Matt. 20: 25-28).

Placing Servants in Suitable Positions

Sometimes during an interview, or even after an applicant has been hired, the employer determines that he or she would be better suited to filling a different position than the one originally intended. With the passage of time, certain employees develop more rapidly, while others do not do as well as expected. This occasions various employees being promoted and given more responsibility, while others may find themselves demoted. But a good employer will always treat each employee in such a way that the best interests of the company, its employees in general, and the company's clients, are all fairly served.

As servants of the Lord, the same general principle is followed. The Lord assigns each of His servants his or her place as it pleases Him. As 1 Cor. 12: 18 says, "God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him." In so doing, He takes into consideration three things:

1. One's spirit of consecration.
2. One's talents.
3. One's providential situation.

Though all are important, the Lord lays more weight upon point (1) than the other two. He always places His people in their positions with three things in mind, that is, how they may best:

1. Glorify Him and honor Christ.
2. Build up their fellow Christians spiritually.
3. Be built up spiritually themselves.

A Servant's Responsibilities and Duties

Employees have various responsibilities and duties. In secular companies, they have a responsibility toward various individuals or groups. They owe a certain responsibility to their employer, another toward their supervisor, still another toward their fellow employees (including those whom they supervise), and finally, toward the company's customers.

The Lord's servants also have a responsibility toward various individuals and classes. They have a responsibility toward God, Christ, their fellow Christians, the world in general, and to themselves.

Employees have various duties they are expected to fulfill in order to meet the terms of their employment. This varies greatly depending upon their position.

For a servant of the Lord, these duties include:

1. *Studying* God's Word, which gives one a knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of God's character and Plan.
2. *Practicing* God's Word, which implies character development.
3. *Spreading* the truths found in God's Word, which helps others to gain a knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of God's character and Plan.

Wages and Fringe Benefits

Employees receive wages and fringe benefits. Likewise, the Lord's servants also receive wages and fringe benefits. A few of these include the privileges of being:

1. Ambassadors for God and Christ.
2. Helpers of the Lord's other servants.
3. Receivers of special help from the Lord.

In addition to these, there are privileges and benefits yet to come, in the eternal future.

Our text in 2 Tim. 2: 24, 25 contains five parts: one prohibition ("must not strive"), three graces (gentleness, patience, and meekness), and one ability ("apt to teach"). Note the emphasis Paul places upon qualities of character over abilities.

We also observe the character graces selected. Why did the Apostle describe the more passive graces, instead of the more vigorous ones such as combativeness, zeal, industriousness, and courage? Certainly, those more robust graces are important and necessary to be exercised at various times. However, from a study of God's Word we conclude that the graces in our text more closely resemble the character of the Master, and are therefore the more effective and servantlike.

We now consider each one of the five parts of our text in turn. The first part speaks of a quality that servants of the Lord must seek to avoid. It reads that they:

"Must Not Strive"

The Bible speaks of a proper and an improper striving. Proper striving has to do with the Christian grace of combativeness, the grace one uses to defend oneself against spiritual enemies, such as sin, error, selfishness, and worldliness. It is also used to defend God's Word when attacked. Jude 3 reads, "Ye should earnestly contend for the faith." Christians should defend God's Word when necessary, but always prompted by love.

On the other hand, improper striving is characterized by arguing, quarreling, or being contentious — the striving Paul is speaking against. Some other verses which address improper striving are:

- Matt. 12: 19: "He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets." This verse describes how Jesus conducted Himself in His ministry. He did not resort to wild harangue when preaching the Gospel, but always presented God's Word in a rational way, appealing to reasonable heads and responsive hearts.

- Luke 9: 55, 56: "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." This records the occasion when two of Jesus' disciples returned from the Samaritan city which had refused them hospitality. They asked the Lord if they should call down fire from heaven to destroy the inhabitants. Our Lord's response illustrates His desire to bless rather than punish His enemies.

- Phil. 2: 3: "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves." Paul here exhorts the brethren against improper striving with each other. Instead, they should, in humility, always keep in mind those good qualities of one another — especially the ones that excel their own.

- Phil. 2: 14: "Do all things without murmurings and disputings." Here again, stress is laid upon the brethren's conducting themselves without argumentativeness in their affairs with their fellow believers.

- James 1: 19: "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath." Strife only damages the influence of the Truth.

- 1 Pet. 3: 8, 9: "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing."

The second part of our text introduces the first of three graces that servants of the Lord are encouraged to develop. They are to be:

"Gentle Unto All Men"

Gentleness may be defined as a gracious, courteous, kindly, mild, and tender quality of disposition, manifesting itself in a person's bearing, voice, words, and acts. It is a most appealing and winsome grace of Christian character.

It is one of the chief graces, one of the fruits of the spirit in Gal. 5: 22, 23. Some naturally have a more gentle disposition than others, but because of present conditions in the world, gentleness is perhaps one of the most difficult of the Christian graces to develop and exercise.

Our Lord was a marvelous example of gentleness. This grace is central in His invitation to those who struggle under the conscious weight of sin and imperfection, to come to Him and rest (Matt. 11: 28-30).

Paul was another good example of gentleness. We read in 1 Thess. 2: 7, “We were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children.” He did not treat his Christian brothers and sisters as inferiors, or treat them harshly. Rather, he was tender towards them, as a good mother deals with her children.

James indicated that gentleness is one of the ingredients of the wisdom that comes from God; ranking right after purity and peaceableness (James 3: 17).

The soft answer that gentleness offers turns away wrath, while its opposite, grievous words, stir up strife (Prov. 15: 1). Gentleness is a grace that is usually essential in order to present the message of God’s Word effectively.

We note from our text that the Lord’s servants are not only to be gentle with fellow Christians, but with all, including their enemies.

The third part of our text treats of an ability that servants of the Lord should develop:

“Apt to Teach”

This is the ability to make the message of God’s Word — the Gospel — plain to others. It is a requirement of elders in a church (1 Tim. 3: 2), yet is an attribute that all Christians must develop.

We first ask, What is the Gospel, that great message that Jesus commissioned His disciples to teach all nations? John 3: 16 states it in a nutshell: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” This message can be stated thus — *Jesus as Savior and King*. As Savior, He sacrificed His human life as the Ransom for Adam and the entire world (2 Tim. 2: 6). As King, He ministers salvation to two main classes — the Church, during the Gospel Age, and the world during the Millennial Age.

Teaching the Gospel does not require a lot of learning, a university degree, great intellect, the ability to offer difficult explanations, or the use of perfect grammar. The most important thing is to have the Gospel in one’s heart and mind. To have it in one’s heart is to possess the spirit of the Gospel, a love for its good news, and a desire to share it with others. To have it in one’s mind is to have a knowledge, understanding, and belief of its message.

One of the best methods of witnessing the Gospel to others is to explain it in simple and understandable terms, and to do so in one’s own words. A good teacher of the Gospel is not only able to impart knowledge without stirring up strife, but to offer comfort as well.

There will very likely be some opposition. When instructing His disciples, Jesus summed it up well: “Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves:

Meekness is an important grace for a servant of the Lord, as it prevents us from becoming haughty and contentious. It also helps us to be open to the opinions of others, and enables us to sacrifice our rights and privileges when principle is not at stake.

be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves” (Matt. 10: 16).

“Patient”

The fourth part of our text deals with patience, which is cheerful endurance and self-control in the face of obstacles.

A few other translations (some of which are not common) render this part of the text as:

- “ready to endure malice” (*Rotherham*)
- “not resentful under injuries” (*Williams*)
- “willing to suffer wrong” (*Verkuyl*)
- “ready to overlook grievances” (*Norlie*)

We are reminded in Eccles. 7: 8 that “The patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit.” Patience is a necessary quality to have when teaching others. Pride, on the other hand, is a hindrance, for most people will resist someone who possesses and exhibits pride.

“Meekness”

Finally, meekness is defined as mild-mannered submissiveness of mind, heart, and will. To expand on that definition, we would say that to be meek is to be:

1. *Teachable* (a matter of the mind).
2. *Mild* (a matter of the heart).
3. *Leadable* (a matter of the will).

Meekness is one of the chief graces and fruits of the spirit, as listed in Gal. 5: 22, 23. As with every other Christian grace, our Lord is our model. He said “learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart” (Matt. 11: 29). It is also one of the qualities needed in order to gain and retain a knowledge and understanding of God’s Word (Psa. 25: 9). The Scriptures hold out many promises for the meek. For example, the meek are promised that they will inherit the earth (Psa. 37: 11; Matt. 5: 5).

Meekness is an important grace for a servant of the Lord, as it prevents us from becoming haughty and contentious. It also helps us to be open to the opinions of others, and enables us to sacrifice our rights and privileges when principle is not at stake.

Meekness is one of the most important of the Christian graces when having to perform the difficult task of correcting another. The Apostle Paul alludes to this in Gal. 6: 1: “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.”

If we heed the exhortations of this text, many things will be accomplished:

- We will develop a better Christian character.
- We will be more effective in the Lord’s service.
- We will be prevented from injuring His cause.
- We will be more pleasing to the Lord, whom we love and long to serve.

* * *

A LITTLE LIGHT

*’T’WAS but a little light she bore,
While standing at the open door;
A little light, a feeble spark,
And yet it shone out through the dark
With cheerful ray, and gleamed afar
As brightly as the polar star.
A little light, a gentle hint,
That falls upon the page of print,
May clear the vision, and reveal
The precious treasures doubts conceal,
And guide men to an open door,
Where they new regions may explore.
A little light dispels the gloom
That gathers in the shadowed room,
Where want and sickness find their prey,
And night seems longer than the day,*

*And hearts with many troubles cope
And feebler glows the spark of hope.
Oh, sore the need that some must know
While journeying through this vale of woe!
Dismayed, disheartened, gone astray,
Caught in the thickets by the way,
For lack of just a little light
To guide their wandering steps aright.
It may be little we can do
To help another, it is true;
But better is a little spark
Of kindness, when the way is dark,
Than one should walk in paths forbidden
For lack of light we might have given.*

— *Poems of Dawn: page 165*

of interest . . .

The Church of England is launching a radical review of its finances after warnings from dioceses that they could face bankruptcy. Parishioners’ donations during services are failing to reach targets — no diocese reaches the 5% of average earnings, about £17 (\$20) per church member per week — and £500 million has been wiped off the church’s £3.5 billion assets in the past year on financial markets.

The bleak figures help explain the strength of the threat by some wealthy evangelical churches to withhold payments to diocesan funds while the homosexual theologian Jeffrey John was being considered for the position of suffragan bishop of Reading. Some dioceses have frozen recruitment and warned privately that they are in dire straits, though only London has so far admitted it may have to close churches. The review will consider the cost of bishops’ palaces and amalgamating diocesan bureaucracies.

— *The Guardian*

* * *

The Anglican Church continues to be plagued with controversy as a result of its American chapter, the Episcopal church, and its appointment of openly homosexual priest, Gene Robinson, as bishop of New Hampshire. As in the case of British canon, Jeffrey John, who withdrew his name from consideration as bishop of Reading, many objections are pouring in from among portions of the world’s 80 million communion of Anglicans, especially from Africa and Asia where more traditional views are held — earlier this year, bishops in Africa, Asia, and Latin America representing a third of Anglicans worldwide, severed ties with a Canadian diocese which authorized same-sex blessings.

Many Anglicans voicing their concerns that the appointment is contrary to the teachings of the Bible predict it will create a major schism in the Church. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Rowan Williams, has said the appointment would have a “significant impact” on the Church worldwide but that it was too early to say what the outcome would be.

— *British Broadcasting Corporation*

Deep River

My home is over Jordan

THE OLD SPIRITUAL expresses in simple poetic words the deep-seated longing for a promised land, a home where peace prevails and the long years of this life's wilderness journey are ended. The Biblical land of Canaan symbolizes for Christians this desired haven.

For Israel, in the years following their exodus from captivity in Egypt, Canaan was their literal destination, "a land flowing with milk and honey," promised by God through Moses, the man who had led them to freedom. That it took 40 long years to bring a stubborn and fickle people to the threshold of their inheritance underlines the enormity of the task entrusted to Moses. That he should die in Moab, having seen from the summit of Pisgah the prospective inheritance of his people, was a grief to them, and they mourned his death for 30 days.

A Military Commander

But the Lord had appointed Joshua to lead the people westwards over Jordan. "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses" (Josh. 1: 3). Preparations were made and the people were now assembled on the shoreline of Jordan. "Within three days ye shall pass over . . . to go in to possess the land" (Josh. 1: 11).

The great day dawned — Nisan 10, only a few days shy of their departure from Egypt 40 years before. The generation that had then set out to inherit the land were dead, their remains buried in the wilderness, but their children, though trembling with apprehension, had evidently learned valuable lessons through God's dealings with them. They trusted that a great miracle was to be wrought on their behalf, which would drive away their fear and give them the victory over the hostile tribes of Canaan.

Deep River

Viewed from the human standpoint it was a most unfavorable time of year — flood time in the Jordan. As the melting snows of Lebanon surged down, the riverbanks, ordinarily about 100 feet wide at this point, overflowed sometimes several hundred feet more. The current was swift and dangerous. How they were to cross, no man knew, but the priests, carrying the sacred ark, were to lead the way.

The brief account in Joshua chapter 3 scarcely conveys the immensity of the operation. It must have taken several hours for the 2 million or so people to pack their belongings and dismantle their tents, attend to their livestock, and organize themselves in as orderly a manner as possible to follow the priests across the Jordan.

The Miracle

It was a miracle. There can be no doubt of that. Whatever natural means the Lord may have used to stem the flow of the floodwaters, the timing of the event was Divinely overruled so that Israel could enter into their promised land that day. The people stood back at a respectful distance from the priests, intently watching the drama unfolding. To the astonishment of all, when the priests' feet touched the water, the river began to shrink. Step by step they went on into the channel, the river receding before them until it was entirely dried up. The ark rested in the middle of the riverbed and remained there for the several hours it must have taken until the whole multitude had crossed with cries of triumph and joy to the western shore. After the priests had carried the ark to the Canaan side of Jordan, the waters flowed back as before.



How Did it Happen?

"Do you believe it?" someone asks. The account in Joshua 3: 15, 16 reads: "As they that bare the ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests . . . were dipped in the brim of the water, . . . the waters which came down from above stood and rose up

upon an heap very far from the city Adam . . . and those that came down toward the . . . salt sea, failed, and were cut off: and the people passed over right against Jericho."

Bible believers do not discard any of its presentations lightly, but rather seek to find reasonable explanations for apparently unnatural happenings. Even though we may have a reasonable idea how this miracle was performed should not in the least detract from its value.

From v. 16 we see that the waters did not pile up within a few feet of the Israelites as they passed over the river, but a great way off near the town of Adam. At that point the Jordan passes through a deep gorge, and a landslide had very likely formed a dam and stopped the flow, the flood waters forming a "heap" or a vast lake, which would be contained until such time as the dam would burst.

Documentary Evidence

In the *Encyclopaedia Biblica* under the caption "Jericho," we find an account of a similar damming up of the Jordan in 1266: "A lofty mound which overlooked the river on the west fell into it and dammed it up at a time when the Jordan was in full flood as in Joshua's day. The waters above spread out into a great lake while the river below ran dry. The dam held from midnight until the fourth hour of the day."

SANCTIFY YOURSELVES

So began a new chapter in the great epic tale of the children of Israel. Joshua had said to the people, "Sanctify yourselves: for . . . the LORD will do wonders among you" (Josh. 3: 5). To sanctify means to set apart, and it was God's intention that the promised land of Canaan should be conquered and become the special dwelling place of His chosen people. They were not to be integrated with the existing inhabitants, who were to be dispossessed.

As God later said through the prophet Isaiah, "Ye are my witnesses" (43: 10), and it was paramount for His purposes that the worship of the true God should not be contaminated by the influence of godless tribes. The successes and failures of Israel in this respect are recorded in the Scriptures, providing a fascinating history of God's dealings with an often rebellious and disobedient people, and also many object lessons for the faithful of a later era.

Israel Represents Mankind

From the standpoint that "All these things happened unto them for ensamples . . . for our admonition (1 Cor. 10: 11), we might think of Adamic Death as the barrier that must be crossed, and the arrival into Canaan as portraying the entrance of all who love the Lord into the blessings and privileges of the Millennial Age. Joshua, whose name signifies *Savior*, would represent our Lord Jesus, and the priests bearing the ark might portray the true Church, the members of the Body of Christ, who will play their part in leading the world into the new dispensation — their land of promise.

There will still be enemies to conquer, weaknesses to overcome, and until each one has dislodged sin, error, and selfishness from the fortress of the heart, their citizenship is on trial. *Self-rule* is the real conquest.

Where Do We Fit In?

There is another — more immediate — Scriptural application we might make. Let us suppose that the people of Israel who trusted Joshua represent justified believers in Jesus, who desire to follow where He leads and to keep His commandments. Yet some feel instinctively that more is required of them, and recognize that they fall a little short of wholehearted willingness to sacrifice all for the sake of the Gospel. As with a certain ruler whom Jesus advised to "Sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor" (Mark 10: 17-22), it is a matter of grief and pain that there is some precious possession, some personal indulgence, some cherished love, some social status, that must be sacrificed for Christ's sake. Taking up the cross is not easy, and the sympathy of the Lord was evident: "Jesus beholding him loved him" (v. 21).

Taking the step of full consecration means so much and seems so formidable. It is our crossing of Jordan, that signifies the death of our human will and our setting apart to do the will of God, *whatever that may require of us*. Jesus says, "Sanctify yourselves: for the Lord will do wonders among you."

The Fears

But the river is so swollen! And did not the spies tell us of giants over there — warlike men of immense power and stature? What if we enter and find ourselves drowning? What if we do cross, but fall in battle?

*"When I tread the verge of Jordan,
Bid my anxious fears subside."*

We often falter on the threshold of a new experience. The unknown may frighten us; our courage may fail us; the old, familiar refuges will be out of reach; we doubt our strength to overcome the enemy. And so, many of the Lord's followers remain in a spiritual wilderness, perhaps throughout the whole of this lifetime, and fail to enter into the fullness of blessing that might have been theirs.

The priests of Israel, bearing the ark upon their shoulders, were obedient to Joshua's command. With perhaps only a moment's natural hesitation, they stepped boldly into the floodwater, and found it disappearing from their path. The first step of faith is always the most difficult, and it may be said with some truth that once that step is taken the goal is reached. A degree of momentum is gained, until pressing onward proves easier than retreating. So it is with the journey of consecration. As the years go by, we find we can join with our fellow travellers in singing:

*"And day by day this pathway smooths,
Since first I learned to love it."*

Inheriting the Land

The ark remained with the priests in the riverbed until all of the people had passed over, picturing the Lord's guarantee of a safe passage to all who desire to enter into the land of promise — to land safe on Canaan's side. "The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: . . . The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever" (Psa. 37: 23, 29).

Conquering the enemy takes time. If the Israelites had obeyed the Lord and driven out the godless tribes of Canaan they would have saved themselves much adversity in future years. Similarly, *spiritual* Israelites who compromise with sin in their own character are sure to have difficulty, and a fault, allowed to remain, may become a besetting sin and a thorn in the flesh to vex us.

"Milk and Honey" for All

The full conquest of the land is yet future. In the ultimate sense, entering into that blessed inheritance implies for humankind the complete and utter rooting out of all evil from the earth, "the meek" at last receiving what Jesus has promised them (Matt. 5: 5). For the true Church, the members of the Body of Christ whose names are written in heaven (Heb. 12: 23), there is "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, . . . reserved in heaven for you" (1 Pet. 1: 4). Thus for us all — beyond the deep river, our home is over Jordan.

* * *

BIBLE QUESTION BOX



Q How many Apostles were there?

A Many Christians hold to the thought that there were more Apostles than “The Twelve.” Some in the past have claimed, and some even now claim that they are Apostles, with similar powers, and in some cases base it upon the thought of Apostolic succession. The root of the difficulty is the failure to recognize that the Greek word *apostolos* has two different meanings — a *general* meaning and a *special* meaning. The New Testament uses this word in both of these senses.

(1) Its general meaning is *messenger*, and as such can be applied to anyone and everyone who is used as a messenger — one sent forth on any mission. Examples of this general sense can be seen in 2 Cor. 8: 23 and Phil. 2: 25. In these passages the persons mentioned were *messengers* — apostles — of certain churches, though not appointed specially to these missions by God or Christ; for they were sent forth by the vote of these churches on certain missions. Paul and Barnabas are called apostles in this *general* sense in Acts 14: 4, 14 because they were *sent out* on their missionary journey by the church at Antioch as its missionaries — messengers.

Only Twelve Special Apostles

(2) In the *special* sense, the Greek word *apostolos* applies to a special class of twelve, *and only twelve*, distinct men, who as specially chosen *messengers* of God and Christ acted as *Their plenipotentiaries* in the founding, teaching, and up-building of the entire Church. As such they were all: (a) eyewitnesses of Christ’s resurrection (Acts 10: 41), and (b) endowed with inspiration and infallibility in all their teachings (Gal. 1: 8, 9). They were given the powers (c) of binding and loosing (Matt. 18: 18), (d) of working miracles (Gal. 3: 5), and (e) of bestowing the “gifts” of the spirit on other disciples (Acts 8: 14-25). Though others could preach and work miracles, none others than these twelve were given the powers as explained in points (b), (c), and (e) above.

Scriptures proving that there were only twelve Apostles include Rev. 12: 1. Here the true Church is pictured by “a woman,” and the twelve Apostles by the “twelve stars.” In Rev. 21: 10, 14, the Church is pictured by the New Jerusalem, in which “the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the *twelve apostles of the Lamb*.”

Our Lord prophesied that there would be some who would claim to be Apostles (one of “The Twelve”), and

called them “liars” — “thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars” (Rev. 2: 2). Such are “false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ” (2 Cor. 11: 13).

Paul, Not Matthias, One of “The Twelve”

The names of the original twelve Apostles are found in Matt. 10: 2-4, Mark 3: 16-19, and Luke 6: 14-16. With the fall of Judas, the eleven, failing to wait on the Lord, and recognizing that Judas was to be replaced (Psa. 109: 8), mistakenly chose Matthias to take his place as one of “The Twelve” (Acts 1: 15-26). The fact that Jesus had instructed them to *wait* at Jerusalem until they would be baptized with the holy spirit should have prevented them from making the selection (Luke 24: 49; Acts 1: 4, 5). Aside from that, Christ alone was given by God the right to choose “The Twelve” (John 15: 16; compare Gal. 1: 15-17), and that authority was never given to the Apostles, or the Church as a whole, even after Pentecost.

Though some dispute that Paul took the place of Judas as one of “The Twelve,” Scriptures show to the contrary. He had all the powers of “The Twelve” in large measure (compare Acts 19: 6 with 8: 14-18), and in some instances even possessed them to a higher degree than the others. He compared himself with the remainder of “The Twelve,” showing that in no way was he inferior to any of them, even the greatest; that he was at least equal to any other Apostle, “not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles” (2 Cor. 11: 5).

Additional Scriptural proof for St. Paul being one of “The Twelve” include the books of 2 Corinthians and Galatians, which were written in large part to refute the Judaizing error that denied he was one of “The Twelve.” Specific Scriptures in which he speaks of himself as an Apostle are 1 Cor. 4: 9, Gal. 1: 17, and 1 Cor. 9: 5. As stated previously, a requirement of being one of “The Twelve” included being an eyewitness of Christ’s resurrection. St. Paul, in 1 Cor. 9: 1 and 15: 5-11 speaks of himself as one of those eyewitnesses. Another requirement was inspiration in their teachings. St. Peter calls St. Paul’s epistles Scripture in 2 Pet. 3: 15, 16, and St. Paul called upon certain ones in the Corinthian church to recognize his writings as inspired (1 Cor. 14: 37).

* * *

IT SEEMS THAT ALL THE WORLD IS ANGRY, and in our increasingly rage-ridden society, the gracious faculty of living peaceably with all men is seldom seen.

Confronted daily by expressions of angry frustration which would, in times past, have been controlled or suppressed, it is hard not to be caught up in the general attitude of aggression that robs the heart and mind of its peace, and tarnishes the character.

We all know what it is to feel anger. It can vary from mild irritation to intense fury, and like other emotions is accompanied by physiological and biological changes which can affect our well-being. Intense anger increases the heart rate, elevates the blood pressure, impairs mental efficiency, and disturbs one's contentment.

Righteous Indignation

There is of course an anger that is entirely proper. The Scriptures repeatedly mention God's anger, which is not based upon malice or injustice, but is an expression of His displeasure and opposition to sin. Jesus displayed the same righteous indignation at the abuse of the sacred things of God when He overthrew the tables of the moneychangers in the Temple (Matt. 21: 12, 13). The Apostles, too, sometimes gave expression to righteous anger, but love was the spur — love for truth and for God, whose ambassadors they were, and love for those who might be deceived by evildoers.

A person who is *never* angry is somewhat lacking in moral fiber. Retaining a measure of the Creator's image, the mature man and woman of faith must feel that same repugnance at evil that God feels, and abhor the injustice that prevails on account of sin.

How vocal should we be? Some believe that Christians should avoid the public arena and leave decision-making processes to the secular powers. The media and in particular the entertainment world seek to suppress the voice of Bible-believing Christians on social and moral issues, and it may be that we stand in danger of being de-sensitized. Let us pray for guidance as to our responsibilities in such matters!

Unrighteous Indignation

There are angry people everywhere. We see:

- Road rage — aggressive behavior in motorists;
- Air rage — flight passenger aggression;
- Rage in the workplace;
- Rage against police, social workers, nurses, politicians;
- Elder rage — in the lives of the elderly.

There are pop and rap groups whose hatred-inciting message is a shout of rage at world conditions or at their own real or perceived deprivation. Computer games portray characters with furious, distorted features, battling to the death to get their revenge on one another. Much even of children's entertainment is blighted by images of ugliness and violence, which inevitably affect their own conduct.

The unreasoning fury of so many betrays the frustration of a world at enmity with itself and helpless to change the situation. *Rage* is intense, uncontrolled anger, its root meaning being *madness*, and it is highly infectious. Men, women, and children afflicted by such destructive emotions are often, unwittingly, crying out for help.

How Can We Help?

There is no easy answer. As Christians we know that unbelievers are to a greater or lesser extent victims of "the god of this world" (2 Cor. 4: 4). Without faith in Christ they are "strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph. 2: 12).

Confronted personally by acts of rage, we are ourselves under test. Is the armor of God in place to "quench all the fiery darts of the wicked" (Eph. 6: 16)? Are we equipped to repulse the temptation to respond in like manner — to "give as good as we get"? Is our symbolic shield of faith so well controlled that we can deflect malicious, darting words, view the angry one with love and sympathy, and calm the storm?

Pouring Oil

Rage often exhausts itself if its target is not easily provoked. "A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger" (Prov. 15: 1). The voice of reason, prompted by the spirit of a sound mind (2 Tim. 1: 7) — the symbolic oil — can sometimes soothe the hurt and take the heat out of a nasty situation.

Rage is not an uncommon experience within families. A wise mother knows how best to calm a child's tantrums, not with angry threats or exasperated scolding, but with soft words and loving embrace. Idealistic? Yes, but any measure of success, however small, is worthwhile. Guiding a young life is a great responsibility, and the Apostle Paul, though unmarried himself, cautioned Christian fathers, "provoke not your children to wrath" (Eph. 6: 6). Much anger is prompted by fear, and a calm, loving environment is the best antidote.

But the soft answer does not work with everybody and there are those who become more infuriated when their raging provokes no similar response. To appear unaffected may be seen as showing them up in a bad light and they are at a disadvantage. We have to remember that it is not they who are on trial, but we ourselves.

Be Ye Angry, and Sin Not

Subject still to the frailties of human nature, even the Lord's people may at times lose some self-control and be found harboring *unrighteous* anger. We are exhorted: "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil" (Eph. 4: 26, 27). Let us each one strive to be delivered from such a fault, and learn as far as possible to live peaceably with all men (Rom. 12: 18).

* * *

Living Peaceably

"Godliness with contentment is great gain"

1 Tim. 6: 6

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At-a-glance

Germany: *Alteiningen*, October 17-19

Nigeria: *Danfodio Road Primary School, Aba*, Abia State, November 28-30

United Kingdom: *Sheffield*, October 25, 26

United States: *Illinois*, October 3-5; *Oklahoma*, November 7-9

Details

United States

Chicago, Illinois, October 3-5 (Friday-Sunday)

Site: Holiday Inn, 3405 Algonquin Road, Rolling Meadows, Illinois 60008; telephone: (847) 259-5000. *Rates and Reservations:* \$72.15 per room (\$65 + 11% tax), up to 4 per room. Reservations should be made direct with the hotel *by September 19*. *Be sure to mention that you are attending the LHMM Convention to obtain the discount rate.* A luncheon will be provided on Saturday, October 4.

Rolling Meadows is west of Chicago and 20 minutes from O'Hare International Airport; courtesy limousine is available. If you need limousine service from the airport, please give your arrival time and airline when making reservations. Make all other inquiries to the class secretary: Mrs. Audrey Hammer, 1702 Highland Ave., Arlington Heights, IL 60005.

Tulsa, Oklahoma, November 7-9 (Friday-Sunday)

Site: Sheraton Tulsa Hotel, 10918 E. 41st St., Tulsa Oklahoma 74146; telephone: (918) 627-5000. *Rates and Reservations:* \$70 (plus tax at 13%). Make enquiries to the class secretary: Mrs. Laverna Shaw, 1221 E. Forest Drive, Sand Springs, OK 74063.

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Carl Seebald

Chicago Convention, October 3-5

Ralph Herzig

Auburn, Massachusetts, September 14

Richard Blaine

Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, September 7; Cleveland, Georgia, September 27; Marietta, Georgia, September 28; Chicago Convention, October 3-5

Robert Herzig

New Haven, Connecticut, October 19

Jan Wojnar

Brazil, September 12-25; Springfield, Massachusetts; October 5

John Detzler

Chicago Convention, October 3-5

Leon Snyder

Minneapolis, Minnesota, September 20, 21; Chicago Convention, October 3-5

Baron Duncan

Springfield, Massachusetts, September 7; Pittsfield, Massachusetts, November 16

Tom Cimbura

Chicago Convention, October 3-5; Chicago, October 25, 26

Don Lewis

Grand Rapids, Michigan, September 6; Muskegon, Michigan, September 7; Chicago Convention, October 3-5

James Shaw

Chicago Convention, October 3-5

Marek Piotrowski

Seattle, Washington, November 15, 16

Evangelists' Services

Jon Hanning, Derry, Pennsylvania, September 20, 21;

Beechgrove, Tennessee, November 15, 16

Dan Herzig, Pittsfield, Massachusetts, October 12; Auburn, Massachusetts, November 9

David Lounsbury, New York City, September 21

Walter Markiewicz, Moscow, Idaho, September 13, 14;

Eugene, Oregon, September 27, 28; Riverside, California, October 25, 26

Harold Solomon, Boston, Massachusetts, October 26

Robert Steenrod, Cambridge Springs, Pennsylvania, October 19

Edward Tomkiewicz, Muskegon, Michigan, November 1;

Grand Rapids, Michigan, November 2

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