

DAVID BRINGS UP THE ARK

STORY BY THE "HIGHWAY AND BYWAY" PREACHER

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Scripture Authority: — 2 Samuel, chapter 6.

SERMONETTE.

In prosperity David forgot not God. There is forcible suggestion in the fact that the chapter which tells of David's successes is followed by a chapter telling of his sincere and humble devotion to God. This is not the usual order. We are prone to forget God in times of prosperity, while our periods of religious fervor are encouraged and inspired by adversities.

The deceitfulness of riches and the pride of life are pitfalls which David seems to have successfully avoided.

God's blessing followed by man's devotion is the Divine order. "We love him because he first loved us." We give to him because he first gives to us. We find the incentive for service in the fact that he sent his only begotten son to minister unto us.

Uzzah's death troubled David and caused him to fear God with a superstitious fear. The blessing upon the house of Obedom where the ark rested filled his heart with a Godly fear. There is a vast difference in the two kinds of fear. One is grounded in suspicion and distrust, the other in love. The one repels, the other attracts. For perfect love casteth out fear.

God's hand of judgment fell upon Uzzah, while his hand of blessing rested upon the house of Obedom. Why the difference? Just this: One knew God, the other did not. One was sensitive to the Divine presence; the other was not. One had due reverence for holy things; the other was of that profane nature that dares violate the sanctity of holy things and disobey the plainly spoken commands of God.

David did not let any false ideas of his own dignity and importance as king come between him and his God. In bringing up the ark he laid aside his royal robes, his crown and scepter, and attired in the garment which betokened complete consecration to God, he danced before the Lord. This was as it should be, for the heart which would truly worship God must come into his presence with that sincere humility which strips it of everything human and that genuine reverence which exalts and glorifies God and abaseth self. If to-day such a spirit could prevail among the worshippers who assemble in the churches of the land what a different atmosphere would permeate the service. Neither by dress nor by pompous, forbidding dignity could the rich and the distinguished be told from the worshippers of more humble station. There would be a joyful abandon to the service which would make one forget everything but the Lord and his glory and majesty and power.

THE STORY.

SHARP indeed the contrast between the departure from and the return to Jerusalem of King David. But a few days before he had gone out of the royal city with great re-

joicing followed by 30,000 of the chosen men of Israel to bring up the ark of the Lord and that evening as the shadows were gathering he had gloomily and silently returned, followed only by his body guard and his few attendants and without the ark. That had been left at the place where the awful judgment had fallen upon Uzzah; king and people with a superstitious fear shunning it and refusing to bring it further.

The representative men whom David had summoned from the various tribes and who had come so gladly and in such high spirits had returned home again disappointed and troubled in heart. And they had taken the word everywhere of the failure of their mission, of how Uzzah had been suddenly stricken before the ark and the expedition abruptly ended.

Thus it was that as the king entered his house that night upon his return to Jerusalem not only he but the whole nation as well were troubled by the strange and untoward things which had come to pass. Dejectedly King David looked about him as he sought the seclusion of his private apartments. All the beauty of the cedar palace which he had built seemed to have passed away and in place of the joy and satisfaction he had found in the new surroundings there was now only disappointment and anxious forebodings.

"Why is this thing come to pass?" he asked himself, dejectedly. "Did I err in my desire to bring up the ark? How beautiful is the situation in this city and how fitting it seemed that the ark of the Lord should rest within the tabernacle which has been reared upon the rocky eminence overlooking the Kedron. How joyful was our going forth and how sad has been our return. It may be that the ark can come hither, for who is there that dare bring it. Uzzah but touched it and is dead, and I remember hearing my father tell of the awful things which befel the Philistines when they had the ark, and after that how the men of Bethshemesh were stricken with a grievous plague when they looked within the ark. And now this tragedy has fallen upon us at a time when we would bring up the ark and who is there dare approach unto it more or to bring it up over the difficult pathway of this city?" And he bowed his head in his hands.

The king sat silently and disconsolate far into the night, and when at last he sought his couch it was only to find his troubled thoughts merging into the most distressing dreams, so that little rest or refreshing came to him. And the days which followed brought little relief, for the unexplained mystery does not contribute to one's peace of mind. Day after day, yea, night after night ere slumber came to his weary, tired brain, he went over and over again the sad incidents of Uzzah's death. He tried to analyze his own purposes and desires in bringing up the ark. He searched his heart for answer to the many questions which arose.

He did not doubt God. He did not feel rebellious against him. But he did want to understand it all. It seemed as though he never again could come into close and loving touch with him again. His longing was after God, and yet how dare he approach unto him or come near to the sacred emblems of Israel's worship, or bring them to their proper place in the royal city if such fate as came to Uzzah awaited him or others in Israel?

He thought that the presence of the ark in Jerusalem would bring the blessing and favor of God, but how could he now hope for such thing when on the very journey thither the ark brings death to those in whose care it was placed?

How all Israel had rung with the joy of bringing up the ark, and now in what reproach must he be held because his plans had ended in such disappointment and tragedy. Thus the days passed in troubled thought. The weeks grew to be a month and then the month stretched to two and

still no relief came to poor King David.

So it was when the third month was drawing to a close. Weary with the struggle and the questionings which filled his heart David resolved that he would send for the Prophet Nathan, who in the course of his ministry through Israel had come to Jerusalem.

"What think you concerning this matter?" questioned David when the man of God had come into his presence. "I fear to bring up the ark, and yet I cannot be content while it abides not in the tabernacle where the word of the Lord which came unto Moses declared it should be placed. But since the Lord smote Uzzah all the nation fears the ark as some terrible thing which will bring them hurt."

"But thinkest thou that the judgment of the Lord rests upon any who deserve it not?" replied Nathan. "Knowest thou not that God must punish a violation of the command concerning the touching of the ark? If plague came to the Philistines because they kept the ark a trophy to their gods, knowing not God neither his law, how much more should judgment be on a Levite who, instructed as he is concerning the things of the tabernacle, puts forth the presumptuous hand and thinketh to save the emblem of Divine presence from disaster?"

"But there seemed danger that the ark would fall, for the oxen shook it, and Uzzah thoughtlessly put forth his hand to stay it," David responded quickly.

"Yea," solemnly said the prophet, "but thou must not forget that those to whom God commits his sacred trust must heed the commands of the Lord concerning them."

"Then thou thinkest that there is nothing to fear in the presence of the ark?" David asked eagerly.

Nathan opened his mouth to reply, when the entrance of a servant announcing the arrival of a delegation to see the king cut short his words, as they cried, joyfully, almost before they had made their obeisance:

"Let the king's heart rejoice, for blessing has come to the house of Obedom since the ark came into his care."

"Thou hast thy answer to thy question," Nathan exclaimed, turning to the king. "Go thou and bring the ark thither."

So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obedom unto the city of David with gladness.

Character in Reading.

A man reveals his character by the way he holds his newspaper. The methodical, exact man folds his paper very evenly in a small square. The man who makes an untidy fold across the page, letting half of the pages hang out and probably tearing one or two sheets in the process, is careless and good natured, but possibly hot tempered.

He who clutches his paper as if in mortal fear that some one is going to take it from him is certainly bad tempered.

The man who holds his paper close to his face, appearing almost to hide behind it, is watchful and prudent to an extreme and apt to be suspicious.

Watch the way people fold their hands. Those who fold the right thumb over the left are stronger willed than those who fold the left over the right.

World's Richest Banks.

The Bank of England is the richest bank in the world today. The bank of France comes next. The Bank of Paris is not a state institution, though the governor and two deputies are appointed by the president of the republic and are removable by the minister of finance. The bank practically represents the financial power of the republic.

How to Make it Attractive.

If virtue could be marked down to about 98 cents from one dollar there would be a rush for it.

WHAT ONE MERCHANT DID

Correspondent of Home Trade League Testifies to Value of Publicity

One country merchant writes the Home Trade league as follows:

"Since I have adopted the city idea of advertising—naming new goods with prices, and at the same time making known what I desire to dispose of at or about cost to make room for new goods—my sales have not only increased very largely with regular customers, but I have secured many new ones. Not only this—instead of the farmers' wives spending from a half to an hour and a half looking about the store to see what there is in stock they may want and taking the clerk's time who otherwise would have a chance to sell goods to several other customers, they come in and ask for the very articles they have seen advertised and which they have already decided they do want from seeing the advertisement in this weekly paper, and the result is I have been able to dispense with one of my clerks to whom I was paying \$500 per year."

This merchant further says that this saving of clerk hire expended in this same kind of advertising during the year will, he is confident, increase his trade 50 per cent. and that he can already name 28 customers who but very recently have been buying their goods almost entirely from Chicago catalogue houses.

This experience without doubt can be duplicated by thousands of other men in business throughout the country. It is to be feared that the average merchant in the smaller towns has allowed himself to get into a rut, and it is one from which he must swiftly emerge if he has any desire to "stay

in the game." The methods of a generation ago, it must be remembered, are not necessarily adapted to the conditions of to-day.

By the persistent and persevering use of every device for publicity the catalogue houses have built up their present enormous trade. It is not reasonable to suppose they can be dislodged from the position they occupy—a position, as has frequently been pointed out, that threatens the well-being if not the existence of every small community throughout the country—unless they are opposed with something like their own weapons. A favorite phrase much in use to-day is "Get business!" and to get business you must go after it. Is it reasonable to expect it will come to you unsought?

Take the experience of this Home Trade league correspondent as a guide. He had the goods. He wanted to sell them. His proceeding was simple. Through publicity, which in his case simply meant attractive and truthful advertising, he brought the goods and the people together. Results were never in doubt.

To sum up, successfully to compete with the powerful catalogue houses of the cities the country merchant must in a measure adopt their methods. They have won by publicity. Meet them on that ground. Match advancement with advancement. You have the medium in your local paper. Let your advertisements say something, and mean what they say. Let the people know what you have to sell, and depend upon it, they will come to buy.

IS HUMAN WEAKNESS

THE DESIRE TO GET SOMETHING FOR NOTHING.

AN IGNIS FATUUS TO AVOID

One Cause That Has Led to the Downfall of Many—Fallacy That Ever Tends Toward Evil.

A man who won the confidence, respect and admiration of the people of his state was elected to the United States senate. Soon it is discovered that he was "owned by the railroads," bought by favors and instead of representing the interests of the people who sent him to his high place in the nation's councils, preferred to represent the corporations that made it possible for him to ride over railroads without cost. It is only a demonstration of human inclination to get something for nothing.

The member of a state legislature was accused of showing special attention to legislation favorable to the railroads and corporations. He was charged with riding on passes; and in fact it became known that his principal supporters, too, rode free over the railroads. Another illustration of the human desire to secure something for nothing.

The mayor of a city regularly occupied a box at the leading theater; handed out a free street car ticket to the conductor, enjoyed free drinks at the bars—another example of the man who wanted something for nothing, and at last his greed caused him to enter into dishonest deals that landed him in the penitentiary.

D. M. CARR.

FOR GREATER ECONOMY.

Manufacturing Drifting Closer to Fields Where Raw Material Is Produced.

Economy in every industry is becoming more pronounced year after year. Manufacturing centers are drifting toward locations where the raw materials can be secured at lower cost. During the past ten years cotton manufacturing in the south has increased more than a hundred per cent., and there has been a decrease in the production of textile manufacturing centers in the New England states in proportion to the increase in consumption. A score of years ago the great flour manufacturing centers were in New York and other eastern states. To-day the west controls manufactures of flour and cereal foods. When mills are located in centers of wheat and corn producing sections in number sufficient to utilize the crops of local territory, it will work a benefit to the farmers of the land in the saving of what is now paid in freight

rates or raw products to manufacturing centers, and the distribution cost to consumers of the land. Every farmer can help better conditions and help himself by giving his support to local manufacturing enterprises.

Value of the Local Press.

The farmer is a friend of the local press. He is the spinal column of the editor's subscription list. The other sources of the editor's support are the merchants of the town and the business men in general. Let the business men stand by the local press in the way of advertising, as the farmer does in the way of subscription, and all concerned will receive greater benefits.

Nervous Prostration.

First Hobo—Meanderin' Mike's ill from overwork.

Second Hobo—Poor old Mike! Wot's he bin a-workin'?

First Hobo—Too many easy marks.

Problem.

If a hen were to pick up a hornet, would you call that a peck of trouble?

What Love Means.

"Love?"

Do you know what it means? asks a writer in the Chicago American. Not in the dictionary, but in the hearts of us who are still old-fashioned enough to believe in it, and to believe that this dreary old world has love to spare for humanity yet.

It means the little head cuddled against the mother breast. It means that which bore with us through years of folly, and pain, and un wisdom. The one who always forgave, even when we hurt her the most. It means the one woman—"like mother"—to be ours, from out the whole world, till death does us part.

It means that which lightens toll, sweetens poverty, divides our trouble and shares our joy, and makes our life worth the living. It means that which makes for us with perennial youth and beauty, the bent shoulders, the faded eyes, the wrinkled cheek, the toll-hardened hands and the halting feet.

When we refuse to meet an emergency it is apt to overtake us.

Not in Sherlock's Class.

To Frederick Kohler, Cleveland's chief of police, a reporter submitted the other day an idea for use in the war against male flirts that Mr. Kohler is waging.

"Your idea is novel," said the chief, laughing, "but, from the practical point of view, I'm afraid that there is not much in it."

"In fact—if you'll excuse me—your idea reminds me of a remark that is imputed to one of my Cleveland sleuths.

"They say that this man, examining a jeweler's window that had been smashed in, muttered to himself sagely:

"By gosh, this is more serious than I thought. It's broke on both sides!"—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Norway's Wooden Churches.

Some of the wooden churches of Norway are fully 700 years old and are still in an excellent state of preservation. Their timbers have successfully resisted the frosty and almost arctic winters because they have been repeatedly coated with tar.

Hawthorne's Mental Sight.

Hawthorne's mental sight in discerning souls is marvelously penetrating and accurate, but he finds it so difficult to give them an adequate physical embodiment that their very flesh is spiritualized, and appears to be brought into the representation only to give a kind of phantasmal form to purely mental conceptions.—E. P. Whipple.

Music in Sea Shells.

How many children know what causes the booming sound in a sea shell when it is placed against the ear? The hollow, polished inner parts of the shell catch all the sounds about it and echo them, muffled in a measure. A sea shell is therefore an instrument of the delusive spirit, Echo.

Painstaking Doctor.

We know of no more instructive, no more encouraging subject for a paper than that of the debt which science owes to the persevering, observant, painstaking doctor who collects the mortar from which specialists build their edifices.—London Hospital.