

THE LESSON OF UZZA

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“And David and all Israel played before God with all their might, and with singing, and with harps, and with psalteries, and with timbrels, and with cymbals, and with trumpets.”
1 Chronicles 13:8

“And David was afraid of God that day, saying, How shall I bring the ark of God home to me?”
1 Chronicles 13:12

“So David, and the elders of Israel, and the captains over thousands, went to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of the house of Obed-edom with joy.”
1 Chronicles 15:25

DAVID had in his heart, an intense love to God. During Saul's reign, God had been well-nigh forgotten in the land. The ordinances of His house had been almost, if not entirely, neglected, and when David found himself firmly seated upon his throne, one of his first thoughts was concerning the revival of religion—the reestablishment of that form of worship which God had ordained in the wilderness by the mouth of His servant Moses.

So he looked about him to see where the ark of the covenant, that most sacred of all the ancient symbols, was, and he wrote, “We heard of it at Ephrathah: we found it in the fields of the wood.” Out of pure love and reverence to God, he called the people together, consulting with them so that the thing might not be done by himself alone, but by the nation. It was agreed that the ark should be brought up and placed upon Mount Zion, near the palace of the king, in a conspicuous position where it should be the center of religious worship for the entire nation. It was to be placed near that sacred spot where Abraham had of old, offered up his son Isaac, that, in the great days of assembly, the Israelites might wend their way thither, and worship God as He had commanded them.

David's intention was right enough, no fault can be found with that, but right things must be done in a right way. We serve a jealous God, who, though He overlooks many faults in His people, yet nevertheless, will have His Word revered, and His commands obeyed. “Be ye clean,” says He, “that bear the vessels of the Lord.” He will be honored by those that attempt to draw nigh to Him. So it came to pass that, though David had a good intention, and was about to do a right thing, yet at the first, he had *a great failure*.

When we have considered the cause of that failure, we shall note that this failure wrought in David *a great fear*, and when we have meditated for a while upon that fear, we shall see that when David set to work to honor his God after the due order, he did it with such *a great joy* that, perhaps, we have scarcely another instance of such exuberance of spirit in the worship of God as we have in the case of David, who leaped and danced before the ark of the Lord with all his might.

I. First then, we are to consider DAVID'S GREAT FAILURE.

It followed almost immediately after “David and all Israel played before God with all their might, and with singing, and with harps, and with psalteries, and with timbrels, and with cymbals, and with trumpets.” This was David's first attempt to bring up the ark of the covenant into the place appointed for it.

Observe, dear friends, that *there was no failure through lack of multitudes*. It is, to my mind very delightful to worship God with the multitude that keep holy day. I know some people who think themselves the only saints in the whole world. They do not imagine that any can be the elect of God if there are more than seven or eight, “because,” say they, “strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it,” and therefore, simply because they are few in number, they straightway conclude that they have passed through the strait gate into the narrow way.

It needs far better evidence than that to prove that they are in the right road, and for my part, I love, as David did, to go with the multitude to the house of God, to keep time and tune with many hearts and many voices all on fire with holy devotion as they lift up the sacred song in a great chorus of praise unto the Most High. There was no failure, in that respect, on this occasion, for “David gathered all Israel together, from Shihor of Egypt even unto the entering of Hemath, to bring the ark of God from Kirjath-jearim.”

Thus they came, from all parts of the land, in their hundreds and their thousands, an exceeding great multitude, yet their attempt to bring up the ark proved a sad failure. So, you see that it is of little value merely to gather crowds of people together. However great the multitude of nominal worshippers may be, it is quite possible that they may offer no worship that is acceptable to God. We ourselves may come and go in our thousands, yet that alone will not guarantee that the presence of God is among us. It would be far better to be with a few, if God were in the midst of them, than to be with the multitude, and yet to miss the divine blessing.

Neither was there *any failure so far as pomp and show were concerned*. It seems that these people paid very great honor, in their own way, to this ark—putting it on a new carriage, and surrounding it with the princes, and the captains, and the mighty men of the kingdom, together with the multitudes of the common people of the land. I doubt not that it was a very imposing array that day, and truly, the solemn worship of God should be attended to with due decency and order, yet it may be a failure for all that.

Sweet may be the strain of the sacred song, yet God may not accept it because it is sound and nothing more. The prayer may be most appropriate so far as the language of it is concerned, yet it may fail to reach the ear of the Lord God of Sabaoth. Something more is needed beside mere outward show—something beyond even the decent simplicities of worship in which we delight.

Neither was there any failure apparently, *so far as the musical accompaniment was concerned*. We are told in our text that, “David and all Israel played before God with all their might, and with singing, and with harps, and with psalteries, and with timbrels, and with cymbals, and with trumpets.” I like that expression, “with all their might.” I cannot bear to hear God’s praises uttered by those who simply whisper, as though they were afraid of making too much noise. Nay, but—

*“Loud as His thunders, sound His praise,
And speak it lofty as His throne,”—*

for He well deserves it. Let the sea roar, and the fullness thereof, in praise of its great Creator. Let all the winds and the waves join in the concert, there cannot be any sound too jubilant for Him who is worthy of the highest praise of heaven and earth. It is right to sing unto the Lord with all your might, yet there may be a certain kind of heartiness which is not acceptable to God because it is natural, not spiritual. There may be a great deal of outward expression, yet no inward life. It may be only dead worship after all, despite the noise that may be made. I do not say that it was altogether so in David’s case, but certainly, all the multitude, all the pomp, and all the sound did not prevent its becoming an entire failure. What was the reason for that failure?

If I read the story aright, it seems to me, first, that *there was too little thought as to God’s mind upon the matter*. David consulted the people, but he would have done better if he had consulted God. The co-operation of the people was desirable, but much more the benediction of the Most High. There ought to

have been much prayer preceding this great undertaking of bringing up the ark of the Lord, but it seems to have been entered upon with very much heartiness and enthusiasm, but not with any preparatory supplication or spiritual consideration.

If you read the story through, you will see that it appears to be an affair of singing, and harps, and psalteries, and timbrels, and cymbals, and trumpets, and of a new cart and cattle, that is about all there is in it. There is not even a mention of humiliation of heart, or of solemn awe in the presence of that God of whom the ark was but the outward symbol. I am afraid that this first attempt was too much after the will of the flesh and the energy of nature, and too little according to that rule of which Christ said to the woman at Sychar, “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”

Yes, beloved, all worship fails if that is not the first consideration in it. Let the singing be hearty and melodious, let everything in our services be in proper order, but as the first and most important thing, let the Holy Ghost be there, so that we may draw near to God in our heart, and have real spiritual communion with Him. The outward form of worship is a very secondary matter, the inward spirit of it is the all-important thing, there appears to me, to have been too little attention paid to that in the first attempt that David made to bring up the ark, and therefore, it was a failure.

One very important omission was that *the priests were not in their proper places*. They appear to have been there, but they were, evidently, not treated as their position entitled them to be. The men of war were brought to the front, and the men of worship were pushed aside. Now, in all true worship, the priest is of the first importance. “What,” you ask, “do you believe in a priest?” Yes, in the great High Priest of whom the Aaronic priesthood was the type, all my hopes for time and eternity are centered in Him who is “a Priest forever after the order of Melchisedec.” If you do not put Him into the first place—I care little what sort of worship you render—you may be very intense, and very devout, after your own fashion—but it is all in vain.

There is no way of coming unto God except through the “one Mediator between God and men, the man, Christ Jesus.” There is no way of approaching God except through the one great High Priest, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. You may cry unto God, but your prayers cannot reach His ears until Christ presents them to His Father. You may bring your sweet spices, but they will never have any fragrance before the Lord until the great High Priest puts them into the golden censer, and mingles with them the precious incense of His own merits, and so makes them acceptable before the Lord. A prayer without Christ in it will never reach heaven. Praise which is not presented through the merits of Christ, is but a meaningless noise which can never be well-pleasing unto God.

These people not only had not the priests in their proper places, but *they also had a cart, instead of Levites, to carry the sacred ark*. The laboring oxen took the place of the willing men who were appointed by God for this service. David and all the people appear to have forgotten the appointments which God made concerning the ark, so they fell into trouble, and all their efforts proved to be a failure.

Next I notice that, the first time, *there were no sacrifices*. They put the ark upon the cart, and went before it, and behind it, and around it, with their instruments of music, but there was no sacrificial blood shed. They had been so long out of the habit of worshipping God in His appointed way that they had forgotten very much.

I wonder that David did not notice this fatal omission, and I am not surprised that Uzza died as there is no mention of the sprinkling of blood upon the mercy seat that day. And beloved, if we leave the blood of atonement out of our worship, we leave out that which is the very life of it, for the blood is the life thereof. If you have no respect unto the atoning sacrifice of Christ, God will have no respect unto you. If you have no regard for the great propitiation which Christ has made for sin, the Lord will not accept either prayers or praises at your hands. Without the shedding of Christ’s blood, there is no remission of sin.

All through this incident we see that there was no taking heed to the commands of God, and to the rules which He had laid down. *The people brought will-worship to God*, instead of that which He had

ordained. What do I mean by will-worship? I mean any kind of worship which is not prescribed in God's own Word.

It has sometimes been pleaded, as an excuse for the observance of some rite or ceremony which is not commanded in the Scriptures, that it is very instructive, or very impressive. That is no excuse or justification for disobedience. The first commandment may be broken, not only by worshipping a false god, but by worshipping the true God in another way than that which He has ordained. If you set up a mode of worship not warranted by His Word, whatever you may plead for it, it is idolatrous, and the Lord may well say to you, "Who hath required this at your hands?" Mark this—if it be not of His appointment, neither will it meet with His acceptance.

Inasmuch, therefore, as these people did not show any reverence for God by consulting His record of the rules which He had laid down for their guidance—seeming to think that whatever pleased them must please Him—whatever kind of worship they chose to make up would be quite sufficient for the Lord God of Israel—therefore, it ended in failure.

Beloved, take care how you worship God. If you are to take heed how you hear, you are also to take heed how you pray, and to take heed how you praise, and to take heed how you come to the communion table. Take heed how, in any way you seek to draw near unto the living God, for He is not to be approached in any slipshod fashion that you may choose to invent. He has His own way by which alone He can be approached. His august court has rules, even as the courts of earthly kings have their regulations and laws, and if you transgress the King's command, it may be that He will smite you as He slew Uzza, or at the least, your worship will be unacceptable to Him.

II. Now we turn to our second text, to the second head of our discourse, namely, DAVID'S GREAT FEAR, "And David was afraid of God that day, saying, How shall I bring the ark of God home to me?"

What changeable creatures we are! From a careless and almost criminal want of thought, David's mind speedily travels to great seriousness of thought, attended with a very terrible dread. Do you wonder that *the death of Uzza caused David to fear greatly*? The procession is going along, and the harps, psalteries, timbrels, cymbals, and trumpets are sounding the high praises of God when, on a sudden, the oxen come to the threshing floor of Chidon, and perhaps, tempted by the sight of the grain, they turn aside—or at least, they stumble, and the ark is likely to be upset.

One mistake usually leads to another. If they had not put the ark on that cart, this trouble would not have happened. And now young Uzza, who had been living in the house where the ark had been kept so long, perhaps not thinking he is doing wrong, puts out his hand to hold the ark, and instantly falls a corpse. A thrill of horror goes through the crowd, the music stops, and David stands aghast.

At first sight, it does appear to be a very severe punishment, yet we must remember that this is not the only time that God acted thus toward those who profaned the service in which they were engaged. Nadab and Abihu, instead of taking the proper fire to light their censers, took strange fire. There did not seem much difference, is not one kind of fire very much like another? Those two young men went in before the Lord with their censers kindled by strange fire, and they fell dead in a moment before God. They had only broken the law in a small matter, as it seemed, but God has His ways of measuring things, and His method is very different from ours.

David ought also to have remembered how more than fifty thousand of the men of Beth-shemesh were slain when the Philistines brought back the ark and the men of Beth-shemesh looked into it. Truly "our God is a consuming fire." He will not be trifled with. This was His ark, and He would make them know that it was His, and albeit that with good intentions they had surrounded it, yet since they had not reverently obeyed His commands, He would let them see that He was not to be trifled with, nor that His ark could be touched with impunity. Do you wonder that, in the presence of that corpse, David was afraid of God that day?

He was also afraid of God for another reason, namely, that *he himself had been in a wrong frame of mind*, for we read in the eleventh verse, that "David was displeased because the LORD had made a breach upon Uzza." He does not seem to have been displeased with Uzza, but he was displeased with

God. It seemed to him a hard thing that he had gathered all that crowd of people together, and that they had been doing their best, as he thought, for the honor of God, and now the whole proceedings were spoilt by the outstretched hand of an angry God in their midst. So David was angry, and when he remembered that such wicked thoughts had ever crossed his mind, he began to feel afraid of God for his own sake.

Then, I daresay, *his own sense of worthlessness for such a holy work* made him cry, “How shall I bring the ark of God home to me?” He feared lest, in some unguarded moment, he might be guilty of irreverence and so perish as Uzza had done. I have often had, in a measure, that kind of fear upon me which came over David that day.

To be a child of God is the most blessed experience in the world, but it also involves stern discipline. When God makes you His child, you are sure to feel His rod. Others may escape it, but you will not, “for whom the LORD loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.” If you live very near to God and you get many tokens of His favor, you will find that you must watch every step you take, and every thought you think, for the Lord is a jealous God, and where He gives the most love, there will be the most jealousy.

He may leave a sinner to go to great lengths in sin, but not His saints. He may let ordinary Christians do a great deal without chastening them, but if you are privileged to lie in His bosom, if you have high fellowship with Him, you will soon know how jealous He is.

I have often heard men, while praying, quote as if it were a text of Scripture, “God, out of Christ, is a consuming fire.” The Bible does not say anything of the kind, it says, “Our God is a consuming fire.” So, the prophet Isaiah asks, “Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?” And what is his answer? “He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly.” He is the only man who can live amid such burnings—the sacred salamander from whom the fire only burns out any remaining sin.

When you ask to live near to God, see in what a terrible place, and in what a supremely blessed place, you ask to live. You want to live in the fire of His presence, even though you know that it will consume your sin, and that you will have often to suffer much while that sin is being consumed. I have said, again and again, “My Lord, burn as fiercely as it may, I do aspire to dwell in this sacred spot. Let the fire go through me till it has burned up all my dross, but oh! do let me dwell with Thee!”

Yet I am not surprised if someone starts back and says, “I can hardly ask for such a trial as that.” Like James and John, we want to sit on the right and left hand of our Master in His glory, but when He asks, “Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?” it will need much more grace than they had if we are able to say, from our hearts, “‘We can.’ By Your grace, we shall be able and willing to endure anything if we may but dwell with You.”

For, beloved, if you have ever had even a glimpse of God in His innermost tabernacle—if He has made His glory to shine upon you—you have felt willing even to die, have been almost eager to die, that you might have yet more of that beatific vision, and never have it clouded again.

One of the good old saints said, when he had very much of the love of Christ poured into his soul, “Hold, Lord, hold! It is enough. Remember that I am but an earthen vessel. If I have more, I shall die.” If I had been in such a case, I think I would have said, “Do not hold, Lord! I am but an earthen vessel, so I shall die in the process, and glad enough shall I be to die if I may but see Your face, and never, never, lose the vision anymore.”

We need not wonder that David was afraid after such a manifestation of the divine displeasure. He did the best thing he could do under the circumstances, He left the ark with Obed-edom for a while, determined to set about its removal in a different fashion another time.

III. Now we come to our third subject, that is, DAVID’S SACRED JOY, “So David, and the elders of Israel, and the captains over thousands, went to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of the house of Obed-edom with joy.” Obed-edom took the ark into his house and *God blessed him*. Then it occurred to David that there was not much, after all, to be afraid of in the ark. That awful thing that had

smitten Uzza, had been in this other man's house and been a blessing to him. That fact has often made my heart rejoice. I have said, "Well, I know that it is a solemn thing to live near to God, but I have seen a poor, bed-ridden woman live in the light of God's countenance, year after year, as happy as all the birds of the air, then why should not I do the same? I have seen a plain, humble, Christian man walking with God, as Enoch did, and happy from the first of January to the last of December, and God blessing him in everything, so, come, my soul, though your God is a consuming fire, there is nothing for His children to dread."

So, after David had seen that God blessed Obed-edom for three months, he thought to himself, "Well, now, Obed-edom has had his turn, and I may have mine. I will set to work to see if I cannot worship God rightly this time, and bring up the ark unto my house in the right way."

So he began thus. *He prepared a tent for the ark.* I do not read that he did that before, but in the first verse of the fifteenth chapter we read, "David made him houses in the city of David, and prepared a place for the ark of God, and pitched for it a tent." Now you see that he is thoughtful and careful in preparing a place for the ark of God, and if I want God's presence, I must prepare my mind and heart to receive it. If I want to enjoy communion with my Lord at His table, I must obey that injunction, "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup." I must not observe the ordinances of the Lord's house without proper thought and solemnity. As the priests washed themselves before they ministered at the altar, so would I come, cleansed and sanctified by the purifying Word, that I may acceptably appear before God.

Then next, *the mind of the Lord was considered.* In the second verse of this fifteenth chapter, David says, "None ought to carry the ark of the Lord but the Levites: for them hath the LORD chosen to carry the ark of God," and he asserts that the breach upon them had been made because they "sought him not after the due order." Now is David anxious to obey God. He will do, not what he thinks proper, but what God thinks proper, and that is the right way for us to worship the Lord.

How I wish that all professing Christians would revise their creed by the Word of God! How I wish that all religious denominations would bring their ordinances and forms of worship to the supreme test of the New Testament! "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them." But alas! they know that so much would have to be put away that is now delightful to the flesh, that I fear, we shall be long before we bring all to worship God after His own order.

But my soul, if you are to be accepted of God, you must see to it that in all your approaches to the great King, you do strictly observe the etiquette of His court. What is the rule for courtiers who come into the presence of the King of kings? What dress are they to wear? With what words can they approach the throne? In what spirit are they to draw nigh to God? Answer all these questions and see that you do ask the Lord to make you obedient in all things to His gracious commands.

Further, you see that this time *the priests were put into their proper places.* David said, "Because ye did it not at the first, the LORD our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought him not after the due order." Now they are where they should have been at the first, in the front of the procession, and brethren, when God accepts us, Christ will take the first place. Our great High Priest will be in the front, and we shall do nothing except through His name and in the power of His precious blood.

Then, on this second occasion, *sacrifices were presented unto the Lord.* Scarcely had the ark rested upon the shoulders of the Levites than they offered seven bullocks and seven rams as a sacrifice unto God. So, we should never think of doing anything in the worship of our God without the seven bullocks and seven rams which are all summed up in the one perfect offering of our ever-adorable Lord.

O brothers and sisters, keep Christ ever before you! Let all your good deeds be done through the strength you receive from Him, for "of him, and through him, and to him, are all things." Nothing can be right that is apart from Him, but if He is our Alpha and Omega, and all the letters between, there is no fear that we shall not bring up the ark of the Lord aright. In this spirit of loving obedience, and holy awe, relying upon the sacrifice which they had presented, they seemed like hinds let loose, and David,

especially, who I suppose was a representative of the whole of them, seemed as if he did not know how he could adequately express the joy that he felt. He had his harp, of which he was a master-player, so, with his skillful fingers moving among the familiar strings, he began to sing, and as he sang, he leaped like some of our Methodist friends do when they get so excited that they must begin to jump and to dance.

I suppose that all the crowd cried, “Amen!” as David sang some of his most joyous songs of praise unto the Lord, and that a great shout went up to heaven, for everyone was glad that day, and especially David, as he danced before the Lord with all his might.

We must not forget that this carrying up of the ark was a type of the ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ. If there is anything that should make a Christian’s heart leap for joy, it is the fact of His Lord’s return to heaven. See Him! He has risen from the dead, and now He is rising from the midst of His disciples. He continues to ascend till a cloud receives Him out of their sight and angels fly to meet Him as He nears the pearly gates. Squadron after squadron salutes the conquering Prince, and bids Him welcome home.

And who, I pray you, is this Lord of hosts who now ascends His Father’s throne, and sits down at His Father’s right hand forever, as the acknowledged King of kings and Lord of lords? It is the man that died on Calvary—the great representative Man who is also God. Lo, at His chariot wheels He drags sin, Satan, death, and hell. He leads captivity captive, and gives gifts unto men.

*“Sing, O heavens! O earth, rejoice!
Angel harp, and human voice,
Round Him, as He rises, raise
Your ascending Saviour’s praise.”*

Now may you who love Him dance with all your might, now may you let your souls revel in intense delight, and plunge themselves in the bottomless sea of ineffable bliss. God grant you so to do, for our Lord Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

1 CHRONICLES 13, AND 15:1-4, 11-16, 25-29

1 Chronicles Chapter 13. Verses 1-3. *And David consulted with the captains of thousands and hundreds, and with every leader. And David said unto all the congregation of Israel, If it seem good unto you, and that it be of the LORD our God, let us send abroad unto our brethren every where, that are left in all the land of Israel, and with them also to the priests and Levites which are in their cities and suburbs, that they may gather themselves unto us: and let us bring again the ark of our God to us: for we inquired not at it in the days of Saul.*

It had lain neglected at Kirjath-jearim, “in the fields of the wood,” as David writes in the one hundred thirty-second psalm.

4-8. *And all the congregation said that they would do so: for the thing was right in the eyes of all the people. So David gathered all Israel together, from Shihor of Egypt even unto the entering of Hemath, to bring the ark of God from Kirjath-jearim. And David went up, and all Israel, to Baalah, that is, to Kirjath-jearim, which belonged to Judah, to bring up thence the ark of God the LORD, that dwelleth between the cherubims, whose name is called on it. And they carried the ark of God in a new cart out of the house of Abinadab: and Uzza and Ahio drove the cart. And David and all Israel played before God with all their might, and with singing, and with harps, and with psalteries, and with timbrels, and with cymbals, and with trumpets.*

A stately array of all the leaders of the tribes, with all sorts of music, to do honor to the ark of God.

9-10. *And when they came unto the threshingfloor of Chidon, Uzza put forth his hand to hold the ark; for the oxen stumbled. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzza, and he smote him, because he put his hand to the ark: and there he died before God.*

I suppose that Uzza, through the ark having been so long in his father's house, had grown unduly familiar with it, and therefore, touched it. Yet it was an express law that even the Levites should not lay a hand upon the ark. They carried it with staves, the priests alone might touch it for necessary purposes. It was for this profanation that Uzza "died before God."

11-12. *And David was displeased, because the LORD had made a breach upon Uzza: wherefore that place is called Perez-uzza to this day. And David was afraid of God that day, saying, How shall I bring the ark of God home to me?*

He was afraid lest he also might die.

13. *So David brought not the ark home to himself to the city of David, but carried it aside into the house of Obed-edom the Gittite.*

He must have been a brave, believing man, to be willing to receive the terrible ark into his house, but he probably knew that so long as he behaved reverentially to it, he would have a blessing, and not a curse, through taking it under his charge.

14. *And the ark of God remained with the family of Obed-edom in his house three months. And the LORD blessed the house of Obed-edom, and all that he had.*

1 Chronicles Chapter 15. Verses 1-2. *And David made him houses in the city of David, and prepared a place for the ark of God, and pitched for it a tent. Then David said, None ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites: for them has the LORD chosen to carry the ark of God; and to minister unto him forever.*

It should not be carried upon a new cart, and dragged by unwilling oxen, but it should be borne upon the cheerful shoulders of the God-appointed bearers, the Levites.

3-4. *And David gathered all Israel together to Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the LORD unto its place, which he had prepared for it. And David assembled the children of Aaron, and the Levites:*

Then follows the list of them, which we need not now read.

Verses 11-13. *And David called for Zadok and Abiathar the priests, and for the Levites, for Uriel, Asaiah, and Joel, Shemaiah, and Eliel, and Amminadab, and said unto them, Ye are the chief of the fathers of the Levites: sanctify yourselves, both ye and your brethren, that ye may bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel unto the place that I have prepared for it. For because ye did it not at the first, the LORD our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought him not after the due order.*

They had sought Him, but they had not done it "after the due order." They had been in too great a hurry, and they had followed their own notions, instead of looking to the written law wherein everything was prescribed for them.

14-16. *So the priests and the Levites sanctified themselves to bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel. And the children of the Levites bare the ark of God upon their shoulders with the staves thereon, as Moses commanded according to the word of the LORD. And David spake to the chief of the Levites to appoint their brethren to be the singers with instruments of music, psalteries and harps and cymbals, sounding, by lifting up the voice with joy.*

Before, there had been a great medley of musical instruments, but little singing, and there had not been a proper choice as to the persons who were to sing, but now, this service was put into the right hands.

Then follows a list of the singers and the players upon the various kinds of instruments that went forth to bear the ark. Let us pass on to the twenty-fifth verse.

Verses 25-26. *So David, and the elders of Israel, and the captains over thousands, went to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of the house of Obed-edom with joy. And it came to pass, when God helped the Levites—*

For though the ark was by no means a great load, yet they must have felt some measure of alarm at the very idea of going near to it, but when God strengthened them, they took up their burden with delight, “When God helped the Levites”—

26. *That bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, that they offered seven bullocks and seven rams.*

There is no mention of any sacrifice on the previous occasion. If there had been a proper offering of beasts unto the Lord, there might not have been the death of Uzza, but now, they do everything in the right order, and the sacrificial blood is sprinkled, without that, there is no acceptance before God.

27-28. *And David was clothed with a robe of fine linen, and all the Levites that bare the ark, and the singers, and Chenaniah the master of the song with the singers: David also had upon him an ephod of linen. Thus all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of the LORD with shouting, and with the sound of the cornet, and with trumpets, and with cymbals, making a noise with psalteries and harps.*

David himself, while playing on his harp, leaping and dancing through the intensity of joy which filled his soul.

29. *And it came to pass, as the ark of the covenant of the LORD came to the city of David, that Michal the daughter of Saul looking out at a window saw king David dancing and playing: and she despised him in her heart.*

So have I known it, when a rich person has been converted, and has been found in the first flush of his Christian joy, mixing with the poorest of the brethren full of delight, and somebody of his own rank has sneered at him. Yet Michal was less honorable than David, though she thought so much of herself. God forbid that we should ever blush to manifest enthusiasm even with the poorest of God’s saints while we are glorifying the Lord! Let Michal sneer, if she will, it matters little what she does. We will only reply as David did, “I will yet be more vile than thus.”

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—98, 186, 317

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