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DOING THINGS GOD'S WAY!!

"And let us bring again the ark of our God to us: for we enquired not at it in the days of Saul. 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 Kirjathjearim. And David went up, and all Israel, to Baalah, that is, to Kirjathjearim, 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 drave 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. 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. And David was displeased, because the LORD had made a breach upon Uzza: wherefore that place is called Perezuzza to this day. And David was afraid of God that day, saying, How shall I bring the ark of God home to me? So David brought not the ark home to himself to the city of David, but carried it aside into the house of Obedom the Gittite. And the ark of God remained with the family of Obedom in his house three months. And the LORD blessed the house of Obedom, and all that he had," 1 Chronicles 13:3-14.

This passage of God's Word was part of my Bible reading today for I follow the Robert Murray McCheyne's Bible Reading Calendar.

The passage is most familiar but as ever the case with God's Word, it bringeth forth out of its treasure things new and old.

As I looked at the verses I was struck by one very relevant application to today's contemporary worship scene.

Before I come to that, let me point out:

I. GOOD IDEAS ARE OFTEN SPOILED BY IGNORANCE.

It was a most admirable idea on David's part that the Ark of the Covenant be brought to its proper place. "And let us bring again the ark of our God to us." The Protestant religion is one 'ever reforming'! There is a Latin phrase, dating back to the Reformation. 'Ecclesia reformata, semper reformanda' - the church reformed, always reforming. It refers to the conviction of certain Reformed Protestant theologians that the church must continually re-examine itself in order to maintain its purity of doctrine and practice.

The Lord often describes His people as 'sheep'. Sheep ever go astray. That is their nature! "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way," Isaiah 53:6. That being so, we are ever in need of being brought back to the right paths and to that ordered by the Lord for our good.

The state of religion when David came to the throne was in great need of reformation. By that we mean, it needed to be brought into line with the commands and decrees set down by the Lord as to how He was to be worshipped.

The worship of God is not something decided by what men may consider good and proper and profitable. No, the whole scheme of worship has been laid down by the Lord!

When Israel was led out of Egypt toward the promised land, the Lord issued His Law regarding not just civil life but more importantly, how He was to be approached in worship. When "the children of Israel did according to all that the LORD commanded Moses," then the Lord was pleased and His blessing was upon them.

The central holy artefact used in the worship of God was the 'Ark of the Covenant'. It was designed by the Lord and made under His supervision, Exodus 25:22. Because of the apostasy of Eli's two sons and his fail-



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ure to deal with their sins, Israel had suffered a great defeat at the hands of the Philistines and the Ark was taken away by them. However, the Lord afflicted them most severely and they were forced to return the Ark to Israel but it had not been restored to its appointed abode, the Tabernacle, rather it had been housed in the home of Abinadab and Eleazar his son looked after the Ark of the Lord.

There the Ark remained for some 20 years, though back in Israel, it was not where God had ordained it to be, within the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle.

This David was aware of when he came to power and he is to be commended that one of the first things he thought about was restoring the Ark of the Covenant to its rightful place. Would that we had rulers with such a mindset!

All Israel supported David in his plan. "Let us bring again the ark of our God to us: for we enquired not at it in the days of Saul. And all the congregation said that they would do so: for the thing was right in the eyes of all the people," verses 3-4.

However, in the execution of his plan, David displayed the degree of ignorance there was in the ranks of Israel. "And they carried the ark of God in a new cart out of the house of Abinadab: and Uzza and Ahio drove the cart," verse 7. That was the Philistine's mode of transporting the Ark (1 Samuel 6:7-8), but it was not the way ordained by the Lord. "And Moses wrote this law, and delivered it unto the priests the sons of Levi, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and unto all the elders of Israel," Deuteronomy 31:9. Even the thinking of so great a man as David may be 'polluted' by the notions of the Philistines!

2. THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT THAT DAVID AND ISRAEL WERE MOST EARNEST IN THEIR SEEKING TO RESTORE THE ARK.

"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," verse 8. They put everything into their worshipping and honouring the Lord that day.

Here is where we may learn something that is very relevant to that which is a growing phenomenon in religious circles today. There are many believe that they can enjoy much more of the Lord's blessing and power if they but with enthusiasm engage in forms of worship that display their fervour. Thus we have professing 'fundamentalist gatherings' which feature much music and singing with great energy in the mistaken belief that such will make up for the sad but undeniable deadness found amongst the congregations of many true believers!

This is but seeking to restore the Ark on a new cart! It is not God-approved!

Despite all the religious excitement displayed by David and Israel that day, the Lord was not pleased with what was taking place and the earnestness of the Israelites did not pacify the Lord or placate His anger at their activities. I am sure that all in that gathering were filled with a sense of 'religious wellbeing' but it was a fleshly thing, a delusion.

"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," verses 9-10.

Again, take note. Uzza was a good man, motivated in his actions by the highest considerations of God's honour YET what he did was forbidden in the Law of God and he was judged accordingly. None was permitted to touch the Ark. "And when Aaron and his sons have made an end of covering the sanctuary, and all the vessels of the sanctuary, as the camp is to set forward; after that, the sons of Kohath shall come to bear it: but they shall not touch any holy thing, lest they die. These things are the burden of the sons of Kohath in the tabernacle of the congregation," Numbers 4:15.



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Being 'sincerely' wrong does not alter the character of our sin. The reaction of David that day was, sadly, a fleshly one. "David was displeased, because the LORD had made a breach upon Uzza," verse 8. David was 'angry' with God! He felt that God had done wrong! Is that not a common response to the pressing of the claims of the Bible upon those who are determined to go their own way in matters relating to the worship of God and the things that should be believed amongst us! They rail against what the Lord has commanded us to observe and keep!

It would appear that David quickly adopted a wiser and more proper attitude. "And David was afraid of the LORD that day," verse 9. A reverence and godly fear fell upon David as a proper realisation of what had happened that day came into his mind and heart.

Dear Christian, God will not take with our tampering with His 'order' in His worship. Such tampering will not bring good but sorrow in the end. The excitement seen today in many places of 'contemporary worship' will undoubtedly give way to a harvest of misery and shame! Doubtless, that harvest will not attract the same attention as did the stir created by the antics in the worship gathering, for the devil does not want his dupes to see the dire consequences of being deceived by him, but the grief will come about and the wise will observe it taking place and learn!

3. IN THE END, DAVID DID BRING THE ARK BACK TO ITS RIGHTFUL PLACE WHEN HE OBSERVED GOD'S LAW ON THE MATTER.

"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 hath the LORD chosen to carry the ark of God, and to minister unto him for ever. And David gathered all Israel together to Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the LORD unto his place, which he had prepared for it, 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. 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 musick, psalteries and harps and cymbals, sounding, by lifting up the voice with joy," 1 Chronicles 14:1-3, 12-16.

Please note the words, "we sought him not after the due order," verse 13. The Lord wants EVERYTHING "done decently and in order," 1 Corinthians 14:40.

Let us learn that lesson today and enter into the 'joy of the Lord'.

"Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts," Jeremiah 15:16.

The Bible is the book of "good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people," (Luke 2:10) if it is but believed and obeyed.

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