

THE DIVINE AMPLIFIER

"And the Lord said unto him, What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod." Exodus 4:2.

For years Moses had led an humble and quiet life as the shepherd of the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro. One day, as Moses led the flock to the back side of the desert in Midian, his eyes fell upon an unusual sight -- a glowing fire in a bush, but the bush was not consumed. This strange sight, such as he had never seen before, struck him with astonishment. His first and natural impulse was to inquire into its cause. As he turned aside and drew near to observe it, his steps were arrested suddenly when a voice called to him out of the unconsumed bush. It was the voice of God calling him by name and saying unto him, "Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground" (Exodus 3:5). Human words cannot describe the feeling of awe this humble shepherd must have had as he stood in that desert place alone with his God. With great reverence Moses listened to that voice. From God he received a gracious and threefold revelation. It was a revelation of God's character -- "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." It was a revelation of God's sympathetic interest -- "I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows." It was also a revelation of God's purpose -- "And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey.

At that sacred spot that day God told Moses that He had a big and important job for him to do. God then and there commissioned Moses to go to Egypt in His name and power and lead His sorely afflicted people out of bondage and into the land of promise. What a compliment God paid Moses and what an honor He bestowed upon him when He called him to render this great service!

Like so many through the years that have passed, and like many of us today, Moses shrank from the undertaking to which God was calling him. Aware of his personal limitations and conscious of his unworthiness, Moses was not willing to use the talents which God had given unto him for the liberation and salvation of an enslaved people. He began to ask questions and to make excuses in order to keep from entering upon his assigned task. Moses offered seven objections to undertaking the arduous task to which God was calling him. His excuses were as follows:

1. Lack of fitness.
"Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" (Exodus 3:11). Thus he pleaded his insignificance.
2. Lack of words.
"And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?" (Exodus 3:13). Thus he pleaded his inability to talk.
3. Lack of influence.
"And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee" (Exodus 4:1). Moses firmly believed that the people would question his authority.
4. Lack of eloquence.
"And Moses said unto the Lord, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue" (Exodus 4:10).

5. Lack of special adaptation.
"And he said, O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send" (Exodus 4:13).
6. Lack of success at his first attempt.
"For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast thou delivered thy people at all" (Exodus 5:23).
7. Lack of acceptance.
"And Moses spake before the Lord, saying, Behold, the children of Israel have not hearkened unto me; how then shall Pharaoh hear me, who am of uncircumcised lips?" (Exodus 6:12).

This list of excuses would appear to be rather conclusive that Moses was not qualified for the work to which God was calling him. God listened attentively to all of the objections of Moses. He is always a good listener. God then asked Moses a very revealing question: "What is that in thine hand?" Moses answered, "A rod." This rod or stick he had cut out of a thicket to use in protecting and guiding his sheep. Any day he could have thrown that rod away and found himself a better one. Then God said to Moses, "Cast it on the ground." God's Word states, "And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent, and Moses fled from before it. And the Lord said unto Moses, Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand, and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand."

In the performance of that miracle God was showing Moses that he could turn that rod into a higher use than he had ever done. This incident taught Moses that what was formidable to weak faith might become an instrument of power when the act of obedience to God was performed. When the rod of the shepherd was used for God it accomplished great things for both God and the Israelites.

From the faraway days of Noah, when God called him to "prepare an ark to the saving of his house," down to the present, God has called men to work with and for Him; and some have responded, while many have refused. God knows the ones whom He calls, and how much good they can do with what they have and what they can get. When God called Moses, He knew what he had done, what he was doing, and what he could do. He knew that Moses had the courage, ability and strength to lead and care for a flock of sheep and that He needed and could use his leadership ability; hence God called him.

Like Moses, too many of us are bemoaning our weaknesses and making excuses for our idleness in the service of the Lord. Each of us has resources for which he is responsible before God; resources, whether great or small, which must be used for His glory. Nobody can read the blessed Word of God without noting how in the economy of God He made use of the simplest instruments.

We have come to an hour when men are enamored with bigness. They are literally hypnotized by size. They are interested in things of the flesh rather than in things of the spirit. Humanism and materialism are about to destroy us. For the most part, people today are concerned about two things -- profit and pleasure, or getting and enjoying.

As Christians, we need to learn to put our little selves into the hands of God. If we will do that, He will amplify and magnify that which we possess in such a way as to glorify Himself and bless others. Christianity is big because it has to do with God, His sovereignty, His power, His majesty and His truth. The more we study the ways and workings of God in Christianity, the more we will discover that He delights to use the weak things and the things which the world counts as nought. God often uses the weakest instruments to accomplish His great purposes.

Let us note some examples of how God used little things to accomplish great purposes, and then apply some of the lessons which they teach us.

Due to their sinful disobedience to God, the children of Israel were in subjection to the Midianites and the Amalekites. For their sad plight they had nobody to blame except themselves. When they were in the depths of despair, God selected the brave and heroic Gideon as the man to meet the emergency. Conscious of his limitations, Gideon sought to be excused on the grounds of poverty and inability. When he at length tried to rally the Israelites to fight the Midianites, thirty-two thousand men volunteered their services. However, God preferred to defeat the enemy with a few rather than by so many, so the army was reduced to three hundred men.

After careful inspection, Gideon and his three hundred men each took a trumpet, a pitcher and a lamp within the pitcher, and at the appointed time and given signal they blew their trumpets, threw down their pitchers, held up their lamps and shouted, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon." Awaking from sleep, the enemy readily concluded that some mighty host had fallen upon them, inasmuch as one torch was supposed to represent a company of soldiers. Many were slain and the rest fled. Brave and noble Gideon's name was written high on the scroll of fame because he used what he had in his hand for God.

David, "What is that in thine hand?" It is only a sling. His sling was just a little weapon which he had made for pleasure and to keep the beasts away from his sheep. David arrived from home when preparation for battle was in progress in the camp. He was weary of the cowardice of the men of Israel, who did not seem to resent the impious challenge of Goliath. Patriotic fire burned in the soul of the youth as the giant continued to defy the armies of the living God. He decided that he would accept the challenge of the impious giant who was defying the living God.

David laid aside the armor of Saul which had been placed on him. Listening to the Philistine curse him and vow that he would soon give David's flesh to the birds and the beasts, David took the pebbles which he had obtained from the brook and hastened to the conflict in the name of the Lord. Behold he adjusting the stone and swinging his sling. The stone whizzed through the air and sank into the head of the boastful Philistine, and he fell prostrate on the ground. David simply served the Lord with what he had in his hand, which happened to be a sling.

When the Lord Jesus wanted to meet the need of a hungry multitude, He turned to His disciples and inquired what they would do, but they had no solution except to go to town and buy a vast quantity of bread. Andrew, the apostle who was always looking for opportunities to serve the Lord, remarked: "There is a lad here, who has five barley loaves and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?" I suppose this boy was just as hungry as the others in that huge crowd. Somebody went to him and asked him for his five little home-made barley loaves and his two little fishes. He readily gave them to the Lord in order that He might use them in feeding the multitude. All that the Lord asks of us as Christians is that we dedicate just what we have to His service. Nobody ever presented himself and his possessions to the Lord who was not blessed and used. This lad reached out beyond the day in which he lived to the days in which we live in influence for the Lord. The Lord's use of little things brings honor and glory to Himself, to Whom all praise belongs. Felix of Nola went into a cave and prayed for safety. God sent a spider to build a web over the mouth of the cave. About ten minutes later enemies of Felix came galloping along. They were about to enter the cave to look for their man when they discovered the spider web across the mouth of it. Thinking the web would have been broken if Felix had entered, they hastened on in

search of him. Rejoicing in the deliverance of God, Felix wrote these words, "With God on our side a spider's web is like a wall of adamant, but with God against us, a wall of adamant is no better than a spider's web."

The lesson is the same in every case. It is that God wants us, whom He has saved, to serve Him right where we are and with whatever we have. You hold something in your hand which the Lord can use. But He cannot use you or it unless you surrender yourself and what you have to Him. Use what God has given you today because tomorrow may be too late.

"Hear ye the Master's call,
 'Give Me thy best!'
For, be it great or small,
 That is His test.
Do then the best you can,
 Not for reward,
Not for the praise of man,
 But for the Lord!"