

The Ark in the House.

JULY 13.

2 SAMUEL VI: 1-12.

Golden Text, Prov. 3: 33.

COMPARE 1 Chron. ch. 13. The Ark was a wooden chest 3 feet 9 inches long and 27 inches deep and wide, called "the ark of the covenant" or of the "testimonies," because its principal contents were the two tables of the law written with the finger of God which made it specially sacred. On the mercy seat which surmounted it were the two golden cherubims, a symbol of the divine presence. Its proper place was in the "holy of holies" in the tabernacle. When the Israelites moved it was borne on the shoulders of the priests in advance of the host, Nu. 10: 33. on which account the expression in Ps. 132: 8 is used. On its approach the waters of Jordan divided and the people went through its bed dry-shod, Jos. 3: 15. Before it the walls of Jericho fell down, Jos. 6: 6, 20. For more than 300 years it remained at Shiloh, until that fatal day when it was carried into the battle field and brought disaster upon the house of Eli and upon the nation, 1 Sam. ch. 4. It troubled the Philistines who did not know what to do with it. At length they sent it to Kirjathjearim, 9 miles miles N. West from Jerusalem, where it was almost lost sight of for a number of years in the decline of religion which ensued. V. 1. The object of this great assemblage was to restore it to its proper dignity as the emblem of their national religion. V. 2. These 30,000 included delegates from all parts of the country with whom David consulted as to the best mode of taking it to Jerusalem, 1 Chr. 13: 1-3. *From Baale*,—rather to *Baale*—another name for Kirjathjearim. V. 3. They had no business to put it on a cart, new or old, see Num. 7: 9, *Gibeah*—a hill in or near Kirjathjearim. V. 5. This extraordinary demonstration was doubtless well intended, but it was premature. V. 6. *Uzzah put forth his hand*—fearing that the cart was going to upset; a small offence, seemingly, but a violation of an express command, Num. 4: 15; James 2: 10. V. 7. The severity of his punishment shews how great the offence was in God's sight. The whole proceedings were wrong, and doubly wrong for Uzzah, who was not a priest, to touch the ark, 1 Chr. 15: 13. V. 8. *David was displeased*—angry with himself as the person really to blame for this tragedy. *Afraid*—not knowing what might happen to himself. V. 10. Knowing all that had taken place? Obedience shewed great moral courage by admitting it into his house, V. 11. *Three months*—time enough for all parties to reflect before repeating the attempt. *The Lord blessed*—as he assuredly will all who seek to serve him, in the appointed way. V. 12. *Gladness*—see v. 15, and read in this connection psalm 24, supposed to have been composed for this occasion. From the whole narrative we learn the importance of implicit obedience, and the value of personal and family religion as a factor in national prosperity.

God's Covenant with David.

JULY 20.

2 SAMUEL VII: 1-16.

Golden Text, 2 Sam. 7: 16.

COMPARE 1 Chr. 17: 1-17. With the aid of Hiram's carpenters, ch. 5: 11, David had built a fine house for himself and others for the members of his court. He had also erected a temporary tabernacle or tent for the ark, 1 Chr. 17: 1. Vs. 1, 2. When all was finished he sat down to admire the fine workmanship of his palace and take his ease. Looking at this and that, he could not help drawing a comparison betwixt his own splendid mansion and the mean accommodation he had provided for the ark of God. The inward monitor told him this was not right, and he then and there resolved in his own mind to erect a building that would at once serve as a suitable place of worship for the people and a fitting receptacle for the sacred emblem—nothing less than a magnificent temple, which would be a visible expression of the nation's religion and a centre of attraction for generations to come. *Nathan*—one of the most eminent men of his time, a prophet and an author, 2 Chr. 9: 29. The same who rebuked David for his sin against Uriah, ch. 12: 1-15, and who arranged for the succession of Solomon, 1 Ki. 1: 22-49. Vs. 3, 4. Before consulting God, he encouraged David, thinking it was a good idea. But the Lord seeth not as man seeth, and next morning Nathan had to unsay what he had inconsiderately said. The reasons against David's proceeding, though not stated here, are obvious,—(1) The Lord had not been consulted in the matter. (2) The proper time had not yet come—the nation being still in a transition state, the risk would be too great for such an undertaking at present. (3) David had been a man of war, 1 Chr. 22: 8; 29: 3; the temple should be a symbol of the church and kingdom of God, Rom. 14: 17. Vs. 5-7. *Shall thou build?* equivalent to thou shalt not. For hundreds of years the tabernacle had sufficed, when better is needed the Lord will himself give instructions. Vs. 8, 9. David is reminded of his humble extraction and that his success and prosperity were not his own acquiring, but came from God. V. 10. *Will appoint*—rather "I have appointed," i. e. have given them Canaan—which they might have kept till this day had they been true to God. Vs. 11, 12. *A house*—God would increase and strengthen his kingdom, make him the head of a new dynasty, and endow his son with even greater splendour, 1 Ki. 10, 23. V. 13. *He*—Solomon, the man of peace; but, in a higher sense, David's greater son, Math. 22: 42; John 7: 42. Ps. 72: 17-19. V. 14. So soon as Solomon's heart turned away from the Lord he met with disasters, 1 Ki. 11: 14. *Rod of man*—punishment, not to destroy but to reclaim. V. 16. In the Messiah the throne of David was and is thus established, Ps. 45: 6. The covenant made with David is renewed in the case of every believer, Jn. 14: 1-2; 2 Pet. 3: 9.