



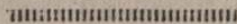
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Stories that Might Have Been

STUDIES OF
BIBLE BOYS
AND GIRLS

By

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EMMA A. ROBINSON



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GREETINGS TO THE BOYS AND GIRLS

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This book comes to you with the old, old stories that you know so well but I have tried to bring them to you in a new dress. As you see these boys and girls, you will realize that when God wanted someone to do a great piece of work he selected men or women who had been worshippers of Jehovah from the time they were children. Had you ever thought that Moses, after he was twelve years old, was taken away from his home and the worship of Jehovah and grew up where he was surrounded with idol worship? Yet he was the boy or the man whom God chose to do the greatest work that any man could do, in leading the Children of Israel out of Egypt and making of them a great nation.

Joseph, Daniel and Esther also had their only opportunity and training in the worship of God while they were Juniors.

In the world today God is looking for boys and girls who have never wasted time by not belonging to Him, and when He wants leaders He is going to look for the boys and girls who today have found out that it is worth while to serve God now, to belong to His family and His church.

This is an every day book. Read for yourself the story as given in the Day by Day references.

An Honor Roll will be kept at the Central Office of those who do not miss a day in the reading, and who each week memorize the Memory Treasure from the Hymnal which tells the same story as the Bible Study. After reading the stories write your answers to the questions as given at the close of the chapter.

Some of these you will have to think about pretty hard, but we are going to ask you to write answers to every one of them and to be ready to discuss them with the other boys and girls when you come to class.

Of course you will see at once that these stories are not exactly as they are written in the Bible. I have tried to see these boys and girls just as I see you and to put into the stories the things that you and I would have seen, and to talk about them as you boys and girls today would talk, for those boys and girls may have talked in just that way.

YOUR MISS ROBINSON.

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STUDY I.

THE WORLD'S BIRTHDAY

"I DO not think much of that yarn we had to-day," said Tim Nelson, as the boys gathered on George White's porch after the League meeting.

"What yarn was that?" asked Bob.

"Oh, that one about the world being created in six days," replied Tim.

"What's the trouble with that?" asked Frank.

"Trouble," said Tim. "It isn't true, that's all."

"Not true," said George, "it is in the Bible."

"That's just it," said Tim, "it is in the Bible, and yet we know from our science lessons that it took thousands of years just to make coal, and it must have taken most a million for that evolution business we had the other day."

"Whew!" exclaimed Fred Brown, "doesn't he know a lot! But, really, that four thousand B. C. on the first page of the Bible is kind of queer, isn't it?"

"I agree with you about the four thousand years," said George's uncle, stepping out from behind the vines where he had been reading.

"Why hello, Doctor Thompson," exclaimed the boys in a chorus. "We did not know you were here."

"Yes, I came this morning," answered Doctor Thompson, "and I overheard your conversation as I was reading."

"By the way, Tim, you believe there is a God, do you not?"

"I sure do," answered Tim.

"Well, then, do you believe that he could have created the world in six days if he had wanted to?"

"Sure thing," answered Frank, while Tim replied more slowly "I—suppose—so."

"Now," said Doctor Thompson, "about that Genesis story. Tim says science proves that it cannot be true."

"Tim, what has science proved to us about the center of the earth?"

"That it is a molten mass, a burning fluid," answered Tim in the words of his schoolbook.

"Good!" replied the Doctor, "but did you know that scientists to-day are proving that the earth is solid all the way, through some radium theories they are working out?"

"And did you know that scientists, many of them are proving that the old theory of evolution, as we think about it, has no foundation? The true story of evolution puts God in it, any way. Every one believes that there was a beginning some time and that God was the creator.

"We believe what science proves to our reason, and that is good; but if we keep up to science, every little while we have to change our reasoning just as did those scientists who proved that the earth was flat. But to come back to the creation story. How long is a day?"

"Twenty-four hours, of course," answered Frank.

"Is it?" asked the Doctor. "It seems to me I have read a good deal lately about an eight-hour day and a ten-hour day. And what did you mean a while ago, Tim, when you said you were going to have an auto of your own some day?"

"Oh, I just meant," said Tim, "that as soon as I get through school I am going to save my money and buy an auto."

"Then, your day simply meant time.

"Now, Tim," said Doctor Thompson, "can you find any place in the Genesis story where it tells how long the day might have been?"

"No—o—," said Tim.

"I really do not see any reason," said Doctor Thompson, "why each of those days might not have been a period of time—say five or ten million years. Do you? I do not know that they were, or were not—but, really, boys, I do not care, do you? I do not see that it makes any difference. We have the world, and we have God, and we know that God made the world, somehow, in his own way, and that is enough for me. How about it, Tim?"

"Oh, it is all right if you take it that way," said Tim.

"But I really think," continued the Doctor, "that you are missing the point of the whole story."

"How so?" asked George.

"There is one verse which says 'God created man in his own image.'"

"That is another fake," said Tim. "How could a man be the image of God, when God is a Spirit?"

"If you mean that man looked like God, it would be impossible," replied Doctor Thompson. "But suppose we change that word 'image' into 'like'—God made man 'like' himself. That is, he gave to man his ability to think things out for himself; to reason; draw his own conclusions, and make his own choices. How is that, Tim?"

"That will pass," said Tim. "Go on."

"Let us look at that world's birthday party," said Doctor Thompson. "What do we have?—birds, flowers, trees, animals, plenty of everything to eat. What more could anyone want? As God walked with Adam and Eve and talked with them he found something missing. He seems to have reasoned something like this: 'Here I have made Adam and Eve like myself, but I have given them everything just as they want it, and they have no chance at all to prove that they have my power to reason and to decide. That is not fair to them.' The next time he talked with them he said: 'I have given you everything in this garden to do with just as you wish. It is all yours, except one tree. Of that you must not eat.' Can you not imagine Adam replying, 'Certainly, Lord, we will not eat of it, if that is your wish'?"

"Now, George, suppose you be Adam and let Tim be Eve, and let us see how you would talk about it at breakfast the next morning."

"TIM—It seems queer about that tree. I wonder why we must not eat of it."

"GEORGE—I do not see why the Lord should put that tree in the garden if we must not pick the fruit. What a queer name! "The knowledge of good and evil." What is evil?"

"TIM—I think I will go and look at that tree. I do not remember what it looks like. Of course we will not touch it, but I would just like to see it."

"GEORGE—It is in the center of the garden."

"Later, as Eve looked at the tree she said to herself: 'What a splendid tree! That fruit looks as though it would taste fine.'"

"Just then a voice said, 'Why do you not eat it?'"

"What was it that Eve called the voice, Frank?"

"The Bible calls it a serpent," answered Frank.

"Yes: what was Eve's reply, George?"

"God said we must not eat of that tree, but may eat of every other tree. I do not remember the exact words," answered George, "but that was what they meant."

"And the serpent, Tim?"

"Oh, he told her to go ahead and eat, that it would make her wise—as wise as God."

"Yes, and Eve looked at the fruit, thought about it, wanted it, and took it. That is the way Doctor George said it once and I always remember it," said Frank.

"Suppose Adam and Eve had not eaten of the fruit of the tree, Frank, what would have happened?"

"My! I do not know," said Frank. "It would have been a different world wouldn't it if they had chosen to obey instead of to disobey?" mused Tim.

"Just one thing more," said Doctor Thompson. "Did God leave them when they proved that they could do as they pleased and disobeyed him?"

"No," said George, "I do not believe so; he drove them out of Eden, and they had to work hard, but he gave them another chance."

DAY BY DAY

The World's Birthday—Gen. 1. 1-11.

The World's Birthday (Continued)—Gen. 1.20-25.

The Birthday of the First People and God's Gift to them—Gen. 1.26-31.

The First Sabbath—Gen. 2.1-2.

The First Home—Gen. 2.8-17.

The Great Opportunity—Gen. 3.1-4.

The First Home Lost—Gen. 3.4-24.

I BELIEVE

In God.

That in the beginning he created.

That he made us like himself.

That I can do right, but that I also can do wrong because I have the power to choose.

Do You?

CAN YOU

Name the order of things created?

How Do You Know

That God did not forsake Adam and Eve after they disobeyed him?

MEMORY TREASURE

The spacious firmament on high,
With all the blue ethereal sky,
And spangled heavens a shining frame,
Their great Original proclaim,
The unwearied sun, from day to day,
Does his Creator's power display,
And publishes to every land
The work of an almighty hand.

—*Methodist Hymnal*, 84

STUDY II.

HOW TO MAKE IT RIGHT

"THAT wood won't burn. It is too wet," said Cain as he and Abel stood watching their father arrange a fire on top of a pile of stones near the tent which was their home. I suppose you would call it a ranch.

There were many cattle, and thousands of sheep, and fields of grain. Scattered about were the tents of the family and of those who cared for the flocks and the fields.

Yonder were the wells, and on the hillside was the fold for the sheep.

Over the hills every night came the shepherds with the sheep, and early every morning they went out again in search of grass.

Not far from the home tent of Adam and Eve was a rough pile of stones. Here the boys, Cain and Abel, had many times watched their father as he built a fire and burned up some of the finest of his sheep and the best of his grain.

Again he was preparing to offer a sacrifice as Cain uttered these words.

"Yes," said Abel, "it will burn. It always does."

"But why, father, did you take that beautiful white lamb? It was the very finest in the whole flock."

"My son," replied Adam, "do you not remember the story your mother and I have told you so often, of how when you boys were babies, God often walked and talked with us when we lived in the garden of Eden?"

"Yes," answered Cain, "I remember the story, and of how, because you ate of the fruit which God said you must not eat, we had to move away from Eden."

"I do not remember much about Eden," said Abel, "only all the fruit, and how sad mother was when we came away."

"You have told us a good many times, father, about this fire, but somehow I do not understand it," said Abel.

"It is this way, my son: I have disobeyed and dishonored God. Every time you boys disobey your mother or me, or do wrong, you are disobeying God.

"Your mother and I do not disown you when you disobey us, so God did not disown us when we disobeyed him.

"Abel, why did you bring those roses to your mother yesterday? You picked out the very largest and best ones."

"Oh, that was just to tell her that I loved her."

"But did she not know that you loved her?" asked the father.

"Oh, I guess so, but she liked the roses," laughed Abel.

"True," answered the father; "but what about that water jar that Abimelech broke? He could not give it back to your mother, but he worked hard and made her the very best jar he could. Why did he do that?"

"He said it was to tell her that he was sorry he had been so careless and had broken the jar," said Cain.

"Now, listen and see if you can get this," said Adam. "We love God very, very much. Back there in Eden he knew it because we had never done anything wrong and he visited us and talked with us. When we disobeyed him, it was as though we built a wall between us."

"You mean he is here, but we cannot see him?" asked Abel.

"Yes," replied his father, "and he has told us that when we bring our offering to him it says to him just what Abel's roses said to mother. It means we love him.

"But it also does what Abimelech's jar did—it says, 'I am sorry I have done wrong or have sinned and will try to be more careful.'"

"But why burn it, father? It does not do anyone any good that way."

"True, my son, but that seems to be the only way to give it to God. It would not be giving it to him if we used it, and it would not be giving it to him if we let it spoil. It is God's way for us to worship him."

"But why choose that fine lamb?" asked Cain; "that little lame one would do just as well to burn, and it will never be of any account."

"You have answered your own question," answered Adam. "Would you want to offer to God, to show your love to him, or to ask his forgiveness, that which was of no account? You would not offer such a gift to mother or to me."

These boys grew up. This is all we really and truly know about them, except that one decided to be a farmer and the other a shepherd.

Then comes the story of their offering to God, which gives us a true picture of them as boys.

Abel gathered the finest of the roses for mother because he loved her.

Cain asked, "Why did you not offer to God the lame lamb that was of no account?"

Did Cain bring that kind of an offering?

No, indeed; so far as we know he brought of the finest of his grain, just as Abel brought of the best of his flock.

What then?

The story says Abel's offering was accepted and Cain's was not.

Why? What was the trouble? God himself answered this question.

He said: "Cain, if you do right, your offering will be accepted, but if you let wrong wishes and wrong thoughts into your minds, they will cause you to sin. Do not let them rule over you."

Not the kind of an offering, not even the quality of the offering, but the man back of it.

Cain, there is no use in your joining the church and wearing the name of Christian, if you are going to train with sin and entertain wrong thoughts.

Be sincere, and your offering, if it means love and worship, will be acceptable to God.

Abel did not have a chance to prove that it was worth while to be true and honest in his dealings with God; but who do you think really lived the longer, Cain or Abel?

Abel finished the work God had for him to do. Cain never did, though he lived many years.

DAY BY DAY

The Two Boys—Gen. 4.1-2.

The Offering—Gen. 4.3-5.

God's Explanation—4.6-7.

The New Testament Explanation—Heb. 11.4; I John 3.12.

The Story of Cain and Abel—Gen. 4.7-12.

Cain's Life—Gen. 4.13, 14, 15.

God's Plan Today—Heb. 11.8-10.

I THINK

Abel's great work for God was to teach the meaning of true worship.

Do You?

I WOULD RATHER

Live a few years, free from fear, because I was sincere with God, than to live a long life always afraid.

Would You?

COULD

The story of Cain's life have been different?

How?

MEMORY TREASURE

Arise, my soul, arise:
Shake off thy guilty fears;
The bleeding Sacrifice
In my behalf appears;
Before the throne my Surety stands,
Before the throne my Surety stands,
My name is written on his hands.

—*Methodist Hymnal*, 301

STUDY III.

DO IT NOW

TWINS, and both boys! What fun!

Did they look alike? Not one bit.

Were they alike? Not so you could see it.

Esau, who arrived in the world just a few moments ahead of his brother, grew to be a regular out-of-door boy, strong and muscular, tanned to a ruddy brown, always on the go. He was full of fun and never thought about the end just so he had a good time now.

Jacob was just the opposite. He was an "in-the-house boy," the kind that would like to read rather than play ball. His skin was white and his hands soft and smooth. In his eye was a shrewd look that said "He is scheming to get ahead of some one." He was always trading, and, of course, always came out ahead.

Esau was his father's (Isaac's) boy, while Jacob was the favorite and spoiled son of Rebecca, his mother.

Watch these boys as they play. Jacob stands just in front of the base instead of on it. See him "put one over" on Esau every time he has a chance, but Esau does not care.

As big boys Esau is off in the field or hunting, while Jacob is around the house.

The two grow up—Esau becomes a hunter, or we might say a woodsman; Jacob, a farmer. But they are just the same Esau and Jacob.

In that time it was a great thing to be the oldest son, for what was called the birthright of the oldest gave him not only the greater part of his father's property but gave him his father's blessing also, and this was considered of greater value even than the property.

The birthright belonged to Esau, but Jacob wanted it. Of course he did, and he made up his mind to have it. His mother wanted him to have it too.

He knew how little Esau thought of it, so he waited his time.

When they were young men Esau was off on a hunting expedition. Jacob knew how hungry he would be when he

came home, so he prepared the best meal he knew how to cook—Esau's favorite pottage. How good it smelled! It fairly made one's mouth water to just catch a whiff of it.

Esau came, tired, hungry, but jolly. As he neared Jacob's tent he caught a familiar odor. Oh, how good it smelled! Pottage—that was what he wanted! He could hardly wait.

"Jacob," he called, "here's a hungry man. Feed me, please, from your good red pottage."

"What is your hurry?" asked Jacob.

"I am faint with hunger," said Esau. "Give me quickly of that pottage."

"Wait!" said Jacob. "What will you give me for it? Will you sell me your birthright?"

"Birthright?" said Esau. "What good will a birthright do me if I die of hunger? I want something to eat now, quick, before I die."

"Will you swear to give me your birthright?" asked Jacob, fearing that when Esau's hunger was satisfied he would take back the birthright.

"Yes," said Esau, "I swear—anything to get something to eat."

And so he carelessly sold his birthright for a mess of pottage. He was the boy who thought only of what he wanted now.

Even then Jacob and his mother were not satisfied, for while Jacob had the birthright he wanted all. He just must have that blessing of his father that belonged to the first-born.

But how could he get it? There was no way unless he could outwit his father. Again he waited.

Isaac was old and nearly blind. One morning Rebecca overheard him call Esau. She listened.

"My son," called Isaac.

"Here am I," answered Esau.

"I am getting old," said Isaac, "I do not know how much longer I will live. Take your bow and arrows and go into the field. Take me venison and make me savory food, such as I love. When you bring it to me I will eat and give you my blessing."

Esau started for the field, but Rebecca called Jacob.

"Hurry," she said. "Kill a young calf and make the savory food that your father likes and bring to him."

"But he will know I am not Esau," said Jacob.

“Obey me,” said Rebecca, “and we will take care of that.”

Quickly Jacob returned with the meat. While it was cooking his mother stretched the soft, hairy skin of a kid over his neck and on his hands, that they might feel like Esau’s hands, as she had him practice talking just like Esau. He then put on a suit of Esau’s clothes that smelled of the fields, and, taking the savory meat, he went to his father.

As he came near him he said, “My father,” just as Esau would have said it.

“Who art thou?” asked Isaac who did not expect Esau back so soon.

“I am Esau, your firstborn,” answered Jacob. “I have brought you the food you desired. Will you not sit and eat, and give to me your blessing?”

“How could you get back so soon?” asked Isaac.

“Because Jehovah helped me find the deer quickly,” answered Jacob.

Isaac seemed to be a little suspicious. Perhaps Jacob had not practiced Esau’s voice and tone enough, for he said, “Come nearer, that I may feel you and be sure you are my son Esau.”

After passing his hands over him he said: “The voice is Jacob’s but the hands are the hands of Esau. Art thou my very son, Esau?”

“I am,” answered Jacob, and Isaac placed his hands on his head and gave him the blessing that he intended to give Esau, his firstborn.

Almost before Jacob was out of the room Esau came in. He too said:

“I have brought you the savory meat. Will you not eat it that you may bless me?”

“Who are you?” cried Isaac.

“I am your son Esau, your firstborn,” was the answer.

Isaac trembled so that he could scarcely stand as he cried out: “Have I been deceived? Who was it brought me the venison if it was not my son Esau? I have given him the blessing and I cannot take it from him.”

“Oh, my father,” cried Esau, “can you not bless me also?”

“Your brother,” explained Isaac, “came claiming to be you, and I have given him your blessing.”

“His name, Jacob, the supplanter, certainly fits him,” said Esau, bitterly. “This is the second time he has supplanted me. First he took away my birthright, and now he has

taken my blessing. But have you not a blessing for me also?"

"I have given to him everything that belongs to the first-born," said Isaac.

"Have you not just one blessing for me, father?" pleaded Esau.

"Bless me, father, even me!"

Then Isaac gave to him a blessing also, but it was the blessing of a younger son.

From that time trouble began for Jacob. Esau hated him, and Jacob lived in constant fear. Of what use was the birthright or blessing when any minute Esau might kill him?

Rebecca too saw nothing ahead for Jacob but trouble.

How could she live without her favorite son, Jacob? It would be better to have him alive, though she might never see him again, so she sent him away, to her brother Laban at Padan-aram.

It was a long and lonely journey.

As he traveled Jacob must have thought, and God must have talked to him about the boy he had been, about the man he was.

Was it worth while?

Then came the night, when, all alone, with a stone for a pillow, he slept under the stars.

The dream came. He saw the ladder reaching to heaven and the angels.

He said, "Surely God is in this place; I did not know he would follow me."

He knew God was there. God had talked to him. He may even have made up his mind that he had certainly lost out by cheating and deceiving, but the same old Jacob was there, for, even in acknowledging that that place was the house of God, he tried to make a bargain with God as he said, "If Jehovah will take care of me and bring me back to this place, I will give him a tenth of my goods."

He would follow Jehovah, but in his own way.

When he reached Padan-aram he met his match. He was cheated and cheated and cheated, ten times, through the fourteen years, until he hated the very suggestion of cheating, but before Jacob came to this point he showed his uncle that he too knew all the tricks of cheating.

As the years went by, Jacob longed to go back home, but

always there was the fear of the brother whom he had cheated and the lies which he had told his father.

Had God forgotten Jacob? No, but Jacob was very slow in getting fully acquainted with God, and the years were flying.

At last Jacob started for home. It was the Jacob who wanted the best of everything, who said: "When I crossed this brook I had just my staff. Now I am rich and the owner of two bands of flocks and many servants."

It was the old Jacob who was afraid all the time—every day—of Esau.

As he started for home he sent great flocks of cattle ahead as a gift to Esau.

His messengers returned, saying, "Esau and his men come to meet you." Jacob was more afraid than ever. He sent the women and children ahead, to protect them.

Everyone had gone. As on that night when he saw the ladder and the angels he was alone with God. All these years he had known God but had refused to listen to him.

This night he was afraid. All night he and God were together. No one knows just how God spoke to him, but after so many years of being Jacob, it was hard for him to give up and be what God wanted him to be.

As the sun rose Jacob again asked for a blessing. This time he was honest and sincere as he asked God to bless him.

God in his blessing did not give him honor, nor power, nor money. These were what Isaac had promised him, but Isaac's blessing had done him no good, for he had had to run away from it.

God's blessing was, "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob—the supplanter—but Israel, the Prince of God."

The old Jacob was gone forever, and with him the long years he might have served God.

The new Israel could never make up for the lost years, but for the rest of his life would serve as a Prince of God.

DAY BY DAY

The Story of the Birthright—Gen. 25.27-34.

Trying to Run Away From Fear—Gen. 27.41-43; 28.10.

The Story of the Ladder—Gen. 28.11-13; 15-22.

Jacob's Prayer—Gen. 32.9-12.

The Answer—Gen. 33.4, 8, 9, 11.

Jacob's Blessing—Gen. 32.22-30.

Jacob's Blessing—Gen. 35.9-15.

CAN YOU TELL

The Story of Jacob's Dream?
Where Padan-aram is on the Map?
The Name of Jacob's wife?
Whether he Kept His Promise to Give God the Tenth?
I Can

THINK ABOUT IT

"Save a man and you save a life,
Save a boy and you save a life time."
Why does this make you think of Jacob?

MEMORY TREASURE

O happy day, that fixed my choice
On thee, my Saviour and my God!
Well may this glowing heart rejoice,
And tell its raptures all abroad.
Happy day, happy day, when Jesus washed my sins away;
He taught me how to watch and pray,
And live rejoicing every day.
Happy day, happy day, when Jesus washed my sins away.
—Methodist Hymnal, 312

STUDY IV.

YOU CAN COUNT ON ME

IT WAS an odd procession that wound slowly along the dusty highway from Egypt to Canaan.

In the lead were ten men, shepherds, as their short brown coats, coming only to their knees and without sleeves, proved. Each had his sack of grain on the back of a donkey. The famine in their own land had sent them to Egypt to buy corn and they were nearing home.

Back of them came ten donkeys loaded with the fruits and good things of Egypt and ten others with corn and bread and meat. Following them came empty baggage and transport wagons, all of Egyptian make.

Somewhere in that procession might also be found new suits of fine clothes, very best clothes for great occasions. A full suit for each except the youngest man, and five especially grand ones for him.

It had been a long, hard journey. The mules were dusty and tired, but not so the men. They were excited and in a hurry, and you could catch such exclamations as:

"Isn't it wonderful!"

"How happy our father will be!"

"He will hardly be able to believe it."

"He will not know us when he sees this procession."

Then, more soberly: "We will have to tell him how we put our brother down into that bottle-shaped well, where he could not get out and were going to leave him if those Egyptian traders had not come along."

"Oh, but he will forgive even our lie about Joseph's coat when he knows that Joseph is alive."

All this was new to Benjamin, the youngest of the brothers, and he had many questions to ask.

If this were a movie, this picture would dissolve or melt into another, and we would see an old man.

He stands with his hand shading his eyes looking into the distance.

"They have been gone many days," he says to himself. "They ought to be home. I fear something has happened to Benjamin."

As he stands there, looking, another picture, one of those dream pictures which he sees, comes before us. This time it is of a beautiful young Jewish girl with a little boy beside her, and the old man muses, "Rachel, my beloved is gone." The picture changes and in its place stands a ruddy boy clad in the coat of honor reaching to his ankles, and with long sleeves, the coat of many colors.

"The wild beasts devoured Joseph my best-loved son; my boy who was so true to Jehovah, and now, if anything happens to Benjamin, the baby of my Rachel and the child of my old age, my heart will break. Those older boys talked too much. Why did they tell the Egyptian ruler anything about Benjamin, and why would he not sell them more corn unless Benjamin went with them? Some harm will come to him, I know."

Suddenly he saw a cloud of dust in the distance. He ran toward it, then stopped in disappointment. "It is not my boys. It must be a caravan going north—But that does look like Reuben ahead. No, it cannot be, for see all those mules and wagons." Sadly he turned back when a shout reached his ears.

"Father, father!" came the call, and he waited.

"Yes, it is my sons, and Benjamin is there!" He hastened to embrace Reuben.

"But what are all these?" he asked, turning to the mules and their drivers.

"Wait, father; we have a great story to tell."

"We have found Joseph!" cried out Benjamin. "The beasts did not kill him. My brothers sold him into Egypt! God has been with him! He is the ruler!"

"Joseph not dead? My son Joseph alive?" said Jacob in bewilderment.

"Wait, father, we will tell you all," said Judah as they walked toward the tent home.

"You remember we told you how fine-looking the ruler was and how kind he was to us the last time? He treated us the same way this time. He took us to his own house to dinner."

"It was a wonderful place," said Gad. "It was surrounded with great walls and from high poles at the corners floated gay streamers. In the yard were trees and flowers of all kinds and most beautiful. Beyond this was a great mansion furnished with magnificent couches and sofas in beautiful

colors, with carved tables and sideboards and wonderful drinking vessels."

"But tell me about Joseph, my son," interrupted Jacob.

"Yes," said Reuben, "we were taken to this wonderful home and told that we were to have dinner with the ruler."

"When we entered the dining room it was more wonderful than anything we had ever seen. Fine linens, glass, silver, tapestries, palms, and flowers. The ruler sat at a table by himself. At another table sat many Egyptians and we were seated at a third table. Many servants served us and the ruler sent delicacies from his own table to us."

"But Joseph?" asked Jacob. "What about Joseph?"

"I'll tell you, father," said Benjamin.

"We started back home and had gone but a little way when servants of the ruler overtook us saying that we had stolen the king's silver cup."

"Of course we hadn't," interrupted Simeon, "and we told them so, and opened our bags to show them—and would you believe it?—there was the cup in the top of Benjamin's sack."

"We all told them that Benjamin did not take it," said Simeon, "but they made us go back."

"The ruler asked all about me," said Benjamin, "and then said, as I had stolen the cup, he would keep me as his prisoner. My brothers were fine, father. They told him how much you loved me, and what you had said about Joseph being torn to pieces by a wild animal, and that it would almost kill you if I did not come back. And, father, Judah begged to be made a prisoner in my place.

"Then, father, the ruler sent every one but us out of the room, and we were frightened, for we did not know what was going to happen. And, father, that great ruler began to cry. He could hardly talk, but oh, father, he said: 'I am Joseph, your brother. Does my father still live?'"

"We were so afraid," said Gad, "that we could not answer him, for, father, the wild beast did not devour him. We sold him to a company of traders and dipped the coat in blood to deceive you."

"But," interrupted Simeon, "Joseph said: 'Come near; I am your brother that you sold into Egypt. Do not be angry or grieved with yourselves, for while you meant evil, God sent me down here to preserve your lives.'"

"He told us," said Reuben, "how God had been with him all the time and how, because God had been with him, he had always, even when he first went down to Egypt and was only a boy, been able to do good work so that his owners trusted and honored him."

"Finally," said Judah, "the king heard about him and sent to the prison for him to come and interpret a dream that the wise men could not interpret."

"Of course Joseph had to take time to bathe, shave his entire body from head to foot, and be attired in perfectly fresh, clean clothes before he could go into the presence of the king. Even then he was only a slave, and if the king was not pleased with him, he could order him put to death at once."

"But God was with him," interrupted Benjamin, "and it was all right, for he not only told him the interpretation of the dream, which prophesied about this famine, but suggested how during the years of plenty, enough corn might be saved to feed the people all through the famine."

"The king was pleased," said Dan, "and made him ruler next in power to himself. He gave him the signet ring from his own hand, dressed him in fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck. The second gold chariot became his and he is the greatest man in Egypt next to the king."

"The moon and the sun and the stars bowed down to him," mused Jacob. "Do you remember his dream that made you so angry, my sons?"

"Joseph said it was the God whom he had learned to serve when he was a boy at home, that had given him all this honor and wisdom," said Reuben.

"But, oh, father, he wants to see you," exclaimed Benjamin. "He has sent you all of these gifts," waving his hand to the mule train, "and wagons to carry our goods, and everything. He told us to hurry and bring you to him."

"He says," explained Judah, "that there will still be five years of famine and asks that you will move to Egypt, where you can have plenty for both the family and the cattle. He will give you land and a home."

At first Jacob could scarcely believe that Joseph was still alive, but as they finished and he saw the wagons and the gifts he said: "It is enough, Joseph my son is yet alive. I will go and see him before I die."

And Joseph prepared a home for his father's family and flocks in the land of Goshen, where they might worship Jehovah and become a great people.

DAY BY DAY

Joseph and His Family—Gen. 37.1-11.
A Boy to Be Depended on—Gen. 37.12-17.
Untrue Brothers—Gen. 37.18-34.
God Was With Him—Gen. 39.1-6.
The Secret of Success—Gen. 39.20-33.
Faithfulness Honored—Gen. 41.38-44.
A Man on Whom God Could Count—Gen. 45.4-13.

I KNOW

The story of how Joseph was sold into Egypt and about how old he was.

Why Joseph could always be depended upon.
When he learned to trust and obey God.
How many times the Bible says God was with him.
How the silver cup got into Benjamin's bag.
Where in Egypt Joseph found a home for his father and brothers.

Do You?

THINK ABOUT IT

Which was the wiser and greater man, Jacob or Joseph?
Why?

MEMORY TREASURE

"Fear not, I am with thee, O, be not dismayed,
For I am thy God, and will still give thee aid;
I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,
Upheld by my righteous, omnipotent hand."

—*Methodist Hymnal*, 461

STUDY V.
THE HONOR GIRL

"SHE is some girl!"

"Who?"

"That girl Miriam they were telling about."

"Why?"

"Where have you been? That girl had her wits about her, I tell you."

"Here, Ethel, you tell Jim that story. He must have been asleep."

"I thought it was that same old story about Moses," said Jim, "I know that story by heart; could tell it in my sleep, so I did not listen, I was figuring on my new radio set."

"It was the story of Moses," said Ethel, "only it was the other side of the story."

"The other side of the story? What do you mean?" asked Jim.

"There was a girl in that family too. Did you know that, Jim?"

"A girl, oh, yes, I do remember something about Moses' sister. I never thought of her as a girl, just Moses' sister."

"Well, if that isn't like a boy," exclaimed Ethel. "I have a good mind not to tell you one word."

"She sure was a girl," chimed in Mary, "and she had a name—I do not believe Jim knows what it was. Do you Jim?"

"Guilty!" said Jim, "What shall it be? Chocolates?"

"Really," said Elizabeth, "I myself had never thought much about Miriam before."

"Suppose we give Jim a composite picture. It would be most like a game," said Helen. "Two minutes to think and then each will be ready with one feature for the picture."

"Time's up," called Ethel. "Who first?"

"She was a girl," announced Jim.

"Name, Miriam," said Frank.

"Belonged to a Hebrew family in the time of the wicked Pharaoh," from Helen.

"Had a baby brother," added Mary.

"Loved him," said Ethel.

"Helped her mother hide him from the soldiers," said Frank.

"Watched her make a basket for him—"

"Went with her mother to put the basket in the river—"

"Stayed to watch the basket," came in quick succession.

"Was trusted by her mother not to tell anyone the baby was there," contributed Esther.

"Saw the princess coming," said Frank.

"Yes, and had sense enough to stay where she was and not run to tell her mother," said George.

"Hoped the princess would not see the baby," said Ethel.

"But acted as though she didn't care when the princess found him, instead of crying and giving the whole thing away," continued George, who had been the one to bring up the story of Miriam.

"I know she just wanted to tell the princess that the baby was her brother and that she, the princess, could not have him," said Helen.

"Did not run for her mother even then, but acted as a stranger would when the princess let her see the baby," said George.

"My! but that must have been hard work," said Ethel.

"Yes," said George, "but she was thinking mighty fast. I tell you a girl that could just in a minute think of such a sensible thing to do had her wits about her."

"Hold on, George, you are getting ahead of the picture," said Jim.

"What did she do? Why she just piped up cool as you please, and asked the princess if she should go and find a nurse for the baby among the Hebrew women," answered George.

"I do not believe I could have walked off as though nothing had happened," said Helen.

"Maybe she didn't. She was quick-witted enough to have said, 'I'll run just as fast as I can and find one for you,'" said George with the air of one who had proved his point.

"Well, she was some girl," said Jim. "Is our picture finished?"

"Not quite," said Helen. "She was some girl, as George said, but I can see her when she gets in the house out of sight. I know she fairly flew to her mother and hugged

and hugged her she was so happy, as she said, 'Come quick, mother, and get our baby.' "

"That all?" asked Jim. "Then we must name her. What shall we call her, George?"

"Oh, I don't know," said George, "but Miss Ellis said something we have all left out."

"What was that?" asked Jim.

"I dun'no," answered George, "only something about Miriam just helping take care of the baby. You tell, Helen."

"We did forget that part, didn't we," said Helen.

"Miss Ellis said that the Hebrew mother was sure that in some way God would keep the baby safe from the soldiers and she knew that he would help Miriam watch him. Miriam was simply helping God take care of the baby. If Miriam had failed, God's plan would have been spoiled and he would have had to find another one."

"Yes," said Ethel, "and she said if Miriam had not done her part, the part God showed her how to do, she would not have had the honor of helping God as she did."

"There's her name," exclaimed George, "The Honor Girl."

"Good! How many vote for 'The Honor Girl'?"

"Aye, Aye, Aye," said one after another.

"We do not hear much about Miriam after she was grown up, do we?" asked Frank.

"She was called a prophetess," said Helen, "and must have been a leader at least of the women, for at the crossing of the Red Sea after Moses and the people had sung their song the Bible says, 'And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances. And Miriam answered them,

'Sing ye to Jehovah, for he hath triumphed gloriously;
The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.' "

DAY BY DAY

- A Quick-Witted Sister—Exod. 2.1-9.
- A Faithful Ally—Exod. 15.20-21.
- Jealousy—Num. 12.1-3.
- Miriam's Punishment—Num. 12.4-10.
- Miriam Forgiven—Num. 12.10-15.
- One of the Three—Micah 6.4.

I THINK

Miriam must have asked God what to do when she saw the princess with the baby.

Do You?

I KNOW

In what country Miriam lived.

The name of a king whose tomb has recently been discovered in that country.

Do You?

FOR DISCUSSION

Could Miriam have run off and left the baby when she saw the princess coming?

MEMORY TREASURE

He leadeth me! O, blessed thought!
O, words with heavenly comfort fraught!
Whate'er I do, where'er I be,
Still 'tis God's hand that leadeth me.

—*Methodist Hymnal*, 489

STUDY VI.

COMMISSIONED

"How wonderful he is!" said Joshua as he and Caleb, bearing between them the great bunch of grapes from Hebron, approached the camp of the children of Israel in the wilderness.

"Yes," answered Caleb, "God certainly made no mistake in his choice of our leader."

"He is the greatest man in the world," exclaimed Joshua. "Will you ever forget how his face shone when he came down after talking with Jehovah on Mount Sinai? And he did not know it at all till we told him. I do not believe he even thought what an honor it was to be chosen to talk to God as he did."

"That proves what God thinks of our leader," replied Caleb. "He is the only man since our first parents with whom God has spoken face to face."

"How marvelous he was that day he brought the message that if we would obey his voice Jehovah himself would be our King and we would be his people. The message would not have sounded the same if anyone else had given it," declared Joshua.

"It does not seem possible," said Caleb, "that such a man could have grown up in the court of Pharaoh."

"My father was inside the palace grounds once. He said the palace was like a small town in size, and the grounds where our leader played as a boy had been laid out to make them look like a great velvet carpet on which the house was set. The trees, flowers, and little streams were so arranged as to make a regular pattern in many colors. It took hundreds of gardeners to care for it."

"Yes, and think of living in those rooms which belonged to his adopted mother Thermorethis," said Joshua.

"The carpets were of sky-blue and silver brocade and the coverings for the chairs and seats were richly embroidered with feathers. Magnificent plants stood on carved stands. It would be impossible to tell all of its wonders, but they say the image of the household god was very rich and beautiful."

"How could a boy from such a home be such a man?" mused Caleb.

"I have often wondered," said Joshua, "what that great university which he attended was like."

"They say there were twenty thousand books in the library," said Caleb, "but he could not have read all of them."

"All that makes it more wonderful that he should be such a leader and our leader," said Joshua. "How could he leave such a life? You know it is reported that he said he would rather be a door-keeper in the house of his God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness."

"All the time he lived in the court of Pharaoh he seems to have remembered that he was an Hebrew and to have been angry at the way Pharaoh treated us," said Caleb.

"How could he help it with such a mother as Jochebed? She certainly lived up to her name—'Whose-glory-is-the-Lord.' What a great name! He certainly learned to love Jehovah and the Hebrew people while he was in his own home, so that not even all the wonders of Pharaoh's court could make him forget."

"Those were the days that made him," said Caleb.

"It was a fine thing that Jochebed had heard how the life of great king Sargon had been saved by his mother, who placed him in an ark of bulrushes, lined with asphalt bitumin and then placed the ark in the river."

"Even then his life might not have been saved," replied Joshua, "had it not been for the quick wit of Miriam."

"Miriam just about worships him," he added.

"We must not forget," said Caleb, "those forty years when he was out in the wilderness getting acquainted with God."

"My father says everyone felt so sorry when he had to hide because he had killed that man who was abusing one of the Hebrew people, but that everyone was glad he did it, for it proved that he was still one of us."

"He is not much like that hot-headed fellow now, is he?" answered Caleb.

"Those forty years away from the king's court, out of doors with God were a fine postgraduate course for his mother's teaching, but it was Jochebed who taught him first."

“And now for our Leader and Canaan,” cried Joshua, as they saw the people coming to meet them.

Forty years had passed, and again the children of Israel are on the borders of Canaan.

As they await marching orders Joshua and Caleb talk together. It is as though they saw a moving picture.

“Do you remember,” asked Caleb, “the morning we carried the bunch of grapes to headquarters?”

“Yes,” answered Joshua, “that was forty years ago. Not a man or woman is living to-day who was living then except you and me. Even the man we loved most and Aaron are gone.”

“And you are the great leader,” said Caleb.

“I could never have done the work that he did,” answered Joshua. “How strong and patient he always was!”

“What a picture that is of the time when he raised the brazen serpent, that every one who looked upon it might be healed!”

“And the tent of meeting, which we still have—I shall always see the pillar of cloud over it by day and of fire by night,” said Caleb.

“I can see the people as they gather for the Passover supper. I am glad God has instructed that this be made a permanent feast forever. It is such a wonderful time,” mused Joshua.

“When we left Egypt we were like one great family, but this man of ours has given to us a form of government, laws, a church, and the feasts till we are ready to be a great nation,” said Caleb.

“I wish,” said Joshua, “that he might have lived to lead us into the holy land. He has talked to God for us so many times that we will not know how to get along without him.

“Do you recall our talk about him on that long-ago day?”

“Yes,” replied Caleb, “and after these forty long hard years in the wilderness, he is the same great leader, the Hebrew child, the royal boy and the God man.”

DAY BY DAY

Earliest Training—Exod. 2.9-16; Heb. 11.23.

Moses' Choice—Heb. 11.25-27.

Call to Service—Exod. 3.1-8; 10-12.

Slow to Say “I Will”—Exod. 4.1-17.

The Great Leader—Exod. 34.27-35.

The Tables of Stone—Exod. 20.1-17.

The Secret of Moses—Exod. 3.6-12; Exod. 4.12.

I KNOW

The name of this Leader.
The secret of his ability to be a great leader.
Who taught him this secret.
The story of his call to lead the Hebrew people.
Why the children of Israel spent forty years in the wilderness.

Do You?

I CAN

Tell the story of Moses in ten sentences.

Can You?

MEMORY TREASURE

True-hearted, whole-hearted, faithful and loyal,
King of our lives, by thy grace we will be;
Under the standard exalted and royal,
Strong in thy strength we will battle for thee.
Peal out the watch-word! silence it never!
Song of our spirits, rejoicing and free;
Peal out the watchword! loyal forever!
King of our lives, by thy grace we will be.

—*Methodist Hymnal*, 420

STUDY VII.

AYE, AYE, SIR!

SAMUEL! Samuel!

Slowly Samuel rolled over. Had some one called him? He had been sleeping so soundly that he was not certain.

It did not seem as though he had heard his name. Perhaps he would better see if Eli wanted him.

He was hardly awake yet, but he pulled himself up from bed and stumbled along the corridor to Eli's door.

Knocking softly, he asked: "Did you call me? I was not certain whether I heard you or not."

"No," replied Eli, "you must have been dreaming. Go back to bed."

Scarcely had Samuel fallen asleep—in fact, he was not certain that he was asleep—when again he heard the call, "Samuel! Samuel!" This time there was no mistake. Quickly he jumped from bed and hurried to Eli's door. All was quiet, but again he asked: "Did you call me? I certainly heard you this time."

"No," replied Eli again, "I did not call."

"But, I heard some one," said Samuel.

"Some one called 'Samuel! Samuel!'—twice."

"Go to sleep," said Eli, "I did not call."

The third time came the call "Samuel! Samuel!" This time Samuel heard the call even more distinctly.

Reaching Eli's door, he said, "Certainly you called me this time."

"It must be that the Lord is calling the lad," thought Eli.

Aloud, he said: "No, I did not call you, go back to bed and if the call comes again, say, 'Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.' It may be that God is calling you."

Slowly Samuel walked back; the corridor seemed cold. At his room he stopped. He was almost afraid to go in. Perhaps God was there. It made him shiver. But he entered the room and crawled under his blanket and lay down. It seemed very dark, and he was so far away from Eli. He wished he had stayed in Eli's room, and all the time he was listening. He was not exactly afraid, but he was not sure that he wanted God to talk to him.

About what would God want to talk to him? He was only a boy. He had minded Eli and had tried to do what his mother wanted him to do, but God had never spoken to him before.

Listen! The cold chills crept up his back. Yes, surely there was the call, "Samuel! Samuel!" just as before.

His tongue was stiff. He could hardly speak, but at last he managed to say the words Eli had told him.

"Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." Somehow as he said the words the fear all left him. He knew it was all right if he was with God.

The message God gave him was not an easy one for a boy.

As he listened he thought, "I can not do that," but all the time he knew he could and would.

A boy who had been prayed for before he came into this world; a boy who from the time he was a baby had been taught to worship God; a boy who had been brought to the Temple, that he might better learn to serve God, could not fail when the time came that he was old enough to think and act for himself.

God said, "Go tell Eli," and then he told Samuel some very hard things that he must tell Eli.

Samuel loved Eli and he did not want to grieve him, but God had said, "Tell Eli." His mother could not tell him what to do about it. Eli could not help him.

God had called him—not Eli, nor Elkanah, his father, but him—Samuel, and he himself must decide whether or not he would obey God.

Did he? He certainly did, but that was not all. When God found out that he could count on Samuel to listen and to obey, he spoke to him frequently.

Back in the garden of Eden God walked and talked with Adam and Eve. After they disobeyed him he could no longer talk with them face to face, and he was obliged to find some other way of talking with folks and of telling them the many things there had not been time to tell Adam and Eve, and of bringing to them the new things that came up that they needed to know.

We hear of the prophets, the people who carried God's messages to the people. They were not just like a phonograph or radio, for when one speaks into the recording horn of a phonograph his exact words are recorded on the cylinder or record and are given out just as they are spoken.

It is the same way with broadcasting. The radio picks up exact words and tones.

God sometimes spoke and the prophets received the exact words and gave them to the people.

Sometimes he spoke through dreams and the voices of the prophets told the dreams; sometimes the prophets saw a vision or a picture of the thing God wanted them to tell, but always they were the voice or mouthpiece of God speaking to his children.

But just as the radio cannot pick up the message unless it is properly adjusted, so a person could not catch the message of God unless his life was adjusted to God's plan in his love for God and a desire to obey him.

Samuel was probably only about twelve years old when he "listened in" on that first message from God.

For many years the people had not been listening for God's voice. Indeed, they had almost forgotten him, when he called a boy to be the first of a new order of voices or prophets, who for hundreds of years brought God's messages to his people and helped to make the world ready for Christ to come.

Even before Samuel was grown to manhood God spoke through him many times.

After the death of Eli he became the judge and ruler, as well as the prophet in Israel.

He knew that Israel must come back to a love for God and obedience to his law before they could become a great nation.

As the ruler, he could lead them, while as a prophet he taught them, speaking to them in God's stead.

It was Samuel who anointed the first king over Israel. He was big enough to do this enthusiastically even though in that act he himself ceased to be ruler. When that king proved untrue to God it was a great grief to Samuel, but he was true enough when God sent him to tell Saul that the kingdom would be taken from him, to carry the message.

It was Samuel also whom God chose to anoint David, the greatest king, who because Samuel had led the people back to God, was able to make of Israel a great nation.

The people could not forget as he grew older how God had chosen to speak through him while he was yet a child; how he had grown up in the church, how fearless and loyal he had always been in his enthusiasm for God; how true he

had been as a judge, and how he had lived the things he had urged them to be and do, and they were ready to follow him.

Before the time of Samuel, Israel was not really a nation; it seemed as though she would never be one, but under his leadership she became the "people of God," ready to become under King David the greatest nation in the world at that time.

DAY BY DAY

The Prayer and Promise—1 Sam. 1.16, 17.

The Prayer Answered and the Promise Kept—1 Sam. 1.20-27.

In the Temple—1 Sam. 2.11, 18, 19, 26.

Samuel's Call to Service—1 Sam. 3.1-9.

Samuel's Answer—1 Sam. 3.10.

Samuel—The Voice of God to the People—1 Sam. 12.1, 2, 13, 18.

Saul—1 Sam. 15.1, 10-16, 26.

I CAN THINK

What might have happened if Samuel had chosen not to listen when God called.

Why God called a boy instead of a grown man.

Can You?

I KNOW

How many kings Samuel anointed.

What the young men who under his leadership became God's speakers were called.

How many judges there were in Israel.

Who was the first and who the last.

Do You?

MEMORY TREASURE

O, give me Samuel's ear,
The open ear, O, Lord,
Alive and quick to hear
Each whisper of thy word!
Like him to answer at thy call,
And to obey thee first of all.

—*Methodist Hymnal*, 674

STUDY VIII.

BE PREPARED

HE was a red-headed lad with a firm, clear eye. Out-of-door life had made his skin ruddy and wholesome looking.

He was not very tall but was manly and of athletic build. He was light on his feet and a swift runner.

It is said he was strong enough to break a steel bar.

He was dressed in the loose undergarment of the shepherd with an outer coat or blanket. Round his neck was hung a wallet for carrying his lunch, stones for his sling, and other things necessary in his out-of-door life.

In his hand was a stout staff.

Can you see him?

This was the David to whom Samuel whispered the great secret, as he poured the sacred oil on his head.

God often sends messages to boys in one way or another, but they are not always so clear and definite as the message of Samuel.

The secret he whispered to David, was: "God has chosen you to be king of Israel in Saul's stead. Get ready."

Not even David's father heard the whisper, and David went back to his work with the sheep, for David was a shepherd. The question he asked himself was, How can a shepherd boy get ready to be a king?

As he sat on the hillside trying to answer that question he was aroused from his dreaming by an almost imperceptible sound. Suddenly alert, quick as a flash his eye traveled over his flock, for he had sensed danger. Yes, yonder crouches a mountain lion ready to spring.

As he springs David also springs. At almost the same instant they reach the prey, the little bleating lamb. The lion seizes it, but down comes David's staff in a deadly blow. The lion falls, and even before it ceases breathing David takes from its paws the lamb, still living.

After a time he returned to the hillside thinking, "It was a good thing I had my club in my hand ready for that fellow. Perhaps I had better practice jumping; that was a pretty long leap, and if I had not made it, I would have been too late."

Then he began to sing. The farthest sheep heard his quieting voice as with his harp in his hand, his voice rang out in the words, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want."

But he could not forget that lion entirely, and as he sang his mind went back to the bear which had sprung from the rocks weeks before. He could see it now. It was way on the other side of the flock. He could not leap to it, but there had been his trusty sling. Quickly he had fitted the smooth stone and hurled it crashing straight into the brain of that animal.

Oh, how glad he had been as the stone left the sling that he knew just where it would strike! For he had practiced till that stone simply could not make a mistake, and unconsciously his song became:

"I will lift up mine eyes unto the mountains, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from Jehovah, which made heaven and earth," and he remembered his quick prayer for help the instant he had seen that bear.

The shepherd life was not always so exciting. Some days nothing happened, some days there was the long, tiresome search for grass or water, or the cold rain and wind, or the care of a wounded sheep.

Then came the great war. Three of David's brothers were in Saul's army. David wanted to go, but he was not old enough. Before this he had been called to Saul's court many times that his harp might quiet Saul when an evil spirit came upon him. How glad David was for the long hours of practice on the hillside! He had little thought that he was getting ready to play for the king. But always he returned to care for his father's flocks.

As he went back and forth from the camp of Saul to his sheep he heard many rumors of the battlefield and of the great giant that was defying Saul's army, the army of Jehovah, as it was always called in David's home. As he watched the sheep he could scarcely think of anything but the battlefield.

Suddenly one day he had a battlefield all his own. Almost without sound a lion sprang among his flock. In a flash the trusted stone flew from his sling.

Had his stone killed the lion? He could not even wait to see, for right beside him he saw a bear just in the act of springing upon the sheep. Instantly he was after the bear.

The fight was over in a moment, then David looked and found the lion also stretched on the ground.

Panting, excited but triumphant, David went back to his watch, the other battlefield forgotten for the time.

There was no one to whom he could talk.

No one? Oh, yes, his harp was beside him, his chum and daily companion.

Listen, as he tells the story:

“Blessed be Jehovah my rock,
Who teacheth my hands to war,
And my fingers to fight:

“My loving-kindness, and my fortress,
My high tower, and my deliverer;
My shield, and he in whom I take refuge;
Who subdueth my people under me.

“I will sing a new song unto thee, O God:
Upon a psaltery of ten strings will I sing praises unto thee.
Thou art he that giveth salvation unto kings;
Who rescueth David his servant from the hurtful sword.”

A few days later Jesse, his father, sent for him, and David, leaving his sheep with the messenger, hastened home.

Bowing before his father, his greeting may have been, “Here am I, my father. You sent for me.”

“Yes,” replied Jesse, “I must have word from my three sons. Take a measure of this parched corn and ten loaves of bread and carry them quickly to your brothers. Take also these ten cheeses to the captain of my sons’ company. Find out how your brothers are and bring me word.”

David started early in the morning. Now he could see for himself how the battle went and perhaps he could get a sight of the great giant. No need to tell him to go quickly; his feet would not go fast enough.

As he neared the battlefield he heard the shout of battle, but as he came nearer all was quiet. What did it mean? He ran to find his brothers.

“Why don’t they fight?” he asked.

The men standing near answered, “Have you not seen the giant that comes out every day to defy the army of Israel?”

Eliab, David’s older brother heard David’s further questions about the giant and was angry with him.

“Why have you come down here?” he asked. “With whom have you left the sheep in the wilderness? You just

wanted to see the battle. That is why you ran off from your work."

"What have I done," asked David, "that you are angry with me?"

Then turning to another man he began talking with him. The men were interested and took him to Saul.

Bowing before the king, David said, "I will go and fight this giant."

"You are but a boy," answered Saul: "you cannot fight this Philistine."

"I was keeping my father's sheep," answered David, "and when there came a lion and a bear and took a lamb from the flock, I smote them and rescued the lamb, then killed both the lion and the bear; and I will treat this heathen giant the same way because he has defied the army of God.

"The God that delivered me from the paw of the lion and the bear will deliver me from this Philistine also."

"Go," said Saul, "and God will be with you."

"But," added Saul, "you must not go in that shepherd coat. Take my armor and my brass helmet to protect you." And he clothed David with his own armor.

David took Saul's sword and started out. Then he stopped and took off the armor saying: "I cannot wear this. I have never worn anything of the kind, and I do not know how to use your sword."

Taking his staff in his hand, he stopped at the brook and picked up five smooth stones, which he put in his wallet. All those years on the hillside he had been making his good right arm strong and his body quick as he practiced and gained skill in the use of his sling.

As the giant came out to meet the soldiers of Israel, his servant bearing his great shield before him, he saw just a boy, rugged and tanned. He was very angry.

"Am I a dog, that you come out to meet me in this way?" And he cursed David. "Come," he said, "and I will give your flesh to the birds and the beasts of the field."

"You come," answered David, "with sword and with spear and with javelin, but I come in the name of Jehovah, our God. To-day will he deliver you into my hands. I will smite you and take off your head, and I will give your body to the birds and the beasts, that all may know that Jehovah does not need spear nor javelin; that they may know that there is a God on the earth."

As the angry giant started toward him, David put his hand in his bag and took out a smooth stone.

While the army of Israel watched he fitted this stone in his sling, swung it with his well-trained arm, gave a sudden spring, and hurled the stone straight to the mark between the giant's eyes.

Slowly the great giant sank to the ground.

Quickly David sprang onto his chest, and, drawing out the great sword, cut off the head of the giant.

A mighty shout arose as the army of Israel started toward the camp of the Philistines, who seeing their champion thus slain, fled before them.

It was many years after this that David became the greatest king Israel ever had, and many centuries after that that we read and love and are helped by the beautiful psalms he sang out there on the hillside, where he found out for himself that the teaching of his home was true, that the Lord was his Shepherd, that Jehovah did help, protect, and save him.

DAY BY DAY

The Secret—1 Sam. 16.1-13.

The Giant—1 Sam. 17.1-12.

The Errand Boy—1 Sam. 17.17-22.

The Lion and the Bear—1 Sam. 17.28-29.

The Victory—1 Sam. 17.40-58.

Another Secret—Psa. 144.1-16.

The Great Shepherd—Psa. 23. Psa. 121.1 and 2.

YOU AND I KNOW

That David was getting ready to be Israel's best king in making his body strong in his out of door life.

By becoming very brave and courageous as he protected his sheep from the wild beasts.

By becoming a skilled player on the harp.

By practicing till he was perfect in the use of his sling, could hurl it to a hair's breadth.

I KNOW

Another way in which David was getting ready to be Israel's greatest king and our great helper.

Do You?

MEMORY TREASURE

Lead on, O, King Eternal,
The day of march has come;
Henceforth in fields of conquest
Thy tents shall be our home.
Through days of preparation
Thy grace has made us strong,
And now O, King Eternal,
We lift our battle song.

—*Methodist Hymnal*, 408

STUDY IX.

I CAN DO IT

THERE are at least twenty words in the Hebrew language for "idols." The eight-year-old King Josiah saw these idols as he walked up and down the streets.

On one hill he saw the marble and golden images of the gods, on another the altars to the great god Baal, on another the image of Ashteroth.

The temple at Jerusalem had been turned into a headquarters for the worship of Baal. Those entering this and other places of idol worship jumped over the threshold as was done in heathen countries.

For seventy years the people had been compelled to worship idols because their kings did. The law of Jehovah was forgotten and the books of the law were lost. One of the kings had tried to destroy every copy of the law.

And the new king was eight years old. What could you expect?

Listen: his mother's name was Jedidiah, "the beloved of God," and his grandfather's name meant "honored of God," and in those days the meaning of names counted.

Over in the book of Luke we read that at the age of twelve Jesus went up to Jerusalem to the feast of the Passover and decided that it was time for him to be about his Father's business, and in II Chronicles we read that Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign and that he did right in the sight of God. That in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet young he began to seek the God of David.

The people, many of them, had never heard of the true worship of Jehovah; many of the officers of the kingdom were determined to keep the worship of the kingdom idolatry, and the king was so young he could not work very rapidly.

When he had been crowned king no copy of the law (the book of Deuteronomy, or perhaps the five books of the law) could be found to be placed on his head, which was the law for crowning the kings of Jehovah, so he was crowned just as an idol-worshipping king.

He may not even have known the difference. How could he when all he knew of the law of Jehovah was what he learned from the few people who were true to him?

We said he was fortunate in having a mother whose name meant "beloved of God." He was also fortunate in having three prophets, Zephaniah, Nahum, and Habakkuk, who were speaking for God at the time he was made king, and Jeremiah, who was about his own age and began to be one of God's mouthpieces about the same time that Josiah sought God or began his work of bringing the kingdom back to the worship of Jehovah.

Josiah certainly was in a hard place. Things seemed to be going from bad to worse.

When God called Jeremiah to speak for him he answered, "Alas, O Lord, I know not how to speak; I am too young," but God replied: "Say not I am too young, for thou shalt go to all to whom I shall send thee and shalt say all that I command thee. Be not afraid, for I am with thee."

"Be not afraid, for I am with thee," must have been his commission to the twenty-year-old king also.

Well he knew that whatever the king did the people must do, even though in the end they might rise up and kill him; but Josiah did not seem to think of that. The signs of idol worship that he saw all about him must first be destroyed.

He organized what might be called a "wrecker's association" and sent them out all over the land. Their orders were, "Destroy every symbol of idol worship. Tear down altars, break up images; wreck and utterly wipe out everything in any way connected with idols." One company of these wreckers were assigned to Hilkiyah, the high priest, with orders to carry out from the Temple every altar, statue, vestment and vessel used in the worship of Baal and not only to remove these but to have a great bonfire and burn them.

All worship of idols was also stopped. Priests who had assisted in the heathen worship were deposed from the priesthood. The sacred white horses of the sun were burned, the altars on the roofs of the houses were burned and the ashes thrown into the brook Hedron. At last the whole land looked as though it were a God-worshiping land, even the high places which Solomon had built around Jerusalem for the worship of heathen gods, and which had not been destroyed even by the good kings, were gone.

While Josiah was thus trying to wipe out the worship of idols, Jeremiah the prophet was trying to show the people that their worship was all form and did not mean anything and to help them realize that a nation that does not worship Jehovah must be entirely destroyed.

Under the direction of Hilkiyah, the Temple was cleaned out and was nearly rebuilt by the time Josiah was twenty-six years old.

For the repairing of the Temple money chests had been placed where the people could bring a free-will offering.

One of these was filled, and as the priests emptied it they discovered in the bottom of the chest an old manuscript roll. How many years it had been hidden they could not tell, but they hastened with it to Hilkiyah, who instantly recognized it as the Book of the Law.

Knowing its value, Hilkiyah put it at once in the hands of Shaphan the king's scribe, or secretary, telling him not to lose a moment in carrying the great news to the king. The king ordered the book to be read to him.

As Shaphan read, Josiah was overwhelmed with awe and grief, for this was the first time he had heard the words of the Law, and he began to realize that because the kings of Judah had not known and obeyed those laws great calamities had come upon his people and that still greater ones would come.

What could he do? First, he must know if he rightly understood the words that had been read to him. He consulted not Zephaniah or Nahum, not even Jeremiah who lived at some distance, but went to a prophetess Huldah, who stood at the head of the prophets in Jerusalem. "Will the nation really have to suffer all that the law says, because it has left the worship of Jehovah?" was his question, "or is there still hope?"

"Judah has purposely left God—sinned so greatly by her idol worship that she will be destroyed," answered Huldah; "but because you have so wholly tried to follow Jehovah and lead the people back to him, ever since you were eight years old, this destruction will not come in your time."

Was Josiah discouraged? Did he give up? Not a bit of it. That was one advantage of having become a follower of Jehovah when he was a boy. He could not give up. He had to stand by the thing he believed and had lived for.

He was grieved, but he said: "These people don't know.

We look and act as though we were worshiping Jehovah, but there are many things even about our worship that we did not know, and I must lead my people back into the real worship of Jehovah."

One of the first things he did was to send messages all over the country calling the people to Jerusalem to observe the feast of the Passover at the time that the Book of the Law said the feast must be observed.

The Temple was now repaired. The priests and Levites, who according to the book of the Law had special duties in caring for the Temple—had been carefully instructed.

The people were told just how the Passover lamb must be killed when the time came, and how it was to be prepared. How they themselves must bathe and be sanctified in order that the law of Moses might be perfectly observed.

The people came to Jerusalem in crowds; many, however, had not understood the instructions sent them and brought neither lamb nor kid. The young king was ready for this; 30,000 lambs and kids from his own flock were distributed to those in need, or those who could not afford to buy their own, and during the seven-day feast following, three thousand bullocks were furnished from the royal pasture. The priests and members of the court gave many more.

The evening before the Passover, found everything in readiness. The priests in white robes were at their post near the altar. At sunset the Passover lamb was slain according to directions. The part for offering was brought to the priests, the rest was cooked for the Passover supper, which was eaten according to the directions found in the Book of the Law.

During the seven days of this feast, priests and Levites were on duty constantly, one course relieving another for a few hours. Neither the temple choir nor watchers of the gate could leave the temple. Their meals were brought to them by the Levites.

The feast was kept exactly according to the Law of Moses, as it had not been kept since the days of Samuel. The people felt the influence of this worship. Many were ready to return to a worship of God and renew their covenant. Many others, however, felt that they had been forced by the king to this service. They were still worshipers of idols in their hearts, so as a nation, the covenant could not be renewed as Josiah had hoped.

The eighty-first Psalm is perhaps a story of the way someone expressed the feelings of the king and God about this great feast through which Josiah had hoped that Judah might be brought back to God.

“My people would not hearken to my voice,
Israel was not willing to obey me,
So I gave them over to walk in their own counsels.”

DAY BY DAY

The New King—2 Kings 22.1-2.
A Good Foundation—2 Chron. 34.3.
The Wreckers—2 Chron. 34.4-8.
Finding the Book of the Law—2 Chron. 34.14-19.
The Law Read Before the People—2 Kings 23.1-3.
The Passover Kept—2 Chron. 35.11-18.
The Secret of Josiah's Success—2 Chron. 34.2.

DO YOU KNOW

Of which kingdom Josiah was king?
How he went to work to restore the worship of the true God?
How old he was when he began to seek the Lord?
What is meant by seeking the Lord?
What he did with the book of the law when it was found?

I Do

THINK ABOUT IT

Why was Josiah a different kind of a king from his father?

MEMORY TREASURE

Soldiers of Christ, arise,
And put your armor on,
Strong in the strength which God supplies
Through his eternal Son;
Strong in the Lord of hosts,
And in his mighty power,
Who in the strength of Jesus trusts
Is more than conqueror.

—*Methodist Hymnal*, 382

STUDY X.

THE BOY—AND THE MAN

"Do you think he will do it?"

"Do it? Never!"

"What is this he will not do?" asked Shadrach, as he joined Meshach and Abednego, "and who will not?"

"Greetings, Shadrach! Where have you been these many days?" asked Meshach.

"We were just speaking of this new decree of the king, and Abednego was wondering what Daniel would do about it."

"Decree? I have not heard of any decree."

"Not heard of it?" said Meshach, "Well, you must have been out of the world. Listen, 'Whosoever shall ask a petition of any God, or any man, for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions'; and, see, it is signed according to the law of the Medes and the Persians, which cannot be changed. What do you think of that?"

"Do you mean the king signed that?" asked Shadrach.

"He certainly did."

"But does he not know Daniel?" asked Shadrach. And then he added: "He has seemed friendly to him. I do not know what the king will do, but I *do* know what Daniel will do. He will pray to Jehovah three times a day, just as he has always done."

"That is a sure thing," said Meshach, "but I could wish he would chance to close his door, for it is Daniel they are after I am certain."

"You are right about that, Shadrach, but that is not Daniel's way. He is no coward."

"True," said Shadrach, "but we cannot afford to lose Daniel; and think of those lions."

"Lion, or no lions, Daniel will never back down—not one inch," said Abednego.

"I will never forget the first time the king called for him to interpret his dream," said Meshach.

"His dream?" said Shadrach. "It was not only a dream. You remember that he first called in the sorcerers, the magicians, and the Chaldeans."

"Yes," said Meshach, "and the leaders, said: 'O king, live forever. Tell us your dream and we will show you what it means.' But the king said, 'The dream is gone from me; I cannot remember it; you must tell me both the dream and the interpretation, and I will give you great gifts.' How angry the king was when they replied to him that no ruler or lord had ever asked any such a thing from any magician or enchanter!"

"Yes," said Shadrach, "and he ordered that every wise man in Babylon should be killed, and we and Daniel were in the crowd."

"That was a time when Daniel saved our lives," said Meshach.

"I will never forget how he came into the house and asked us to pray with him that God would tell him the dream and the interpretation."

"I can see Daniel now," said Meshach, "as he went in before the king. He was not much more than a boy, and yet how strong and brave he stood, when he said, 'No wise man or soothsayer can show this dream to the king, but there is a God in heaven who can reveal it!'"

"That was a great dream," said Meshach, "but it certainly took courage to tell the king, about the kingdom which Jehovah, our God, would set up on the earth. Daniel is all right."

"Oh, but that did not take the courage that it did to interpret that other dream," exclaimed Meshach.

"Which?" asked Abraham, who was standing near.

"Don't you remember the one about the great tree that reached to heaven?" answered Meshach.

"Oh, yes," said Abraham, "the tree that could be seen to the ends of the earth, the one from which everyone could be fed, the people and the birds, and all."

"And the king saw a watcher from heaven," interrupted Shadrach, "who said to him: 'Hew down the tree, and cut off its branches, shake off its leaves and scatter its fruit; let the beasts get away from under it and the fowls from its branches. Nevertheless, leave the stump of its roots in the earth, in the tender grass of the fields'—but you know it all."

"I tell you, Daniel was troubled at that time," said Meshach. "He did not want to tell the king."

"It was an awful thing to have to tell a king that he would become crazy and live with the beasts of the field and eat grass for his food, for seven years, until he should learn that Jehovah is God."

"But he did it just the same," said Shadrach.

"That shows what Daniel is made of," said Meshach.

"That is all right," said Abenego, "but by that time Daniel must have known Nebuchadnezzar pretty well. I think it was with young King Belshazzar that Daniel had the hardest work to do. That young man was so wild and reckless, he did not seem to have any reverence for anyone. He was not one bit like his father."

"Right you are," said Meshach.

"Then came that night of the great feast," continued Abednego, "with a thousand of his lords present. They were all merry with wine and feasting."

"That was the time," interrupted Shadrach, "that Belshazzar sent for the gold and silver vessels which Nebuchadnezzar, his father, had brought from the Temple in Jerusalem, at the time he brought us, and they even dared to drink wine from those sacred vessels."

"True," said Abednego, "and then," in an odd tone, "suddenly that hand without arm or body began writing on the wall."

"Ugh! Imagine seeing just the hand writing words which no one understood. No wonder they were all frightened. I will never forget those words," said Abraham—"Mene Mene, Tekel, Upharsin."

"But think," said Abednego, "of standing in that crowd of one thousand lords and telling a king of that kind, that, because he had been so boastful and foolish, and because he had lived contrary to God's law, his kingdom should be taken away from him. That he had been weighed and found wanting. It is a wonder that Daniel was not killed on the spot."

"That is all right," said Abraham, "but what about you fellows? It seems to me that some one else has done about as good a job in this line as Daniel. I believe I would just about as soon be chewed up by lions as to walk into a fiery furnace."

"Oh, but we are not talking about that," said Shadrach, "It is Daniel they are after this time. I do not believe they are even watching us."

"I was just going to say," said Abednego, "that you have not, any of you, struck the time that I will never forget. It was that day, way back there when we were boys and had just reached the king's palace."

"Yes," said Shadrach, "I remember how big and strange it looked and how homesick and scared we were. We just did not know what would happen next."

"What a wonder that dining room was," said Abednego, "with all the glass and the silver, and the tapestries! I can see those tables yet."

"I can see Daniel too," said Meshach, "as he stood there and would not touch the wines and the rich food. My! but he looked strong and brave, as he turned to Melzar and said, 'We cannot eat this food.'"

"Melzar did not know what to make of him," said Shadrach, "for that was the food the king had ordered for us, and when Daniel asked, 'May we not have the kind of food our mothers gave us—the kind that would be pleasing to Jehovah, our God?' he just looked at Daniel."

"Poor Melzar," said Shadrach, "he could not say 'yes,' for his head would have come right off if the king had found us with white faces or sick when he came to look us over."

"Go on," said Abraham, "I have never heard this story before."

"You see," said Shadrach, "the king had had us brought from Judea to be trained for his service in the army and had ordered that we be fed from his table, but we knew that we ought not to eat that food. The king's orders made no difference to Daniel. He knew what was right and he stood his ground."

"Do you know," said Abednego, "I believe that that is what our homes way back there in Judea did for us? We knew Jehovah from the time we knew anything, and somehow his worship and what he would have us do were a part of our very lives."

"Living in this country all of these years," said Shadrach, "this country where they do not know and worship Jehovah, has not made a bit of difference, has it?"

"But what about Daniel?" said Abraham.

"Oh, it was great," said Shadrach, "though I confess I was a bit scared when he threw out that challenge. 'Try us on vegetables, and if at the end of ten days we are not just as strong and well as the other boys, we will eat just

what you want us to.' That, I think, was the greatest thing Daniel ever did."

"You're right," said Abednego, then after a minute, "I never thought of it before, but I wonder what would have happened if Daniel had not taken his stand that day."

They were all quiet for a few moments, then Abednego said, thoughtfully, "I do not believe Jehovah would have had the chance to make of him the great man that he is to-day.

"Or that Daniel would have had the opportunity to lead the kings of this heathen nation to worship Jehovah as he has," added Shadrach.

"He will pray to God three times a day," said Shadrach.

"And with his window open toward Jerusalem, just as he has always done," said Meshach.

And he did.

DAY BY DAY

Daniel's Purpose—Dan. 1.8-20.

The Forgotten Dream—Dan. 2.1-9; 13-20; 26-45.

Another Dream—Dan. 4.4-5; 10-16; 24-28.

The Writing on the Wall—Dan. 5.1-8, 13-17, 25-31.

The Conspiracy—Dan. 6.1-16.

The Secret of Daniel's Life—Dan. 9.19; Psa. 5.8; 1.7; 18-23.

I KNOW

During the reign of how many kings Daniel lived. (Dan. 1.1—Dan. 5.1; Dan. 5.31—Dan. 6.28.)

What Nebuchadnezzar and Darius said about Daniel's God. (Dan. 4.34; Dan. 6.25-26).

Do You?

THINK ABOUT IT

Who gave Daniel his start?

Daniel Could—Can I?

MEMORY TREASURE

BE STRONG!

Say not the days are evil—who's to blame?
And fold the hands and acquiesce—O, shame!
Stand up, speak out, and bravely, in God's name.

STUDY XI.

TRIED AND TRUE

SHE was such a tiny girl, scarcely more than a baby. She did not know what had happened, only mother was not there. Cousin Mordecai was good to her, but he wasn't mother; and she wanted daddy too. It was not like home anyway. Every day Cousin Mordecai carried her most all day, and at night they slept with their clothes on in a tent, and there were soldiers everywhere.

Esther did not know it then, but King Nebuchadnezzar had sent a great army against Jerusalem. They had broken down the walls, killed Esther's father and mother, and many whole families, and now Mordecai, Esther, and many others were prisoners and were being carried to the king's palace in Shushan.

Mordecai had loved Baby Esther, and, when he saw the soldiers coming he had tried to hide her, but a soldier had caught him, and here they were. All through that hot, tire-some journey he tried to be mother and father to the baby, and she grew to love him dearly.

When they reached Babylon they were not treated like prisoners. The boys were sent to school, some of the men and women became servants in the palace, and others had their own homes and worked under the king's officers.

Mordecai was given a house of his own and was made a gate-keeper in the king's palace. He adopted Esther, and she grew up as his daughter and was trained in the worship of the true God.

As she grew to girlhood she was very beautiful. When she was between twelve and sixteen years old, probably not much over twelve, the King Ahasuerus put away his chosen queen and sent his officers out to select the most beautiful girls from among whom he might select a new queen.

Esther was one of the girls chosen, and when she was brought before the king he loved her and made her his queen, but Esther did not let any one know her nationality nor her relationship to Mordecai.

Mordecai knew that some in the kingdom hated the Jews and had told her not to let any one know that she was a Jew.

One day Hatach, one of the king's chamberlains, came to Esther saying, "Mordecai is standing in front of the gate clothed in sackcloth. He is throwing ashes on his head and crying out something about the Jews."

"Go," said Esther, "and find out what it means, what is troubling him. Take him this new clothing and tell him to put it on."

Hatach did so and returned saying, "Mordecai will not change his raiment, for a decree has gone out from the king, under the direction of Haman, that on a certain day all of the Jews in the province shall be killed."

"Here," added Hatach, "is a copy of the decree which Mordecai sent to you."

Esther read the decree, and looking at Hatach asked, "Can nothing be done?"

"Mordecai," said Hatach, "says that you must go before the king and plead for the lives of your people."

"Does not Mordecai know," asked Esther, "that that is impossible? Go, remind him that every one knows that whosoever goes unbidden into the king's presence shall be put to death, unless he extend the golden scepter, and I have not been called into the inner court for thirty days. I cannot go."

Hatach carried the message, and Mordecai sternly replied: "Ask Esther if she thinks she will escape if the Jews are killed? Tell her that if she does not speak to the king, both she and all of her family will be slain."

"Tell her too that even though she perishes, God will in some way deliver his people, but that the great honor of helping him will go to some one else."

Esther was only a girl; she was beautiful and lived in all the luxury of the king's palace. Could she give it up, and perhaps even lose her life?

Then came the words of Mordecai, "God has given you this chance." True, she was a queen, but she was also one of God's family.

The words she had learned in the home of Mordecai came to her: "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve." "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms."

Rising, she said: "Go to Mordecai. Say to him, 'Go gather together all of the Jews that are in Shushan, fast and pray for me for three days.' Tell him also that I and my

maidens will likewise fast and pray. Then I will go to the king, and if I perish, I perish."

When Hatach carried this word to Mordecai he did as Esther had commanded.

At the end of three days Esther called her maidens. "Dress me in my most beautiful royal robe," she said. "Make me in every way as beautiful as a person can be. This will please the king, and I must help God by doing my part."

As Esther entered the inner court the king sat upon his throne. As he saw Esther her beauty pleased him, and he extended the royal scepter. She drew near and touched the tip of the scepter, which was the proper thing for her to do.

"What wilt thou, Queen Esther?" asked the king, "and what is your request? It shall be given you, even to the half of my kingdom."

"If it seems good to you," answered Esther, "will you and Haman come today to a banquet that I have prepared for you?"

"Tell Haman to make haste," said the king to his chamberlain, "that we may accept the invitation of Esther."

At the conclusion of the banquet the king again asked: "What is your request? It shall be given you. What is your petition? To the half of my kingdom it shall be granted you."

This surely was Esther's opportunity, but the God to whom Esther had been praying whispered, "Not yet, Esther," and she answered: "If I have found favor in your sight, may I ask that you and Haman come to the banquet which I will prepare to-morrow, and then will I make my request known."

That night God sent troubled dreams to the king. He could not sleep, and he remembered that at one time Mordecai had saved his life and that he had never been rewarded; so that when he went to Esther's banquet the next day he was feeling very kindly toward the Jewish people.

This time when the king said, "What is thy petition and what thy request, Queen Esther?" she replied, "O, king, let my life and the life of my people be given me at my request."

Then she told him the story of Haman's hatred of Mordecai and of his plan to kill all the Jews, but mentioned no names.

The king was very angry and asked, "Who is this man?"

Esther replied, "An adversary, an enemy, even this wicked man Haman."

Then indeed was the king very angry and ordered that Haman be hanged. He sent for Mordecai and gave to him the office which Haman had held.

Again Esther entered the king's court and again the scepter was extended.

Esther bowed before the king saying, "If I have found favor in your sight, if it please the king, will he reverse the writing of Haman, for how can I endure to see all of my people slain?"

Then the king, while he could not according to the law of the country reverse the law once made—instructed Mordecai in a plan to save the Jews and made Mordecai the ruler next to himself.

The Jews were saved, and to Esther belonged the great honor of thus helping God.

DAY BY DAY

Esther Chosen Queen—Esth. 2.1-9; 15-17.

Mordecai Discovers a Plot Against the King—Esth. 2.21-23.

Haman—Esther, Chapter 3.

Mordecai's Message to Esther—Esther, Chapter 4.

Esther's Intercession—Esth. 5.1-8; 7.1-6.

The Jews Delivered—Esther, Chapter 8.

I KNOW

How Mordecai saved the king's life.

The joke on Haman.

How the Jews were saved.

Why Mordecai was sure he could count on Esther.

Do You?

MEMORY TREASURE

Be strong! We are not here to play, to dream, to drift,

We have hard work to do, and loads to lift.

Shun not the struggle, face it, 'tis God's gift,

Be strong, be strong!

—*Methodist Hymnal*, 407

STUDY XII.

I MUST

“JESUS! Jesus!”

How strange such a call would sound! It would seem to us like profanity, and yet Mary may have called Jesus in this way many times, for that was his name, as George or Frank is yours, or she may have called him by his other name, Immanuel.

It is the boy whose name is Jesus of whom we are speaking.

How did he look?

A good deal like you if you are twelve or thirteen years old. He was about your height and weight, with dark hair and eyes. He could outwalk you and probably outrun you. His clothes would look a bit queer to us, but ours would to him. His hair probably was long. He usually went bare-headed and barefooted except for toe-sandals which he wore out of doors. His outer garment was sleeveless and came to his knees. It may have been white or brown. Under this outer garment he wore what was called a praying shawl, which was made with an opening in the center, and right here is where he began to be different.

At each corner of the shawl was a fringe or tassel, and for each tassel he had when a very little boy learned a prayer. He must never put the shawl on without saying one of these prayers. He wore the shawl to help him remember to pray.

Let us go to his house early in the morning. Mother calls, “Jesus, it is time to get up.”

He rolls over on the bright-colored rug which is his bed, stretches, and in time sits up, then with a yawn gets to his feet.

No; he is a Jew and the moment he awakens, his first thought is of God and he “says Good-morning to God,” before he leaves his bed. For this he has a special prayer.

The Rabbis at the time Jesus was a boy had put many ceremonies and prayers into the Jewish religion and Jesus, as a Jewish boy, must observe these even before he is ready for the family worship which comes before either work or breakfast.

The morning worship over, Jesus must make his bed, which is just to fold or roll his mat neatly and place it on the shelf which extends around the room. Next he helps the younger children make their beds, and pulls the table to the center of the room for breakfast.

If you had no newspapers, storybooks, games, or playthings, what do you suppose you would think about or talk about, or do with yourself?

When Jesus went to the table to eat, his father and mother talked about the Temple services, the Bible stories, the caravans that passed through the town, the next feast, and frequently taught the children Bible verses.

Breakfast over, came school. Here were no books but there were "slates." These were small boards, and on them the teacher had printed in the Hebrew or in the Greek, the words of the Bible texts to be learned, for the Book of the Law was their Reader.

Day after day these verses were learned till a Jewish boy knew by heart a large part of the Books of the Law and the Prophets.

A queer school? You would have thought so if you could have heard them learning their lessons, all repeating the words at the top of their voices as they sat on the floor in a semicircle, with the teacher in the center.

After school Jesus and Joseph, John, James, and the others might go for a hike into the hills to watch the sower as he sowed the seed, or the vine dresser as he pruned the grape vines, or they may have gone farther to gather the wild lilies, or perhaps they played ball or spun tops or had a procession, which was a favorite game.

There were many holidays in the school which Jesus attended. Every week there was the Jewish Sabbath and one day to get ready for it. Then every few weeks there was some feast lasting from one day to over a week, so that to Jesus a holiday meant a go-to-church day. The greatest of these was the feast of the Passover held every year, in Jerusalem. Mary and Joseph attended this each year, but Jesus did not go with them till he was twelve years old.

It was a great trip for a boy who had never been away from home. To a thoughtful Jewish boy it was more than that, it was the time when all the teachings of his

father, all of the worship of the home and all the feasts seemed to have a new meaning.

When he was a baby he had been taken to the Temple just as nowadays babies are taken to the church to be baptized, and, as the baptized babies are then members of the church, so he became a member of the Jewish Church. But as you when you are older join the church in full membership, so Jesus and every other Jewish boy when twelve or thirteen years old, became a son of the law, or a full member of the Jewish Church, and was looked upon as a man in the church.

Of course he thought of this as he went toward Jerusalem. Then, every place through which they passed had some story that his father had told him again and again. There were new birds and flowers to see, streams to cross, and every few hours people from other towns joined them.

On the afternoon of the fourth day they came in sight of Jerusalem, the city about which Jesus had dreamed for years. There, shining in the sunlight, was the wonderful Temple, with its dome of pure gold. For a few moments he looked without speaking, then turning to his father, he said: "It looks just as you said it would only more beautiful. Is the Holy of holies at this end?"

"Yes," replied his father, "and next comes the holy place."

"And yonder is the court of Israel," continued Jesus, "and to the front is the great altar." For some time Jesus stood as he and his father talked of the coming feast and Joseph pointed out the different places in the city.

His father had been his teacher before he went to school, and all through his school life had been the teacher in the home, so to Jesus he was both his best friend and a great man, whose honor and love was shared only with Mary his mother.

The great day of the feast was at hand. They must be in Jerusalem by sunset, for with the Jews the day began with the sunset of the evening instead of at sunrise.

The feast with all of its joy and its worship passed. At some point Jesus with the other boys who were to become sons of the law, had been received into full

membership in the Jewish Church and had had the phylacteries placed about their necks.

Jesus knew that this would mean new responsibilities in the church at home, and he was greatly interested in finding out all that he could about the services and worship in the great Temple at Jerusalem.

In one of the courts rabbis held sort of informal schools where anyone who came to the feast might go to ask questions or just listen. These were great places to the boy Jesus who wanted to know so many things. Many of those at the feast left after the first three days because the crowd was so great. On account of the heat they would begin their journey at night.

One night the people from Nazareth started for home. In the darkness and the crowd it was hard to tell whether all were there or not.

As they traveled first one group and then another moved off in various directions. As the crowd grew less Mary missed Jesus, but probably thought he was with his father. Joseph too missed him but some one said, "I am sure he is with his cousins," so they did not realize that he was not with them till it came time to camp for the night and they began to look for him. When they found that he really was missing they hurried back to Jerusalem to find him.

Jesus probably had been with friends and did not realize that they had gone, as there were so many people in Jerusalem. Then, too, he was now a son of the law, and he had been allowed to go about alone or with his friends.

It was not easy to find any one in such a crowd, but after searching for more than a day his parents found him, where he had been spending much of his time—in one of those schools in the Temple.

His mother was so rejoiced to find him that she cried out: "Son, why have you done this? Your father and I have been very anxious as we have hunted for you."

Jesus seemed to be surprised, as though he may not have known that they had left Jerusalem, for he says, "Don't you know I must be in my Father's house?"

That was what becoming a son of the law had meant to him. He now belonged to God and must learn more of his Father's work.

To-day we would say he had decided to belong to God

and had joined his church, so he must learn to do his will and his work.

This was a great time in his life, and he may have wanted to stay longer in Jerusalem but he returned to Nazareth with his parents and found that the first work God had for him was to "do those things which his parents thought best" so that he might grow in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man. Some one has said he studied Greek but obeyed his parents. This was God's way for him to be ready when God had other work for him to do.

DAY BY DAY

The First Christmas—Luke 2.8-20.

Becoming a Member of the Jewish Church—Luke 2.21-39.

The Boy, Christ—Luke 2.40.

A Full Member of the Church—Luke 2.41-49.

What This Meant to Jesus—Luke 2.49 and 51.

Getting Ready—Luke 2.52.

Listening In—1 Sam. 3.10.

I CAN

Draw a picture of Jesus' home.

Begin my day as he did.

Become the kind of a son of the law that Jesus did.

Draw a picture of the Temple.

Can You?

I KNOW

What becoming a son of the law meant to Jesus.
What God and mother would like to have it mean to you.
Do You?

JESUS SAID I MUST

What about me?

MEMORY TREASURE

O, Jesus, I have promised,
To serve thee to the end;
Be thou forever near me,
My Master and my Friend;
I shall not fear the battle
If thou art by my side,
Nor wander from the pathway
If thou wilt be my guide.

—*Methodist Hymnal*, 350



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