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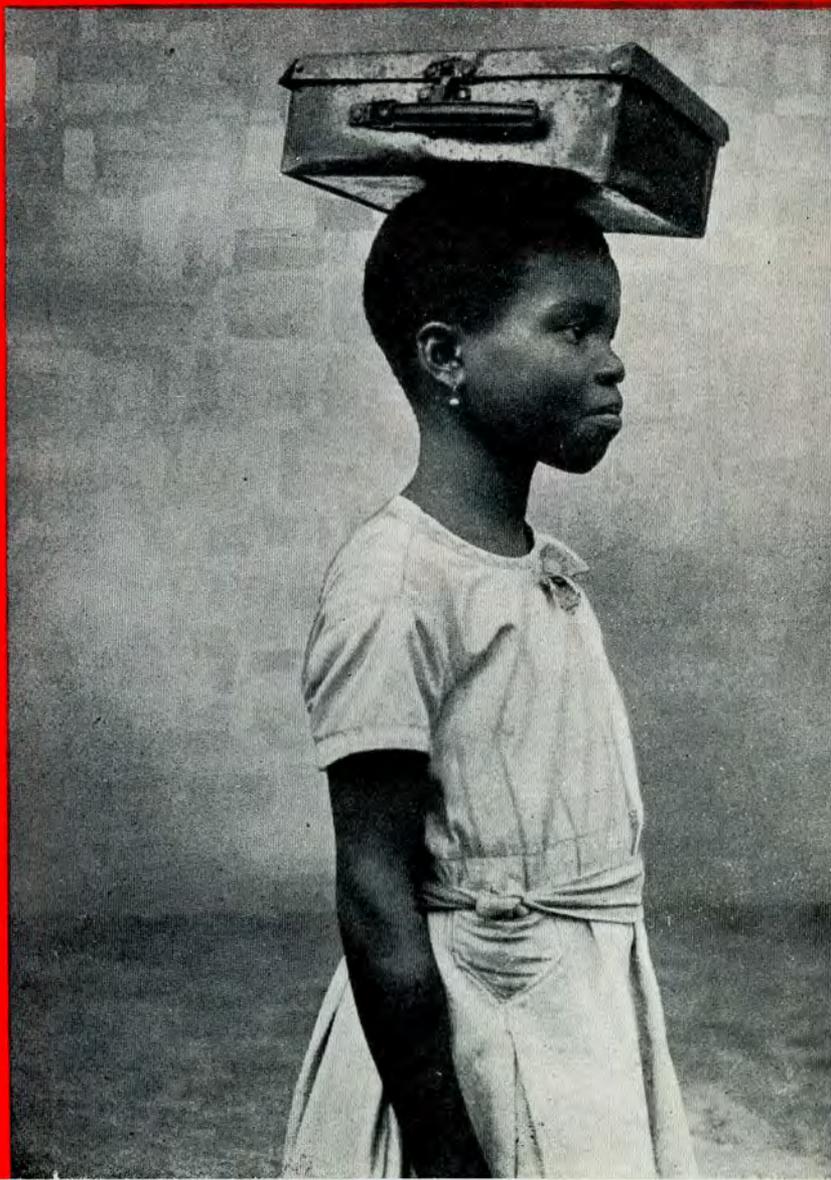
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## Features:

	page
Joseph's Egypt ..	243
•	
Holding the Over-12's	245
•	
For Superintendents Only .. ..	245
•	
Who Wrote Genesis? ..	246
•	
Genesis and Geology ..	247
•	
The Content of Exodus .. ..	248
•	
Primary Lesson Outlines	249
•	
Junior Lesson Outlines	255
•	
Senior Lesson Outlines	263

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# Who Wrote Genesis? (III)

by F. F. Bruce, M.A.

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THE book of Genesis is concerned with events which all took place before the Exodus. The language, according to Professor Yahuda, suggests an Egyptian milieu. Is there anything in Genesis to indicate a later date for its composition? Many Egyptologists say that the Egyptian proper names in Genesis are of a kind that first began to be used two or three centuries after the Exodus. But Dr. Yahuda contests this, and argues that the way in which the king is referred to (by "Pharaoh" without the addition of his personal name) and the form of Joseph's Egyptian name are characteristic of the period of the Israelites' sojourn in Egypt.

## A Later Date?

But there are some details in Genesis which do point to a later time than the Exodus. We may look at three. (1) Such remarks as "the Canaanite was then in the land" (Gen. 12. 6), and "the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land" (Gen. 13. 7), were probably, though not necessarily, written at a time when the land was no longer in the possession of these people. (2) In Gen. 14. 14 Abram and his allies are said to have pursued the kings from the east as far as "Dan". We know from Josh. 19. 47 and Judg. 19. 29 that until that place was conquered by the tribe of Dan after the Israelites' entry into Canaan its name was Leshem or Laish. (3) Gen. 36. 31-39 gives us a list of eight kings who reigned over Edom "before there reigned any king over the children of Israel". It appears from recent archaeological research in Transjordan that Edom did not become a kingdom before the thirteenth century B.C.; the list of kings therefore probably takes us from that time down to the conquest of Edom by David about 1,000 B.C. (2 Sam. 8. 14).

But we should remember what was said in a previous article about the likelihood that additions

were made in later editions of the Pentateuchal histories and laws. Such additions would not conflict with any conclusions to which the bulk of the work points in the matter of date and authorship. Let us look at these three *post-Mosaica* one by one. (1) The remarks "the Canaanite was then in the land" (Gen. 12. 6) and "the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land" (Gen. 13. 7) break the continuity of their contexts, and are pretty clearly parenthetical notes inserted at a later time when it was necessary to remind Israelite readers, living in Canaan, that it was not their race that inhabited the land in those early patriarchal days. (2) Gen. 14 stands by itself. The documentary theories find no place for it in their various sources, and they are no doubt right in treating it as a document of separate origin. The late Professor A. H. Sayce made the attractive suggestion that this narrative is based on a record of the event which was kept at Jerusalem (whose king Melchizedek figures in the story), and found there among the archives when David took the city. (3) It was an easy and natural thing for a later scribe to bring the genealogy of Esau up to date by adding the list of kings and "dukes" of Edom which we find at the end of Gen. 36. In the same way the genealogical tables of Gen. 10 may have been brought up to date by later additions, though there is good evidence that the first draft of this chapter reflects a period earlier than 1,000 B.C.

## The Author's Sources

There is nowadays no reason why a man may not hold that Moses was the author of Genesis without thereby forfeiting his intellectual respectability. But we may still interrogate the book itself and try to discover what it has to tell us about the sources of information which were at his disposal. This was

Reeds and Palette as used by scribes in Moses' day.

(British Museum.)



what Astruc did in 1753, as we have seen, but the criterion by which he distinguished Moses' sources (the various names of God used) has not proved to be a reliable one. Mr. Stafford Wright, in *How Moses Compiled Genesis*, suggests that Moses came into possession of private records made by Joseph (with whose career he must already have been acquainted from Egyptian public records), and of family records which had been kept by Judah, in addition to a collection of other old writings, in various languages and dialects, handed down from father to son, which together made a chain stretching back to Adam, whom he identifies with "the first of the true modern civilised men".

Another writer who has followed up this line of research in considerable detail is Air Commodore P. J. Wiseman, whose book *New Discoveries in Babylonia about Genesis* (Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 6s.) should be consulted by all who are interested in pursuing this matter further. He bases his thesis on the recurring formula, "These are the generations of . . ." or the like, which appears in Gen. 2. 4; 5. 1; 6. 9; 10. 1; 11. 10; 11. 27; 25. 12; 25. 19; 36. 1; 36. 9; 37. 2. He shows good reason for translating the word for "generations" in this formula (Heb. *toledoth*) by "history", and points out that the phrase is used in Genesis "to point back to the origins of the family history". The formula, he holds, is the concluding sentence of what precedes it and not the introductory sentence of what follows; it serves as the colophon of each of a series of documents which went to the compilation of Genesis; and the person named in the formula is either the writer of the preceding record or the owner of the tablet containing it. And it is certain that the proper appreciation of the significance of this recurring formula in Genesis will supply the key to the problem of the book's compilation. I believe that Air Commodore Wiseman is right in inferring from these formulæ the existence of a series of records reaching back into antediluvian days. Nothing that we know about the origin of writing in Western Asia conflicts with this position.

We may sum up in the words of Dr. J. Garrow Duncan in *New Light on Hebrew Origins* (S.P.C.K., 1936), where he repeats a contention he had made in 1908, "that the original documents of the Old Testament were written as early as the period of serfdom in, or emancipation from, Egypt, and that Moses himself wrote these narratives . . . If Moses did not write these narratives of the Pentateuch, it must have been an author who had a similar upbringing and intimate acquaintance with Egyptian knowledge, legends, ideas and beliefs as well as Egyptian languages and customs" (pp. 178f.). Moses—or someone who had the same experience and qualifications as Moses. Why not Moses?\*

\* In addition to books mentioned above reference should be made to Dr. Yahuda's *The Accuracy of the Bible* (Heinemann, 1934), in which he presents in more popular form the conclusions of his larger work on the language of the Pentateuch; and a little book published by the Bible League about 1933, *The Author of the Pentateuch*, by A. H. Finn (author of an earlier and much more elaborate work, *The Unity of the Pentateuch*.)

# Genesis & Geology

by

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## VI.

### No. (vii) : Restoration Belief (continued)

ONE of the most striking features of the fossil record is the *suddenness* with which new and well-marked types appear. The earlier sedimentary rocks, representing an immense period of time, contain no definite fossil remains, although many of them are perfectly suited to have preserved relics of life had any existed; but at the very beginning of the fossil record, in rocks about five hundred million years old, life bursts upon us in great abundance, with a mass of creatures belonging to nearly all the main groups existing today. And, after that, we find the most remarkable new types always appearing *suddenly*, and usually in great numbers and variety; while older types often disappear equally suddenly, in a way that is hard to explain.

For this reason, geologists used to believe that there have been many total destructions of life upon earth, each destruction being followed by a complete new creation of life forms. Our present world of life was held to be the last of these general creations, after the annihilation of its immediate predecessor. This belief, which was called the doctrine of "Catastrophism," obviously suits Genesis I, as the eminent Scottish theologian, Dr. Thomas Chalmers (1780-1847), pointed out.<sup>1</sup> And to this view the present writer still holds, both as a geologist and as a Christian.

Why, then, is this doctrine, once practically universal among geologists, now generally regarded as "disproved"? For that it is actually disproved, the present writer flatly denies. The fact is, that its early supporters made two bad mistakes. Thus they assumed

(continued on page 262.)

## Straightforward Psychology

Mr. Harold Thorp hopes to resume these widely - appreciated studies next month.