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Features :

	page
Is Modernism Old-fashioned ? ..	99
•	
The Background of the Bible Story ..	100
•	
A Challenge Answered by—a Youth Club ..	102
•	
John and Mary Junior ..	104
•	
Creation or Evolution ? ..	107
•	
Keeping Order ..	109
•	
Primary Lesson Outlines ..	110
•	
Junior Lesson Outlines ..	118
•	
Senior Lesson Outlines ..	128
•	
Think on These Things ..	138
•	
Useful Books ..	139
•	
A Page of Problems ..	141
•	
The Child and The Gospel ..	142

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search us. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (2 Tim. 3. 16.)

Our Policy

What is the remedy? Surely not merely to fulminate against the scheme of things which allows "modernist" teaching to be given in day schools. All teachers are not "modernist,"

and in any case we must recognise that if each section of opinion within the community demands that its own views shall be preached in publicly provided schools, the State has no option but to ban the subject altogether. Let us rather pray and work that the bankruptcy of the "modernist" position (which might better be called "rationalist") may receive the maximum publicity. And as Sunday School teachers let us realise more fully than ever the importance of our own teaching, and "go to it" with energy, skill and faith.

THE BACKGROUND OF THE BIBLE STORY

III. EGYPT

This is the last of three special articles on the geographical and historical background of Genesis, by

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The Nile

SHORTLY before the Israelites entered the land of Canaan after their wilderness wanderings, Moses told them the chief difference between the new land they were about to enter and the land of Egypt which they had left: "For the land, whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs: but the land, whither ye go over to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven" (Deut. II. 10, 11). Canaan's fertility, as we have already seen, depended on rain; Egypt's depended on the Nile. Year by year, as the snow melts in the Abyssinian highlands, the water of the Nile rises and overflows its banks, flooding the land on either side. When the floods subside, the land is ready for ploughing and sowing. The chief crops sown in ancient times were barley, spelt, and flax. After the sowing, the fields were kept watered by raising the Nile-water by a rope-and-bucket device (nowadays called a *shaduf*), and dis-

tributing it over the fields by means of canals and channels, the smallest of which, as Moses said, were simply hollowed out by foot. Such a prolonged famine as that in Joseph's time would be due to the Nile's failing for several years on end to rise high enough to flood the land sufficiently—not an unparalleled phenomenon in Egyptian history.

Politics and Religion

About 3,000 B.C. the two kingdoms of Upper Egypt (between the apex of the Delta and the First Cataract) and Lower Egypt (the Delta region) were united under what is known as Dynasty I. The twofold origin of the Egyptian kingdom is indicated in the Old Testament by the Hebrew name for Egypt, *Mizraim* (e.g. Gen. 10. 6), which literally means "the two Egypts," with the dual ending *-aim*. The king was the chief civil, military, and religious dignitary of the land. The kingdom was divided for administrative purposes into several regions commonly called "nomes," each ruled by a governor called a "nomarch," who acted

as the royal representative. Among the gods of Egypt, the two most important were Ra, the sun-god, and Osiris, the god of the Nile. The ritual of Osiris, which persisted well into the Christian era, was based on the rise and fall of the Nile inundations.

The Pyramid-Builders

The great age of pyramid-building was the period of Dynasties III to VI (2700-2200 B.C.) The pyramids were the tombs which the kings made for themselves during their lifetime. These centuries were marked by close relations between Egypt and the neighbouring parts of Asia, over which indeed Egypt may have exercised some kind of control at that time. But these dynasties were followed by a dark age (2200-2000 B.C.) when the land was overrun by invaders from Asia. Light dawns again with Dynasty XII (2000-1780 B.C.), which introduced the Middle Bronze Age in Egypt. Syria and Palestine were again under Egyptian control, and it was probably in this period that Abraham paid his visit to Egypt, recorded in Gen. 12. 10-20. This incident is aptly illustrated by a picture painted on a tomb at a place in Egypt called Beni-hasan, which shows the household of an Asiatic chieftain going down into Egypt about 1900 B.C.

Joseph and the Hyksos Kings

Such peaceful immigrations, however, were succeeded about 1720 B.C. by a wholesale invasion from Asia, which resulted in the overthrow of the native Egyptian monarchy and the establishment of the Asiatic kings whom the Egyptians called "Hyksos" or "Rulers of Foreign Lands." They ruled till about 1550 B.C. The Hyksos Empire included Palestine and Syria. It was in this period that Joseph was taken down to Egypt, to be followed later by the rest of his family; the Hyksos kings would naturally welcome fellow-Asiatics to positions of honour. Just as naturally, when the Hyksos kings were at last expelled by the native Egyptians, the latter would look with no kindly eye upon the Hebrews, whom they would identify with their hated oppressors. At ordinary times it would be superfluous to say that Potiphar, captain of Pharaoh's guard, was



“an Egyptian” (Gen. 39. 1); but it was not a superfluous remark at a time when the ruling dynasty was itself not Egyptian. The statement that “every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians” (Gen. 46. 34) is explained by the pastoral pursuits of the followers of the Hyksos.

The whole story of Joseph is full of local Egyptian colour. The titles of various dignitaries can be paralleled from Egyptian records as indeed can the whole picture of Egyptian life and customs portrayed by the writer of Genesis*. The land of Goshen, where Jacob's family settled, seems to have lain in the eastern region of the Delta, where also Avaris, the capital of the Hyksos kings, was situated. The “embalming” of Jacob and Joseph at the end of the Book of Genesis (ch. 50. 2, 3, 26) is, of course, the well-known Egyptian practice of mummification.

*See *How Moses Compiled Genesis*, by Stafford Wright (Church Book Room Press, 6d.—Obtainable from C.S.S.M.).