

THE CHILDREN'S PORTION.

SHORT TALK WITH THE CHILDREN ABOUT THE BIBLE.

BY ALPHEUS.

Of course the children who read the *Advocate* know that the first books of the Bible were written by Moses. Can you name the books Moses wrote? Try. How old was the world when he was writing its early history? It was older than people generally suppose. Would you believe that the first six chapters of Genesis carry us over a period of fifteen hundred years and it was a thousand years old when Moses wrote? Do you sometimes wonder how Moses got acquainted with all the facts about which he wrote? No doubt there were written accounts of some kind to which he had access. But what kind of writing would they have in those days when paper and pens as we have them were unknown?

You can read about both of these by turning to Job 19-23, and Jeremiah 17-1. It was an engraver's tool they used for an iron pen, and the writing was done on the face of smooth stones or on the soft clay of bricks which were afterwards burned, and the writings they had were just pictures of passing events or peculiar characters known well to the people who lived when the world and its language were in their infancy. The oldest books that we know of are the inscriptions of the Assyrians on bricks brought from Nineveh and Babylon, and no doubt some of the first records of our Scriptures were thus written. Wood was also used as tablets, covered with wax and the writing on that was done with a style or sharp pointed instrument.

But the most common material was the dressed skin of animals. We know that the dressing of skins was practised by the Israelites, Ex. 25-5, Lev. 13-48. Books were made of these skins or sheets of parchment by rolling them on sticks, to which they were fastened by a thread, and after being rolled up were sealed with wax.

These sheets of parchment were generally written on one side, but in Exodus and Revelation we read of their being written on both sides.

The use of papyrus was learned from the Egyptians, who early used this material with reeds for pens to make their characters; it is from this we get our name for paper.

There must also have been monuments in those days to commemorate many particular events. The Tower of Babel must have been a witnessing monument of the fall of its builders. And the flood must have left many landmarks as evidence of the destruction wrought. In addition to all this the accounts handed down from father to son. From Adam through Seth, Enoch, Noah, Abraham and the other patriarchs to Moses, so that from all the above sources combined, the Bible that Moses had, though very small compared to ours, must have been a correct account of every thing that he gathered into an historical account to connect with the events happening in his own day.

But Moses was divinely inspired to write what he did, and to gather