

CORRESPONDENCE.

For the Wesleyan
ON WRITING.

The first mention of writing, is Exodus, chap. xvii., verse 14, "Write this for a memorial in a Book."

The most ancient piece of writing extant in any nation, is the "Pentateuch," or five books of Moses, and the "Ten Commandments," found therein, and originally written on the "tables of stone with the finger of God;" this is generally considered as the *very first* writing in alphabetical characters, ever exhibited to man. Some suppose, that *marks*, or *hieroglyphics* might have been used before.

One of the most ancient methods of writing, was on wood cut into thin slices, and finely planed and polished. The letters were cut or engraved in the wood with an iron instrument called a *style*; and from the ancient use of this instrument, the particular mode or manner of a person's composition, is still termed his "style."

In later times, these wooden tables were covered with wax, in which the style made a readier impression, besides which, by the application of heat, the writing could be easily effaced, and by smoothing over the wax, other writing could be put in the same place where the former writing had been. The wax tables were mostly used in writing letters or *papyrus*, and when written, the tables were tied together, sealed, and then sent to the party to whom they were directed. The Greeks and Romans continued the use of waxed table books, long after the "*papyrus*" of Egypt was discovered, because of their use in correcting extemporaneous compositions.

From the ancient waxed table books, it is conceived the modern *ivory table books*, as sometimes used for memorandums, were adopted.

Stone or Lead were also substances on which writing was performed with the *style*, or "iron pen." Job seems to refer to this, chap. xiv. verse 23, 24, and likewise the Prophet Jeremiah chap. xvii. verse 1.

Pliny says, "that table books of wood were in use before the time of Homer." The Chinese, before the invention of paper, wrote or engraved, with an iron instrument or *style*, on thin boards or on bamboo.

Another ancient way of writing was on the leaves of the Palm Tree, and afterwards on the inner bark of different kinds of trees, particularly of the Ash and the Lime tree, whose inner bark was called by the Greeks "*Biblos*," and by the Romans "*Liber*."

From the use of the Palm leaf, as the substance on which writing was performed, we still use the term "*leaf*" as applicable to that part of the book, in which the letters are made or impressed. From the use of the Greek term, "*Biblos*," as stated above, we have the English word "*Bible*"; which without the article, simply signifies a book, but with the article, it becomes emphatic, and means, the book of God, because it is the best book ever written, inasmuch as it reveals the mystery of God incarnate for the salvation of a lost world.

From the ancient use of the term "*Liber*" as stated above, comes the English term "*Library*" which means a collection of books.

In subsequent years came into use the famous "*Papyrus*" of the ancients. The *Papyrus* grows on the banks of the Nile, and in marshy grounds. The stalk rises six or seven cubits, that is, from ten to twelve feet above the water, and terminates in small filaments resembling hair. This was sometimes called the Egyptian reed, and was of the same material of which the ark was made, in which Moses was

put when placed by the river's brink, and called in our version of Exodus, chap. ii. verse 3, "an ark of Bulrushes."

The *Papyrus* was of the greatest use to the ancient Egyptians; the pith contained in the stalk serving them for food, the woody part to build vessels, and the bark was made into a paper, which became in after years, a considerable article of commerce.

The manner of making the Egyptian paper is as follows: When the outer skin or bark is taken off, there are several films or inner pellicles, one within another. These, when separated from the stalk, were laid on a table artfully matched and flatted together, and moistened with the water of the Nile, which, dissolving the glutinous juices of the plant, caused them to adhere closely together. They are afterwards pressed and dried in the sun, and thus are prepared sheets or leaves for writing in characters marked by a coloured liquid passing through a hollow reed. The leaves thus prepared, were afterwards tied or sewed together, and covered with thin board made of the wood of the "*Papyrus*". From this use of the term "*board*," the word was used in modern times, to designate books with a certain kind of cover; and from the term, "*Papyrus*" comes the English word, Paper.

On the invention of this kind of Paper all other substances formerly used for writing, fell into disuse. And we are informed "When Ptolemy Philadelphus, king of Egypt, set up to make a great Library, and brought together all sorts of books unto it, he caused them all to be copied out on this sort of paper."

Another substance used for writing on, by the ancients, was the skins of animals. The honour of this invention is usually given to Eumenes, king of Pergamus, in Asia, who died about 160 years before Christ. It is said that Eumenes being bent upon getting a library in his own country, that should outdo the Alexandrian library, began to import *Papyrus* from Egypt; but the Egyptian king prohibited the exportation of that article. This led Eumenes to have the skins of animals prepared; and on them he thenceforth copied out such works as he intended to put into his library. From "*Pergamus*" the name of the place where the art of thus preparing skins was practised, came the latin "*Pergamentum*" and the English word Parchment.

It must, however, be a mistake of those historians who say that Eumenes of Pergamus, first invented parchment, although it is probable that he made considerable improvement in the mode of preparing it. For it appears a sort of parchment was used long before Eumenes was born. According to Diodorus Siculus, the Persians of old wrote all their records on skins; and Herodotus tells us that the "ancient Ionians, in writing made use of sheep skins and goat skins." There is also strong evidence that the Jews made use of a kind of parchment long before Eumenes; for we read of "a roll," Ezra vi. 2; "a roll of a book," Jer. xxxvi. 2; and a "scroll rolled together," Isaiah, xxxiv. 4. And, some suppose that the authentic copy of the Law, which Hilkiah found in the temple, and sent to king Josiah (see 2 Chron. xxxiv. 14-16) was of this substance.

It need scarcely be added, that when men began to use other substances for writing than wood, wax, &c., the use of the *style*, or "iron pen" was laid aside; and pens made of reed or cane, were introduced. The word rendered in our version of 3 John xiii, "Pen," is "*Kalamos*," the Greek term for a reed. The quill began to be used in the seventh century.

The most singular substance of which any paper was ever made, was "*asbestos*," a sort of native fossil stone, which is found in different countries up the Levant, as well as in Anglesey in Wales; in Aberdeenshire in Scotland; in some

parts of France quality of soap. The method of is pounded in cotton. All the menus of a fine to a paste: it is dried, it forms from "*Asbestos*"

Although so called, that the cloth of the A gather the action napkins thereof a feast, were the better scoured

The Chinese from linen as is skin that is found the interior bar

The Japanese mulberry tree.

About the time of making poses, soon set and the Parchment to be made But the most use of linen rags, wax, and in various

The time of but it must have before that time, in the Bishop's all made of paper date 1370." A some acts of Job which bears date Anno Domini, 1

And as the date certain, so nei Some give the honor to the Greek derived this invention was of Arabic or Saracens of Spain

By whom it was of comparatively the invention of subsequent invention was dissipated, on all subjects, we have been so dissatisfied much that is highly pressed, yet much it been widely circulated which stand so in everlasting welfare shall the Bible be April 3, 1832.

My Dear Brother,

It having pleased his spirit upon me to animate some papers for the encouragement