

SOME NAMES IN GENESIS.

Two classes of names have been already considered. A third still remains to be treated of; this is, in some ways, the most interesting of all. In the division which was last discussed the names were (except in rare instances) not prophetic, but told rather of the piety of the parent, or of some circumstance in connexion with the birth of the child. In that which is now to be examined it will be found that a person's position in history is marked by the name which he bears, and which has reference to that fact or event in his experience which most impressed his contemporaries or after generations. The names, therefore, are not *birth* names, but were subsequently given to their possessors, possibly in many cases superseding those by which they were originally designated.

By far the greater portion of this type of names is contained in the first eleven Chapters of Genesis. When, with Chapter xii., we commence the history of a single family, we find that such soubriquets become rarer and birth names proportionately commoner. Indeed in the last thirty-nine Chapters there are *very* few which have an undisputed right to admission into this class. Esau's second name of Edom, and Joseph's Egyptian title Zaphnath Paaneah, are undoubted instances. Besides these there are only one or two others which claim consideration. Of the two just mentioned, Edom was discussed in the last paper. In the case of Zaphnath Paaneah, the old explanation of the Targum (*vir cui secreta revelantur*), Syriac, Arabic, and other ancient interpreters, is now universally abandoned. That of Jerome, *Salvator Mundi*, meets with but little more favour. It is allowed on all sides that, whatever it means, the word must be of Egyptian not Semitic origin. Egyptologists, however, have not yet decided among themselves what is

its precise signification. Canon Cook, in the *Speaker's Commentary* (vol. i. p. 480), gives it the meaning of "food of life" (zaf-nt-p-ankh), which is suitable enough, and is adopted by the Dean of Canterbury in Bishop Ellicott's *Commentary for English Readers*. Brugsch, in his *History of Egypt from the Monuments*, suggests another explanation, "the governor of the district of the dwelling-place of the living one" (za-p-u-nt-aà-ankh), *i.e.* nomarch of the Sethronite nome; "the district of the dwelling place of the living one" being, according to him, a name, sometimes given to the district of Succoth, of which Pithom was the chief town.¹ Both meanings give an excellent sense, and we might well rest content with either. But—who shall decide when doctors disagree?

To these two names that of Hagar may be added. This, since it comes from an Arabic root meaning *flight*, is generally thought to have been given to Sarah's handmaid in consequence of her flight from the ill-treatment of her mistress. If this view be correct, the name will be used in Genesis xvi. proleptically, a thing not uncommon in Scripture history. It is possible, though, that she bore the name even before this time, and that it preserves an allusion to a yet earlier flight (otherwise unknown to us) from a previous master, before she entered Sarah's service.

A fourth name, according to one theory, may be added to the list; viz. that of Beeri, the father of Esau's wife Judith (Chapter xxvi. 34). In regard of Esau's wives there is a well known difficulty, owing to the fact that the names given in the two lists in Chapters xxvi. and xxxvi. do not correspond. Into this difficulty there is no need to enter here. For my present purpose it is sufficient to point out that Judith of Chapter xxvi. 34, has been sometimes identified with Aholibamah of Chapter xxxvi. 2; in which case Beeri must be the same person as Anah. Supposing this

¹ *History of Egypt from the Monuments*, vol. ii. p. 378.

to be so, a very probable explanation of the name is forthcoming, drawn from the incident described in Chapter xxxvi. 24: "These are the children of Zibeon; both Ajah and Anah: this was that Anah that found the mules in the wilderness, as he fed the asses of Zibeon his father." Now, whatever it was that Anah found, it was certainly *not*, as the English version understands it, *mules*. This interpretation, which rests on the Targum of Jonathan, may be dismissed at once, as having nothing in its favour. The older Targum of Onkelos, and the Samaritan version, represent Anah as discovering *giants* in the wilderness! For this also there is nothing to be urged. It would require **אִימִים** not **יָמִים**, and it is now generally agreed that Jerome was right when he rendered the word (which only occurs here) "*aquas calidas*." Thus Anah was probably the first to discover the very remarkable hot springs of Callirrhœ, on the eastern side of the Dead Sea, so graphically described by Canon Tristram in his *Land of Moab* (p. 240). Next we notice that Beerli, which means *well-finder*, can scarcely have been the original name of Judith's father. But how easily and naturally is it accounted for if he be the same person as "that Anah who found the *hot springs* in the wilderness, as he fed the asses of Zibeon his father." I do not pretend that this identification is certain. The whole theory, which is (I believe) due to Hengstenberg, is most ingenious, and is certainly plausible. But it must be taken for what it is worth. It is scarcely safe to build upon it, nor is it here adduced to anything more than a probability.

Let us now turn back to the earlier Chapters of Genesis. In these I believe that such soubriquets are the rule rather than the exception. It is true that with our limited knowledge it is only sometimes that we are able to explain them satisfactorily; but occasionally we come across a whole group of the significance of which there is no room to doubt, and here and there across the mist of years we catch

a glimpse of some historical character with a name exactly expressing his position; and thus one is led to think that had we but a fuller knowledge of the history of those far distant ages, and of the real meaning of the names appearing in the lists, we should find that in almost every case they represented the true position in history of those who bore them.

First on the list will stand the name of *Eve*, which requires but little comment. "And Adam called his wife's name Eve (Hebrew, *Khavvah*) because she was the mother of all living" (*Khay*). The meaning is well brought out by the translators of the LXX. who everywhere else render Eve by *Eva*, but here, and here only—in order to explain the statement—translate it *ζωή*: "And Adam called his wife's name *Ζωή*, because she was the mother of all living" (*πάντων τῶν ζώντων*).

Next, there can be little doubt that we are justified in including in this class the name of *Abel*. It will be noticed that it is not stated in Genesis that the name was given by Eve, as in the case of Seth; nor does the mother make any verbal allusion to its meaning, as to that of Cain. The statement is simply this: "And she again bare his brother Abel" (Hebrew, *Hebhel*). This word *Hebhel* means *breath*, and is an ordinary substantive commonly used of anything transitory, evanescent, or frail. So it is used in Job vii. 16: "My days are *vanity*"; Proverbs xiii. 11, which Gesenius would render "Riches vanish more quickly than a breath"; Delitzsch, "Wealth gotten by means of vanity (*i.e.* light, unsubstantial airy projects) always become less;" Psalm xxxix. 5, "Behold Thou hast made my days as an handbreadth and mine age is as nothing before Thee: verily man at his best state is altogether *vanity*;" Psalm lxii. 10, "Surely men of low degree are *vanity*, and men of high degree are a lie: to be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than *vanity*" (rather "*like a breath*"). With

passages such as these before us, it is only natural to conclude that the name Abel, or Hebhel, is a later designation given in consequence of his early death, which might well cause him to be known as a *breath* that had passed away. The explanation of Josephus, "Abel which signifies sorrow," is entirely wrong, but is easily accounted for. He was misled by the LXX. in which the name is written Ἀβελ, and hence connected it with the Hebrew *Ēbel* (אֵבֶל), grief.

Of the line of Cain in Chapter iv. there is nothing to be said till we are arrested by the account of Lamech's family in Verses 19-22: "And Lamech took unto him two wives: the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah. And Adah bare Jabal: he was the father of such as dwell in tents, and of such as have cattle. And his brother's name was Jubal: he was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ. And Zillah she also bare Tubal-cain, an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron (rather 'hammering out all kinds of cutting instruments of copper and iron'): and the sister of Tubal-cain was Naamah." Of Lamech's wives we know too little for much speculation concerning the origin of their names, one of which, Adah, means *ornament* or *beauty*, and the other, Zillah, *shadow*. Of Naamah, too, which denotes *pleasant*, there is not much to be said. Kalisch however finds in these names traces of "obvious progress" in the intervening generations between Adam and Lamech. "Women were in the age of Lamech no more regarded merely as the propagators of the human family: beauty and gracefulness began to command homage; the woman was no more merely the "help" of the husband, but his most beautiful ornament: if the eye finds an independent delight in lovely appearance gross materialism is conquered; and man has entered the period of *art* which consists essentially in the spiritualization of the sensual conceptions."¹ It is thus

¹ Kalisch, *Commentary on Genesis*, p. 149.

that this commentator endeavours (to use his own expression) to "strike the living water of thought even out of the apparently rocky soil of dry names." How far he has been successful my readers must judge for themselves. His reasoning is ingenious, and he is possibly correct in the inferences which he draws from the names. But at best they are uncertain, and we seem to stand on far surer ground when we approach the names of Lamech's sons. These are all called by titles significant of their position. Jabal, the father of those "that dwell among tents and cattle," bears a name which stamps him as "*the wanderer*," a fit title for the founder of the nomad life. The inventor of the "harp and organ" (rather "the lyre and pipe") is styled Jubal, which probably means *music player* (see Gesenius' *Thesaurus*, p. 561); while Tubal-cain may be understood as *copper-smith*, a most appropriate designation for the man who was the first to "hammer out all kinds of cutting instruments of copper and iron." Thus in each case the name is descriptive of its owner's occupation, and draws attention to that for which he was specially noted. It would seem, then, to be almost certain that they were originally not birth names, but soubriquets, given to those who bore them after they had become famous, and (in the literal sense of the words) *had made themselves a name*.

Chapter v. contains the genealogy of Seth. Of the names comprised in it there are very few of which anything whatever is known or can be conjectured. Seth and Noah, the names at each end of the list have been already discussed. Jared and Enoch are the only others which call for any comment. The former of these, Jared (Hebrew, Yered), means *descent*, and is explained by a strange Jewish tradition, from the narrative concerning the "sons of God" and "daughters of men" in Chapter vi. 1-4. The traditional interpretation of this passage saw in the sons of God the angels, and placed their fall in the days of Jared, whose

name is supposed to preserve the memory of their *descent*. So the Book of Enoch, Chapter 106: "I announce it to thee that, in the generations of thy father Jared, some from the heights of heaven departed from the word of the Lord;" and (according to the probably correct reading preserved in the Greek) also in Chapter 6, οἱ καταβάντες ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις Ἰάρεδ εἰς τὴν κορυφὴν Ἑρμονιεύμ ὄρους. And the name is understood as referring directly to this fact in the Book of Jubilees (Chapter iv., ed. *Dillmann*, p. 17; cf. Schodde's *Book of Enoch*, p. 72).

The second name mentioned above, that of Enoch, is also one which has exercised the ingenuity of Jewish writers; and from the etymology, which was explained in the last paper on this subject, they imagined him to have been the inventor of letters and learning, *initiating* and *training up* others in the science of which he was the parent. The true account of his name is far more probably to be given from his history as recorded in Chapter v. 24: "Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him." It was as one *dedicated* or *consecrated* to God by his pious life and early removal that he was known, and hence his name. Philo's explanation, it may be noted in passing, is altogether wrong: ἐρμηνεύεται Ἐνώχ χάρις σου (*De post. Caini*, § 11). This takes it as if it came from the Hebrew khên (חֵן), with the pronominal suffix; an entirely impossible derivation of the word.

Deeply interesting are the lists of names in Genesis x., one of the most remarkable chapters in the Bible from an ethnological point of view. The great majority of names are certainly tribal and national rather than individual. Their form is sometimes plural, or (as in the case of Mizraim=Egypt), dual; and occasionally they are preceded by the definite article, as in Verses 16 to 18, where the English reader can see for himself that he is reading of tribes and nations. It is only here and there that we come across a name

which can be claimed with confidence as a personal one. One such confessedly meets us in Verse 8, that of Nimrod, the "mighty hunter." This name, if it be derived from a Semitic root, will signify *rebel*, a meaning which is given to it in the Targum of Jonathan, where Nimrod is described as *mighty in rebellion* (נִיבֵר מְרֹדָא), and which is admirably adapted to the Nimrod of later Jewish legend, although his rebellion finds no place in the Biblical narrative. Josephus, in speaking of the builder of the tower of Babel, tells us that "it was Nimrod who excited them to such an affront and contempt of God. He was the grandson of Ham, the son of Noah, a bold man, and of great strength of hand. He persuaded them not to ascribe it to God, as if it was through his means that they were happy, but to believe that it was their own courage which procured that happiness. He also gradually changed the government into tyranny, seeing no other way of turning men from the fear of God, but to bring them into a constant dependence on his own power. He also said he would be revenged on God, if He should have a mind to drown the world again, for that he would build a tower too high for the water to be able to reach; and that he would avenge himself on God for destroying their forefathers" (*Antiquities*, Book I. chapter iv.). Certainly, if there is any truth in all this, Nimrod was "mighty in rebellion." But it must be confessed that the derivation which would connect his name with his legendary position is very questionable. It is not likely that the name of the great Cushite hero of Hamitic race should be derived from a Semitic root; and it is safer to leave it for the present unexplained, and to cherish a hope that future research among the tablets and cylinders of Babylonia may throw some light upon it.

In Verse 25 of the same Chapter, we read that, "unto Eber were born two sons: the name of the one was Peleg, for in his days was the earth *divided* (*niplegah*); and his

brother's name was Joktan." On the last name there is nothing to be said. The two former call for some notice, and, whether they belonged primarily to individuals or to tribes, they definitely mark the position of those to whom they were first given. Eber, from *abar* to cross over, denotes *the crosser over*, and must allude to the passage of the Tigris as the Semitic tribes gradually migrated westward. From Eber were descended Terah and Abraham, in whose days the name acquired a new significance. The Tigris had been already left behind, and now the Divine command came to Abraham, "when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran, and said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee" (Acts vii. 2,3). Westward the patriarch journeyed, and in due time *crossed the Euphrates*, from which it would appear that, when he finally settled in the land of Canaan, he was known among the inhabitants of that country as the crosser over, *i.e.* the man who came from "beyond the flood" (compare Joshua xxiv. 2, *be-eber hannahar*), or the *Hebrew*, a name which became the standing designation of his descendants, especially in their intercourse with foreign nations (see Genesis xiv. 13, xliii. 32; Exodus i. 15, 16, xxi. 2; 1 Samuel xiii. 3, 7, xiv. 21), and which is actually rendered the crosser over, *ὁ περάτης*, by the LXX. in Genesis xiv. 13. Peleg is explained by the text of the Book of Genesis, and means *division*, "for in his days was the earth divided." There is, however, room for some doubt as to the precise meaning of this statement. It may refer to the fact that the separation of the different nations took place in his days: either (1) the general dispersion of the human family subsequent to the Deluge, or (2) the breaking up of the family of Eber into two divisions. This is the meaning which has satisfied most writers since the days of Josephus, who remarks that "he was called Peleg because he was born at the dispersion of the nations

to their several countries, for Peleg among the Hebrews signifies division" (*Antiquities*, Book I. chapter vi.). But the only meaning of the word *peleg*, when used as a substantive, is a stream or watercourse, and the verb, which is a very rare one, only occurring here (=1 Chronicles i. 19), Job xxxviii. 25; Psalm lxx. 10, is used in Job for dividing watercourses. Hence it has been acutely suggested that the expression before us may be taken of a literal division of the land, and thus preserve the memory of "the first cutting of some of those canals which are found in such numbers between the Tigris and the Euphrates."¹ Whether or not this view be correct, it is curious to find that the Targum of Jonathan apparently connects some such operation not with the name of Peleg, but with that of Sheleph, which stands in the very next verse. According to this ancient Jewish tradition, Almodad was so named as *measuring the land* (qui dimensus est terram funiculis), and Sheleph as *letting out the waters* (qui educebat aquas fluviorum), from the root *shâlaph*, to draw out.

It has already been mentioned that no satisfactory explanation is forthcoming of the name Joktan. But two other of the names that stand near it can be accounted for without much difficulty, viz. Salah, the father of Eber, and Hazarmaveth, the son of Joktan. Salah (Hebrew *Shelach*) means extension, or *sending forth*, and thus the three names Salah, Eber, and Peleg (if the common explanation of this last be adopted) all point definitely to the fact that the descendants of Arphaxad were beginning to spread abroad, and to send forth new colonies, crossing the great rivers which lay before them, and breaking up into separate tribes.

Hazarmaveth means *the court of death*: and as the word agrees in every letter with Hadramaut, the name of a

¹ The Dean of Canterbury, in Bishop Ellicott's Commentary. Mr. Cyril Graham is there quoted as the originator of this view.

province on the south coast of Arabia, there can be no question concerning its identification. Further, since the province in question is not noted only for its fertility, but also for *the unhealthiness of its climate*, it is natural to conclude that the name, "the court of death," was originally given to it in consequence of the bitter experience of its earlier settlers.

Nothing has hitherto been said of the names of Noah's three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth; but doubtless they ought to be included in this list, although I do not feel perfectly satisfied of the origin and meaning of them all. Ham (Hebrew *kham*) is tolerably certain. It was formerly derived from a Hebrew root *khamam*, to be warm; but is now generally admitted to be the same word as *Khemi*, the old name of Egypt, which is several times called in the Bible "the land of Ham" (Psalms lxxviii. 51, cv. 23, 27, cvi. 22). This word *Khemi* signifies "*the black land.*" "The ancients had early remarked that the cultivable land of Egypt was distinguished by its dark and almost black colour, and certainly this peculiar colour of their soil suggested to the old Egyptians the name of the black land. . . . The Egyptians designated themselves simply as the people of the black land, and the inscriptions, so far as we know, have handed down to us no other appellation."¹ They were of course the leading Hamitic race with which the Hebrews came in contact, and therefore it is not surprising that their own national name should have been extended so as to include all the other branches of the same stock. Japheth is more doubtful. Considering his position, I can scarcely believe that the name is derived from either of the two Semitic roots suggested, viz. (1) *pathah*, to enlarge, extend, "as predictive of the wide spread of his descendants over the northern and western

¹ Brugsch, *History of Egypt from the Monuments*, vol. i. p. 16.

regions of the world";¹ or (2) *yaphah*, to be fair, as if Japheth represented the *fair*, and Ham the *dark coloured* races of the world. The former derivation at first sight may be thought to receive some support from Genesis ix. 27: "God shall *enlarge* Japheth" (Hebrew: *Yapht Elohim le-Yepheth*); but this may well be only one of those allusive paronomasias of which so many were collected in my last paper. Ewald is surely right when he says that "Japheth in our present Hebrew remains quite obscure."² Some have connected it with the mythological Iapetus, regarded by the Greeks as the ancestor of the human race. There may be something in this, but I am scarcely prepared at present to offer an opinion on it in either way. Those who are curious on the subject will find a most interesting discussion of it in the new volume of Monsieur Lenormant's work, *Les Origines de l'Histoire* (vol. ii. p. 190 sq.). For myself, I am inclined to leave the origin of the name uncertain, but unhesitatingly to reject the explanations offered from Semitic roots. Shem, on the contrary, *must* be Semitic. In Hebrew it signifies *name*, with a secondary meaning of *renown* or *glory*, which is perhaps the idea present in the word when used to denote the progenitor of the favoured races taken into covenant with God, and chosen by Him as those among whom He would put his name.

Between forty and fifty names have now been examined in the course of this and the preceding paper. The list might easily have been lengthened. But it is believed that no really important name has been omitted, and the results are sufficiently striking without wearying the reader by working through those of subordinate interest. It has been proved that in almost every case the name given can be accounted for, either by some circumstance in connexion

¹ *Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. i. p. 929.

² *History of Israel*, vol. i. p. 279.

with the birth of the child, or by some incident in his after history which impressed itself upon the memory of his contemporaries; and that this latter type of name predominates in the earlier Chapters. There are doubtless scores of other such names scattered over the pages of the book, especially in the genealogies, which are as pregnant with meaning as those which have been considered. But in the present state of our knowledge, or rather ignorance, both of the history of the men, and in many instances of those primitive languages in which the elements of the names should be sought, we must be content to leave them unexplained, and to acquiesce at least for the time in the confession that, while we believe that there is much interesting ancient history underlying those apparently dry lists of names, yet it cannot be reached by us because we have lost the key.

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*SCRIPTURE STUDIES OF THE HEAVENLY
STATE.*

V. THE DESIRE OF THE ANGELS.

(1 *Peter* i. 12.)

IN our last paper we considered in its first and initial stage the nature of that law which determines the blessedness of heaven. As yet we have only looked at this law as it was seen in the life of the Christian Founder; in other words, we have begun with the Head of the body. But, if this be a true principle, it must, like all other principles, be proved by an induction of particulars. We cannot rest with the Head of the body; we must descend to the members also. We must try to see whether the law which is