

THE DAYS OF ENOS.

GENESIS iv. 26.

No one can read the fourth chapter of Genesis carefully without being arrested by the statement in the twenty-sixth verse: "And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: *then began men to call upon the name of the Lord.*" These last words are significant, *φωνᾶντα συνετοῖσιν*, as the Greeks would call them. The writer clearly attached some considerable importance to the fact which he has thus preserved, although what its precise meaning may be it is somewhat difficult to discover. To this question I propose to address myself in the present paper.

For the rendering of the English version there is much to be urged. Not only is it an easy and natural translation of the Hebrew words, but it has also large support from the ancient versions. The rendering of the Septuagint, *οὗτος ἤλπισεν ἐπικαλεῖσθαι τὸ ὄνομα Κυρίου τοῦ Θεοῦ*, may be dismissed at once as incorrect, having arisen from a confusion of the verb *khalal* (ללח) with *yakhal* (לח) "to hope." The Greek version of Aquila improves upon this by translating the clause, *τότε ἤρχθη τοῦ καλεῖν ἐν ὀνόματι Κυρίου*. To the same effect is that of Symmachus, *τότε ἀρχὴ ἐγένετο*. Thus both of these agree with the Authorized Version, which has, further, the support of the Syriac; while the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Latin of Jerome differ only in assigning a definite person to the verb, making it refer to Enos: "Iste cœpit invocare nomen Domini" (*Vulgate*). In spite however of this formidable array of authorities, I think that the rendering is not absolutely beyond question. One school of interpreters has for the most part withheld its consent, and that is one to which we should naturally attach great weight, viz.

the Jewish. The Targums and many Jewish Rabbis of later date agree in rejecting the ordinary rendering, and in supporting an alternative which will presently be offered to the reader's consideration. But, before passing on to this, a few words may be devoted to the discussion of the meaning of the phrase, "to call upon the name of the Lord." It is not one of common occurrence. We meet with it next in the history of Abraham, where it stands in the following passages: (Gen. xii. 8) "There he builded an altar unto the Lord, and called upon the name of the Lord"; (xiii. 4) "The place of the altar, which he had made there at the first: and there Abram called on the name of the Lord"; (xxi. 33). "And Abraham planted a grove [rather, *a tamarisk*] in Beersheba, and called there on the name of the Lord, the everlasting God." Once it is used of Isaac: (Chap. xxvi. 25) "And he builded an altar there, and called upon the name of the Lord." Beyond these passages it is not found in the Pentateuch; and in the later books, in the few passages in which it occurs, it has lost that technical and definite meaning which belongs to it in the history of the Patriarchs (See 1 Kings xviii. 24; 2 Kings v. 11; Joel ii. 32; Zeph. iii. 9; Ps. cxvi. 4, 13, 17). In Genesis it is manifestly used of solemn and formal worship. In three out of the four instances cited from the Patriarchal history it stands in close connection with the mention of an altar. In the fourth it is connected with the planting of a tree, an act which from the manner in which it is narrated we should gather to have been a solemn and religious one.

Of this definite and formal worship of God the passage which we have been considering gives us (according to the ordinary interpretation) the origin and commencement. *Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord.* "We have here," says Keil, "an account of the commencement of that worship of God which consists in prayer, praise,

and thanksgiving, or in the acknowledgment and celebration of the mercy and help of Jehovah. While the family of Cainites, by the erection of a city, and the invention and development of worldly arts and business, were laying the foundation for the kingdom of this world, the family of the Sethites began, by united invocation of the name of the God of grace, to found and to erect the kingdom of God." A difficulty, however, arises at once. At the beginning of this very chapter *sacrifice*, both bloody and unbloody, appears as an institution already existing. It is hard to imagine that it was unaccompanied by any invocation of the Supreme Being, with which in later instances it is so closely joined. How then can the commencement of this invocation of God be placed *later* than the origin of sacrifice? The difficulty is for the most part ignored and passed over in silence by commentators. And yet it is a very real one. The sacred writer would scarcely have recorded this fact in his very brief record unless it was really significant—unless it formed a new point of departure, which, if we take the words as they stand in our English Bibles, it certainly does not. At best it only recounts a further development of what must already have existed in some shape or other. It speaks rather of a continuance and an advance than of an absolute beginning—of a *turning point*, if you will, but not of a *commencement*.

We are led then by this consideration to hesitate before adopting the current explanation of the passage; and are induced at least to give a patient hearing to the alternative translation, which has the support of the great majority of Jewish expositors.¹ This is first found in the very ancient Targum of Onkelos (dating from the first or second century

¹ The view taken by the Dean of Canterbury is that "the name Jehovah had now become a title of the Deity, whereas previously no such sacredness had been attached to it" (*Old Testament Commentary for English Readers*, vol. i. p. 32). I cannot think that there is much to be said for this, although it has the merit of avoiding the difficulty mentioned above.

of the Christian era), in which the text is rendered : "Then was there *profanation* in calling upon the name of the Lord." In the later Targum of the *pseudo*-Jonathan (the seventh century?) the statement is somewhat amplified : "That was the time when men began to err and make to themselves idols, and called their idols after the name of the Word of the Lord." This, it must be remembered, is intended not for a literal translation, but for a paraphrase bringing out the meaning of the text. The older Targum, however, gives the translation on which the paraphrase is based ; and, as far as the actual word is concerned, *hûchal* (הוֹכַל), may equally well signify "it was profaned" as "it was begun." The particular voice of the verb here used (the Hophal) is found nowhere else in the Old Testament. The active (Hiphil) is used in several passages, and generally means "to begin." But in Ezekiel xxxix. 7 it certainly signifies "to profane" or "pollute." "I will make my holy name known in the midst of my people Israel ; and *I will not let them pollute* (לֹא אִחַל) my holy name any more." We seem, therefore, to be warranted in rendering the passive "it was profaned" or "there was profanation."¹ And, if so, the text will describe the origin not of the true worship of God—that must already have existed—but of *idolatry*, which is essentially a "profanation in calling upon the name of the Lord." This view, it has already been implied, became the traditional one among Jewish expositors. We learn from Jerome's *Questiones in Genesis* that it was the favourite one with the Rabbis of the fourth century ; for after giving his own explanation of the passage (substantially that of the Authorized Version) he tells us that most of the Hebrews take a different view, and suppose

¹ I feel that there is some difficulty in the preposition לְ after הוֹכַל with this interpretation. It is however lessened by a comparison of Jeremiah xxxiv. 8, 15, 17, xxxvi. 8, in which passages a not altogether dissimilar use of לְקַרֵּא is found.

that then for the first time idols were fashioned in the name of the Lord, and in his likeness. Later Jewish writers, such as Kimchi and Rashi, carry on the tradition, which is elaborated in a striking manner by Maimonides, the great doctor of the synagogue in the twelfth century, "the glory of Israel, the second Moses." The passage is interesting and worth quoting, although it cannot be pretended that there is the slightest foundation in Holy Scripture for the details with which the bare outline of the sacred text is filled up. "In the days of Enos," he says, "the sons of Adam erred with a great error, and the counsel of the wise men of that age became brutish: and their error was this. They said, forasmuch as God hath created these stars and spheres to govern the world, and set them on high and imparted honour to them, and they are ministers that minister before Him; it is meet that men should laud and glorify and give them honour. For this is the will of God, that we might magnify and honour whomsoever He magnifieth and honoureth, even as a king would have them magnified that stand before him. When this thing was come up into their hearts, they began to build temples unto the stars, and to offer sacrifices unto them, and to laud and glorify them with words, and to worship before them, that they might, in their evil opinion, obtain favour of the Creator."

Whatever may be thought of this tradition, it is tolerably certain that the worship of the heavenly bodies was one of the earliest forms of idolatry. It is alluded to in the book of Job (Chap. xxxi. 26-28): "If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness; and my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand: this also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge: for I should have denied the God that is above." Again we find mention of it in Deuteronomy iv. 19: "Lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest

the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven, shouldest be driven to worship them, and serve them." While Amos v. 25, 26 implies that the Israelites were actually guilty of star worship during their wanderings in the desert: "Have ye offered unto me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel? But ye have borne the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chiun your images, the star of your god, which ye made to yourselves." To a still earlier date would the practice be carried back if there were any historical foundation for the fine old Jewish legend concerning Abraham which found its way ultimately into the Koran. This must have been known to Josephus, for he tells us that the Patriarch was led to a belief in the one only God by observing the changes of the sun and moon and all the heavenly bodies. "For if," said he, "these bodies had power of their own, they would certainly take care of their own regular motions; but since they do not preserve such regularity, they make it plain that, so far as they co-operate to our advantage, they do it not of their own abilities, but as they are subservient to Him that commands them, to whom alone we ought justly to offer our honour and thanksgiving" (*Antiquities*, I. vii.).

As given in the Koran the story is very graphic: "When night overshadowed him he saw a star, and said, This is my Lord; but when it set he said, I like not gods which set. And when he saw the moon rising he said, This is my Lord; but when he saw it set he said, Verily if my Lord direct me not I shall become one of the people who go astray. And when he saw the sun rising he said, This is my Lord: this is the greatest; but when it set he said, O my people, verily I am clear of that which ye associate with God: I direct my face unto Him who hath created the heavens and the earth" (Sale's *Koran*, p. 95).

These illustrations cannot of course be made to furnish any argument for the rendering of Genesis iv. 26 which

became traditional among the Jews. They are only adduced here as helping to set before us vividly the character of the primitive idolatry, of which (according to this interpretation) the text gives us the origin. The translation must stand or fall on its own merits. It does not appear to me to be by any means certain, and yet I cannot think that we are justified in dismissing it in the contemptuous fashion which has become customary. The strong *consensus* of Jewish opinion is a weighty argument in its favour; and if it be allowed that it is linguistically possible, I think it will be felt that it is quite as probable as the one which is ordinarily adopted. The "profanation," it will be seen, is not attributed to Enos. The authors of it are not mentioned. We are only told that it took place *then*, viz. in the time of Enos. The words mark the date at which it was introduced, but do not in the least imply that it originated in the line of Seth. One is tempted, however, to think that there is a possible connection of some sort between the rise of idolatry and the name given to Seth's son. Enos (Hebrew עֲנוֹשׁ from עָנָה to be weak, frail), designates man from his frail and mortal condition. Keil's view is that this feeling led to God, and to that invocation of the name of Jehovah which commenced under Enos. This seems to me to be less likely than the old Rabbinical idea that Seth, seeing the beginning of apostasy from the true God, in sadness of heart at that which he witnessed gave to his son a name which should mark his sense of human weakness and human frailty. But we are now entirely in the region of conjecture. I have already said that I do not propose the translation as certain, only I do not feel that it deserves the treatment which it meets with in most modern commentaries. Many of the older divines of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, such as those whose views may be found in Pole's *Synopsis Criticorum*, and in the *Critici Sacri*, were good Hebrew scholars and

well versed in Rabbinical lore; and they, for the most part, treated it with considerable respect: and with the words of one of them this paper may be fitly concluded: "Credibile est tunc primum certos ritus constitutos fuisse colendi Dominum. Siquidem invocandi verbo totus cultus designatur aliquando. Quid ergo mirum si idem hoc loco fiat. Nam tunc primum invocatum fuisse nomen Domini non est verisimile. Qui postremam opinionem quam ait Hieronymus esse plerorumque Ebræorum sequuntur, legunt Ebræa interpretantes *tunc pollutum fuit invocando nomen Domini*: quam interpretationem ut non sperno (verbum enim Ebræum ad utrumque ambiguum est) ita meliorem judicio priorem: fruatur quisque judicio suo."¹

EDGAR C. S. GIBSON.

NOTE ON EPHESIANS III, 3, 4.

καθὼς προέγραψα ἐν ὀλίγῳ, πρὸς ὃ δύνασθε ἀναγινώσκοντες νοῆσαι τὴν σύνεσίν μου ἐν τῷ μυστηρίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

"As I wrote afore in few words (marg. or, a little before), whereby when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ." (*Authorized Version.*)

"As I wrote afore in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ." (*Revised Version.*)

In both these versions the words πρὸς ὃ are rendered "whereby;" which is a very unusual meaning to be given to the preposition πρὸς. Surely it ought to have the sense of *whereunto*, which may here be taken to be equivalent to *so far as*.

Again, the Revisers seem to have felt that the words "ye may understand," are a very inadequate rendering of δύνασθε . . . νοῆσαι, especially as δύνασθε occupies so prominent and emphatic a position in the text, and stands in such close connection with ἀναγινώσκοντες immediately following it. But the Revised Version, though an improvement, also fails to give due emphasis to the

¹ Drusius in *Crit. Sacri*, vol i. p. 127.