

TO WHAT TRIBE DID SAMUEL BELONG?

THE genealogy given at the beginning of the Book runs thus: Zuph, Tohu, Elihu, Jeroham, Elkanah, Samuel. The sons of Samuel were Joel his firstborn, and Abiah his second (1 Sam. 8. 2).

So far there is no Tribal reference. Strange to say, of the two Hebrew words translated "Tribe," one (בִּטְרָה) is never used in the Book in this sense, and the other (בְּטֵרָה) is only used generally of the Tribes of Israel, and, in two passages, of the Tribe of Benjamin. Under these circumstances it is not perhaps so astonishing that Samuel's Tribe should not be distinctly named.

The fact that Elkanah is called a man of Mount Ephraim and that his ancestor Zuph is called an Ephrathite (R.V. Ephraimite) has led some students to regard him as a member of the Tribe of Ephraim. But a man might be an Ephraimite by residence and yet belong to another Tribe. Thus Sheba, who is called a man of Mount Ephraim in 2 Samuel 20. 21, is described as a Benjamite in the first verse. So also the Kohathites, who had their lot out of the Tribe of Ephraim, Dan and Manasseh (Josh. 21. 20-25), would naturally be described according to their residence as Ephraimite, etc. We read in Judges 19. 1 of a Levite sojourning in Mount Ephraim, and in chapter 17. 7 we come across a young man out of Bethlehem Judah of the family of Judah who was a Levite, but sojourned there.

So far we see that Samuel may have been of the Tribe of Ephraim, or of the Tribe of Levi and of Kohath's family, which was partly resident in Mount Ephraim; or he might possibly belong to some other Tribe. But we must look further afield to make sure of our ground.

On turning to 1 Chronicles 6. we find two Kohathite genealogies which bear on our subject, and which are

placed immediately after the Aaronite pedigree. One of them traces a line down from Levi's son Kohath to Samuel's children (*vv.* 22-28), and the other traces up from Heman (Samuel's grandson) to Jacob. This is not a solitary instance of a duplicate genealogy, for we have two in the case of Saul (*chap.* 8. 29-38, and 9. 35-44); and we are familiar with the two genealogies in the New Testament, one coming down from Abraham to Joseph, and the other going up from Joseph to Adam. In these and similar cases there is no attempt to give complete lists of families. The object is simply to show relationships, and to indicate lines of descent.

The three pedigrees of Samuel which we thus possess may be set forth in parallel columns as follows:

| A. | B. | C. |
|-------------|--|---|
| 1 CHRON. 6. | 1 CHRON. 6. | EXOD. 6. 16, 24; |
| 33-38. | 22-28. | NUM. 16. 1. |
| Levi | | Levi |
| Kohath | Kohath | Kohath |
| Izhar | Amminadab | Izhar |
| Korah | Korah | Korah |
| Ebiasaph | [Assir, Elkanah,] Abiasaph | Assir, Elkanah, Abiasaph |
| Assir | Assir | |
| Tahath | Tahath | |
| Zephaniah | Uriel | |
| Azariah | Uzziah | |
| Joel | Shaul | |
| Elkanah | [and the sons of] Elkanah | |
| Amasai | Amasai | |
| Mahath | Ahimoth | |
| Elkanah | Elkanah | 1 SAM. 1. 1. |
| Zuph | [the sons of] Zophai | Zuph |
| Toah | Nahath | Tohu |
| Eliel | Eliab | Elihu |
| Jeroham | Jeroham | Jeroham |
| Elkanah | Elkanah | Elkanah |
| Samuel | [and the sons of] Samuel | Samuel |
| Joel | [the firstborn] . . . and the second Abiah | The firstborn Joel and the second Abiah |
| Heman | | |

Most of the variations in these lists are familiar to those who have studied other Hebrew genealogies. Thus, such changes in spelling as Zuph and Zophai, Ahimoth and Mahath, Joel and Shaul, Samuel and Shemuel, are easily accounted for. The last-named, indeed, is simply a freak of the translators. The substitution of Amminadab for Izhar is more puzzling. It may have been a case of adoption. The names Azariah and Uzziah have practically the same meanings, and we have a similar variation in the case of the well-known king of Judah. Zephaniah and Uriel are almost opposite in sense; the one marks the Divine hiding, the other the God-sent light. Eliel and Eliab are obviously related (cf. 1 Chron. 27. 18, where Elihu seems to stand for Eliab); so are Nahath and Toah (נחח and נחח). The omission of the name of Samuel's firstborn (Joel) may have been a copyist's error, but our translators are mainly answerable for turning Vashni (*i.e.* "and the second") into a proper name.

It should be added that several of the names reappear in connection with the Korhite or Kohathite family in other connections. Thus there was a Korhite Elkanah in David's band (1 Chron. 12. 8); and a Kohathite Uriel among those who brought up the ark to Jerusalem, and he had 120 kinsmen. Also in the age of Hezekiah we find among the Kohathites Mahath the son of Amasai, and Joel the son of Azariah (2 Chron. 29. 14).

A comparison of the lists as a whole seems to prove that in spite of all their variations and corruptions we have *bona-fide* family records; and these records testify to the fact that Samuel was a descendant of the ill-fated Korah, of whose sons we are told in a note (Num. 26. 9) that they did not perish with their father. Samuel was thus a Ephraimite or Ephraimite by residence, and a Kohathite by blood.

Turning back to the Pentateuch, we find that the Kohathite

thites had important duties during the early history of the people. They had charge of the ark and the vessels of the sanctuary, and had to bear them on their shoulders whenever the camp moved on. Special provision was made for their security when approaching the sacred things (Num. 4. 18 ff.). In and after the time of David the Kohathites were among the most notable of the Temple officials, being in charge of the musical department, and having to prepare the shewbread and other bakemeats (*see* 1 Chron. 9. 31, 32, which perhaps refers to the time of Nehemiah). Probably their representatives had to do with the Temple services in our Lord's time.

R. B. GIRDLESTONE.