

been at a time of religious declension, for his brethren evidently did not call upon God. He dwelt in a city of some importance, since a notable family of scribes, mentioned in chapter ii. verse 55, had their abode there, and a city that reflected his dignity since it was named after him ; but the Scriptures, so full of geographical information, tell us nothing concerning this great literary centre, and, when we consult our Hebrew lexicons or manuals of Scripture antiquities, we learn that Jabez was "an unknown town in the tribe of Judah." But Jabez was a Prince rather than a doctor of law, for he had a coast to defend against his enemies and to enlarge at their expense. In the Book of Judges we learn that Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, with his nephew Othniel, enlarged the coast of the Kenizzites, who are mentioned lower down in the genealogies which contain the name of Jabez ; but concerning the greater Jabez there is absolute silence. It is plain that this Prince does not belong to the period of the Conquest, for at that time there were none but honourable men and worshippers of Jehovah in all the host of Israel. If again we refer him to the time of the Judges, it is strange that a record which sets forth Tola and Jair, Ibzan, Elon and Abdon should leave us in the dark regarding so worthy a character as this hero of faith. Shall we place Jabez in the time of Israel's sojourn in Egypt ? If so, we must find his city in that ancient land, and, finding it there, we shall, as will shortly appear, be compelled to deny that Jabez was in any sense, save that of faith, an Israelite. Indeed the Gentile origin of Jabez is apparent in many ways. His very name has no signification in Hebrew, much less that which is attributed to it in the text. In order to find such a meaning, the letters of the word must be transposed to form an anagram, and, allowing such a liberty, it would be easy to prove that Zaphnath-Paaneah, and Abrech are Hebrew also. But the most striking evidence of his Gentile origin is found in the statement that he called, not upon *God*, but on *the God of Israel*. He was a proselyte, more honourable than his brethren, because he left the worship of their false gods to explore the favour and protection of the One Living and True.

Let us glance over this fourth chapter of First Chronicles, and find the connection in which Jabez stands. The chapter begins with these words : " The sons of Judah ; Pharez, Hezron,