

Reproduced from the Library of the Editor of  
[www.theSamaritanUpdate.com](http://www.theSamaritanUpdate.com)  
Copyright 2011

**The American Eclectic:**  
Or  
Selections from the Periodical Literature of all  
Foreign Countries.  
Conducted  
By Absalom Peters, D. D., and Selah B. Treat,  
Editors of the American Biblical Repository,  
Aided By a Number of Literary and Professional Gentlemen.

New-York:  
Published by W. R. Peters, Brick-Church Chapel, 36 Park Row,  
Fronting the City Hall.  
Boston: Whipple & Damrell, No. 9 Cornhill.  
London: Wiley & Putnam, 35 Paternoster Row  
1841

September, 1841, Vol. II., Vol. V

(p. 249) (Sept.) ARTICLE IV.

HISTORY AND LITERATURE OF THE SAMARITANS:—EPISTOL SAMARITANAE.

By **Elihu Burritt**, Worcester, Mass.

EDITORIAL NOTE.

THE reception of the following article from our friend, Mr. Burritt, has turned our attention to the brief account of the history and literature of the Samaritans, contained in the late learned work of Dr. Robinson;<sup>1</sup> to which we are indebted for a few remarks, calculated to increase the interest of our readers in the curious and instructive correspondence which is here introduced.

The Samaritans, dwelling at Nabalus, (the Neapolis of the Roman age, and the Sichern and Sychar of the Scriptures,) it appears, have been for the last two and a half centuries a very small community. At present they are estimated at about one hundred and fifty souls. It (p. 250) appears also that two centuries ago they had small communities at Cairo, Gaza and Damascus. But their origin and history are topics of peculiar interest to biblical scholars and antiquaries. The occasion of their correspondence with several learned Europeans, and its continuance for more than two centuries, under the impression that they were communicating with their brethren of the same faith, constitute a most singular chapter in the "Curiosities of Literature." Some things in their epistles to their European correspondents would seem to indicate, that the deception attempted to be practised upon them had been entirely successful. But Dr. Robinson's account of his interview with them at Nabalus, in 1838, renders this doubtful. "They were very civil and polite," he remarks; "answered readily all our inquiries respecting themselves, their customs and their faith; and asked many questions, especially the priests, respecting America, and particularly whether there were any Samaritans in that country. We did not understand them as believing that other colonies of Samaritans actually exist there or elsewhere; but they seemed to have the idea that such a thing was possible, and were anxious to learn the true state of the case."<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> *Biblical Researches in Palestine, Mount Sinai and Arabia Petraea.* By E. Robinson, D. D. Boston, New-York, London and Halle. 1841.

<sup>2</sup> *Bib. Research.* Vol. III. p. 104

The published literature of the Samaritans consists of "various copies of the Pentateuch, in whole or in part; and of this series of letters, at four different periods, stretching through an interval of nearly two and a half centuries. In addition to this, Gesenius discovered, in a Samaritan manuscript in England, a curious collection of hymns, chiefly of a doctrinal nature, which he has published with a commentary. They possess also manuscripts of a work professing to be the book of Joshua, often mentioned in their letters."<sup>3</sup> This has never been printed. Accounts of their tenets and rites have been often drawn up from these sources, which are also referred to by Dr. Robinson.

In respect to their present condition, he remarks: "At the time of our visit, neither they nor any one else spoke of any Samaritan except at Nablus; our Samaritan guide certainly knew of no other. It appears to be the last isolated remnant of a remarkable people, clinging now for more than two thousand years around this central spot of their religion and history, and lingering slowly to decay; after having survived the many revolutions and convulsions, which in that long interval have swept over this unhappy land; a reed continually shaken with the wind, but bowing before the storm."<sup>4</sup>

Mr. Burritt's account of the origin and history of this remarkable people is derived from the Scriptures, and the subsequent authorities referred to in the margin. We commend it to our readers as a rare and interesting scrap of history, and the correspondence which follows, as one of the most singular occurrences in the records of the literary world. SR. ED.

---

INTRODUCTORY OBSERVATIONS :—HISTORY OF THE SAMARITANS.

The following correspondence between a handful of Israelites and several of the *savans* of Europe, if not of particular historical importance, (p. 251) may yet possess a slight interest, as developing some peculiar traits of Hebrew character. These traits, which are found among the Jews in every climate and country, in every circumstance and avocation of life, we have reason to believe still characterize,—under different or modified forms,—the *Lost Tribes*, wherever they may be scattered on the globe. For it is questionable, whether there were any discriminating degrees of guilt or goodness, between Manasseh of Jerusalem and Hoshea of Samaria; or whether the Hebrew captives, which Shalmaneser distributed among the cities of the Medes, were further sunk in idolatry than those whom Nebuchadnezzar led to *the streams of Babylon*. Nor is the reason apparent why the Samaritan captives, in the remotest territories of the Persian empire, might not have cherished their ancient customs and religious institutions with as much devotion, as that multitude of Jews, *both great and small*, who fled for refuge to the banks of the Nile, after the demolition of their city and temple by the Chaldeans.

If Israel was ever more defiled with idolatry than Judah, it was the result of the political manœuvres of their profligate kings, rather than of any national or predisposed dereliction. Their first sovereigns ought, in his unprincipled ambition, to sunder forever the great tie that still bound them to the house of David, and to prevent the two factions from ever again mingling into one. The expedient which he adopted for this purpose was both effectual and fatal. He seduced his subjects from their old custom of going up to Jerusalem to worship, by insidiously inveigling them into the idolatrous rites of their Pagan neighbors. Some of the successors of Jeroboam stationed guards along the southern border of Samaria, to prevent those yearly pilgrimages to the temple, which had continued to be made ever since the country was divided under Joshua. During the long bloody wars which ensued, the kings of Israel became alternately allied with, and subject to the surrounding nations; still the religion of their fathers was never extinguished among them. There were always some who would not bow the knee to Baal. Although their national existence terminated at their expatriation by the Assyrian monarch, yet a remnant,—probably not more than one fourth of their number,—was unavoidably left behind. These still clung, with religious devotion, to the leading customs and institutions of their fathers. The heterogeneous multitude,

---

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 132.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p. 134.

with which Shalmaneser replaced the captives of Israel, were forced, by a royal edict, into a nominal adoption and observance of the Jewish religion.<sup>5</sup> He even commanded one of the Israelitish priests to be sent back to Samaria, to teach those Pagan colonists "*the manner of the God of the land.*"<sup>6</sup> The result of this religious instruction and influence among the foreigners was an anomalous culture, which probably bore the same resemblance to the Jewish religion, as that of the Roman church, to the Protestant creeds of our day.

A few years after the invasion of Shalmaneser, Hezekiah, king of Judah, sent posts through all the cities, villages and coasts of Israel, to invite the remnant of the ten tribes to Jerusalem, to participate in the (p. 252) great passover which he had appointed. The long wars between Israel and Judah were now over; the bitter feuds between the brethren, which had been mutually aggravated by centuries of border warfare, were now laid aside. Both of the parties stood in an affecting position. On the one hand, a few remaining Israelites still wandered about their half depopled coasts, as perpetual mementos of the judgments that had annihilated their nation. Their brethren, the Jews, on the other hand, were tottering on the very rock where, as a nation, they had been wrecked forever. It was under these circumstances that the king of Judah sent out his heralds from Dan to Beersheba, to summon the Jews and all the remnant of the ten tribes to appear in Jerusalem to go up again together into the temple of Jehovah, to meet once more around a common altar, there to mingle their offerings, and conciliate their offended God, that the still reserved vials of his wrath might not be poured out upon them, to make the cities of Judah like those of Samaria. This appeal was responded to by thousands from the countries of Samaria and Galilee. A large proportion of the northern tribes of Israel had probably escaped the Assyrian bondage; and although many of them treated the message and messengers with scorn and contempt, a multitude, even from the very vicinity of Tyre, went up with humbled hearts to that interesting and memorable feast in Jerusalem. They there renewed their covenant with each other and with their God. The temple of Solomon was thronged with a multitude of worshippers, such as had not trodden its courts since the days of its illustrious founder. The congregation of the ten tribes was conspicuously prominent in that vast assembly, both from their number and zealous devotion. Nor had they come up thither alone. Many of those foreign colonists, who had complained to their Assyrian master that they did not understand "the manner of the God of the land," inquired of the journeying Israelites the way to Zion. The pilgrims replied: "*Come with us and we will do you good.*" And they went up together to the house of God; and the voice of joy, which arose from the streets of the sacred city, was mingled with the notes of gladness from those, who first learned, on that great festal day, "to speak the language of Canaan." The songs of praise, that ascended to heaven on the seventh day, were as long and loud as those of the first; for "the Levites and priests praised the Lord day by day, singing with loud instruments unto the Lord." The hour of separation came. The valedictions of the parting moment were interchanging between new-made friends. Multitudes, who had never before been in Jerusalem, still clung to the shadow of its hallowed sanctuary. Thousands, that clustered around the porches of the temple, stood listening, in rapt devotion, for those strains which had now died away upon the ear. The rainbow of promise sat like a diadem upon the tabernacle of the Lord. The pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night seemed again to cover the holy of holies, like some conciliating angel's wing. There was a spell of holy and quiet rapture on every heart, as if the gate of heaven had opened suddenly, and disclosed a vista of beatitudes that entranced their spirits. Men said farewell! and met again; again gave the parting hand and fervent blessing, and again met to sing one more hallelujah. (p. 253) At this affecting moment, "the whole assembly took counsel to keep other seven days; and they kept other seven days with gladness."

This remarkable passover terminated with an act of mutual faith and devotion, which served to strengthen the new bonds between Judah and Israel. Without separating, at the end of these fourteen holy days, they proceeded, with one heart, to enforce a summary reformation throughout

---

<sup>5</sup> 2 Kings 17: 3, 6, 24.

<sup>6</sup> 2 Kings 18: 25-35, 41.

the whole of Palestine. They marched together through all Judea, and overthrew all the altars and images of Baal. This done, the Jews accompanied their brethren of Israel into Samaria and Galilee, and there demolished all the places of heathen worship, until every idol was destroyed, and the worship of the God of Israel reinstated in the whole country.

The pious Hezekiah was succeeded by the veriest Nero, that ever sat upon the throne of Judah or Israel. This impious profligate surpassed all the Pagan aborigines of Canaan, in every species of cruelty and abomination. He and his son, Amon, involved Judah in a worse idolatry than that into which Jeroboam enticed the Ten Tribes. During the sixty years of their united reigns, the Jews sunk to a greater depth of moral degradation than the Israelites of Samaria and Galilee.

On the accession of Josiah to the throne, another general reformation was effected. Again were all the images and agents of heathen worship banished from his territories. The religious institutions of Moses were re-established and enforced by royal precept and authority. The temple was cleansed of every relic of heathen worship; and, having been thoroughly repaired, the people, from one end of the world to the other, were summoned to keep the passover at Jerusalem. They went up in numbers that corresponded with the immense preparations. Again, *those that were left in Israel* were seen in that vast convocation. Samaria, Galilee and Judah now comprised the kingdom that Josiah held under the king of Babylon; those that remained of the Ten Tribes consequently became his subjects. As such they assembled with their brethren of Judah at Jerusalem, on the great feast day of the nation. Of this memorable festival, the sacred writer affirms: "Surely there was not holden such a passover from the days of the judges that judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel, nor of the kings of Judah."

Forty years after this passover, Judah had been almost entirely emptied of its inhabitants. The last detachment of Jewish captives had been led beyond the Euphrates. Those of the Ten Tribes, who had taken up their residence in the cities of Judah, during the reign of Josiah, shared also in this captivity, and were dispersed, with their Jewish brethren, throughout all those countries, whither their fathers had been exiled more than a century before. During the last two years of Jerusalem's blockade, the Israelites of Samaria and Galilee were shut out from the holy city; and those of them, who still adhered to the institutions of Moses, were prevented from making their annual pilgrimage to the temple. But as soon as the Babylonish forces were withdrawn, while the ashes of the temple and of the royal palaces were still warm, a small company of about eighty Israelitish pilgrims, from Shechem, Shiloh and Samaria, was discovered approaching the mournful scene. With clothes rent and faces scarified (p. 254) with voluntary marks of abasement, they proceeded slowly and sadly towards the hallowed spot of their former worship, to lay their last, Utile offering upon the smoking cinders of God's altar. They were met, in the silent streets of Jerusalem, by a Jewish renegade who had just imbrued his hands in the murder of Gedaliah. With well counterfeited expressions of sorrow and sympathy, he invited them to Mizpah, the seat of the governor whom he had just assassinated. The unsuspecting Samaritans had no sooner reached the limits of the city, than they were all massacred, with the exception of ten, and thrown into a trench without the walls. After the assassination of Gedaliah, there was, for the period of fifty-two years, nothing but desolation throughout Judea. All who had strength to fly, fled into Egypt and the surrounding nations. None but a few wretched paupers remained behind, who obtained their subsistence from the thorns that covered the pleasant places of the daughter of Zion.

The years of the Babylonish captivity had now been fulfilled. A jubilee was proclaimed for the Hebrew captives throughout all the Persian empire. A royal edict gave a free passport for every descendant of Israel to his native country, at the expense of the kingdom. No special application to the tribes of Judah and Benjamin was intimated in this proclamation. The Persian monarch did not recognize, nor did the Hebrews remember any such distinction. The descendants of all the tribes of Israel had met and mingled in that school of affliction. They had there learned the never to be forgotten lesson, that they were brethren. Those who had been carried thither by Shalmaneser, as well as the last company of captives that left Jerusalem, participated in all the

privilege and protection conveyed in the edict of Cyrus. The edict itself was issued and afterwards recorded in the very region assigned to the first captives from Palestine. The permission to return to their native country was conferred indiscriminately upon the Hebrews, and by them indiscriminately accepted. We have no data to institute a comparison between the number that returned and that which remained; nor have we the means to ascertain how many of each of the twelve tribes ultimately found their way back to the land of their fathers. But every fact and circumstance recorded of this captivity strengthens the probability, that, in proportion to their numbers, there were as many of the *ten tribes* that returned, as of the other two. And there is sufficient reason to justify the supposition, that there were as many of the children of Judah and Benjamin embraced in what have been termed the *Lost Tribes*, as of any other two of the twelve. Some of the first men of these two favored tribes had been elevated to distinguished offices of honor and trust in the realms of Babylon, Media and Persia. We find them occupying their stations, years after the proclamation of Cyrus. Others, who stood in the very presence-chamber of those oriental sovereigns, only asked and obtained leave of absence for a specified time, in order to assist in rebuilding Jerusalem.

But even if those of the Ten Tribes that returned were only a small moiety of those who resided in Judea, and were carried away by Nebuchadnezzar, the company that rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem must have been fairly represented by each of the twelve tribes. For, while Shalmaneser was overrunning Samaria, almost the entire tribes of Simeon and Dan were, from their location, placed *al'abris* from the Assyrian invaders. In 1 Chronicles 4: 41—3, we find the children of Simeon, even in the days of Hezekiah, adding to their territories by extensive conquests in the interior of Idumea; wresting from the descendants of Ham, by force of arms, "*fat pasture and good, land wide, quiet and peaceable,*" for their flocks. In the 42d verse we are told how a detachment, led by their four captains, scaled the embattled cliffs of Mount Seir, "and brought down to the ground those that dwelt in the clefts of the rocks." In the 43d verse, we learn that, not satisfied with these conquests, they pushed forward even to the country of the Amalekites, and completely extirpated the remnant of that once powerful nation. Also, during the three years' siege of Samaria, the Israelites, in the border towns, enjoyed and improved the opportunity of escaping into Judea, and other surrounding countries. Hence the frequent recurrence of the phrase: "*the children of Israel that dwelt in the cities of Judah,*" which we find in the history of Hezekiah and Josiah.

The genealogy, which Ezra and Nehemiah give of the principal families that came with them, is too imperfect of itself, and too imperfectly connected with anterior genealogic records, to enable us even to refer the *heads* of these families to their respective tribes. In some cases, the descendants of a distinguished family are given, and in others, the children of the inhabitants of certain cities or towns, as "The children of Elam," and "The men of Bethlehem." Among the latter cases are mentioned "The men of Michmas," "The men of Bethel and Ai," "The children of Senaah;"—all towns belonging to Ephraim or Manasseh. Nor is the whole number of the Hebrews, that returned with Nehemiah, embraced in his genealogic table. He only quotes the lineage of about 30,000, while the remaining 12,000 are left without any genealogy.

But, whatever may have been the comparative numbers of the different tribes that left the Persian empire, long before they came in sight of their beloved Jordan, the words Judah and Israel had ceased forever from being mentioned in contradistinction from each other. And if God had *caused to cease the kingdom of Israel*, as predicted by Hosea, they had just begun to realize the promise uttered by the same prophet: "Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head [Nehemiah ?], and they shall come up out of the land; for great shall be the day of Jezreel;" i. e. *the day of God's sowing*. Every variety of metaphor is introduced to illustrate the unanimity which should thenceforth exist among the several tribes of Israel. Ezekiel, then residing among the captives in the Babylonish empire, in his prophecy concerning the consolidation of the houses of Israel and of Judah, likens them to *two sticks joined* or *twisted together into one stick*, or travelling staff. The prophecies abound in like

figures, indicating the intimacy of the union which should subsist, in all coming time, between the tribes.

We have adverted to these circumstances and results of the Hebrew captivity, mainly because of their bearing on the subsequent character and history of the *Samaritans*, the remote ancestors of the authors of the (p. 256) *EPISTOLAE SAMARITANAE*. A remnant of the Israelites, as we have said, were unavoidably left in the towns and villages of Samaria. These became incorporated with the colonists which Esar-haddon had sent from different portions of his empire, to repopulate the country, which he had almost emptied of inhabitants. These foreigners were required by him to adopt the religion of the Israelites; which they did, in most of its essential ceremonies, while, at the same time, they pertinaciously adhered to the worship of their Pagan deities. During the seventy years of the Babylonish captivity, these seemingly incongruous cultures had been resolved into one, which retained some of the prominent characteristics of the Jewish religion. When, therefore, they heard that the Jews had returned from their captivity, and were beginning to rebuild the temple, and the walls of Jerusalem, "they came to Zerubbabel, and to the chief of the fathers, and said unto them, Let us build with you; for we seek our God, as ye do; and we do sacrifice unto him, since the days of Esaraddon, king of Assur, which brought us hither."<sup>7</sup> The Jews, predetermined to re-establish their religious worship in all its ancient purity, and to preserve it from ever being adulterated again with any heretical culture, peremptorily refused any copartnership with the Samaritans in the great work, or any communion in their religion. The reasons which they assigned for this refusal were that they alone had been commissioned by Cyrus to rebuild Jerusalem; that the Jews had been sent home for this very purpose; and that they alone bore the credentials of the emperor of Persia to execute this sacred commission. This reception from the Jews stung the Samaritans to the quick. Their resentment soon broke out into open opposition to the newly returned Jews. They tried every expedient to impede or prevent their enterprise. They sent messages to the Persian throne to excite suspicions against them; they threw out reports and insinuations impeaching their loyalty. For awhile, they succeeded in impeding the work; but were again humbled and mortified by an edict from Darius, which commanded them, not only to offer no opposition to the enterprise of the Jews, but even to contribute to its support by subsidies of all kinds of provisions and other necessaries.<sup>8</sup> These were the sparks that kindled up that burning and bitter hatred between them, which, five centuries afterwards, existed with such virulence, that the Samaritans refused to give our Saviour a night's lodging, because he appeared to be travelling towards *Jerusalem*; and which also caused the surprise of the Samaritan woman, when he asked her for a drink of water, "*because the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.*"

When the temple and the walls of Jerusalem had been completed,—a work into which the Samaritans had been forced as reluctant tributaries, —other causes of mutual animosity ensued. Several intermarriages had occurred clandestinely, and other domestic and civil relations had been formed between the parties during a temporary absence of the Jewish governor. Immediately upon his return, he employed a summary process to check this growing intercourse. He even expelled, or "*chased*" as he says, (p. 257) one of the high-priest's sons, because he had married the daughter of Sanballat, a distinguished Samaritan leader.<sup>9</sup> Upon this, Sanballat and his confederates built a temple on Mount Gerizim, and invested his fugitive son-in-law with the pontifical robes.<sup>10</sup> Samaria immediately became a city of refuge for all the disaffected Jews, and was soon filled with fugitives from Jerusalem.<sup>11</sup> These were hailed with a species of triumph by the Samaritans, as valuable proselytes to their cause, and as such were chosen to the sacred offices of their new temple. Their religion consequently underwent a change. Hitherto every kind

---

<sup>7</sup> Ezra 4: 2.

<sup>8</sup> Ezra 6: 1—12.

<sup>9</sup> Nehemiah 13:28.

<sup>10</sup> Joseph. Antiq. B. XI. ch. 8.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

of deity, that was worshipped in the Assyrian empire, had shared with the God of Israel in their adorations. But as soon as their temple was completed,—in which religious service was as regularly performed as at Jerusalem,—and the law of Moses had appeared in Samaria, these false gods were proscribed. The true worship, as prescribed by this law, was adopted and performed,—according to the reluctant testimony of some of the Jewish Rabbins,—with more precision in its details than at Jerusalem. Had the Samaritans adhered to the gods of Cuthah, Ava, Haraath and Sepharvaim, they would have been more tolerable to the Jews; but having erected a temple and an altar in opposition to theirs, stolen their religion, and seduced so many of their worshippers, they launched against them such invectives and anathemas as could have been uttered only by the deadliest hate. They prohibited any commerce or communication with them. They made it an abominable pollution to touch or handle any thing belonging to the Samaritans, to drink of their wells, or to eat of the fruit of their fields. They shut up every avenue of reconciliation; they refused to accept repentance, or bestow pardon, and excluded them forever from being received as proselytes. They wished to consign the souls of the Samaritans to annihilation, and to sink their graves beyond the reach of the archangel's voice; and, therefore, with a malignity that has few parallels, they excommunicated them from any participation in the general resurrection.<sup>12</sup>

The Samaritans, not at all intimidated by these anathemas, maintained their ground with marked success. To give a kind of dignity to their sect and religion, they had a copy of the law of Moses, written in the ancient Hebrew, or Phoenician character, not only because their people were more familiar with this, but also to convey an idea of their freedom from those innovations which they charged upon the Jews. Although they received only the five books of Moses as their standard of religious belief and worship, they entertained no little respect for the prophecies; as was evinced in the conversation of the Samaritan woman with our Saviour, when she remarked: "I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ," etc. Among other points of difference between them and the Jews, this was in their favor, that they rejected all traditions, and clung with tenacious minuteness to the letter of the written word. The Jews were forced to confess that these apostates, as they called them, observed the law better (p. 258) than themselves; for our Saviour testifies that the latter made the *commandment of God of no effect by their traditions*. The Samaritans met the Jews at all points with the authority of the Holy Scriptures, and chose their quotations with much adroitness to give divine sanction to the schismatic points of their religion. They even pretended to find precepts and precedents to justify their selection of Mount Gerizim, as a place of worship, rather than Jerusalem. Among other reasons which they advanced for this preference, was the very natural one offered by the woman to our Saviour: "*Our fathers worshipped here.*" They insisted that it was there that Abraham, when he had passed through the land of Sichem, raised the first altar to the God of Israel, ever erected in the land of Canaan; that it was there that Jacob presented his offerings and communed with his God. Not satisfied with these precedents, they tried to enhance the veneration of their favorite mountain by an act of sacrilegious audacity. For, in Deut. 27: 4, where God commanded the Israelites to erect an altar to his glory on Mount Ebal, upon their passing over Jordan, the Samaritans substituted Mount Gerizim. Being accused by the Jews of this falsification, they threw back the allegation upon their accusers, and charged them with altering the passage by putting Mount Ebal for Mount Gerizim. To support this counter-charge, they alleged, that, as God had chosen Mount Gerizim as a place whence to pronounce his blessings, and Mount Ebal his curses, the former was certainly preferable for his altar. Their Pentateuch discovers, in one or two other instances, some altered or inserted passages to convey a divine authority for choosing Mount Gerizim instead of Mount Ebal, as a place of worship. The variations, additions and transpositions, which are found in the Samaritan Pentateuch, compared with the Hebrew, have been noted with extreme accuracy by some of the most distinguished philologists of Europe. And it has been justly remarked, that it is less surprising that variations should be found between the two Pentateuchs, than that there should be

---

<sup>12</sup> Lib. Rab. Eliezer.





In the name of JEHOVAH, the I AM THAT I AM, our LORD and the GOD of our fathers, the GOD of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, who hath said in the law: "I am the God of Bethel." He is the most high God, the possessor of Heaven and earth; ELOHIM EL-SHADDAI, who sent Moses, the son of Amram, with the law and the ordinances, and revealed by his hand the hallowed Mount Gerizim, the house of God.

After this, we send you our salutations, O congregation of Israel, people of the Lord your God, whom he hath chosen to be unto him a peculiar people, from among all the nations upon the face of the earth; for ye are a holy people unto the Lord your God.

And now we will declare unto you, brethren, children of Israel, that we are adherents to the law of Moses, the prophet, in truth, and that we keep the holy law, and are called *Samaritans*; because we observe the Sabbath, as the Lord hath said: "*Let no man go out of his place on the Sabbath day.*"

And we go not out on that day from our places, except to the house of the Lord to pray, according as he hath said: "All who sought the Lord went out unto the tabernacle of the congregation." Ex. 33: 7. And we do nothing in it of any kind of business, except to praise and magnify the Lord, and to read in the law. Nor kindle we fire in it, nor sleep we with our wives on the night of the Sabbath; but the children of Judah kindle fire in it, and observe it not in truth; but sleep with their wives on the night of the Sabbath, and in it go forth without the city, and ride upon beasts. Nor wash they themselves in water from every sort of uncleanness; but we wash in water, and purify ourselves from every kind of uncleanness. We pray also every day in the morning and evening, according as the Lord hath said: "The one Lamb thou shalt offer in the morning; and the other lamb thou shalt offer between the evenings." Ex. 29:39. We prostrate ourselves upon the earth and worship the Lord with our faces towards Mount Gerizim, the House of God. We also observe the feasts, which are seven, called *holy convocations*. The principal is the feast of the Passover, in which our fathers went out of Egypt. On that day we sacrifice the offering of the Passover, in the first month, on the fourteenth day, between the evenings, at the going down of the sun. We eat it roasted with fire, with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. We do this only at Sicheim in front of Mount Gerizim, the House of God; nor do we this, unless we know whether the first day of the *Nisan* of the Greeks has arrived. The feast of unleavened bread is only on the seventh day. We eat unleavened bread six days, and on the seventh we keep a feast on Mount Gerizim. We go up in the morning (p. 261) after the night for the reading of the law; and after prayers, the priest utters blessings from the eternal hill upon the heads of the children of Israel. We count fifty days from the morning of the Sabbath, which is of the seven days of the feast of unleavened bread, to the morning of the seventh Sabbath; and this is the appointed feast of the harvest. On that day there is a feast on Mount Gerizim, like the solemn feast of unleavened bread. We do not count from the morning of the feast of the Passover, as the Jews do.

We also observe the seventh month; the first of which is *the Sabbath of the memorial of blowing the trumpets, a holy convocation*. Lev. 23: 24.

The tenth of this month is the day of propitiation, when we read in the law, and pray, and sing psalms throughout the day and night, from evening to evening. We all fast, both men and women and children, great and small; we only release the infant at the breast. The Jews release their children under seven years.- -We also keep the solemn feast of the booths, on the fifteenth day of the seventh month. On that day there is a feast on Mount Gerizim like the former. We also make booths, according as the Lord hath said: "And you shall take you, on the first day, the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm-trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows from the brook," Levit. 23 : 40; and we remain in these seven days with joy. Each day of the seven we hold a feast on Mount Gerizim. The eighth day of the convocation is after the feasts of the Lord. We make a strict and just computation. If the conjunction of the sun and moon happen in the night, or on the day before noon, when less than six hours have elapsed, that day is the first of the month. But if there have passed more than six hours, or six full hours of that day, the first of the month will be

on the morrow of that day. If the conjunction is of the moon, the month is twenty-nine days; and if of the sun, the month will be thirty days. If the conjunction be during the eleventh, or earlier than this, of the month Adar of the Greeks, the year will be intercalary, and of thirteen months; and the month after this will be the first of the year. But if the beginning of the month happen on the twelfth, or later than that, of the month Adar (of the Greeks), that month will be the first, and the year will be twelve months in length. The Jews do not compute like us.

We remit debts in the year of remission, from the first of the seventh month; and in like manner on the year of Jubilee. We sprinkle the waters of uncleanness upon every one who is defiled by a dead body, on the third and on the seventh day. A woman remains in the impurity of her courses seven days. A bearing woman, who has given birth to a child, rests in her uncleanness forty-one days for a male, and eighty days for a female. We circumcise the male on the eighth day, according as the Lord hath commanded; nor do we delay it a day; but the Jews put it off one or two days.

We wash ourselves from the uncleanness of the night, and of that of sleeping with woman; nor do we touch any article of the company of the unclean without washing ourselves with water. We offer the fat of the (p. 262) sacrifice as the Lord hath said, and give to the priest the shoulder, the cheeks, and the ventricle. We take not to wife the daughter of a brother, nor the daughter of a sister; but the Jews marry the daughter of a brother, and the daughter of a sister. We believe only in Jehovah, and in Moses, and in the law, and in Mount Gerizim; and we turn ourselves towards it while worshipping God. The Jews believe in other things and turn themselves towards *Jafna*, on the south of Mount Gerizim. There are among us priests of the children of Levi, and of the children of Aaron, and of Phineas; but among the Jews there are none of the children of Phineas. We are all of Joseph the Just, of Epbraim and of Manasseh, and of the tribe of Levi and we dwell in the holy Sichern, and in Mount Gerizim. There is also with us the Holy Book, the book of the law from the day of grace, in which is written: "I, Abisha, the son of Phineas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, have written this Holy Book in the entrance of the tabernacle of the assembly, in the thirteenth year of the settlement of the children of Israel in the land of Canaan, and in all its borders around about." We read the law in the holy language, the Hebrew tongue; nor do we any thing but according to the commandments which God hath given us by the hand of Moses, the son of Amram, upon whom be peace forever.

We announce unto you, O society of our brethren, children of Israel! that there came to us an uncircumcised man from France and from your region, whose name is Robert Huntington, and that he told us that ye were a numerous people, pure and holy like us. And he said that ye had sent him to us to the village of Sichern. He asked of us a copy of the law. And he also justified his words unto us in a manner, by writing before our faces in the holy language, and by making mention of Mount Gerizim. We gave unto him a complete copy of the law, in the holy tongue, to manifest unto you that we are righteous, and that we are of you, and cleave to the law of Moses. It is only from love to you that we have sent you the law by an uncircumcised man; for that is a reproach unto us. We have answered your request, and sent unto you a copy of the law and two letters. And now we pray you, in the name of *Jehovah*, the *I am that I am*, let not our petition remain in vain. Tell us what is your law, and the language you speak, and what is the name of the city in which ye dwell, and who is your king, and what law is his; whether there are among you priests descended from Phineas, and among them a high-priest or not I adjure you, in the name of the Lord merciful and gracious, acquaint us with the right way, and tell us nothing but the truth. Send us a copy of the law which is among you, in the holy language; send us also from among you wise, discreet and understanding men, and among them some of the sons of Phineas. Ye know, brethren, that the Lord hath set apart for himself the children of Israel of Mount Gerizim, according as he hath said: "To his habitation shall ye seek, and thither shalt thou come." Deut. 12: 5. He commanded us also to keep a feast according to his words: "Three times shalt thou keep a feast to me in the year." Ex. 27: 14. He hath said moreover: "Three times in the year shall all the males appear, and it shall come to pass, if ye do this, the Lord your God will (p. 263) bless thee,

and thou shalt turn it into money, and bind up the money in thy hand, and shalt go into the place which the Lord thy God shall choose." Ex. 27: 14.

Ye know, brethren, that all the prophets are buried in the region of the village of Sichem; our father Joseph, *Ben-forath* (vide Gen. 49: 22.), and Eleazar, Ithamar, Phineas, Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and the Seventy Ancients, together with Eldad and Modad. Now if it is in you to show favor and truth, ye will return us word; and if ye cleave to the ordinances of Moses, and to the law and to Mount Gerizim, the house of God, ye will send unto us letters and men from among you. Be not frightened at the way. Send us nothing by a Jew, for they hate us. And if there come none of your men, return us word by some of your friends. If there be among you the book of Joshua, the son of Nun, and the book of Canticles, and of prayers, send them to us. Tell us the truth, and what your law is; for we read the law from "*In the beginning*" to "*In the sight of all Israel.*" Gen. 1: 1. Deut. 34: 12. Send it all in the holy language of truth. What is the name of the *Hashhab* which is to arise. ?

And now we adjure you, by the covenant of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, and by Moses, the son of Amram, send not our request away empty, but send unto us the passing year.

After this and before this we praise the Lord, the God of heaven and earth; and all that in them is; and we plead for his mercy and righteousness to show you what is pleasing to his majesty, to teach us, and teach you, the good way. Amen! We pray also that he will preserve you with great care, and redeem you from the hand of your enemies, and gather your exiles into the land of your fathers, Amen! by the work of Moses the Faithful. We say: "My faith is in thee, O Lord! and in Moses, the son of Amram, thy servant, and in the holy law, and in Mount Gerizim, the house of God, and in the day of judgment and of salvation. Blessed be our God forever! and blessed be his name forever! And the peace of God be on the righteous, perfect, pure and faithful prophet Moses, the son of Amram."

We have written this letter in the valley of Sichem, over against Mount Gerizim, on the third day, the fifteenth day of the sixth month, the same as the twenty-seventh day of the month Ab, of the Greeks, in the year 6111 of the creation of the world, the second year of the remission. The commencement of the seventh month of this year is on the fourth day, on the beginning of the eleventh of Elul of the Greeks. Blessed be the Lord! From the congregation of the children of Israel, the Samaritans dwelling in Sichem and Mount Gerizim, on which be peace! This year is the year 3311 of the settlement of the children of Israel in the land of Canaan. Blessed be the Lord!

November, 1841

Vol. II., No. VI

(p. 481)

ARTICLE V.

THE HISTORY AND LITERATURE OF THE SAMARITANS.

By Elihu Burritt, A. M. Worcester, Mass.

[Continued from No- V., page 263.]

WE trust it will not be considered an attempt to invest this subject with an undue importance, if we adduce a few more of the *EPISTOLAS SAMARITANAE*. This correspondence is not so important for the *eclaircissements* which it elicited, as it is interesting from the circumstances under which it was commenced and continued. It will be recollected by the readers of the last No. of the *Eclectic*, that Robert Huntington, a minister of the gospel at Aleppo, impressed these Samaritans with the belief that there was a large community of Israelites sojourning in England, and that he urged them to write to these counterfeit brethren, and, above all, to send them a copy of the Samaritan Pentateuch, which the *savans* of Europe had so long sought to obtain. The Sichemites, deceived by his well-feigned interest and sympathy for their English brethren, and feeling it all-important to establish some intimate relations with such a large colony of the

children of Joseph, immediately fell in with the suggestion of Huntington, and sent, by his hand, a letter and the long-wished-for copy of their Pentateuch, directed to their brethren in England. These precious manuscripts fell into very different hands from those designated by their address. The faculty of Oxford College held a session upon these interesting writings, and concerted measures for availing themselves of the success of Huntington's artifice, by confirming and perpetuating the deceptive impression which that individual had left on the minds of the Sichemites. The task of effecting this devolved upon Thomas Marshall, then Rector of that Institution, and a man of profound erudition. And it is due to that eminent scholar to say, that he acquitted himself of this (p. 482) task with admirable tact and success. The letter which he addressed to the Samaritans, in answer to theirs—which we gave in the last No. of the Eclectic—was written in Hebrew, without points, and forwarded by Huntington to Sichem. Our readers, we presume, will detect in it an imitation of the Hebrew style, which could not have been accidental, but must have been assumed with a decided design and effect.

---

THE LETTER OF THOMAS MARSHALL, RECTOR OF OXFORD COLLEGE, TO THE SAMARITANS OF SICHEM, IN ANSWER TO THEIR FIRST COMMUNICATION TO THEIR SUPPOSED BRETHERN IN ENGLAND, 1672.—*Translated from the Hebrew.*

**תדיג לעדת בני ישראל השמררים השכובים במדינת שכם מול התגרזיים**

IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth and all their hosts. "And God saw every thing that; he had made, and, behold, it was very good."—Gen. 1: 31.—In the clay that God created Adam, he made him in the likeness of God, and invested his soul with knowledge, righteousness and truth. Afterwards the serpent enticed the woman to take of the fruit of the tree, of which God had commanded them not to eat; "and she gave also unto her husband with i her, and he did eat;"—Gen. 3: 6.—And the Lord said, "Lest the man put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever; therefore the Lord sent him forth from the garden of Eden."—Gen. 3: 22, 23.

Afterwards the man begat children after his own likeness and image; and the children of Adam are the children of death; and, by their nature, they are the children of Belial, and children of the curse; "for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth."—Gen. 8: 21.

In this great affliction, when there was no help, the Lord took not away his mercy and his truth from man, who had fallen in his iniquity; for the Lord is gracious; he is a merciful God, and long-suffering, and of great tender mercy and faithfulness; for the Lord God said to the serpent, that the *seed of the woman* should bruise his head. And, behold, this seed is the seed of Abraham, in whom all the nations of the earth are to be blessed; it is the great Prophet, concerning whom the Lord spake to Moses, saying: "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him shall ye hearken."—Deut. 18: 15.—"He is the star that comes out of Jacob; and the sceptre that rises out of Israel."—Numb 24: 17.—"This is the sceptre unto which shall be the gathering of the people, after the sceptre shall come out of Judah, and a lawgiver from between his feet."—Gen. 49: 10.

And now, as Moses lifted up the brazen serpent as a standard in the wilderness for the healing of the people, "and it came to pass that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived;" so also hath the seed of the woman been suspended to the tree, to (p. 483) make an atonement for the children of men, and to turn away from them their iniquity and curse; for it is written, *he that is hanged is accursed of God.*—Deut. 21: 23.—And as "the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi, budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds,"—Numb. 17: 8,—so also hath the great Prophet "risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept with their fathers,—1 Cor. 15: 20,—and he liveth forever a priest after the order of Melchizedek."—Psal. 110: 4.—We commemorate this resurrection, which is the first day of the week, or the morrow after the sabbath; as it is said in the book of the law by way of allegory: "Ye shall bring a sheaf of the first-fruits of your harvest unto the priest; and he shall

wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you; on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it"—Lev. 22: 10, 11.—We observe this like as ye do, and we do not count from the morrow after the feast like unto the Jews.

Other prophecies, and many figures like unto this, hath Moses, the son of Amram, written in the law, concerning the death of this great Prophet, his resurrection, his priesthood, and his spiritual kingdom. By his grace we are circumcised in heart, we eat the spiritual passover; and the spiritual sprinkling of his blood upon our hearts cleanses us from all our sins. It is for this that he is our High-Priest, and that we offer the sacrifice of praise, and continual prayers to the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth.

There is also with us the Book of Joshua, the son of Nun, written in the holy tongue; it is more ancient than your book, which is written in the Arabic language. We have also the Book of Canticles, and of Prayers, and also other books written by the prophets of the Lord, in which are great mysteries concerning the glorious life in the invisible world.

We are the children of Japhet, *and we dwell in the tents of SHEM*,— Gen. 9: 27.—for in our fathers and in their children hath the Lord our God taken delight. We are a numerous and great people, and have many civil laws; but far more precious in our eyes than they all, is the law of Moses, the man of God, and the writings of the prophets. We have also a great king, mighty on water and on the land. We possess one of the islands of the nations, and its name is ENGLAND. Our country is exceedingly good; it is a land of rivers of water, and of cities; it is a land of corn and barley, a land in which we eat not our bread in penury.

And now we rejoice in our hearts to see the Book of the Law, and the numerous writings which ye have sent unto us; and if it seem good unto you to do us favor and charity, write unto us, and write in the holy tongue, or in the Arabic; and send your letter by the hand of that Frank whose name is Robert Huntington. Send us nothing by a Jew; for the Jews who hate you, do not love us. In your letter tell us who is that great Prophet, concerning whom the Lord spake unto Moses the son of Amram; what is the *star* that was to come out of Jacob, and who is the *Shilo* whom your fathers have expected; turn not our requests empty away.

And now, in the integrity of our hearts, have we told you the words (p. 484) of truth before God, the Judge of all the earth, the God of Abraham, or Isaac, and of Jacob. The Lord our God keep you forever!

We have written this letter in the illustrious city and university of Oxford, in England, on the eighth day of the third month, in the year 6113 of the creation of the world, according to your computation.

---

Notwithstanding the adroit *Judaisms* interspersed by Marshall in his letter, the Samaritans received his stammering *Shibboleth* [vide Judges 12: 6] with suspicion, as is apparent in their answer. It was no slight dereliction in their assumed character, that the learned Israelites of Oxford forgot to preface their professions with those good *works*, without which, according to the following epistle of the Samaritans, and also to far better authority, *faith is dead*. There was also a lack of veneration for MT. Gerizim in these English brethren, which the Schemites could not reconcile with a devout adhesion to the true faith; hence the earnestness of their demand to know, if Marshall and his associates always performed their devotions with their faces fixed steadfastly towards that holy mountain. These *savans* also received a merited rebuke for their avidious curiosity, in making another attempt to filch from the Samaritans more of their precious manuscripts, without making them, in return, the least remuneration. It was another suspicious circumstance connected with this letter, that it was entirely anonymous; not furnishing the least clue to the names of any of the English Israelites, of their priest or king, or even of the writer himself. The Samaritans alluded to these points of deficiency with much force and justice. Their second letter was written by a different hand from the first, which was given in the last No. of the Eclectic. It is written in Arabic without points, though interspersed with Samaritan words, where the former language failed to furnish them with terms appropriate to their religious rites.

THE SECOND LETTER OF THE SAMARITANS OF SICHEM TO THEIR BRETHREN IN ENGLAND, IN ANSWER TO THE FOREGOING LETTER OF THOMAS MARSHALL. 1096 OF THE HEGIRA.—  
*Translated from the Arabic.*

## بِسْمِ اِلٰهِ الرَّحِيْمِ الرَّحْمٰنِ وَبِهٖ نَسْتَعِيْنُ

IN THE NAME OF GOD MERCIFUL AND GRACIOUS, IN WHOM WE SEEK HELP.

Praise unto the One, the Everlasting, the Living, the Most High God without beginning, who created the heavens and the earth by his omnipotence, and made fast the vault of heaven by his greatness; who created the dry land, and makes the herbs germinate by his wisdom, and directs the sun, the moon, and all the stars by his eternity; who makes the waters overflow, and gives life to the birds and beasts of the field by his unity. He sealed his creation by forming our father Adam from the dust by his power, and he gave him his dwelling in the garden of amenities in (p. 485) his beneficence. He created Eve from one of his ribs as a help-meet, and gave her to him for his wife. He blessed the sabbath-day, and hallowed it by his majesty. From Adam he hath linked together a glorious chain, even from Seth unto Noah the Righteous, and to Shem his son, and unto the sons of Shem, until he appeared to our father Abraham the son of Terah,—unto whom be peace!—who is the father of the assembly of nations, unto whom God hath given the great covenant, both to him and his son Isaac our father,—to whom be peace!—He hath also established this covenant with our father Jacob, the father of the twelve tribes, one of which is the tribe of Joseph our father,—to whom be peace!—And this covenant remained from Levi to Kohath, to Ami am, and to Moses our head,— to whom be peace! —whom God chose for an ambassador to the impious Pharaoh; and he delivered our fathers, the children of Israel, by the miracles on the night of the feast of the Passover. They ate the sacrifice of the Passover, and went forth out of Egypt, and entered the sea, and came out safe, but Pharaoh and his people were submerged and died therein. He pierced the waters of Marah for them; he conducted them to Elim, and thence to the wilderness of Sin; he caused manna to descend for them, and gave them water to drink at Rephidim.

Joshua slew Amelek and his host, and afterwards they ascended the wilderness of Sinai, and they heard the voice of God on Mount Sinai, pronouncing unto Moses the Ten Commandments. After this, God gave him two stone tables of the law and the ordinances, and said unto Moses and the children of Israel: "I will raise up unto them a prophet, from the midst of their brethren, like unto thee."

We now present unto you our salutations, seigniors, brethren, children of Israel, dwelling in the country of England, and in the illustrious city in the province of the Franks. May God multiply you, and return you to the holy land which he gave unto your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. *Amen!* O our brethren, how long will ye forsake the holy land of your fathers! We live in hope of your return to worship on Mount Gerizim, the house of God; for ye are a numerous, great, and rich society. Bring out of what God hath given you, and make a pilgrimage to Mount Gerizim, for God hath commanded this of you.

Your letter, which ye sent in the holy tongue, hath arrived, and we have comprehended all that ye mentioned in it; but ye make no mention of any name but the name of *high-priest*; ye give not the name of the king that is over you, nor of him who wrote your letter, and we know not the cause of this. Ye make no mention of Mount Gerizim, and this hath been with us a subject of great wonder. Ye have spoken of the arising of the great Prophet, of whom God said to Moses: "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee."—Deut. 18: 18.—This is he that was announced to our father Abraham, and of whom it is said: "Behold, a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp;"— Gen. 15: 17.—It is he, "unto whom shall the gathering of the people be."—19: 10.—This is he of whom it is said: "And he shall break the head of all the children of Seth, and Israel shall do valiantly."—Numb. 24: 17.—It is also of him that it was said

to Moses; "The Lord thy God (p. 486) will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, like unto me; unto him shall ye hearken."—Deut. 18: 15.

Our doctors have also said concerning this, that this prophet should arise, and that all the nations should submit to him, and believe in him, and in the holy law, and in Mount Gerizim; and that the beginning of the name of him who should thus arise, would be **ꞤꞤ**, and that he would die, and be buried with Joseph *Ben-Phorath*, and that the tabernacle would appear through him, and be established on Mount Gerizim. These are the things recorded in the books found among us, and in the book of Joshua the son of Nun.

Ye remind us, to send unto you the book of Joshua and of prayers. Ye know, brethren, that we have sent unto you the book of the Law, and ye have not sent us in exchange a copy of the one ye have. Send us the book of Joshua which is with you, and your book of prayers, that we may send you some present in exchange. Acquaint us, if, in your prayers, ye turn the face towards Mount Gerizim, or elsewhere. As for us, we turn the face only towards Mount Gerizim, from any place in which we are found. The book of Joshua the son of Nun is found among us, written in the Arabic, but all our prayers are in the holy tongue.

And now, brethren, send us an explanation of the cause of your removal to that distant country; in what year was it, and in the time of what king; or in the reign of what Christian kings; who was then high-priest, and from what place ye went down to sea? In the name of God, give us to know these things, and hide them not from us. Remember your ancient fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and the land of Canaan, which the Lord gave unto them. Remember also your father Joseph the Just, whose sepulchre is with us in Sichem, and also the sepulchres of the holy priests, Eleazar, Ithamar and Phineas, and the sepulchres of their children, and likewise those of Joshua, and Caleb, and the Seventy Ancients, and Eldad and Modad. The ministry of all these sepulchres is in our hands. No people disputes with us concerning this. Send us of what God hath given you, of gold and silver, that we may employ it in sustaining the ministry of these sepulchres, and of Mt. Gerizim, the eternal hill. Send us also some gifts and benefactions for the priests, the needy, the widows and orphans dwelling by the place of God. There are with us many *fakirs*, and a large number of indigents, looking in hope for your alms and presents. For indeed all nations, whether Christians, Franks, Jews or others, send their alms, their gifts and oblations, to their places of worship, to the sepulchres of their prophets, and to their poor; but ye do not remember your holy places and the sepulchres of your prophets, nor send any thing of what God hath given you, that the days of your life may be long, and that he may grant you every good thing.

If ye send any oblations, gifts or alms, send nothing by a Jew, for the Jews love neither us nor you; send only by one of your society, or by one connected with you, or by some Frank, to your friend Robert Huntington, for he is a friendly and trusty man, and the Franks are a faithful people, and with them there is no negligence. But if some one (p. 487) of you would come, it would be better, and then there would be no trouble; and ye would thus procure us great gladness, and your coming would be to us a subject of great blessing; and it may be that Prophet will arise in your time, and the appointed season of grace in your days. We entreat of you to send us information whether or not ye kindle fire on the evening of the sabbath, and on the evenings of the solemn feast days. As for us, we do not kindle fire on the sabbath-day nor on the feast-days. Give us to know how ye compute the months and year, and the solemn feasts, and the part of the year when the feast of Purim happens, and when the coming feast of the Passover takes place. As for us, we calculate the first of the month, of the year, and the solemn feasts, from the tables; that is, from the celestial calculus of the Hebrews, of which we have proofs, which are the eclipses of the sun and moon. Such is our computation: science belongs to God.

Written the eighth day of the sixth month, corresponding to the 14th day of Tisri of the year 6114 of the creation of the world, and the sixth year of the remission. The beginning of the month this year, according to us, is on the fifth day of the week, and the feast of Expiation comes on the sabbath. The blessed day of the coming feast of the Passover arrives on the second day of the

week; and if God will, may ye be present to eat the paschal lamb with us upon the mount of Ordinances, which is Mt. Gerizim, in happiness and peace. *Amen!*

Written in the village of the holy Nablous and Mt. Gerizim, by Mofarridj, the son of Jacob, of the children of Ephraim, the son of Joseph the Just, sheikh of the children of Israel at Nablous.

PART OF A LETTER WRITTEN BY THE SAMARITANS TO THEIR BRETHREN IN ENGLAND.—

*Translated from the Samaritan.*

אִתְּכֶם וְעִמָּךְ אֲנִי וְכָל הָעָם  
אֲנִי וְכָל הָעָם אֲנִי וְכָל הָעָם  
אֲנִי וְכָל הָעָם אֲנִי וְכָל הָעָם  
אֲנִי וְכָל הָעָם אֲנִי וְכָל הָעָם

To the children of Israel, the Samaritans dwelling in the illustrious city and university of England, in the country of the Franks, let this come in peace.

In the name of the Lord God, the Great King, the God of Israel, who sent Moses according to the great Book, and through him set apart to himself his people Israel, and revealed the holy Mt. Gerizim, the house of God, the mount of heritage and of the divine presence; the great place which God hath chosen, whose name is the Gate of Heaven, as it was said by our father Jacob-Israel: "This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."—Gen. 28: 17. Happy are the people that prostrate themselves in adoration towards this excellent mountain! The peace of God be upon it, and the Lord unveil his divine pre- (p. 488) sence upon it in peace in a coming day, O society of our brethren, and then may the greatest of your priests be found there. *Amen!*

And now, society of Israel, our brethren, and all ye chief priests of the children of Phineas, priests, Levites, elders, and all ye Samaritans dwelling in all the cities of the Franks—the Lord keep you, and bless you, and multiply your number, and verify his words to you, written in your book of the law: "The Lord God of your fathers make you a thousand times so many more as ye are, and bless you as he hath promised."—Deut. 1: 11.

And now we inform you, O society of our brethren, that your letter hath reached us, and we have received it, and rejoiced in it with great rejoicing. We have understood all that was in it, both its good words and its great hidden mysteries. The day of its arrival was a great day with us; we read it in the hearing of the whole congregation; we pronounced a good welcome to you, and all the people said, *Amen!* And we confirmed this welcome by all manner of words and fair speeches, and in our praises to our seignior the high-priest.

Ye wrote that ye were a numerous people; God be praised for this! Ye reminded us also to send you the book of Joshua, and the book of prayers. Ye know, seigniors, that the prayers are many; there are prayers for each sabbath and each feast-day. We sent you also the holy law, but ye have not sent us any thing in exchange. We now ask you to send us the book of Joshua the son of Nun, and the book of your prayers, as a proof of sincerity, that we may send you, on our part, our prayers, and all the canticles and hymns that are with us.

Ye know, O brethren, children of Israel, that our number is small and feeble, and there is no longer with us a high-priest of the children of Phineas; for the high-priest which we had is dead. There are with us, however, priests of the children of Levi, and they cover themselves with a veil when they bring forth the books and read in the Targum; we also observe all that you mentioned.

We ask of your justice and goodness tithes and offerings, presents and oblations for the Lord and Mount Gerizim, the eternal hill, and also for the holy priests, Eleazar, Ithamar and Phineas, and for our father, Joseph *Ben-Phorath*, that we may preserve their sepulchres. For our money is gone, and there are many impoverished, feeble and indigent persons among us, and priests and strangers, who all ask for your charity. Let every man give to them; what his heart incites him, let him make the gift of his hand; according to the blessing of the Lord your God which he hath given you, give ye also to them.

Send us from among you good, wise, prudent and understanding men and a priest of the children of Phineas, that we may appoint a high-priest over us in the place of the high-priest that



is dead.—It is your duty to send us of what God hath given you, of silver and gold, and vestments for the house of the Lord. Do not forget the prophets and ancients in your offerings and oblations, as the Lord hath said: "Three times a year shall all your males appear before the Lord thy God in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread and in the feast of (p. 489) weeks and in the feast of tabernacles."—Deut. 16: 16.—This will be a good memorial of you in all places and in all mouths; for all nations, the Jews, the uncircumcised, and the Franks, send offerings to----

[The remainder of this letter is lost.]

---

THE LAST LETTER OF THE SAMARITANS TO THEIR BRETHERN IN ENGLAND. —

*Translated from the Arabic.*

IN THE NAME OF THE GREAT JEHOVAH!

Blessed be the Lord our God, and the God of our fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac and Jacob. Peace unto Moses our prophet, by whom he revealed the sanctity of Mount Gerizim the house of God, on which be peace forever!

After saluting you and presenting you our compliments, seigniors, brethren, children of Israel, Samaritans dwelling in the city of Oxford, in the country of England, having saluted you after the delay of years and days, we inform you that your letter hath arrived and we have read and understood its contents. Ye mention that ye have sent us previous letters, and that we have not returned an answer. Ye know that we sent by way of answer the book of Joshua and also a letter by Robert Huntington, the Frank. We sent you also a book of annals from Adam up to the advent of Mahomet—cursed be his name!—and a part of the prayer of Joshua, the son of Nun.

Ye advise us that ye sent us eight pieces of gold; they have arrived; but seigniors, brethren, a mission like that is not such as ye ought to send. We are very urgent for a large sum from you for the house of God, and for the prophets, the priests, the widows and orphans. Persons like you do not send such a little present. Ye ask books of us; we have sent you the law and the book of annals, and ye have not sent us an equivalent, but only the book of Joshua; and it is recorded therein, that the twelve stones which our fathers took from Jordan, were set up on Mount Ebal. This is a very doubtful thing to us; for according to the law that is with us, they erected them on Mount Gerizim, but according to that of the Jews, on Mount Ebal.

If ye are Samaritans of our nation, Israelites,—if ye are not Jews nor Karaites, let us know the truth of your religion, your faith, and your affairs. Ye ask us to inform you what is our faith and sect. Ye know that our faith and the creed of our sect rest on four things: *viz.*, belief in God, the God of Israel, in Moses, in the Law, and in Mount Gerizim. As to the details of our sect, such as uncleanness and purification, we have mentioned them all in our previous letters; and we have also related all that pertains to the observation of the feast and sabbath-days. Tell us your faith and sect; of what tribe ye are, and whether there are found with you priests of the children of Phineas the son of Eleazar, the high-priest; there are some of them found among us. We are of the tribe of (p. 490) Ephraim and Manasseh, the children of Joseph the Just, and of the tribe of Levi. And when we pray, we turn ourselves only towards Mount Gerizim in whatever place we may be found. There are also among us learned and wise men. We keep a calculation of the days from the science of the heavens, a strict computation, in which there is no error nor defect.

But we do not know what is your faith or your sect or your names. In the name of God, the God of Abraham, of Isaac and Jacob, send us your names and the names of your chiefs and your signatures; and let us know strictly what is your religion, and whether or not ye believe in Mount Gerizim. Send us your book of the law, that we may discern the true from the false; send also a portion of the sea of your wealth, tithes and offerings, that we may sustain the places of our prayers and the the places of their worship.-- Let us know if your number is large or sepulchres of Eleazar, Ithamar and Phineas, and the sepulchre of Joseph the Just, and the sepulchre of Joshua the son of Nun, and for the priests and widows, orphans and the indigent. Let your gifts be proportionate to those of the Christians, the Jews and all other nations, except you,

who send presents to their holy places and small. We purposed to send you some books and prayers, but we have delayed it until a copy of the law should arrive from you and a return for the book of annals; when we in return will send you of what we have. Send some one of you to come and visit and worship with us.

We desire that ye send us the sum of 2000 pieces of gold for the purpose of building. We pray for you at all times by the sepulchres of the illustrious prophets and on Mount Gerizim. Make known to us the name of the king that is over you,—whether he is one of you or a Frank; and also the name of your high-priest, that we may make supplication for them in our prayers. Advise us of all that we have mentioned. We commend you to the keeping of God and his eternity. *Amen!*

God, our God and the God of our fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac and Jacob, keep you all, *Amen!* Written in the middle of the month of Thebet, which is the month of Dhou' Uriddja of the Arabs, in the year 6117 of Adam, 1099 of the children of Israel, in the village of Nablous, in front of Mount Gerizim, the house of God, on •which be peace!

Written by Morfaridj, son of Jacob, Isaac the priest, and by Abraham the son of Isaac, and Abraham the son of Ephraim the priest

#### **Comments on this section from the Editor of theSamaritanUpdate.com**

This reference is not located in *A Bibliography of the Samaritans, Third Edition, Revised, Expanded, and Annotated*, by Alan David Crown and Reinhard Pummer, ATLA Bibliography, No. 51, **The Scarecrow Press, Inc.** Lanham, Maryland, Toronto, Oxford. 2005

**Elihu Burritt** (December 8, 1810 – March 6, 1879) was an American philanthropist and social activist. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elihu\\_Burritt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elihu_Burritt)