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From Egypt to Palestine through Sinai,
the Wilderness and the South Country
Observations of a Journey Made
with Special Reference to the History of the Israelites
By **S. C. Bartlett**, D.D., LL.D.
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(p. 464)...

In the evening the English missionary, Mr. El Karey, kindly called, and offered to take us to the Samaritan Synagogue. The little Samaritan community is now reduced to not more than a hundred and fifty. The high-priest received us, showed us into a rude, vaulted, whitewashed room, the synagogue, and produced from a recess, that was concealed by a curtain, the famous Samaritan Pentateuch, which we had come chiefly to see. He, however, practised the established ruse, and brought us first a more modern copy. Our guide at once knew the difference, and called for the genuine antiquity. He then brought an embossed (p. 465) silver cylinder, which, on being opened, showed a parchment roll about fifteen inches wide, and evidently several yards in length, written in Samaritan characters. At the place where it is usually opened it is badly defaced. The high-priest has by this time abandoned all the pretence of awe and apprehension which he exhibited to Tristram, and the backsheesh necessary is reduced to a very moderate sum. The immense antiquity claimed for it (written by Abisha, the son of Phinehas) is, of course, hardly worth a contradiction. But the actual age of the manuscript is certainly a question of interest for competent investigators, if such there are.

Mr. El Karey himself claims to have fallen upon a remarkable passage concerning our Saviour among the old records of this people. In the annals of the priesthood he finds, as he alleges, a record supposed itself to be seven or eight hundred years old, and copied from a much older manuscript. His supposed discovery has been, I believe, frequently made known, and perhaps formally communicated. The form in which I took it down is as follows: "And in his days was born Jesus, the impostor, the son of Mary, the son of Joseph, the carpenter. His birth was in Bethlehem, and [he] professed to be a prophet in Nazareth, and he had a great many followers, whom he dispersed in the country. And after the death of Yohekerem, who was succeeded by Yohanatan, Jesus was persecuted and crucified in the days of Tabrobrus, through the standing men in the accursed city of Jerusalem." It does not distinctly appear that Mr. El Karey is in any way able to authenticate this record as being really ancient, while the internal improbabilities are sufficiently manifest.

But this little remnant of the Samaritan community and worship undoubtedly keeps the continuity of connection (p. 466) with the time of our Lord. On the top of Mount Gerizim, just south of the town, is their sacred place, where they worshipped when Christ conversed with the woman at the well. It is a large rock surface, surrounded by traces of old walls.

Toward it they still turn their faces in prayer, and they put off their shoes as they approach it. Not far away, lower down toward the town, is the spot where they still annually eat the paschal lamb, with staff in hand, shoes on their feet, and girdles (of rope) around their waists, "eating with haste/" and all that is left "burning with fire," as witnessed by Mr. Porter and Dean Stanley. The custom is a separate and venerable link of connection with the most ancient observance of Israel in its departure from the land of bondage, as is also their fragmentary Bible, the Pentateuch, another bond of connection with the Jewish history at a point of divergence a century older than the Septuagint, and, as some think, as old as the days of Rehoboam. This slender thread of connection may soon pass away in the extinction of the little community.

Ebal on the north, and Gerizim on the south, carry us back to the intermediate point, the thorough possession of the land by Joshua, when the great warrior arrayed the tribes on these two eminences, while the Levites with a loud voice uttered the blessing and the cursing in their hearing. These eminences lie near the eastern end of the narrow valley that contains the town, and they rise abruptly, so near each other that when Tristram's two companions tried the experiment of reciting the commandments antiphonally from the two mountains, they heard with perfect distinctness. The view of these mountains from our camp at the western end of the city was very striking.

(p. 469) CHAPTER XXIII.

THROUGH THE BATTLE-FIELDS OF PALESTINE.

WE left Nablous (Shechem) on the morning of March 27th, and were soon attended on our way by showers of rain and hail. We took the road to Sebustiyeh, the ancient Samaria.

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

S. C. Bartlett is **The Rev. Samuel Colcord Bartlett** (1817 – 1898) was the president of Dartmouth College from 1877–1892.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samuel_Colcord_Bartlett

His visit to Nablus was Friday, March 27th, 1874.

In his company was Rev. **Jacob Chamberlain**, M.D., Missionary in India; Rev. **E. M. Williams**, of Minneapolis and **Edwin J. Bartlett**, A.M. of Chicago, Professor of Dartmouth College