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Origines Hebrææ:
The Antiquities of the Hebrew Republic
By **Thomas Lewis, M.A.**
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(p. 155) When they had evidence sufficient that the moon had appeared, the sanhedrim declared aloud, "The "feast of the new moon, The feast of the new moon," and took this method to give public notice of it to the whole country: at night they ordered a person to go up to the top of mount Olivet with a bundle of the most combustible wood and other stuff, and there he set it on fire, (like a beacon,) and waved it up and down, and this way and that way, and never left till he saw another do so upon another hill, and so another upon a third; and thus was the intelligence conveyed to the whole nation. The country (p. 156) observing the flames and blazes, knew that the new moon had appeared the night before, and that the sanhedrim had (as the method was) fixed upon the day past for the first day of the month, and they knew how to reckon forward themselves. But this practice had often deceived them; for their neighbours the Samaritans, and other profane persons about them, would make flames and blazings at unseasonable times, in order to lead them into mistakes; and therefore they used another way of giving notice, which was by sending messengers up and down the country for this purpose.

(p. 262) CHAP. X.

The Samaritan temple upon mount Gerizim.

THE defection or schism of the ten tribes is sufficiently related in the sacred writings, and may properly be divided into three periods: the first, from the time of Jeroboam to the transportation of the ten tribes by Shalmaneser; the second, from the time of their transportation to their return from their captivity; and the third, from their return to the appearance of Christ. Jeroboam chose Shechem for the place of his residence, which from thence was transferred by his successors to Samaria, and has given the origin to the name of the Samaritans. The places appointed for their worship were Dan and Beth-el, where they set up their golden calves, and established a kind of devotion in resemblance of the divine service performed at the temple at Jerusalem. But as this Samaritan worship was not the same with that of Jerusalem, but different in ceremonials, and intermixed besides with some Pagan ceremonies, it is doubted whether this was a simple schism in the first period, or an actual heresy and idolatry.

The second period takes its beginning with the time of the carrying away of the ten tribes into captivity. After which the kings of Assyria, in order to repeople the country, sent thither colonies of men of divers nations and different idolatries; and so the country fell into a medley of religion, in some things resembling the Jewish, and in others the worship of the

heathen. For their idolatries the vengeance of God sent lions among them, who having devoured some of them, because they wor- (p. 263) shipped not the God of that country, they addressed themselves to the king of Assyria, who sent them a priest to instruct them in the service of the true God, which they embraced, yet not so as to abandon altogether their ancient idolatry, which mixture of God's service and the worship of idols continued thus till the return of the Jews out of their captivity.

The governors of Samaria did all, what in them lay, to obstruct the reedifying of the temple at Jerusalem, which proved the occasion of that mortal hatred between the Jews and Samaritans which continues to this day. Nevertheless, the Jews intermarrying with the Samaritan women, and by degrees contracting a more intimate correspondence with them, by the mutual intermixture of these two people, the divine worship was, in process of time, in some measure purged from their former errors, and the Samaritans banished idolatry from among them. Among those who had married a Samaritan was one Manasseh, who espoused the daughter of Sanballat. The story is fully related by Josephus to this purpose.

Manasses the brother of Jaddua the high priest had married Nicasso the daughter of Sanballat, which thing the elders of the Jews resenting as a violation of their laws, and as an introduction to strange marriages, they urged that either he should put away his wife, or be degraded from the priesthood: and accordingly Jaddua his brother drove him away from the altar, that he should not sacrifice. Upon this Manasses addressing himself to his father-in-law Sanballat, tells him, that it was true indeed that he loved his daughter Nicasso most (p. 264) dearly, but he would not lose his function for her sake, it being hereditary to him by descent, and honourable among his nation. To this Sanballat replied, that he could devise such a course, as that he should not only continue to enjoy his priesthood, but also obtain a high priesthood, and be made a primate and metropolitan of a whole country, upon condition that he would keep his daughter, and not put her away; for he would build a temple upon mount Gerizim over Sichem, like the temple at Jerusalem, and this by the consent of Darius, who was now monarch of the Persian empire. Manasses embraced such hopes and promises, and remained with his father-in-law, thinking to obtain a high priesthood from the king: and whereas many of the priests and people at Jerusalem were intricately in the like marriages, they fell away to Manasses, and Sanballat provided them lands, houses, and subsistence: but Darius the king being overthrown by Alexander the Great, Sanballat revolted to the conqueror, did him homage, and submitted himself and his dominions to him; and having now a proper opportunity he made his petition, and obtained it, of building this his temple. That which forwarded his request was, that Jaddua the high priest at Jerusalem had incurred Alexander's displeasure for denying him help and assistance at the siege of Tyre. Sanballat pleaded that he had a son-in-law, named Manasses, brother to Jaddua, to whom very many of the Jews were well affected, and had recourse; and might he but have liberty to build a temple in mount Gerizim, it would be a great weakening to Jaddua, for by that means the people would have a fair invitation to revolt from (p. 265) him. Alexander easily condescended to his request, and so he set about the building with all possible expedition. When it was finished, it made a great apostasy at Jerusalem, for many that were accused and indicted for eating forbidden meats, for violating the sabbath, or for other crimes, fled away from Jerusalem to Sichem and to mount Gerizim, and that became a common sanctuary for offenders. Thus far the historian. This temple was five years a building, after the model of that at Jerusalem, and remained standing about two hundred years, when it was laid desolate

by Hircanus, king of the Jews, about an hundred and thirty years before the nativity of Christ. It is difficult to determine whether this temple was afterwards rebuilt.

CHAP. XI.

The principles of the Samaritans.

THE religious principles of the old Samaritans have been mentioned in general, in the beginning of these Antiquities, but in this place they ought more particularly to be explained. It must be observed therefore that the Samaritans received no other scripture but the Pentateuch, rejecting the prophets and all other books that are in the Jewish canon. The five books of Moses they have still among them, written in the old Hebrew and Phoenician character, which was in use before the Babylonish captivity, from whence they boast that theirs is the true authentic copy, and that the copy made by Ezra was a transcript from theirs. The Samaritan Pentateuch has occasioned great disputes among learned men, (p. 266) some placing its antiquity long before the captivity of Babylon, and others insisting that it was introduced among the Samaritans, by Manasseh, and the apostate Jews that followed him; and because the old Phoenician character was that only which the Samaritans were used to, they caused this law for their sakes to be written out in that character, and in this they have retained it ever since. That great critic, father Simon, seems to have cleared this difficulty, and delivers his sentiments in this manner:

There happened, under Rehoboam the son of Solomon, a schism among the Israelites, which divided them into two kingdoms; one of these kingdoms was called Judah, and contained those who remained at Jerusalem, steadfast to Rehoboam, and the family of David, the others preserved the ancient name of Israelites, and left Jerusalem under the conduct of Jeroboam. The capital of their kingdom was Samaria, whence they have been called Samaritans. This schism having weakened the republic of the Hebrews, Salmanassar king of Assyria conquered Samaria, and sent all the people captive into remote countries, and at the same time planted in their places colonies of Babylonians, Cutheans, and other idolaters; but these finding themselves devoured by lions and other beasts, demanded an Israelitish priest, to teach them the law and customs of the country they came to inhabit, which was granted them; and this priest taught them the law of Moses, and it is probable that he brought them a copy of the law he was to teach them.

As the ten tribes who followed Jeroboam's side did not make an entire apostasy from the religion of the Hebrews, they had without doubt preserved (p. 267) the law of Moses; and it is this law which the priest, sent by Salmanassar, taught the inhabitants of this new colony, who were no more troubled with the beasts, which before devoured them. It is true, the people retained something of their old idolatry; but that hindered not but that they also observed the law of Moses, and offered sacrifices according to the ceremonies of this law, though they offered others according to their ancient superstition. However it was with these Samaritans, it is certain that they who are now so called have the five books of Moses writ in the Hebrew tongue, and in the ancient Hebrew characters, which are now called Samaritan; they have preserved nothing of their idolatry; on the contrary, they observe the law of Moses more after the letter than the Jews, and the explanation of the glosses contained in the Talmud, and which the Jews exactly follow, are altogether unknown to them. They have no other canonical books but the Pentateuch, because all the other sacred books which are in the Jewish canon were certainly not published in the time when they made their schism, and that is the reason that they acknowledge nothing for divine and authentic, but the law of Moses.

We cannot certainly be assured that the Cutheans and other people, who came to inhabit Samaria, had copies of the law, because the priest, who was sent to them, might have taught them it with the ceremonies of Moses, without giving them copies of a law which they could not have understood, it being written in a language which was altogether strange to them, and in characters of which they had no knowledge; but when they had quitted their ancient (p. 268) idolatry, and had built a temple on the mountain Gerizim, where they offered sacrifices as the Jews did at Jerusalem, it was necessary they should have the five books of Moses; and the agreement that is between their ancient copy and that of the Jews, makes me think that at that time they did but copy that of the Jews, and that the differences which are at present proceed from transcribers, excepting some words which have been changed on purpose to maintain their own opinions and prejudices.

As for the ancient Hebrew characters which are pretended to be kept by the Samaritans, one cannot from thence certainly conclude that they have preserved the ancient Hebrew copy of the law: as soon as they had a temple and the books of Moses, they writ them in their ordinary characters, as they yet write the Arabic in these ancient Samaritan letters: this custom has likewise spread itself over other nations of the Levant; and we see that the Syrians, whether Jacobites, or Maronites, or Nestorians, write the Arabian language in Syriac characters: the Jews of Constantinople likewise write the Persian, the Arabic, the vulgar Greek, and the Spanish, in Hebrew characters, as appears from two tetraple Pentateuchs which they have printed in all those languages at Constantinople. The German Jews likewise often write the high Dutch in Hebrew characters; wherefore the characters alone are not a sufficient proof to shew, that the Samaritans having preserved the ancient manner of writing, which was used before the captivity, have likewise preserved the ancient books without any change. Upon the whole, we may conclude that the Samaritans not having faithfully translated the Hebrew text in (p. 269) some places, we ought to have recourse to the Jewish copy, which nevertheless hinders us not from correcting sometimes the Hebrew text of the Jews by the Samaritan. They are two copies from the same original, each of which having its failures and perfections, the one may properly serve to assist the other. So much is judiciously observed by the French critic.

Besides the Pentateuch in the original Hebrew, the Samaritans have also another in the language that was vulgarly spoken among them; for as the Jews, after the Babylonish captivity, degenerated in their language, from the Hebrew to the Babylonish dialect, so the Samaritans did the same: whether this happened by their bringing this dialect out of Assyria with them, when they first came to plant in Samaria, or that they first fell into it by conforming themselves to the speech of those Phoenician and Syrian nations, who lived next them, or else had it from the mixture of those Jews who revolted to them with Manasseh, is difficult to determine; and therefore as the Jews, for the sake of the vulgar among them, who understood nothing but the vulgar language, were forced to make Chaldee versions of the scriptures, which they call the Targums or Chaldee Paraphrases, so the Samaritans were forced for the same reason to do the same thing, and to make a version of their Pentateuch into the vulgar Samaritan, which is called the Samaritan version. This translation is not made like the Chaldee among the Jews, by way of paraphrase, but generally by an exact rendering of the text word for word. Not but there are some variations and additions, which either happened by the errors of the transcribers (p. 270) or were designedly inserted by the Samaritans, the better to support their cause against the Jews.

Another difference in religion, between the Samaritans and the Jews, relates to the receiving of traditions, which are strenuously embraced by the Jews, but rejected by the Samaritans, who abide firmly by the written word; but what engaged them in the most violent contests was the dispute concerning the place where they ought to worship, the one contending for the temple at Jerusalem, and the other for that upon mount Gerizim: here, the Samaritans urge, were altars erected, and sacrifices offered by Abraham and Jacob; and therefore this hill was appointed by God himself to be the place of blessing, when the Israelites came out of Egypt; and accordingly Joshua, when he entered the land of Canaan, caused the divine blessing to be declared upon it: here likewise he built an altar upon it, of twelve stones, when he had passed the river Jordan, in obedience to what God had commanded by Moses: and this, they contend, is the very altar upon which they still sacrifice on that mountain to this day. But to defend this last part of the argument, and thereby reconcile the greater veneration to mount Gerizim, they have been guilty of great prevarication in corrupting the text; for whereas the command is, that they should set up the altar on mount Ebal, they have made a sacrilegious change in the text, and instead of mount Ebal have inserted mount Gerizim, the better to support their cause by it. These mountains are in the tribe of Ephraim, near Samaria, and in the valley between them lieth Sichem ; but St. Jerome asserts positively, that neither of them were the Gerizim and Ebal of (p. 271) the holy scriptures; for these, he contends, were two small hills lying near Jericho; but this opinion receives no countenance from learned men.

The Jews accuse the Samaritans of two instances of idolatry committed in this place; the first, that they worshipped the image of a dove, and the other, that they paid divine adoration to certain teraphims, or idol gods, that were hid under that mountain. The first accusation (says the Samaritan Chronicle) is founded upon this, that in the time of Adrian a figure of a pigeon was set upon this mountain, which made itself heard when any Samaritan came there to worship: but it is more probable that this charge was first occasioned by the idolatry of the Assyrians; for that people having adored Semiramis under the image of a dove, the Jews reproached the Samaritans, as worshippers of the same image, because they descended from them, and possibly they were so while they worshipped there other gods with the God of Israel, but never afterwards. As to the second charge, it is true that Jacob buried the teraphim or idol gods, that Rachel had stolen, under the oak in Shechem, which they suppose to have been at the foot of mount Gerizim, and from hence, because the Samaritans worshipped in that place, the Jews suggest, that the Samaritans worshipped there upon the account of these idols, and paid adoration to them: but both these charges are malicious calumnies; for after the law of Moses had been brought among them by Manasseh, the Samaritans zealously worshipped the true God, and as sincerely abhorred idolatry, as the most rigorous of the Jews, and so continue to this day.

(p. 272) CHAP. XII. *The Samaritan creed.*

TO omit nothing that concerns the religion of the Samaritans, I have two things to subjoin before I conclude this subject, which, though not strictly relating to the old professors among that sect, will yet be of use to a more exact discovery of their principles. The first is a confession of faith, sent by Eleazar the high priest, in the name of the synagogue of Sichem, to the great Scaliger, who applied to him for that purpose; the other is a letter sent from the Samaritans at Shechem to their brethren in England, by the hands of Dr. Huntington, sometime chaplain to the Turkey company at Aleppo, and afterwards bishop of Rapho in

Ireland, who, it seems, had informed them that there were some of the sect of the Samaritans then abiding in London.

The Samaritan creed.

1. The Samaritans observe the sabbath with all the exactness required in Exodus; for none of them goes out of the place where he is on the sabbath day, but only go to the synagogue, where they read the law, and sing God's praises. They do not lie that night with their wives, and neither kindle nor order fire to be kindled; whereas the Jews transgress the sabbath in all these points: for they go out of town, have fire made, lie with their wives, and even do not wash themselves after it.

2. They hold the passover to be their first festival; they begin at sunset, by the sacrifice enjoined for that purpose in Exodus; but they sacrifice nowhere but on mount Gerizim, where they read the (p. 273) law, and offer prayers to God, after which the priest dismisses the whole congregation with a blessing. —

3. They celebrate for seven days together the feast of the harvest, but they do not agree with the Jews concerning the day that it ought to begin; for these reckon the next day after the solemnity of the passover; whereas the Samaritans reckon fifty days, beginning the next day after the sabbath, which happens in the week of the unleavened bread, and the next day after the seventh sabbath following, the feast of the harvest begins.

4. They observe the feast of expiation the tenth of the seventh month; they employ the four and twenty hours of the day in prayers to God, and singing his praises, and fasting. For all except sucking children fast, whereas the Jews except children under seven years of age.

5. The fifteenth of the same month, they celebrate the feast of the tabernacles upon the same mount Gerizim.

6. They never defer circumcision further than the eighth day, as it is commanded in Genesis, whereas the Jews defer it sometimes longer.

7. They are obliged to wash themselves in the morning, when they have lain with their wives, or have been sullied in the night by some uncleanness, and all vessels that may become unclean become so when they touch them before they have washed.

8. They take away the fat from sacrifices, and give the priests the shoulder, the jaws, and the belly.

9. They never marry their nieces, as the Jews do, and have but one wife, whereas the Jews may have many.

(p. 274) 10. They believe in God, in Moses, and in mount Gerizim. Whereas, say they, the Jews put their trust in others, we do nothing but what is expressly commanded in the law by the Lord, who made use of the ministry of Moses; but the Jews swerve from what the Lord hath commanded in the law, to observe what their fathers and doctors have invented.

Eleazar added to this, that they reckoned a hundred twenty-two high priests from Aaron to their time; they have a catalogue and succession of them. They believe themselves to be of the posterity of Joseph by Ephraim, and that all their high priests descend from Phinehas; whereas the Jews have not one of that family. They boast that they have preserved the Hebrew characters, which God made use of to promulgate his law; whereas the Jews have a way of writing from Ezra, which is cursed for ever. And indeed, instead of looking upon Ezra as the restorer of the law, they curse him as an impostor, who hath laid aside their old characters to use new ones in their room; and authorized several books that were written to support the posterity of David.

Several attempts have been made to convert these Samaritans; but they have been oppressed instead of being made Christians, and they are reduced to a small number rather by misery than by the multitude of those that have been converted. Nay, they seem more stubbornly wedded to their sect than the Jews, though these adhere very stiffly to the law of Moses. At least Nikon, who lived after the twelfth century, setting down the formalities used at the reception of heretics, observes, that if a Jew had a mind to be converted, to avoid the punishment or payment of what he owed, he was to purify himself, (p. 275) and satisfy his creditors before he was admitted. But as for the Samaritans, they were not received before they had been instructed two years, and they were required to fast ten or fifteen days before they professed the Christian religion, and to be morning and evening at prayers, and to learn some psalms; others were not used with so much rigour. The term of two years that were enjoined to the Samaritan proselytes is an argument that they were suspected, and the reason why they were so, was, that they had often deceived the Christians by their pretended conversion.

CHAP. XIII.

A letter of the Samaritans at Sichem, to their brethren in England.

IN the name of the almighty adorable God, in the name of the great Lord, who is by himself, our God, the God of our fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who has said in his law, I am the God of Beth-el, the supreme God, Lord of heaven and earth, God Almighty, who has sent Moses the son of Amram commissioned with his laws, and by his means has revealed the holiness of mount Gerizim, and of the house of God.

We salute you, O synagogue of Israel, the people of our Lord and Master, who has chosen this people above all nations of the earth, for you are a people holy to the Lord. We call ourselves Samaritans, and we assure you, our brethren in Israel, that we are extremely devoted to Moses the prophet, and to *the* holy law. We observe the sabbath, as God has commanded. For on that day, nobody moves out of (p. 276) his place, except it be to pay his devotions at the house of the Lord. As all those who sought God went to the tabernacle of witness, we do nothing there but read the law, praise God, and pay him our thanksgivings; and whereas the Jews ride on horseback, go out of the city, light fires on that day, and lie with their wives, we separate ourselves the night of the sabbath, and light no fire. The Jews do not wash for every kind of pollution, but we do, and purify ourselves thereby. We pray to God evening and morning, according to the command he has given us, You shall offer me a lamb in the morning, and another lamb between the two evenings. We lie upon the ground when we worship God, before mount Gerizim, the house of God.

We have seven solemn feasts wherein we assemble; the first is the feast of the passover, at the time that our fathers came out of Egypt. We sacrifice the lamb the fourteenth day of the first month, at evening, a little before sun-setting, and eat it roasted with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. We make this sacrifice only upon mount Gerizim, and we prepare it on the first day of the month Nisan, according to the Greeks. We reckon seven days for the feast of unleavened bread, on six whereof we eat bread without leaven; on the seventh we go early at break of day to mount Gerizim, to celebrate the feast and read the law. When prayers are ended, the priest gives the blessing to the people from the top of the eternal mountain. We do not begin to reckon the fifty days of the feast of harvest like the Jews, from the morrow of the feast of the passover, but we reckon them from the day following the sabbath that happens in the feast of unleavened bread, (p. 277) till the morrow of the seventh sabbath, on which we celebrate the feast of the harvest upon Gerizim: we celebrate also the seventh month, which

begins with the feast of trumpets. Ten days after is that of propitiations, in which we sing hymns, and say prayers, from one day to the other, night and day. The women and children fast as well as the men, and we dispense with none but those that suck, whereas the Jews dispense with all under seven years old. We observe the feast of tabernacles upon mount Gerizim the fifteenth of the seventh month. We set up tabernacles according to the order given us by God, *Ye shall take the boughs of goodly trees branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook.* We spend seven days in joy under these tents, and on the eighth we end the feast of the Lord with an hymn.

We very circumspectly observe, whether the conjunction of the sun and moon happens in the night, or in the day before noon. If it happens before noon, that day is the first of the month; but if it happens at twelve o'clock or a little after, we delay the beginning of the month till the morrow. If the conjunction be lunar, the month continues twenty-nine days, but thirty, if it be solar. If the new moon falls on the eleventh of the month Adar of the Greeks, we intercalate a month, and we reckon thirteen that year; and the month that immediately follows is the first month of that year. But if the month begins on the twelfth of Adar, or some days after, then that is the first month of the year, and we reckon but twelve; for the week of unleavened bread must be in the month Nisan. The Jews reckon otherwise than we. We begin the sabbatic (p. 278) year and the jubilee from the first day of the seventh month.

We sprinkle the water of separation the third and fourth day, upon all that are defiled by the contact of women; and we sprinkle it seven days upon the woman that has an issue upon her. The woman who is delivered of a boy separates only forty-one days, and eighty if it be a girl. The circumcision is exactly made the eighth day after the birth, without deferring it one single day, as do the Jews. We purify ourselves from the defilements contracted in sleep; and we touch none of the unclean things specified in the law, without washing in clean water. We offer to God the fat of the victim, and give the priest the shoulder, the jaws, and the ventricle.

It is not lawful for us to marry a niece or cousin, as is done by the Jews. We believe in Moses and in mount Gerizim. We have priests of the race of Levi, descended in a right line from Aaron and Phinehas. We are all of the tribe of Joseph by Ephraim, Manasses, and of the tribe of Levi. Our habitation is in the holy city of Sichem and at Gaza. We have a copy of the law written in the time of grace, in which we read these words: "I Abishai "the son of Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of "Aaron, have written this copy at the door of the "tabernacle, in the thirteenth year of the people of "Israel's entrance into the land of Canaan upon its "frontiers." We read this law in Hebrew, which is the holy tongue, and do nothing but according to the commands of God, given us by Moses, the son of Amram, our prophet, upon whom is peace for ever and ever.

We give you notice, that are our brethren chil- (p. 279) dren of Israel, that R. Huntington, an uncircumcised, is arrived here from Europe, and has acquainted us, that you are a great people, composed of men pure and holy like ourselves, and that you have sent him to desire of us a copy of the law, to whom we would not give credit till he had written before us some characters of the holy language, in order to assure you that we have the same Mosaic religion that you profess. If we had not been willing to oblige you, we should not have sent a copy of the law by the hands of the uncircumcised, for that is a shame to us: nevertheless, we have committed it to him, with two other little books, that we might not absolutely deny your request. We also conjure you in the name of the living God not to deny ours, and to tell us what religion you are of; tell us what is the language you speak, the city you live in, the king

that governs you, and what religion he professes. Have ye any priests of the race of Phinehas? Have ye only one priest? In the name of God tell us the truth, without any shadow of dissimulation, and send us a copy of the law, as we have sent you ours. Send us also some learned men, some prophets, some persons of repute, and especially some descendant of Phinehas; for know that God has chosen us children of Israel to be his people, and to live at Gerizim, according to what he has said, *You shall seek their habitation, and shall go there.* He has said also, *You shall keep three feasts every year, the males shall rejoice three times a year before the Lord.* Know also, that all the prophets are buried in the territories at Shechem, our father Joseph, Eleazar, Ithamar, Phinehas, Joshua, Caleb, the seventy elders, Eldad and Medad.

(P. 280) If you are willing to oblige us, acquaint us whether you are devoted to Moses and his law, to Gerizim and the house of God; and send us some persons without being concerned about the length of the journey. Do not intrust a Jew, for they hate us; if you send us any deputy, give us notice by some friend, If ye have the book of Joshua, and any liturgy, send up that also. Tell us what your law is; as for us, we call the law what begins with the first word of Genesis and ends with the last of Deuteronomy. Cause all this to be copied for us in the holy tongue, and tell by what name you go. We adjure you, by the name of the living God, not to suffer a year to run over your heads without giving us an answer. In the mean time we bless God, the Lord of heaven and earth, and we implore his mercy and his justice to instruct you in all that can please Him, and to guide you in the good way, Amen. May He preserve you, and deliver you from the hands of your enemies, and gather you together from your dispersions, into the land of your fathers, through the merits of Moses.

We add, that this is our faith. We believe in God, in Moses his servant, in the holy law, in mount Gerizim the house of God, and in the day of vengeance and peace. Blessed for ever be our God, and let his peace rest upon Moses the son of Amram, the righteous, perfect, pure, and faithful prophet.

We have written this letter at Sichern, near Gerizim, the fifteenth day of the sixth month, which is the twenty-seventh of the lunar month, in the six hundred and eleventh year of the creation of the world, according to the Greeks, the second from the year of rest. This year the seventh month will (p. 281) begin the fourth of Elul, according to the Greeks; and the next year is the three thousand four hundred and eleventh from the entrance into the land of Canaan, God be blessed.

May this letter, by the help of God, arrive into the city of England, to the synagogue of the Samaritan children of Israel, whom God preserve.

It is written by the synagogue of Israel dwelling at Sichern. Mechab the son of Jacob, a descendant of Ephraim, the son of Joseph, was the secretary.

(p. 453)

CHAP. XXII.

The matter and fashion of their garments.

THE first clothes of mankind were of the leaves of trees, which they made themselves, being ready at hand, woven by divine art. The next were of the skins of beasts, which were much warmer, and (p. 454) better able to defend them from the injury of cold weather, and these were made by God's direction: he entered into covenant with our first parents, and it is not unreasonable to suppose that he signified that they should, for the confirmation of it, offer sacrifices to him; by the blood of which, covenants were ratified in after-times by this

example, and with the skins of these he ordered their clothes to be made; for it is not probable that the beasts of whose skins these coats were made died of themselves, or that they were killed merely for this use, or for their food. But whether this was done by dressing these skins and making leather of them, or only by drying them and letting the hair still continue on them, it is impossible to know. Certain it is that there was a very ancient sort of clothing, as we learn not only by profane authors, but from the sacred; the Jewish doctors have carried this matter so far as to say, that Adam being a priest, these were his priestly garments. The skin indeed of the burnt offering, under the law, is given to the priest, but not to make him clothes; and Eve, if this were true, must have been a priest also, for she had a coat made of skins no less than Adam, who, they fancy, left this coat to his posterity; so that Noah, Abraham, and all the rest of the patriarchs, (as Abel they say did,) sacrificed in the very same coat, till Aaron was made high priest, and had special garments appointed him by God. But these are conceits too insignificant to carry any weight. A learned writer of the Scotch nation, speaking of the apparel of the Hebrews, has this remark: that when they were in Egypt, their clothes were long, reaching to their feet; therefore when they (p. 255) went out of that country, they were commanded to gird up their loins. When they travelled in the wilderness, their clothes reached to their midleg; therefore priests, when they went up upon the altar, are ordered to put linen breeches upon them, lest their nakedness should be seen; because their clothes then were short and fit for travelling: when they came to Canaan, their clothes reached to their feet again. It is certain that long habits were commonly worn by the people of those eastern countries; and the law of Moses gives reason to assert, that the Hebrews had usually four skirts; for the precept is, that they should make the fringes upon the four quarters of their vesture. It is probable they sometimes had more or fewer than four; and in this case if they had but three, their doctors have resolved, that they were not bound to make any fringes for them; but if they had five or six, they were bound to annex them to the four most remote quarters, in which the intermediate were included; but this is an unreasonable subtilty, the intention of the law being to put them in mind of the divine commands by these fringes, which therefore were to be worn in the skirts of their garments, though they had been divided into no wings or quarters at all. These fringes were sewed to the uppermost garment which covers the rest, whereby they were distinguished from the people of other nations; for that was one end of them, to be a distinctive mark that they were of the Jewish religion; and therefore there seems to be no reason in the determination of their doctors, who say, women servants and little children were not obliged to wear fringes; for though small children could not think of the divine precepts, yet it was (p. 456) fit they should wear the note of their religion. There is no foundation neither for resolving that if women and servants (who were not bound so much as others to obey the laws) would wear fringes, though they were not obliged by their constitutions, yet they might not put them on with the common form of benediction which they used, "Blessed be thou, O "God, who hast sanctified us by thy precepts, and hast commanded that we should wear fringes." But I think they observe justly enough, that these fringes were so peculiar to the Jews, that the Samaritans, though acquainted with the law, did not wear them. Nor do the Jews themselves at this day use them upon their upper garment, for that being no longer four-cornered, (because they were laughed at by other nations,) they wear only under their other garments a kind of square frocks with the foresaid tassels or pendants hanging to it only in their synagogues or schools; at morning prayer, every man puts over his head a square woollen garment with the tassels fastened at each corner, which they call the *talith*.

(p. 534) The bride takes the right hand, because the Psalmist says, *Upon thy right hand did stand the Talmud*, in *queen*; she usually turned towards the north or south, as an omen of happy procreation both for the number and sex of their children; and therefore the Jews, as their doctors say, set their beds north and south, in order to beget male children; the curtains of their beds, in order to guard them from flies, were of a very fine net-work, which coming round the whole bed, shut them in in such a manner, that they had the benefit of the air without being offended by the flies, which could not get through them: perhaps the beds of the Jewish women, at such times as it was a legal uncleanness to touch them, were enclosed within a sort of partition, (as is to this day practised by the Samaritans,) to prevent any one's touching them.

Comments on this section from the Editor of theSamaritanUpdate.com

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