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**THE HANDWRITING OF GOD  
IN EGYPT, SINAI,  
AND THE HOLY LAND:  
THE  
RECORDS OF A JOURNEY FROM THE GREAT VALLEY OF THE WEST  
TO THE SACRED PLACES OF THE EAST.  
BY REV. D. A. RANDALL :  
WITH, MAPS, DIAGRAMS, AND NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS  
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1862**

From the 1<sup>st</sup> section of 2 section of the book  
Egypt and Sinai  
(p. 260) .....

Robert Clayton, Bishop of Cloger, in 1753, translated into English and published the Journal of the Franciscan of Cairo before mentioned. This work served to arouse more attention to the subject than had ever before been manifested. The Bishop was full of enthusiasm upon the subject, and in his zeal and liberality, made an offer of five hundred pounds sterling to any one who would visit the desert and bring back copies of the inscriptions. He thinks the characters an ancient form of Hebrew, left there by the Israelites at the time of giving the law. Others have entertained this theory. When I was in Jerusalem, I showed my copies of these inscriptions to old Dr. Levisou, who has bestowed much attention upon the ancient Hebrew. He believes some very ancient copies of the Samaritan Pentateuch, of which I shall speak in my visit to Jerusalem, found among the Samaritans, to be written in the same character used by Moses; but in comparing the two, he could trace no resemblance to warrant an opinion they ever belonged to the same language. But this would not prove the Hebrews did not write them; they might have written in some other dialect, brought with them from Egypt.

(P. 156) from the Holy land.

**AN OLD SAMARITAN BIBLE.**

Our new acquaintance invited us to his house, which, upon one side, joined the Pasha's palace. Through his acquaintance with the authorities of the place, we were allowed to

pass the gates and ascend to the roof of the guard-house, which, being directly upon the wall of the Harem, we were permitted to look down into the sacred inclosure, and enjoy one of the finest views that could be obtained of the Mosque of Omar, and all its interesting surroundings, on the old site of Solomon's Temple.

Mr. Ducat—for this we found to be the name of the man whose acquaintance we had thus accidentally made—then took us to his house and introduced us to Prof. Krauss, and Dr. Bassilius Levishon, the first a middle aged man, by birth a German; the latter, an old man, also a German, but of Jewish extraction. They are both eminent Hebrew scholars, and are sustained here at the expense of the Russian Episcopate. They have both become deeply interested in Samaritan literature, and are now devoting themselves to the reprint of an ancient copy of the Samaritan Pentateuch. The story of this old copy of the Hebrew Scriptures is so singular, I am induced to give a synopsis of it, as I had it from the lips of the old Doctor himself.

#### STORY OF THIS OLD MANUSCRIPT.

The small remnant of the old Samaritans have for years lived in such obscurity as to be almost unknown to the Christian world. The little literature they have, has been carefully and jealously guarded, and kept among themselves. Aside from (p. 157) the Pentateuch in Walton's Polyglot, and a few fragments of mutilated hymns, little or nothing has been known of their literature or religion. Between 1852 and 1854, with much difficulty, several volumes of Samaritan were procured for the British Museum. A couple of years since, Dr. Levishon succeeded in procuring from Damascus a large sized Samaritan Pentateuch, transcribed upon parchment, A. D. 1277.

Anxious to give the scholars of the world this interesting relic of an almost extinct sect, the Doctor made a journey to Paris, procured a lithographic press, learned how to use it, returned with it to Jerusalem, and immediately commenced printing a fac-simile of the old parchment. He had printed but a few pages, when, learning that there were older copies of the same work among the Samaritans at Nabulous, the old Shechem of Scripture, he made a visit there, in company with Prof. Krauss. They found the priest and leading men very reserved about their sacred books, and it was not until after an acquaintance of several days that they ventured to broach the real object of their mission. They at last ascertained that a number of the families had these old copies of their sacred books, which had been handed down from generation to generation, held in sacred veneration, and kept secreted from the eye of Mohammedan and Christian. Among these the priest showed them one that had such marks of great antiquity, they were extremely anxious to procure it. This anxiety, however, they concealed under an air of apparent indifference, and when about to leave, simply inquired of the family, through the priest, if the manuscript could be bought. The first answer was a total refusal to part with it. Before they left, a message came, through the priest, that the family would place the manuscript at their disposal for 14,000 piasters! about *six hundred dollars*. They made no reply, and immediately returned home.

Then followed a long and remarkable series of events. The outbreak among the Druses, resulting in the burning of so many villages, and the cold-blooded murder of so many Christians, aroused also Mohammedan intolerance against all opposing religions, and the little remnant of Samaritans, as well as Chris- (p. 158) tians, trembled for their safety. "That outbreak," said the old Doctor, earnestly, " was the instrumentality, under God, of putting this old book into our hands." A lordly merchant Turk from Damascus visited

Nabulous, and dealing with a Samaritan trader there, accused him of robbing him of a large sum of money, and had him and many of his connections arrested and cast into prison, and there seemed no way of satisfying the avarice of their oppressor. At the expiration of a few months the priest made a visit to the Russian missionaries at Jerusalem, and told the story of their wrongs. "What shall we do? My people are in prison. I have no means to help them. Appeals to the British and American Consuls have been in vain; has the Russian Consul no power with the Turkish authorities to interfere for us?" "How much," said Dr. Levishon, "is the claim against the imprisoned parties?" "The whole sum now demanded, including costs, is six thousand piasters." "Can you not in some way raise the money?" "We have no money; my people are all poor." "Go home," said the Doctor, "and bring me that old copy of your scriptures, and you shall have the money." Three days after the claim of the persecuting Turk was paid, the imprisoned persons were at liberty, and the missionaries were rejoicing over the possession of the most ancient copy of the Samaritan Pentateuch a Christian had ever been allowed to handle.

#### THE AGE OF THIS MANUSCRIPT.

Dr. Levishon firmly believes it to have been written *before the destruction of the first temple!* For this he assigns the following reasons: 1. The extreme reserve and jealous care with which the family at Nabulous guarded it, secreting it even from families of their own sect; and the information derived from the priest through whose agency it was obtained. 2. The appearance of the manuscript, the manner in which it is written, and the fact that the different books, Genesis, Exodus, etc., are not divided into chapters, verses or sections of any kind. 3. The names of several priests found in marginal notes in different places in the volume, which names correspond with other genealogies in his possession. 4. A corner of the book has been (p. 159) scorched by fire, burning off the margin so deeply as even to touch a few of the letters, showing that the book has at some time been in danger of being burned. The family tradition connected with this is, that in ancient times the building and effects where the book was kept were burned, and this book was saved in a miraculous manner. In corroboration of this, on a blank leaf in the book is this remarkable note: "This book, which the fire did not burn, was delivered into the hand of Cyrus, King of Persia, in the presence of Zerubbabel, the priest. Thanks be to God for the preservation of His holy law delivered to Moses." This marginal note has every evidence of being genuine, written in the same character of the book, having all the marks of antiquity. The character in which it is written differs considerably from the modern Hebrew, being the same, the Doctor believes, as was used before the captivity, and the same in which Moses wrote. Immediately upon gaining possession of this they abandoned their work upon the Damascus copy, and are now printing a fac-simile of this, which will soon be ready for distribution. The old Doctor is pursuing his work with all the enthusiasm of a boy; and in several subsequent interviews with him he gave me much information that he had gathered from his intercourse with this ancient people; he also gave me specimen pages of the work to take home with me. We shall have more to say of these Samaritans when we visit Nabulous. Should it prove true, that in the secluded Valley of Ebal and Gerizim, with the little remnant of the ancient Samaritan race God has hid away, and preserved from remote antiquity, copies of his holy law, corresponding in all main particulars to the records of the Jews, will it not be another striking manifestation

of the great leading truth we have kept in mind through this whole work—another instance of the Handwriting of God to refute unbelief, and preserve the knowledge of his name and the revelation of his will?

(p. 260) .....

Robert Clayton, Bishop of Clogher, in 1753, translated into English and published the *Journal of the Franciscan of Cairo* before mentioned. This work served to arouse more attention to the subject than had ever before been manifested. The Bishop was full of enthusiasm upon the subject, and in his zeal and liberality, made an offer of five hundred pounds sterling to any one who would visit the desert and bring back copies of the inscriptions. He thinks the characters an ancient form of Hebrew, left there by the Israelites at the time of giving the law. Others have entertained this theory. When I was in Jerusalem, I showed my copies of these inscriptions to old Dr. Levisohn, who has bestowed much attention upon the ancient Hebrew. He believes some very ancient copies of the Samaritan Pentateuch, of which I shall speak in my visit to Jerusalem, found among the Samaritans, to be written in the same character used by Moses; but in comparing the two, he could trace no resemblance to warrant an opinion they ever belonged to the same language. But this would not prove the Hebrews did not write them; they might have written in some other dialect, brought with them from Egypt.

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

This reference is #3920 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 (The date on the publication is later 1868 while this book's publication date is 1862.)

REV. D. A. RANDALL is Rev. David Austin Randall (1813-1884)

In 1861, he took leave in the US and traveled to first Cairo then to Jerusalem.

He is also the author of *Ham-mishkon, the wonderful tent. An Account of the Structure, Signification, and Spiritual Lessons of the Mosaic Tabernacle Erected in the Wilderness of Sinai.* Cincinnati: Robert Clarke & Co. 1886. This work give a bio of his life.

This is the 1867 edition of two works bound as one. There are 359 pages for Egypt and Sinai and 355 pages for the Holy land.

Dr. Levisohn or Dr. Bassillius Levisohn is *Dr. Basilius Levisohn who is Dr. Levisohn* It is said he was 'a noble-minded man is undoubtedly Professor Basil Levinsohn, who declared in 1863 as a former rabbi of an old rabbinical family, descended, that it is not in the whole range of Jewish theology' *Dr. Julius H. Greenstone*

*A Little History* from the Editor of the Samaritan Update:

Conflicts between Druzes and Christians began in 1842. In 1856, Anti-Christian Riots broke out in Nablus. Relations between the Jews and Muslims remained good.

“ON the 30th of August, 1859, a serious affray took place between the Druzes and Maronites in the village of Bate-mirri, three hours distant, in the mountain, from Beyrout. The original cause was a quarrel between a Druze and Christian boy.”<sup>1</sup> This began a war between the Druzes and Christians. The Turkish Authority was taken by surprise. “As the Mohammedans in the towns invariably prefaced and excused their attacks upon the Christians by raising reports that they were about to be attacked by them;”<sup>2</sup> The conflict ended in 1860.

Rev. Samuel Lyde, a fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge, lived and worked among the Alawis, aka Nusairis, of Syria. A visit to Nablus by Lyde in April 1856 caused a riot. He arrived in the town on 1 April 1856. As he was leaving the town a few days later, he accidentally shot and killed a deaf and dumb man, a Moslem, who stopped him at the city gate. The killing, which followed other tensions, caused a riot. He left Palestine for England on 17 March 1857.

You can read a full account in *DOMESTIC LIFE IN PALESTINE*. by **Mary Eliza Rogers**.

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<sup>1</sup> The Druzes and the Maronites Under the Turkish Rule, From 1840 to 1860, by Colonel Churchill, London, Bernard Quaritch, 15 Piccadilly 1862 Printed by Spottiswoode and Co., New-Street Square, London, (p. 132).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid p. 136.