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**The Land and Its Story;
Or, The Sacred Historical Geography of Palestine**

By **N. C. Burt, D.D.**
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(p. 265) XII.

SHECHEM.—THE SAMARITANS.—JACOB'S WELL.

SHECHEM, or *Nablous*, for the abundance and variety of its Scriptural associations, is surpassed by few places in the Holy Land. Shechem is peculiar in this, that its associations, instead of being confined to particular portions of the sacred history, involve almost every portion, from the beginning to the end of the Bible. " The Book of Genesis, the first book of the Bible, tells us of Sichem, or Shechem, and the Acts of the Apostles, the last historical book of the Bible, speaks of a city of Samaria—perhaps this same city—where the evangelist Philip and the apostles Peter and John preached the Gospel, to the great joy of the people.¹

The patriarchal associations of Shechem are almost as suggestive as those of Hebron itself; not only beginning with Abraham, but being made impressive by existing relics—Jacob's Well and the Tomb of Joseph answering severally to Abraham's Oak and the Cave of Machpelah. But, beyond Hebron and many other interesting Old Testament localities, Shechem was made memorable by a visit of our Saviour to its vicinity, and by the delivery there of a recorded discourse of the Great Teacher—a discourse not only fraught with heavenly truth and power, but also characterized by local and historical references, such as fitted it to the time and place and purpose of His address, and such as will make its meaning vivid to the visitor at Shechem even to the end of time. And besides, Shechem, (p. 266) as the headquarters of the Samaritans—that race and sect intensely hated by the Jews, in the times of the Gospel history and ever since—invites the visitor to a study of the history and character of so singular a people, and to a better understanding of those Scriptures which refer to them—especially when he finds them still clinging to their old home, and still cherishing their old religious faith and their bigoted hostility to the Jews.

The geographical position of Shechem may readily be indicated. It
(etching not shown here)**THE VALLEY AND TOWN OF NABLOUS (ANCIENT SHECHEM).**

has already been observed concerning Shiloh, that its position was central in reference to the country at large. This, however, is more exactly true of Shechem; it being midway between Hebron and Kadesh-Naphtali— between Jerusalem and Nazareth—and between the Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea. The broad valley running north and south through the (p. 267) territory of ancient Ephraim, spoken of in the last lecture—the ancient

¹ Gen. xii. 6; Acts viii. 5.

Moreh, the modern Mukhna²—is flanked on the west by a range of abrupt and lofty hills. The road usually followed leads through the plain along the base of these hills. Travelling northward by this road, we reach, some six or seven miles from the southern limit of the plain, the point where a cross-valley from the west breaks through the range of hills over against us. This cross-valley, where it issues into the great valley, is half a mile wide. The hills, at the points of intersection, rise to the dignity of mountain promontories; that on the north being the historical "Ebal," while that on the south is the still more renowned "Gerizim." Out a little from the base of Gerizim, just where the edges of the two valleys meet, is Jacob's Well;³ while a few hundred yards to the north, or near the middle of the cross-valley, is the little Mohammedan structure known as "The Tomb of Joseph."

The town of Nablous, numbering a population of ten thousand, and occupying doubtless nearly the site of old Shechem, lies in this cross-valley, about a mile and a half from its mouth; being built along its southern border, and on the first rise of Gerizim. The town is not visible from the well. Although the bed of the valley in which it is situated rises some- (p. 268) what rapidly from Jacob's Well, for the first mile, the next half mile *is* nearly a level plain. This plain is covered with luxuriant olive-trees, concealing the town from the approaching traveller, until he has nearly reached its large eastern gateway. Full streams of water, bursting from the hills just west of the town, flow along its northern wall and down the valley, affording a plentiful supply for numerous gardens and orchards, and making music amidst the little mills where they both work and play.⁴

Nablous is on all hands regarded as the most beautifully situated town in Palestine. It lies almost upon the water-shed between the Jordan and the Mediterranean—the streams beginning to flow westward from a point near the western end of the city—and the valley leading westward rivals, or even surpasses, in beauty and fertility, that which conducts us from the city to Jacob's "Well. This water-shed is estimated to be about fifteen hundred feet above the level of the Mediterranean, while Ebal and Gerizim are at least eight hundred feet higher.⁵

There is no reason to think that the site of the city, during the thirtysix centuries of its continuance, has materially changed. Once it was probably much larger than it is now,

² The contrast between early spring and early autumn in Palestine, referred to in foot-notes to pp. 40 and 98, is strikingly exhibited in two sets of photographic views which the author happens to possess. An English photographer, Mr. Good, travelled through the land at the same time with the author. His views, which have attracted much attention, exhibit the land luxuriantly green in the growths of spring. Six months later, the company of Americans, making the excursion of the Mediterranean on the steamship Quaker City, passed through the land, their photographer accompanying them, and catching many admirable views. Yet in these latter views, not only is Bethel sterile in its perpetual rocks, but the plains of Mukhna and Gennesaret appear as if scorched and blasted beyond possible recovery.

³ About eighteen hundred and thirty-three years had elapsed since the digging of Jacob's Well, at the time of our Saviour's visit; and about eighteen hundred and thirty-three years have elapsed since that time. The traditions which then identified the well as that which Jacob dug, seem no stronger than those which now identify it as that which our Saviour visited.

⁴ Much has been written of the vapory atmosphere of the Vale of Shechem, and of its beautiful effect in tinting the landscape. Dean Stanley, after quoting largely from Van de Velde on the subject, remarks that the valley between Nablous and Samaria was, when he saw it, "wrapped in a thick drizzling mist," such as he saw nowhere else in Syria. My own experience was of a similar sort. Our party remained over night at Nablous, encamped a little to the west of the city, on a narrow plateau under Gerizim which looked down northward on the bed of the valley. Through a restless night the music of the running waters was constantly heard, and in the morning a dense fog lay on the lower valley, appearing from above like the water of a lake. This lifted as the sun rose, but did not wholly disappear until the morning was well advanced.

⁵ The aneroid of one of my acquaintances gave the height of Gerizim as eleven hundred feet, measured, as I understood, from the level of the plateau on which the city stands.

and it may have extended eastward so as to cover the olive-orchard now lying on that side. Its ancient name, Sichem, or Shechem, had, in the times of the New Testament, been modified (p. 269) to Sychar.⁶ This word, meaning "falsehood," is supposed by some to have been given the city by the Jews, in token of their estimate of the character and claims of the Samaritan people. The city received the name Neapolis, or New City, from the Emperor Vespasian, who rebuilt it, and of this the present name Nabulus, or Nablous, is but an Arabic corruption.

The first Scripture reference to Shechem, as already intimated, connects it with the patriarch Abraham. Here, on his entrance into Canaan, the patriarch first paused. Probably coming from the direction of Damascus, he crossed the Jordan—as Jacob afterward did—at the brook Jabbok, nearly opposite Shechem, and emerged upon the plain of Moreh, when ascending out of the Jordan valley. The language of the record is: "And they went forth," i. e., from Haran, "to go into the land of Canaan, and into the land of Canaan they came. And Abraham passed through the land unto the place of Sichem unto the plain of Moreh." Here the patriarch enjoyed a special manifestation of the Divine Presence, and here, as it is written, "he builded an altar unto the Lord who appeared unto him."⁷ Probably the great reason why Shechem, in after-ages, was so much revered and resorted to as a sanctuary, was the fact of its having been the first place in the land hallowed by the formal worship of the Father of the Faithful.

So far as we are informed, Abraham never revisited Shechem, although it is not improbable that he may have passed through the plain of Moreh when hastening to the rescue of Lot, and may have halted upon the spot consecrated by his altar, when leisurely returning home.⁸ "We next read of Shechem in connection with Jacob, who, coming from his sojourn in (p. 270) Padan-aram, with his train of wives and children and cattle, made a settlement for himself in the rich vale before the city, purchasing territory and erecting an altar."⁹

And now it was, doubtless, that Jacob dug the well, which has since borne his name, even until to-day. No possession is more valued in the thirsty climes of the East than wells. Often lands are valueless without wells to irrigate them, and flocks must perish but for the waters of a well. The digging of wells by a pastoral people, with only the rudest implements, is commonly a formidable undertaking. Jacob's well, nine feet in diameter and nearly one hundred deep, dug through the solid rock, was unquestionably an enterprise of the first magnitude.

In Abraham's time, we do not read of any *city* of Shechem. The phrase used is, "the *place* of Sichem," meaning, probably, the place where Sichem, or Shechem, afterward stood. The city of Shechem would seem to have taken its name from the son of Hamor, the prince of whom Jacob bought his parcel of ground, and hence would date from about

⁶ John iv. 5.

⁷ Gen. xii. 6, 7.

⁸ The Samaritans have the tradition that Melchizedek met Abraham on Mount Gerizim when he was returning (Gen. xiv. 18). Of course, they would thus identify the Salem of Melchizedek with the "Shalem" of Gen. xxxiii. 18.

⁹ The occurrence of "Shalem," as the name of a city, in Gen. xxxiii. 18, is perplexing, since every thing in this portion of the history must thus be understood as relating to Shalem, rather than Shechem, when the "city" is spoken of, which ill agrees with the representations everywhere else given—these connecting the sanctuary of the patriarchs with Shechem. The translation which makes the word "Shalem" an adjective instead of a substantive—the translation, "And Jacob came safe to the city of Shechem," would relieve all difficulty. Against this, however, and in favor of the proper name, is the fact that across the plain of Mukhna from Jacob's Well is a village, which seems to have borne from ancient times a name closely resembling Shalem.

the time of Jacob's sojourn there. The misconduct of this son of Hamor—the young prince Shechem—and that in turn of the sons of Jacob, who treacherously slew him and his people—was the occasion of Jacob's leaving the place and going farther south.¹⁰ But, though not remaining on the ground, the patriarch still claimed his rights of property at Shechem, and sent his sons there to pasture his flocks¹¹ Even in distant Egypt, the dying patri- (p. 271) arch, recollecting his possessions at Shechem, bequeathed them to his son Joseph, as a special and choice legacy. And, doubtless, Joseph was afterward buried in this spot of ground, as in his own sacred inheritance.¹²

Shechem next appears in the history in connection with the entrance of the Israelites into the promised land, after their long wandering in the wilderness. From the hills of Moab, bordering the camp of Israel east of the Jordan, Moses often, no doubt, descried the promontories of Ebal and Gerizim, which, as he knew, guarded that sanctuary where, first on the soil of Canaan, God had covenanted with Abraham to give the land which he saw to his posterity, and where Jacob had, so to speak, begun the acquisition of the land. And here the leader of the people gave solemn direction that, upon entering the land, the tribes should resort to the hallowed place, and there enter into solemn engagements with the God of their fathers. On Mount Ebal they should rear an altar of stones, and on this altar they should inscribe the law. Then, with six tribes posted on the slope of Ebal, and six on that of Gerizim, the Levites should rehearse the curses and the blessings of the law—the curses from Ebal, the blessings from Gerizim—while to each the people should respond "Amen."¹³

With this direction Joshua and the people strictly complied. After the capture of Jericho and Ai, when the terror of the Israelitish name had fallen on the inhabitants of the land, and no interference from them was to be anticipated, the people took their march from Gilgal and Jericho up to Shechem, a distance of nearly forty miles, bearing with them the ark of the covenant, which, at the reading of the blessings and curses, appears to have been placed in the middle of the valley between the separated portions of the people.¹⁴

(p. 272) The fancy of some tourists has made the modern appearance of Ebal and Gerizim to correspond with their ancient representative character. Ebal is said to be barren and gloomy; Gerizim fruitful and cheerful. This is little else than fancy. I observed, indeed, a difference in the appearance of the two mountains, due to a difference in their vegetable growths. Ebal, having a southern exposure, is well covered, opposite Nablous, with the cultivated cactus-plant; while Gerizim, with its northern exposure, shows patches of hardy grain.

Shechem subsequently was the frequent rallying-point of the nation. When Joshua was about to die, he gathered the people into solemn assembly, that he might rehearse their history, remind them of their obligations, and have them formally renew covenant with God. And Shechem was the place selected for this convocation. Joshua made a record of the transactions of that solemn occasion, and at the same time took a great stone and set it up there under an oak that was by the sanctuary of the Lord." From this, it appears that the exact place of the ancient sanctuary was then well known; and, from its being "under

¹⁰ Gen. xxxiv.

¹¹ Ib. xxvii. 12.

¹² Gen. xlviii. 22; Joshua xxiv. 32.

¹³ Dent. xi. 29, 30; xxvii.

¹⁴ See Joshua viii. 30-35. Some persons prefer the order of events given by Josephus, who represents that not until the completion of the conquest of the country, after a war of five years' duration, and after the tabernacle had been brought from Gilgal and fixed at Shiloh, did the pilgrimage to Shechem and the solemnities on Mounts Ebal and Gerizim occur.

an oak," the inference is natural that it was the spot originally hallowed by Abraham's altar, under the "oak of Moreh," and perhaps the same where Jacob, when about to leave Shechem, buried the strange gods of his children.¹⁵

To this sanctuary—"by the oak of the pillar that was in Shechem"—gathered "the men of Shechem, and all the house of Millo," in the days of the Judges, to crown Abimelech, the Shechemite-son of Gideon. And, from "the top of Mount Gerizim," Jotham, the worthier son of Gideon, who alone escaped when Abimelech massacred his brethren, addressed the (p. 273) people of Shechem in his famous parable of the Trees and the Bramble. This conspiracy resulted in the complete destruction of the city. Its inhabitants having preferred for their ruler a man of the old heathen stock of Shechemites, and shut their gates against Abimelech, the latter captured the city and "beat it down and sowed it with salt."¹⁶

Still, the sanctuary near Shechem was as much revered as ever; and centuries after, even when Jerusalem had become the sacred capital of the nation, and had reached its culmination of glory, no place was esteemed so desirable for national convocation. To Shechem came Rehoboam, son of Solomon, to receive his crown, and there he answered the assembled representatives of the people so unwisely as to occasion the rebellion of the northern tribes and the great incurable schism in the government.¹⁷

Jeroboam, the first king of the ten tribes, at once, after his coronation, rebuilt Shechem, and made it his capital.¹⁸ Not long, indeed, did it retain this honor. And, the seat of government having been removed, the place is seldom mentioned during the two hundred and fifty years of the continuance of the northern kingdom. Yet, speedily after the destruction of that kingdom and the deportation of its people beyond the Euphrates, commenced a new era in its history, whose main features not only were found existing in the times of the New Testament, but even continue in some measure until now. The race and sect of the Samaritans arose, a remnant of whom still dwell under the shadow of Mount Gerizim.

The origin of this singular people, as given in the Books of Kings, was as follows: The Assyrians having removed the proper inhabitants of the (p. 274) country, sent a colony of their own people to take their place. Yet, so thinly scattered over the country were these—so insufficient were they for its protection—that the wild beasts multiplied upon them, until the scourge became distressing. Ascribing this misfortune to their ignorance of the proper local religion, a priest of the captive Jews was sent to them from Assyria, who established himself at Bethel, and initiated the people into some form of the worship of Jehovah. The people adopted this worship, though not to the exclusion of their former idolatry. "They feared the Lord and served their own gods."¹⁹

Whether these Samaritans were wholly of heathen origin, or whether the Assyrian newcomers did not find remnants of the people of the ten tribes still in their old homes, with

¹⁵ Jacob hid "all the strange gods which were in their hand, and all their ear-rings which were in their ears, under the oak which was by Shechem." The phrase "*plain of Moreh*" (Gen. xii. 6) might have been rendered "oak of Moreh."

¹⁶ The history of Abimelech's conspiracy (Judges ix.) is interesting not merely for its topographical references (verses 6, 7), but also for the glimpse which it furnishes of the existence in Shechem of the primitive Canaanites, the descendants of "Hamor the father of Shechem," the founder of the city (verse 28), and of the readiness of this people to embrace any opportunity offered for throwing off the yoke of their Israelite rulers.

¹⁷ 1 Kings xii. 1-16.

¹⁸ Ib. 25.

¹⁹ 2 Kings xvii. 24-41.

whom they intermarried, has been disputed. According to Josephus, the inhabitants of Shechem, when Alexander the Great visited them, professed to be Hebrews; yet they made this profession, as he declares, solely with a view of securing favors from the conqueror, similar to those which had just been granted the people of Jerusalem. "Such is the disposition of the Samaritans," says the historian, "that when the Jews are in adversity they deny that they are of kin to them, and then they confess the truth; but when they perceive that some good fortune hath befallen them, they immediately pretend to have communion with them, saying that they belong to them, and derive their genealogy from the posterity of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh." In the time of our Saviour they claimed to belong to the true people of God; the Samaritan woman at Jacob's Well asking of Christ, "Art thou greater than *our father* Jacob, who gave us the well?"²⁰

Just when the Samaritans began to put forth this claim, does not appear; but we find them greatly concerned at the rebuilding of the Temple and the walls of Jerusalem, when the Jews were restored from Babylon; (p. 275) first insisting on having a share in the work, and, when this was refused, setting themselves to oppose it. "They came to Zerubbabel, and to the chief of the fathers, and said unto them, Let us build with you; for we seek your God, as ye do; and we do sacrifice unto him since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assur, which brought us up hither."²¹

The Samaritans having failed in their efforts either to cooperate with the Jews, or to hinder their plans, resolved on erecting a temple of their own. The place selected for it was not Samaria—probably still their chief city—but Shechem, so long venerated as the most ancient sanctuary in the land. Mount Gerizim was here chosen as the rival of Mount Moriah; and, near the beginning of the fourth century before Christ, it's summit, seen from afar in almost every direction, began to smoke with those sacrifices which are still renewed in the same place every year at the passover.

The immediate occasion of the building of the temple is said to have been the expulsion from Jerusalem of a son of the high-priest, who had married a daughter of the Samaritan governor;²² Having this man as high-priest in their new temple; cherishing the Mosaic Scriptures—which they agreed to receive to the exclusion of the other Old Testament writings; receiving large accessions to their worship from renegade Jews, who would not endure the severity of religious discipline enforced at Jerusalem;²³ the Samaritans urged that they were the true people of Je- (p. 276) hovah, and that from themselves, rather than from the remnant of Judean captives restored from Babylon to Jerusalem, should come the expected Messiah and His salvation.

No wonder that an intense mutual hatred was begotten of these exclusive rival claims. No wonder that the Jews came to have "no dealings with the Samaritans."²⁴ No wonder that the word Samaritan, in the mouth of a Jew, was an epithet for every thing vile, and, being cast by the Jews upon our Saviour, indicated their profoundest scorn and contempt

²⁰ John iv. 12.

²¹ Ezra iv. 2.

²² Josephus gives the name of the priestly son-in-law of Sanballat as "Manasseh," and makes him brother to "Jaddua," the high-priest in Jerusalem. The historian, moreover, represents Sanballat as erecting the temple by permission of Alexander the Great and during his siege of Tyre. The "son-in-law to Sanballat the Horonite," whom Nehemiah "chased" from him (Neh. xiii. 28), according to the received chronology, must have lived nearly one hundred years before the siege of Tyre.

²³ The phrase of Josephus is: Shechem, "a city situated at Mount Gerizim, and inhabited by apostates of the Jewish nation."

²⁴ John iv. 9.

for Him.²⁵ No wonder that when Christ designed to illustrate the highest style of human charity, He told the story of a Samaritan befriending a Jew. \ No wonder that, when certain Samaritans refused to receive the Saviour because He was travelling toward Jerusalem, the apostles James and John desired to call down fire from heaven to consume them.²⁶ No wonder that at Jacob's Well the kind and loving words of Jesus to the Samaritan woman were regarded as a marvel of condescension both by the woman and by the disciples.²⁷

The Samaritan temple was destroyed by the Jews, not far from one hundred years before Christ. Yet the Samaritans continued to worship at their altar on Mount Gerizim. Their community seems to have remained unbroken, in the downfall, of Jerusalem and the Jewish state. Yet, about Anno Domini 200, having made common cause with the Jews against the Romans, they were severely scourged by the latter, so that many fled from their sacred city, and became widely scattered. Communities of Samaritans were organized in Egypt and the West, and a synagogue was established in Rome. Some of these communities maintained a long existence, lingering indeed until modern times; but, according to the best information, the very last of these have recently become extinct. The Jews, in almost every great city of our land, outnumber their (p. 277) brethren in Jerusalem; yet, after the lapse of twenty-five hundred years from their origin, the Samaritans, who have been more or less widely scattered over the civilized world through a great part of their history, now exist nowhere on earth, except at the seat of their ancient local worship. The race has apparently come home to die—or perhaps to live on, as a perpetual providential commentary on our Saviour's discourse concerning them; they, as has been said, turning to Mount Gerizim "as the only sacred spot in the universe: the strongest example of local worship now existing in the world, in the very face of the declaration there uttered, that all local worship should cease."²⁸

Some of the Samaritans were early converted to Christianity and forsook their community; but the community itself having, in its long contest with its Jewish antagonist, become saturated with the spirit of religious bigotry, has since maintained itself against not only Jew and Christian, but equally against Mohammedan and Pagan; and, although now reduced to a pitiable remnant, numbering only one hundred and thirty-five persons, children included, is as sternly uncompromising as ever, in its Samaritan prejudices and practices. The last fragment is as hard as the original rock.

During my stay at Nablous, I had opportunity for learning something personally concerning the Samaritans. No sooner had we arrived at our tents, pitched outside the west gate of the city, than we were waited on by a chief man of the sect, named Shellaby, who had visited England, and who spoke our language. This person was frequently with us during our sojourn, showing us the sacred spots on the summit of Gerizim, and taking us, in the city, to the Samaritan synagogue. "Mr. Shellaby," *as* we called him, is a fine specimen of a man physically. Large and well-proportioned, of handsome form and features, and dignified, courteous address, Mr. Shel- (p. 278) laby, in his flowing silk robes, looked as though he might lay good claim to a descent from any or all of the patriarchs. Yet I observed nothing Jewish in his features or in those of his brethren. It is somewhat remarkable that this little community, intermarrying only among themselves, exhibit no signs of physical degeneracy, but rather the contrary.

²⁵ Ib- viii- 48.

²⁶ Luke x. 30-37.

²⁷ Ib. ix. 51-54.

²⁸ Dean Stanley.

The ascent of Gerizim, made from the olive-orchards to the east of the city, we found to be toilsome. Yet, four times a year, at the recurrence of their festivals, the Samaritans are accustomed to make the ascent on foot, going from their synagogue in procession and chanting as they go. Once up, the summit of the mountain is seen to be an extended tableland or platform, well-nigh covered with the substructions and broken remnants of large buildings. The place of the Holy of Holies, in the Samaritan temple, is pointed out. Just here, as these people believe, Abraham constructed the altar for the offering of Isaac. Here, too, as they say, was Bethel, where Jacob enjoyed the heavenly vision. And here, as they claim, the Ark of the Covenant was set up and the Tabernacle pitched. To this most sacred place they turn to pray. They also show the spot, beneath which, as they allege, the twelve stones, taken from the Jordan at the passage of the Israelites, were deposited. The Samaritans, at the time of our visit, had begun their encampment on Mount Gerizim, for the feast of the passover, and Mr. Shellaby pointed out to us, a little below the summit on the west, the several places where they kill and where they roast the seven lambs of the feast.

The view from Mount Gerizim is mainly interesting from the contrasts of natural scenery presented. Eastward, close at hand, is the carpeted plain of Mukhna; westward is a high billowy plateau, extending almost to the limits of vision. Ebal seems to be of the same height with his neighbor, yet his summit is distant scarcely less than three or four miles.²⁹ (p. 279) The great German geographer, Ritter, making up his account from statements of different travellers, declares, in almost the same paragraph, both that Mount Hermon can, and that it cannot, be seen from Gerizim. The grand monarch³⁰ was not visible to us on Gerizim; yet this may have been due to the vapory atmosphere rather than to the intervention of Mt. Ebal.³¹ The Samaritan synagogue we found to be an unpretending structure, small and low, occupying a secluded position in the southwestern part of the city, and reached by a labyrinth' of dark, narrow, and unspeakably filthy streets. No marvel that they remove their shoes before entering it! Their famous roll of the Pentateuch, transcribed, as they maintain, by the great-grandson of Aaron, over thirty-three hundred years ago, was exhibited to us, though we were not permitted to touch it. It is written in the old Hebrew character, which by the Jews was exchanged for the Chaldee at the time of their captivity in Babylon. The parchment is well browned and much patched, and is no doubt many hundred years old. Biblical critics, of course, set high

²⁹ In my "Far East" I have told of the ineffectual attempts made by our party to communicate with another party on Mount Ebal, and have expressed the opinion that the hosts of Israel must have occupied only the lower slopes of the opposite mountains. So vast a multitude of persons as the whole body of the nation afforded, would, however, have been sufficient to cover a large lateral extent of the opposite mountain-sides, even from base to summit, and probably did so.

Although Jotham spoke his parable from "the top of Mount Gerizim" (Judges ix. 7), he was not required to be heard across the valley; for in all probability Shechem then, like Nablous now, was situated on the lower slope of Gerizim, and would thus be just beneath the speaker.

³⁰ "Jebel-es-Sheikh" it is called.

³¹ From Gerizim looking east, one sees, on the farther side of the plain of Mukhna, a village bearing the name of Salim or "Shalim." Near this is a locality to which the name of "Enon" has been assigned, as if it were the place where John the Baptist prosecuted his ministry, as recorded in John iii. 23. It is suggestive, in view of Gen. xxxiii. 18, to find a place so near old Shechem bearing at present a name so closely resembling Shalem; yet it is very doubtful whether this place can be identified with the ministry of the Baptist. The Salem of John's gospel is thought by some to have been farther to the north, and to have been the same with the Salem of which Melchizedek was king. Dr. Barclay places it near Jerusalem—the Salem of the Psalms.

value on the Samaritan Scriptures, as having been preserved from an early period independently of Jews and Christians. (p. 280)

I do not know when I was ever more impressed by a sense of incongruity than when, standing in the open door of the Samaritan synagogue, in the midst of this ancient people, in the old and far-off land of the patriarchs, examining the time-stained roll of the Books of Moses, I lifted my eyes, and, casting them on the opposite wall of the synagogue, saw perched there a genuine *Yankee clock*, as new and bright as if it had been brought in that morning from New Haven or Wethersfield! Mr. Shellaby had procured it in England. The poor thing, however, was not going; and I fancied that for a people buried so profoundly in the past, it felt that there was no use in its running and in trying to bring and keep them up to the present.

The place of incomparably greatest interest about Shechem is Jacob's Well; and the association of incomparably greatest interest connected with the well is that of our Saviour's conversation there held with the Samaritan woman. This conversation, indeed, even apart from its local and historical allusions, could we separate it from them, forms one of the most engaging chapters in the New Testament history. For its exhibition of Christ's intense sympathy for human souls, His gracious kindness, His glowing zeal; for its display of matchless skill and power, in bringing a poor depraved woman to a knowledge of herself and of Himself, and to actual discipleship; and for its enunciation of sublimest spiritual truths having universal and perpetual adaptations, this chapter is conspicuous. When we join with all these features the personal, local, and historical allusions, so numerous, so distinct, and so graphic, the chapter is invested with the highest and most sacred charms.³²

Let us, then, resort again to the well, before leaving Shechem, and on the very spot occupied by the Divine Teacher, and with the scene about us which so often turned and led His discourse, review the incidents of His pause there and His conversation with the Samaritan woman.

Comments on this section from the Editor of theSamaritanUpdate.com

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N. C. Burt is **Nathaniel Clark Burt** (April 23, 1825 – March 4, 1874) was an American [Presbyterian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nathaniel_Clark_Burt) clergyman. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nathaniel_Clark_Burt

He left Nablus April 5th 1867 (p. 299)

³² John iv.