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THE SAMARITANS.[1]

IN a paper published some months ago in this Review, we spoke of a colony of Jews in China just ready to disappear utterly, after an existence of fifteen or twenty centuries. Another remnant of a people once numerous and important is found in the little community of Samaritans, who still linger in misery, in sadness, and in despair, at the foot of their sacred mountain, in the centre of the sacred land. Year by year their numbers are decreasing. A hundred years ago they had nearly fifty families. One year ago the whole number had fallen to one hundred and thirty-five persons; and a letter written from Nablous, in January of the present year, reduces the number to one hundred and twenty-two, — men, women, and children. Before the end of another century probably the last Samaritan will die, and their books and their story will be only the relics of an extinct people. Except as a surviving remnant, the people of this tribe are not interesting. Their ignorance is dense, even more than of the Arabs with whom they dwell. They live in the most squalid poverty, worse than that of the Jews on Mount Zion. They are coarse in manners, unsocial, suspicious, cunning, and their attachment to their faith is rather obstinate than devout. Of the world away from them they know little or nothing; they never travel, and there are old men among them who have never seen either the Jordan River or the Western Sea, both within a day's easy journey. They own a precious book, which most of them are unable to read, and which they exhibit to strangers with extreme reluctance, and only from strong pecuniary temptation. They are hated by their Jewish brethren, despised by their Moslem neighbors, and pitied by the Christians who curiously seek them out. Their celebration of their sacred festivals is mean, shy, and hurried. They

[1] A Sketch of Samaritan History, Dogma, and Literature. By John W. Nutt, M. A. London. 1874. Questiones de Rebus Samaritanorum sub Imperio Romanorum peractis. Scripsit M. Appel Dr. Phil. Gottingae. 1874.

seem to be a people out of place as well as out of (p. 142) time, an utter anachronism in this age. They have very slight knowledge of their own history, and even this small knowledge they are slow to impart. The contrast between their past and their present, their lofty inherited claim and their actual degradation, is more absolute than in the case of any existing tribe or race. They cannot even tell what they believe.

For information about the Samaritans, therefore, we have to go to other sources than to the present people. These sources are scattered, fragmentary, contradictory in statement, and biassed by prejudices of blood and of feeling. The actual literary remains of the Samaritan people are scanty enough, even when they are all brought together. A few liturgies, a few commentaries, a few theologies, a few chronicles, as wild and fanciful as the Arabic Mohammedan legends, — these, with the manuscripts of the Pentateuch, are the whole of Samaritan literature. They had no great or original writers, and the style is a jargon that hides the worthlessness of the ideas. Their literature, ancient or modern, , will bear no comparison with the writing of their Jewish foes. Indeed, the most that we can find of the faith or the fortunes of the Samaritans comes from what the Jews have written about them. They have been made more famous by their enemies than by their own rabbins. The malice of. their rivals has illustrated their influence more than any defense or claim which they have brought forward. We learn what they were in the Middle Ages almost wholly from the narratives of Jewish and Christian pilgrims.

Where did the Samaritans come-from? Who were they in the beginning? This is a preliminary question, and it is a question not easy to answer. The race had no existence before the time of the Assyrian Captivity, and the word "Samaritan" is not once used in the Scriptures of the Old Testament before that event. The Samaritan region comes often enough into the history, in the city which Ahab built for his father, and in the more ancient city where the tent of the first patriarch was pitched, where Jacob digged his well, and where Joseph's tomb was builded. But nothing is known of any Samaritan variety of Israelites, different from other Israelites. The people are the descendants only of Ephraim and Manasseh, with the mingling of the blood of some of the other Hebrew tribes, and, to some de- (p. 143) gree, of the Canaanite nations. Before the Assyrians broke upon Palestine and destroyed the Northern Kingdom, and carried off its people, the Samaritans as a community or a tribe, are not heard of; there is no sign of any peculiar Samaritan faith or worship. There were had idolatries enough in the kingdom of Ahab and his successors, but this Samaritan abomination was not one of them.

The existence of the people begins with the Assyrian Captivity, about seven hundred years before the Christian era. Perhaps the first appearance of the Samaritan religion must be assigned to a much later date, but it cannot be earlier. The beginning of strife between the Jews and Samaritans appears in the attempt of Zerubbabel to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem, on the return of a Jewish colony from the captivity in Babylon, a little more than five hundred years before the time of Christ. At that time "Samaritans" were dwelling in Judea, in the ancient towns, and •pretending to own the vineyards and the land. Who were these people? Were they the descendants of Israelites left behind by the Assyrians, — of men who did not go into captivity with their brethren? Were they the posterity of the colonists from the East sent in by the Assyrian king to take the place of the transported Hebrews? Were they Canaanite and Moabite marauders, who had possessed themselves of the deserted territory? Were they Jewish stragglers who had escaped from captivity and gradually worked their way back to Palestine in advance of

the main colony? Or were they a mingling of all these, a conglomerate of races, of adventurers and vagabonds of various tribes and kindreds? It is impossible to tell. Probably the last supposition is nearest to the truth, and the Samaritans may be taken as only the general term for the occupants of the land of all sorts, when the Jewish colony from Chaldea came back to the ruined city of their fathers. Some were Hebrew, some Syrian, some Chaldean, and some the children of the proper Jews of the southern kingdom; possibly some were captives of the Assyrians from regions still Farther east. The Samaritans were, in general, the people whose central abode was in fertile Samaria, but who spread themselves out from that centre over the other parts of the Sacred Land.

Had these people any definite and established religion, any conspicuous worship, when the Jewish high priest and his follow- (p. 144) ers found them there in Palestine? Had they preserved or revived there any such worship as that of the former Temple, with its staff of priests and its holy festivals, and its sacrifices and its solemn laws? Had they at that time any Book of the Law, or any knowledge of the Mosaic and patriarchal record? This, too, is what we cannot find out. When Zerubbabel first attempted to build the Temple, these men of Samaria came to him with friendly professions, and offered to assist him in the work, declaring that the Jewish God was their God, and that they had an equal share in the Hebrew inheritance. But when the Jewish pride and scruple rejected their aid, they turned to intrigue against the Jews, and used every effort to persuade the Persian king to revoke his permission to the Jewish missionaries. Their claim was inconsistent. Sometimes they insisted that they, and not the Jews, were the genuine followers of the first Hebrew leaders. At other times they disowned all Hebrew descent, and pretended, as Josephus tells us, now that they were Persians, and now again that they were Phoenicians. There can be no doubt that, in these earlier centuries of the Samaritan history, if they kept the Jewish Law and worshipped the Jewish Jehovah, they had also numerous idolatries; that the religions of the surrounding nations had a place with the Jewish religion; and that there was no exclusive faith. Very likely the condition of things was such as the writings of the Hebrew chronicles and prophecies show it to be in the later reigns of the Israelite kings.

The first permanent memorial of the Samaritan worship, as distinct from the Jewish worship, was undoubtedly the Temple built upon Mount Gerizim in opposition to the Temple at Jerusalem. The date of the building of this temple is another of those perplexing uncertainties in which all the Samaritan history seems to be involved. The occasion of this building, as Josephus tells it, was a marriage of the daughter of Sanballat, — a Cuthite foreigner, one of the Samaritan people, — to a brother of the Jewish high priest. The marriage caused great scandal among the stricter Jews, as it was contrary to their law; and the new temple was a reward to the Jew for his constancy in holding to his marriage bond. In this temple he might keep his customary worship, and not feel himself to be an outcast. But Josephus puts (p. 145) the time of this event in the reign of Darius, the last king of Persia, whom Alexander conquered, about B.C. 335; while in the Book of Nehemiah, Sanballat appears as the foe of the Jews and their temple, some seventy-five or eighty years earlier. As the dates of Josephus are very loose and arbitrary, it is better to follow the Scriptural account; and the best Jewish critics hold that the Samaritan Temple was built at least four centuries earlier than the Christian era.

Not merely the convenient place, but the religious fame of Gerizim, might be a motive for making it the site of another temple. It had very ancient honor in the history of the

people. One of the legends made Gerizim, and not Moriah, to be the place where Abraham went to sacrifice his son Isaac at the command of Jehovah; and, according to the narrative in Genesis, at the foot of Gerizim Abraham built his first altar to Jehovah, before he went farther on his journey. Some of the- occurrences mentioned in the Book of the Judges were associated with this mountain. It was the mount of blessing for the Hebrew tribes, and it comes into the story before David bought the threshing-floor of Araunah, or Solomon built there his house to the Lord. It is in the very centre of the land, visible far and wide, high above the plain, yet easy of ascent, more fertile on its sides, and far broader on its summit, than Mount Moriah, and much fitter to be the site of a national sanctuary. If the first temple had been built upon Gerizim, instead of Moriah, it is quite probable that the revolt of the Ten Tribes would never have come, and that the larger part of the Hebrew people would have been hindered from their lapse into heathen idolatries. A topographer would choose Shechem, with its twin mountains and its abundance of streams, and not Jerusalem, far up among its rocky hills, and remote in the land, as the natural capital of the land. If a rival shrine were to be built, Gerizim was the place for it. Nature and Scripture seemed alike to justify the choice; and the bitterness of Jewish hostility to the Samaritans after this act of impiety is an evidence that Sanballat had not erred in his selection, that a great many Jews accepted the innovation, and that the malcontents were able to quiet their consciences in worshiping in the new temple. For two hundred years it stood there, — long enough to (p. 146) fasten a traditional and undying hatred between the Jews and the Samaritans. When rival sects have condensed their rivalry into solid and costly foundations and structures, they cannot easily be brought together again. The builded churches stand in the way of the brotherly union.

In the meantime, before John Hyrcanus, about the year 129 B.C., finally conquered the city of Shechem and destroyed the temple, the dispute between Jews and Samaritans went on with increased bitterness. To the Scriptural honors of Gerizim the Samaritans had added fanciful glories. They said that Adam was created from the earth of this holy mountain. They said that, when the Deluge came, Gerizim alone was not submerged. The offending brother of the Jewish high priest, married against the Law, had been made high priest in the new temple, and a fraternal quarrel was added to the quarrel of the religions. The Jews, moreover, hated the Samaritans because they were disposed to make terms with the Greek marauders who ravaged Palestine, and they could have no charity for a people who were mean enough to ask that their temple might be consecrated anew to the Greek king of the gods, and to renounce their nationality. The fortunes of the Jews and Samaritans, in these wars with the Greek generals, were not very different. The Samaritan country was ravaged along with the Jewish, and the captives carried into Egypt were of both races. But even in their captivity they kept their hatreds, and fiercely disputed in the cities of the Nile valley whether Gerizim or Jerusalem were the true place of acceptable worship. Some of the Samaritans, indeed, had gone to Egypt in the retinue of Alexander before Ptolemy took Samaritan captives with him; and Josephus tells of a discussion between resident Jews and Samaritans in the city of Alexandria before the king, Ptolemy Philometer, on the points of their religious difference. The dispersion of the Samaritans to the Western and Southern nations, in Europe and Africa, began almost as soon as that of their Jewish rivals. Their influence on civilization was much less, as they were an inferior race, both in blood and in culture. There is no evidence that the Samaritans were known at all to the writers of Greece or Rome, or had any position in the great nations.

(p. 147) The destruction of their temple was an outrage which the Samaritans never pardoned. They answered it by misleading the Galilean Jews on their way to the sacred feasts, and even in killing some of them, if the legend may be trusted. They were turbulent subjects of the Jewish rule; and even when the Roman power was established in Palestine, and they had some privileges from the Roman prefects, they were still not satisfied, and claimed more than their protectors were willing to grant. One of their famous cities was restored by Herod, rebuilt in greater beauty, and named Sebaste in honor of the Emperor. They were able to defy their Jewish foes, and to practise their sacred rites. In the books of the New Testament they appear as a people to be dreaded as well as shunned. Yet the actual feeling of Jesus towards the Samaritans seems to be represented differently by the different Evangelists. According to Matthew, Jesus told his disciples to avoid the Samaritan cities; and when he himself journeyed to Jerusalem, he took pains to cross the Jordan, and go southward through Peraea, on the east side of the river. Luke, on the other hand, speaks of Jesus as decidedly friendly to the Samaritans. He sends his disciples into their country, and asks to have a house made ready for him in one of their villages. In his miracle and parable they appear in a favorable light. When the priest and Levite pass by the wounded man without caring for him, the Samaritan stops, lifts the sufferer, has him cared for in the inn, and pays for his keeping. When the ten lepers are cleansed, the only one that shows gratitude and praises God for his cure is a Samaritan. This would seem to imply that Jesus regarded the Samaritan worship to be genuine. In the fourth Gospel, Jesus appears as talking in a friendly way with a Samaritan woman, at the very foot of Mount Gerizim; and afterwards with more of the people, many of whom became his disciples. The woman admits that the Jews and Samaritans have no intercourse, and is surprised that Jesus should ask her to give him water. And in another place of the Gospel the feeling of the Jews is shown, where the Pharisees say to Jesus, " Now we know that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil." John certainly shows Jesus not bound by the prejudices of his race, and apparently admitting the claim of the woman that she was a genuine Israelite, that she was (p. 148) a descendant of Father Jacob, though her people were misled in their worship. As Jesus taught that God was the spiritual father of all, so he began by calling into the true salvation the nearest Gentiles, the hereditary enemies of the Jewish people. In this conversation, moreover, the Samaritans share the Messianic hope of the Jews, expect a Christ, even if they do not worship in the right place; and they are willing to take a Jew as that Christ.

No explanation, which admits all the Gospels as genuine, has been able to harmonize this difference between Matthew and Mark on the one hand, and John and Luke on the other. It is not pleasant to accept the theory of Dr. Appel that Matthew rightly represents the feeling of the Master, and that the stories of Luke are colored by his Pauline purpose of calling in the Gentiles, while the account of John is a mythical reproduction of Eliezer and Rebecca at the well, and not the narrative of a literal history. That Jesus made any considerable number of Samaritan converts is not probable. They certainly did not get over their anti-Jewish feelings in joining his company, or follow him beyond the borders of their territory. Mark, in his account of the excitement caused by the first preaching of Jesus in Galilee, says that not only men came from beyond Jordan, and from Judea, — much farther than Samaria southward, — from Jerusalem and from Idumea, but even Gentiles from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. The Samaritans do not appear in this company; and in none of the Gospels do the Samaritans ever appear as Christians along

with the Jews. It seems, indeed, quite improbable that, in the state of feeling of the Jews at that time, any Samaritan should be found going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, — a journey which neither business nor piety would call him to make, — or that even lepers should forget their national antipathies in consorting with each other.

If Jesus made few converts from the Samaritans, his apostles seem to have been more fortunate. Philip, the deacon, did missionary work in Samaria; and they came "with one accord," so says the narrative, to hear him, and brought their sick to be healed by him. After him came Peter and John; and, even in the earlier time of Stephen's martyrdom, we read that the Church were scattered through Samaria as well as Judea. If we may trust Justin Martyr, the famous Simon Magus, who tried to buy (p. 149) the Holy Spirit from the apostles, was a Samaritan, "of a city called Gitton." But Justin's testimony is to be received with caution, for he complains in another place in his Apology that very few of the Jews or Samaritans became Christians. Allusions to the Samaritans in the writings of the Christian fathers are rare. Most that we learn of them in the first Christian century comes from Josephus, and from scattered allusions in the Jewish Talmud. The wild fancies of the Samaritan chronicle, however, mention some additional facts, such as the rebuilding of the temple on Gerizim by the Romans, at the time of the war with the Jewish rebel, Bar Cocheba. In this rebellion, the Jews and Samaritans were at the beginning associated, but the Samaritans characteristically changed their alliance and joined what would evidently be the winning side.

In the meantime, in the wars of Palestine and the resulting conquests, the dispersion of the Samaritans had gone on. They were no longer concentrated in the central province of the land, but they had settlements in Gaza, in Caesarea, in Tyre, in Damascus, in various parts of Egypt, in Rome, too. Cassiodorus speaks of their synagogue in Home. By the Roman emperors of the second and third centuries they were generally favored. By the Roman emperors of the fourth and fifth centuries they were oftener persecuted. Hadrian, who built their temple on Gerizim (according to their own account), according to another account persecuted and insulted them; changed the name of Shechem to Flavia Neapolis; burned their books; built on Gerizim a temple to Jupiter, which gave rise afterward to the assertion that the Roman God and the Samaritan were one and the same. At a later period, the Emperor Commodus ordered the Samaritan schools to be shut, their synagogues to be destroyed, their priests to be killed, and prohibited the reading of their books. They had at times to contend with a triple foe, — with Pagans, with Jews, 'and with Christians. They were slandered as idolaters and infidels. One said that they worshiped the gods which they had dug up from the hiding of Jacob. Another accused them of using adulterated foreign wines. Another insisted that they made libations to heathen gods. Others accused them of worshiping doves, which seemed to connect their worship with the heathen Yenus. (p. 150) When Christians came into power in the empire, they were disposed to class the Samaritans with the Pagans, and prohibit their religion.

In the code of Theodosius II. the Samaritans are coupled with the Jews, and are burdened with the same civil disabilities. They cannot hold office; they cannot make binding wills; and if their property goes to their heirs, it is by special favor. On the other hand, it is expressly forbidden to any Samaritan parent to disinherit a child who may have been converted to Christianity, and have gone over, as the law expresses it, from their own darkness of superstition to the gospel light; or to lessen the legacy on that account, whether the offenders be few or many, daughters or sons. Under these disabilities,

conversions, or the appearances of conversion, were frequent; comparatively few became Christians in heart, more than the Goths in Spain who pretended to be Saracens. Sometimes the rage of the Samaritans could not be controlled, and they were guilty of rash acts of violence. In the year 484, when Zeno was emperor, the Paschal Chronicle tells, us that the Samaritans broke in upon the Christians while they were celebrating Pentecost, killed many of them, and cut off the fingers of Terebinthus, the bishop. The bishop carried to Constantinople his mutilated limb, showed it to the emperor, and the result was that the Samaritans were prohibited from using their sacred mountain, and a temple to the Virgin was built there, which was guarded night and day against their profanations. "And fear and peace came upon them," is the quaint sentence which the Chronicle uses to describe the effect of the persecutions. The peace, nevertheless, was not absolute. Under the lead of a Samaritan woman, a daring attempt was made to scale the mountain and to seize the temple. The guard was killed, but the people of the city did not sustain the attempt, and the effort of the heroine only ended in the massacre of her associates.

The Samaritans of this age had one distinguished scholar, almost the only one in their long history. Marinus, a Samaritan, held for nearly forty years the place of chief teacher in the schools' of Athens, and was a noted interpreter of the works of Aristotle. He is praised by Damascenus as one whom priests, as well as wise men, glorified for the abundance and skill of his (p. 151) labors, the many books that he wrote. Two other Samaritans, pretending to be Christians, reached high civil dignities in the reign of Justinian. Even one Silvanus, a Samaritan magistrate, took part against his countrymen. New seditions arose in Samaria, new and more stringent laws were passed against the "Manichaean heretics," which was the convenient way of designating any whom the orthodox Christians hated Faustinus, the prefect, one of those Samaritans who pretended to be Christians, was able, by ministering to the avarice of Justinian, to get favor for his people. He was restored to .his government by giving an ass loaded with gold to the agent of the emperor.

If the Samaritans could not hold public offices, they could at least be, what the Jews have been for so many centuries,— money-changers; and they gave their name to this occupation, which they held in many provinces of the empire. At Constantinople, in the reign of Justinian, the brokers and money-dealers were all called "Samaritans." Occasionally some of those who had gone over to the Christians, and had even been baptized, recanted. An edict was issued against these recantations. The slaves of Samaritans were encouraged to become Christians by the promise of their freedom. They were not allowed any longer to have synagogues, and their evidence in court was not received against a Christian. Their name was the synonym of meanness and wickedness, and they had really no rights which the Christians were bound to respect.

This was the condition of the Samaritans at the beginning of the seventh century, when the new Moslem religion arose in the East: After Omar took possession of Palestine, we hear little or nothing of them until the age of the Crusades. Moslem writers, in describing Palestine, either overlook them altogether or confound them with the Jews. There is no evidence that they were ever fairly driven away from Samaria or Gerizim, though their religion was prohibited. Benjamin of Tudela found them there in the twelfth century, and describes their books and their religion. Later travelers describe their life in other places, — at Cairo in Egypt, Askelon, Gaza, Damascus, Aleppo. In 1671 there were thirty

families in Nablous. Before the year 1500 the traveler Obadiah found fifty families in Cairo. But to-day all traces of (p. 152) these foreign Samaritans are lost, and no community is known except the community at Nablous, in which Samaritan descent is acknowledged or Samaritan books are kept as sacred. Here, where the sect had its birth-place, it will find, after not many years, its grave.

The doctrinal system of the Samaritans is obscure, all the more that the religion had its sects, and that the authorities differ so widely about it. In the beginning, probably there was no large divergence from the Jewish system. If Zerubbabel had allowed the Samaritans to assist in the building of the Temple, there might never have been a separate Samaritan religion. At a later time the tenets of the faith more resembled the Sadducee than those of any Jewish sect. The Samaritans received only the Pentateuch as binding, interpreted it literally, denied the resurrection, and had only a vague belief, if any, in the separate existence of soul. Their view of Jehovah and his Law was substantially of the first high priest of their temple upon Mount Gerizim. But in the ages following the destruction of Jerusalem, the faith of the Samaritans seems to have been modified by new views, taken from the people around them. The doctrine of a Messiah, which, according to John's Gospel, they had in the time of Christ, becomes more important. Pharisaic glosses and interpretations are adopted; and, except in the substitution of Gerizim for Jerusalem, there is little to distinguish Samaritan faith and worship from average orthodox Judaism. Epiphanius, however, in his work on "Heresies," speaks of *four sects* among the Samaritans in the fourth century; but of only one of these have any considerable accounts been given. About the Dositheans, the accounts which have come from writers in the Samaritan and Moslem ranks widely differ. One affirms that there are *three* teachers named Dositheus, another two, while another identifies them as a single person. Both Mr. Nutt and Herr Appel discuss the question, coming to different conclusions, — the first finding that the Dositheus of the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes was a renegade Jew, much earlier in time than the Jew Dusis, who was allowed to escape the punishment of death for his adultery, on condition that he would break up the Samaritans by founding a new sect; while the second, judging by the similarity of their (p. 153) tenets, thinks that the stories are a various reading of one and the same legend. The Samaritan chronicler, Abulfath, separates the two stories, and the statement that he gives of the notions of the Dostani, or Dositheans, is curious: that a dead insect defiles a fountain; that a man whose shadow falls upon a grave remains seven days impure; that only the eggs of fowls killed for sacrifice can be eaten lawfully; that whether a house was pure or not was shown by the kind of bird which lighted upon it; that cattle could not be fed or watered on the Sabbath; and that they altered the time of the feasts. This last charge he also brings against the impious Dusis, whose books, after his murder, were brought forward by the widow with whom he had left them.

That the doctrines of Simon Magus, who seems to have been by birth a Samaritan, were adopted by the sect, is not probable. Mr. Nutt sums up the creed of the Samaritans as it is drawn from the hymns and liturgies and Samaritan writings, in five articles: that there is one infinite creating and preserving God, the maker of all things; that Moses is his first, greatest, and sufficient Prophet; that the Law is perfect in itself, made before creation, and to last forever; that Gerizim is God's House, the centre of all the sacred places; and that there will be a resurrection for the righteous, and a burning hell for the wicked.

The characteristic doctrine of the modern Samaritans is their doctrine of Messiah. While the Jews have so largely given up the idea of any personal coming of the Redeemer, and look for his kingdom in the general advance of civilization, and in the simplification of religious ideas, the Samaritans cling more closely to the personal Deliverer, and even fix, like our arithmetical Christians, the actual date of his appearance, and the details of the event . Their idea of the Messiah varies from the Jewish idea. He is not to be a descendant of Judah, but of Joseph, who is their favorite among the sons of Jacob. He will not be immortal, but will die, and will have his grave near the grave of Joseph. His coming will bring a great overturn among the nations, but it will end very peacefully, in a congress of all the wise men of the earth, who will be converted to the truth by the Samaritan Messiah, as he shows them at Gerizim the tables of the Law and the sacred vessels which were hidden there by Moses. This coming (p. 154) will be in precisely six thousand years from the creation of the world; and, as nearly twenty years have passed since that date, according to the Samaritan reckoning, Messiah (Taheb) has already been several years upon the earth, although "no one has recognized him as yet, and no one .knows exactly where he is. But as he has one hundred and ten years to live, there is ample time for him to harmonize the nations, and fulfill the prophecies, and restore the worship to the holy mountain.

The ancient temple and altars of the Samaritans on Gerizim are now in ruins. But they use the mountain in their religious rites, and celebrate their feasts as devoutly as when they were counted by myriads and were a power in the land. At the Passover Feast they go up on the mountain, on the 14th of Nisan; on the evening of the next day pitch their tents, kill and roast in the trenches their unblemished lambs, eat the repast with unleavened bread and bitter herbs, and take staves in their hands as if about to set out on a pilgrimage. Great rejoicings follow, in which strong drink is freely used. A week later, they visit the sacred sites of the mountain, and recite before them passages from the Law. On Pentecost day these visits are repeated. On the first day of Tisri, their New Year's day, the Feast of Trumpets, all the people solemnly kiss the old Synagogue Roll, the chief of their treasures. The Atonement day is very strictly kept, by abstinence from food, drink and sleep, between sunrise and sunset, and is wholly spent in worship, by night as well as day. The whole Law is read through. During the Feast of Tabernacles they have their booths on the side of the mountain, and make it a week of holidays. Other times they have of sacred meetings, besides their Sabbath service; one on which the congregation is numbered, and the priests get their scanty offerings. The priesthood is hereditary, but no one whose hair is cut can be a priest. This mark of separation between priests and people does not appear in the streets, as they all wear turbans, — red turbans, to distinguish them from the Moslems, who wear white and green, and from Jews and Christians, who wear blue and yellow. In their religious services they are allowed to wear the white turban. All the men wear beards, and none of the women wear earrings, which seem to show idolatry. Their domestic, marriage, and (p. 155) burial customs are those of the tribes around them. Indeed, in these there is not much difference between Moslem and Jew.

About the Samaritan literature there has been almost as much dispute as about the character of the people. Had they a dialect of their own? Had they scribes fit to improve or interpret the Sacred Record? What is the value of their copy of the Law? That they had an ancient literature appears from the mention by Eusebius of certain of their writers,— one Eupolemus, who connects Gerizim with Melchisedek, and shows Abraham the

inventor of astrology; one Theodotus, who described Sichem in flowing verse; one Thallus, who speaks of the darkness at Jesus' crucifixion as coming from an eclipse of the sun. But all the writings of these early Samaritans are lost, and the fragments cited by Eusebius are of doubtful genuineness. These men, at any rate, were probably apostates who had renounced their faith and wrote in foreign tongues. The only ancient literary monument of the people which has come down to us is their copy of the Mosaic Law, with the translations and paraphrases made from it. This, more than anything else, gives them historical importance; and this will preserve their memory after the race and religion have utterly disappeared.

The most ancient copy of the Samaritan Pentateuch in existence is unquestionably the old roll in the Synagogue of Nablous, which is supposed to be the oldest Hebrew manuscript in existence. This is certainly not as old as the inscription upon it pretends, and it could not have been made by the great-grandson of Aaron; but it is probably older than any existing roll of the Jews, and may have been written some centuries before the Christian era. It has very little value now for scholars, partly because they are not allowed to examine it at leisure, and partly because it is so worn and defaced. It was written on the skins of rams, of different sizes. Half of the writing is now illegible. There are rents and holes in it, in places the parchment is thin, and it will only bear careful handling. Comparatively few of those who visit the synagogue are allowed to see it, other ancient manuscripts of the synagogue being substituted. One writer says that he saw "three rolls" in the synagogue. He probably saw only the cases of the manuscript, and imagined rolls within them. One of these (p. 156) rolls, which is kissed by the worshipers, is blackened by their kisses at the passage in the Book of Numbers where the blessing is promised.

The knowledge of the Samaritan Pentateuch does not come from any of the copies in the Samaritan synagogue, but mainly from a copy brought from Damascus in the early part of the seventeenth century, and published in the Paris Polyglott of 1645. This gave rise to sharp controversies among the learned men in the Catholic and Protestant schools, some contending that it was purer than the Hebrew Pentateuch, others that it was a corruption of the Hebrew. Its closer resemblance to the Alexandrine Greek version was noticed, as indeed it had been noticed by some of the Christian Fathers, — Jerome, and Origen before him. They had suggested that the Septuagint version of the Pentateuch was really translated from a Samaritan original. Few controversies of Biblical criticism have been more acrimonious or more subtle than this, but for most readers it will be tedious; and in the absence of ancient Jewish manuscripts, it will be hard to decide which has the prior claim to be the authentic record of the Law of the Hebrew lawgiver. The actual variations of the Hebrew and Samaritan manuscripts are not very numerous. Since the copy brought from Damascus by Pietro della Valle came to Europe, many more copies have come, and are now shown in different libraries, in Europe. Eighteen of these are enumerated in Kennicott's list in the remarkable article of Deutsch on the Samaritan Pentateuch in Smith's Biblical Dictionary.

Translations of this Samaritan Pentateuch into the popular Samaritan dialect, — Targums, as the Jews call them, — were made at an early date, and by use of the rabbis came to have as much authority as the volume itself. Manuscripts of the Samaritan Targum, from the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries, are in the libraries of Rome. A Greek translation seems to have been in use in the first Christian centimes different from the Alexandrine Jewish version. In the tenth and eleventh centuries, Arabic versions were

made by Saadiah and Abusaid; and a revision of the last translation was made early in the thirteenth century. These translations take liberties with the original text, and are (p. 157) not of high critical value. They give no important aid in fixing the primitive text.

Whether the original Samaritan Pentateuch was written in the primitive rude Hebrew characters, such as we find them on the Moabite stone, or in the later script of the time of Ezra, cannot be determined. At the time when the worship on Gerizim was instituted, the Israelite language had already become corrupt, and Assyrian and Chaldean phrases were mixed with the Hebrew. At a later period, the dialects of the western nations modified this composite speech, and the ancient Hebrew ceased to be understood. Samaritan literature, if that term may be used, is partly written in the Samaritan characters, but not always in the Samaritan language. The Samaritan Chronicle, which is a fanciful relation of the exploits of Joshua and the Judges, down to the late oppressions of the Samaritans by the Byzantine emperors, was written in Arabic in the thirteenth century. The Book El Tholidoth, The Generations, is a more sober narrative, written in Hebrew. The Chronicle of Abulfath is later, but more elaborate and full, beginning at the Creation, and coming down to the time of Mohammed. It is written in bad Arabic, and is full of historical blunders. Beside these "chronicles," there arc shorter Arabic tracts, in which legends are recited about Adam and Enoch and Noah and Moses. There is an especial fondness for connecting Gerizim and its neighborhood with the patriarchs of Genesis. Adam comes to Nablous after he leaves Paradise; Enoch is buried on Mount Ebal; Noah is buried at Nablous.

The rest of the literature of the Samaritans is in commentaries, law books, books of diet, books of ethics, liturgies and litanies, hymns, — written sometimes in Hebrew, sometimes in Arabic, — and a few works of grammar. Of strict theological treatises there are none that have been examined, apart from legal and ritual treatises. One writer undertakes to prove from the Pentateuch the doctrine of immortality. All this literature probably belongs to the centuries since the time of Mohammed, and most of it to the last seven hundred years. No Samaritan lexicon has yet been found, and there are not many aids in the study of the language. Some of the Samaritan collections, however, in the (p. 158) libraries, are large, especially the collection brought a few years since by Firkowitsch from Palestine and Egypt, and now in the Imperial Library of St. Petersburg. Eminent Hebrew scholars, like Gesenius, Petermann, Heidenheim, and Jewish historical writers, have made a study of Samaritan antiquities. Petermann is able to tell how the Samaritans read and pronounce their sacred language. In England, Mr. John W. Nutt (whose volume has been freely used in preparing this paper) has condensed Samaritan History from the best sources, and has himself edited, from a Bodleian manuscript, the fragments of a Samaritan Targum. The late Emanuel Deutsch had a rare and thorough knowledge of the Samaritan writings, as is shown in his article in Smith's Dictionary, already referred to.

The study of Samaritan literature will be in Europe, and not in the East. With the exception of those old rolls in the Nablous synagogue, not much of importance of Samaritan records remains in Palestine. The best things have been bought and carried away, and the few survivors of the people have nothing more to tell. None of their number have either taste or capacity to look into or explain the treasures which they own. They are dull of eye, dull of brain, and have difficulty enough merely to keep their wretched life. But in the revival of Semitic studies in Europe, so marked in these last

years, the work of the Samaritans will not be neglected, and we may look for editions of the best of the Samaritan fragments.

To the existence of this Sanctuary in Samaria, and its claim as rival of the Sanctuary in Jerusalem, Christians are indebted for the sentence which is the highest utterance of the spiritual idea of worship, the comprehensive thought of the Divine nature,— "God is spirit, and they who worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." The Holy Place on Gerizim maybe profaned and forgotten, but in bringing out this word of Jesus it had an office as high as that of the more imposing Temple on Mount Moriah, with its solemn service of consecration by a king. No story of the sacred volume has higher or more spiritual meaning than the conversation of Jesus with the Samaritan woman. His word to the Magdalen, or to the widow at Nain, or to the sisters at Bethany, or to his mother, even, when he told her of his large (p. 159) message and his Father's business, is not so deep or suggestive as his word to this woman of a spurned and hated race, the wife of seven husbands, — revealing to her not only the doctrine of the spiritual Father, but her own thought and experience, making her see the true Messiah in one who was so a " Prophet of the soul."

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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

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