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**CHRISTIAN THOUGHT
LECTURES AND PAPERS ON
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CHRISTIAN EVIDENCE,
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EDITED BY
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INSTITUTE LECTURES AND PAPERS.**

(P. 376) THE LIGHT AND THE DARK.—Mr. Elliott F. Shepard has kindly furnished the pictures in front of this number, together with the following observations:

I.

The pictures are engravings of photographs taken from life and show the Light and the Dark of Syria.

On the right, standing at the entrance of his little, low, old stone synagogue at Nabalus, the scriptural Shechem, is Jacob the Samaritan High-Priest, with whiskers, hair and eyes as dark as mystery; and beside him is the famous Samaritan Pentateuch, written, as he says, by Abishua, the son of Phineas, who was son of Eleazer the son of Aaron, three thousand four hundred years ago, in the ancient Hebrew, upon parchment with yellowness, patchings and distinctness as curious as a mine.

Nabalus (Shechem) is now a thriving city of twenty thousand population, half that of Jerusalem, and has long been piling up the ashes from its extensive soap manufactories in the most convenient proximity, raising them to hills over which verdure has crept and streets have crossed and buildings appeared, until a new row of stone dwellings, which we saw erecting there last May, was a hundred feet above the street of the old synagogue. As the dwellers are dust, this is a case of *dust to ashes*; and each succeeding is truly a *rising generation*.

Shechem is 1,900 feet above, and in sight of, the Great Sea, and between Mounts Ebal and Gerizim, the former of which is 3,000 feet high and the latter 2,900, the scenes of the cursing and the blessing under Joshua. But before that, there the Father of the Faithful saw God, and was promised the land; there the Patriarch Jacob buried the strange gods of his heathen servants, and there the bones of Joseph had set the obelisks the example of migration from Egypt by coming up to be buried; and, after that, Abimelech, having slain seventy sons of his father Gideon, there got himself futilely proclaimed king; and the divine-right (p. 377) king, Rehoboam, son of Solomon, tyrannically alienated the ten tribes; and the King of kings "sat thus on our father Jacob's well " while a woman was His priestess to carry the Gospel even to our age. Now, the Samaritan women are not allowed to be educated, because they have no time to learn, nor to attend synagogue; and that is black enough.

The Samaritans are monogamists, but allowed a second wife if the first bears no children. Yet the females number less than the males—so old bachelors must be on the increase among them.

According to High-Priest Jacob, anciently all Israelites, numbering millions, followed with Samaritans. Seven centuries ago that community were a thousand, and lived in various towns—now Nabalus-Shechem contains every man, woman and child of them, totally numbering 180 souls—a lessening which would please the shade of Malthus. Jacob says that the men of Judah and Benjamin tell them that the cause of their diminution is their continued use of the ancient Hebrew, the characters in which God wrote the Decalogue, which is too sacred for human use; and that Judah and Benjamin were minished until, at their lowest ebb in Babylon, they adopted the Chaldaic, and thence began to increase again.

At our visit in the old synagogue, which is in a steep, narrow, crooked, gloomy and partially subterranean street, all their males were assembled in the service of the passover. The whole community usually spend the passover week on Mount Gerizim, but had just been brought down thence in the midst of the feast by the serious sickness of one

of their leading members, who died, and they had buried him, and it was too fatiguing to return to the summit. Death acted as showman for us. If the leading member had not been obliging enough to die, we should have found an empty and barred synagogue, and should not have seen the wonderful old codex, nor the surpliced ritual, nor heard the chants, which are the prototypes of those of the Roman Church.

No sooner had our party become visible at the open door of the synagogue, than the assistant high-priest stopped the service, came and saluted us, brought us the manuscript Pentateuch in (p. 378) its metal case covered with velvet embroideries, and upon its rolls of brass, and civilly answered our questions. While thus engaged, the high-priest, in order to survey the children of the Setting Sun, came to the door, with the excuse of hawking and spitting, and returned to his interior niche leaving each of his eyes with us.

Both these persons spent an hour in our tents, under the direct and cross-examination of the Gospel and the Law. The first being conducted by the Rev. Dr. Henry H. Jessup of the American Christian College of Beirut, and the latter through him as interpreter by the writer.

Jacob, H. P., etc., gave me his photograph, but could not then write his autograph on it, because it was a fast, and in it he could do no work; yet he would keep it, write on it a sentence from their Pentateuch with his autograph, after the fast was finished, and mail it to me at Jerusalem. Thanks to Rev. Mr. Fallscheer, the resident Christian missionary, this he did.

The autograph is reproduced with the picture.

High-Priest Jacob insisted—

That his people are not Samaritans—in the sense usually defined by history—and also by our Lord, when He said: "Ye Samaritans worship ye know not what"—but Israelites, whose fathers had escaped and remained behind when the Ten Tribes were captured. That they had never intermarried with the immigrants transplanted at that time into their country by Shalmanezar, king of Assyria. That he, Jacob, is in the direct line from Aaron, coming through Uzziah the seventh from Aaron, to whom when twelve years old Eli ought to have given up the high-priesthood, and because he did not, but usurped the office, being a Levite, of the right tribe, but not the right family, God slew him and his sons in the days of Samuel. That the high-priesthood descended to him. Jacob, by the line of the oldest male, whether son, uncle, cousin or nephew, and not in the line of the oldest son only. That the first and only real temple was built on Mount Gerizim, and Uzziah while once officiating in it, suddenly found himself in darkness and in a cave. Then God had him take up the ark, with the two tables of the law, and put them in this cavern; then the golden candlestick, the table of shew-bread, the altar, the laver (p. 379) and all the temple vessels. When he went out, the cavern's door was closed and a Hebrew inscription appeared above it. Again Uzziah looked, and the inscription was gone, and so was the temple and every vestige of its existence. No one now knows where are the cavern and all these things. Some time or other God will reveal them all again, when the prophet like unto, but not greater than, Moses, shall appear, from either the tribe of Joseph or of Levi, the two tribes represented by High Priest Jacob's followers; but from which tribe, their interpreters were not agreed. That the patriarch Jacob's prophecy about Shiloh had been fulfilled in Solomon, and did not refer to the Messiah; and his blessing of Judah was to the effect that he should wash his clothes in wine, and eat the fat of rams, and was not much of a blessing after all.

That the Samaritans believed only in the Pentateuch, although they had the other Old Testament books, which they regarded merely as intelligent histories.

That since the vanishing of the Temple they offered the passover solely to commemorate God's passing over the Israelites in Egypt, and not as a sacrifice for sin; for that could only be offered, and confession of sin could only be made, and whether or not there was any sin could only be told, at the Temple; and as there was no Temple, it could not be known whether sin was committed, or who had committed it, and none could confess it, and there remained no sacrifice for sin! That everybody who obeyed the Pentateuch would be saved, and people could keep the Ten Commandments if they would; if they did not, and repented, God was merciful.

Jacob, H. P., etc., had read the New Testament, and if it and the other books of the Old Testament (besides the Pentateuch) were true, there certainly was answering correspondence and fulfilment of prophecy, AND JESUS WAS THE MESSIAH! Then, said Dr. Jessup, on your own showing, if you are right we Christians are as well off as you; but if we are right you are in great danger. To which Jacob assented. He was told of the successful education of women in Beirut. Dr. Fallscheer offered to take all his females into his women's school. But everything was in vain. Nervousness and an excited countenance were the only (380) apparent outcome of Jacob's glance into the mirror of truth. It did not have the charming effect that General Gordon produced at Kartoum, when he showed Bedouins to themselves in a glass. Jacob experienced no satisfaction. He departed with a downcast look, but making his adieux courteously. The heart is a field; what if the good seed should yet take root in Jacob's!

Note from this Editor of the SamaritanUpdate.com

This book is referenced # *has not been mentioned* 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