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The Communion of Saints.

An attempt to illustrate the true Principles of Christian Union.

By **H. B. Wilson**, B.D. Oxford. 1851

(p. 292) Such then have been the ideas of *orthodox* Judaism, from the time at least of the composition of the Talmud, till the present day. Before attempting to trace these ideas back to a time anterior to the Talmud, it will be well (p.293) to examine the ideas of «a religious body closely allied by origin to the Jews, but separated from them by an almost inconceivable amount of sectarian hatred. We mean of course the SAMARITANS, with whom "the Jews have had no dealings" for more than two thousand years. Whatever Jews and Samaritans have in common in matters of doctrine is certainly anterior to the time of their separation.

Although we are in possession of but few documents illustrative of the Samaritan doctrines, we shall find quite sufficient for our purpose.

In the fragment of commentary in the Arabic language first' published by Schnurer, from a manuscript in the Bodleian, we find this interpretation of Gen. xlix. 22.

"I will fortify myself by his means (Joseph's) against misfortune, and avoid ill through him, for he will be my shield against it, and my arrow to repel adversity, for he supports me and my sons in this life, and will aid me by his prayers in the next."¹

This interpretation indeed is not that of the author of the commentary, but he does not object to the doctrine contained in it. Could we find it in a Protestant commentary ?

In their first letter to Joseph Scaliger, the Samaritans beg of him to send a donation for the maintenance of their priests and worship,

'And a votive offering and gift for the prophets and saints, Eleazar, Ithamar, Pinehas, Joshua son of Nun, Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and our father Joseph the fruitful bough. Peace be with them all for ever! For they all are buried in the territory of the city of Sichem, and votive offerings and gifts are brought to them from all cities and families.'²

Their second letter begins as follows :—

In the name of the great Lord, the strong and terrible. The fear of the Lord be upon Moses, the son of Amram, the Prophet of all ages. Through his works, his prayers, his fasts, his (*the next word is unintelligible*) may the Lord multiply the life (p. 294) of you

¹ In Eichhorn's Repertorium, Th. 16. See p. 188.

² Ib. Th. 13, p. 267.

all...may our God rise against those who shall rise against us and against you, through the merits of our fathers and your just men, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (upon whom be peace)."³

In the seventeenth century the Samaritans had been led, by certain Anglican divines, to believe that co-religionists of theirs were living in England, and the illusion was kept up by letters written to them in Hebrew by Dr. Marshall of Oxford. The Samaritans beg donations and votive offerings for their priests, and their poor, and their holy places, as in their correspondence with Scaliger. They complain that all Christians, Jews, and other religious sects except their English correspondents regularly send alms and offerings to their poor and the tombs of their prophets in Palestine. At last they write in bitter disappointment to their fellow Samaritans in Auksova (Oxford),-

" You announce to us that you send us eight gold pieces. These have arrived. But, brethren, this is not what we had a right to expect from you... We thought you would send us a sum of two thousand pieces of gold for a religious foundation, and we would pray for you to the holy prophets, and on Mount Gerizim, and at all times."⁴

Some Protestant controversialists will perhaps exclaim, " What do we care for the authority of these wretched people, and what does it matter to us what Jews, Turks, Druses, and other infidels may happen to believe or practise?" It matters perhaps a great deal more than controversialists may imagine.

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

³ Ib. p. 271.

⁴ Ib. Th. 9, p. 37, 42.