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THE RELIGIOUS WORLD DISPLAYED;
OR,
A VIEW
OF THE FOUR GRAND SYSTEMS OF RELIGION, NAMELY, CHRISTIANITY,
JUDAISM, PAGANISM, AND MOHAMMEDISM;
AND THE VARIOUS EXISTING DENOMINATIONS, SECTS, AND PARTIES IN
THE CHRISTIAN WORLD.
TO WHICH IS SUBJOINED, A VIEW OF MATERIALISM, NECESSITANISM,
DEISM, AND ATHEISM.

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(p. 322) EXISTING SECTS.

The whole body of Jews throughout the world, being, in the opinion of Christians, heretical, or merely branches of a human establishment, for many centuries and at the present day, must therefore be included in the list of Jewish sects. Of these I mention, I. *The Samaritans*, who are of longest standing, and whose original ancestors were, as it is well known, partly of Jewish and partly of Heathen extraction. They were circumcised, observed the ceremonies of the law, offered sacrifices at their temple on Mount Gerizim, and expected the Messiah: but they would not allow Jerusalem to be the place of worship; and they not only rejected all traditions, but would not receive any of the books of the Old Testament, except the five books of Moses.

The Samaritans were not expelled their country, like the other Jews; and though they never had an independent existence, their successors continue to occupy a spot within its bounds, and have preserved their religion, their language, their Sacred Books, and the chief seat of their worship, to the present day.

(p. 323) We had long remained strangers to every thing concerning them, and Julius Scaliger was perhaps the first that directed towards them the attention of the learned, about the beginning of the seventeenth century: since which time, Basnage, Carpzovius, Cellarius, Ludolph, Morinus, Relaud, and others, have introduced into Europe some

knowledge of their state, their religion, and their rites and ceremonies. But for the latest and most authentic account of them we are indebted to M. Sacy and the learned senator Gregoire, to whose communications respecting them the reader is referred¹. From these it appears, that the chief seat of the sect is the ancient Sichem, or Salem, now called Naplouse, or New Samaria, in the valley between Ehal and Gerizim, the birthplace of Justin Martyr; and that they are no where else to be found, except at Jaffa, *i.e.* the ancient Joppa. They are few in number, consisting of only thirty families, or of about two hundred men, women, and children, both at Naplouse and at Jaffa. They have not materially departed from any point of their religion ; and while they differ from the Rabbinites in most other things, they seem to agree with them in the notion that the law consists of 613 precepts. They still retain the Paschal sacrifice, with all its rites; but having been prohibited of late years from ascending Mount Gerizim, by their cruel oppressors the Turks, they now offer it within their city, " because that is considered within the precincts of the sacred place." They expect a Prophet, whom they style Hathab; but, say they, " there is a great mystery in regard to Hathah, who is yet to come, and who will manifest his Spirit. We shall be happy when he comes." The report of their worshipping' a dove is groundless; nor is it true that they deny the resurrection of the dead, or the existence of angels. They, however, admit that they " recite hymns and prayers that Jehovah would pardon the dead; and the priest purifies them by prayer."

The Samaritans have all along possessed the Samaritan Pentateuch, written, they say, in the true Hebrew language, and in the very characters in which the Ten Commandments were written on the two tables of stone that were given by God to Moses. They have likewise the Samaritan Version; but they reject the points, as a Rabbinical invention.

(p. 324) Their priest, whom they call Khacam, they consider to be a descendant of Levi. They say they spring from the true Israelites; and that they are of the tribe of Joseph, " son of our lord Jacob the Israelite." They keep themselves distinct from other nations, and will not intermarry, or even eat, with the Jews, between whom and the members of this sect the same hatred as formerly seems still to subsist. They live by themselves, in the Rue Verte, or in the quarter of Rhadera, at Naplouse; and their costume, by which they distinguish themselves from all other sects and nations, is a peculiar turban, which they always wear upon their heads.

On the Sabbath, and on all their festivals, when they go to the synagogue, they dress wholly in white. In prayer, they turn their faces towards Mount Gerizim.

A complete copy of their liturgy is still a desideratum in Europe; and it further remains to be ascertained whether this long oppressed, ignorant, and deluded people will listen to the preaching of the Gospel among them, and thereby ensure to themselves that happiness they expect under their long looked for Prophet, and the enjoyment of the glorious liberty of the children of God².

¹ "Memoire sur les Samaritains," par M. Silvestre De.Sacy, Paris , 1812. " Histoire des Sectes Religieuses," par. M. Gregoire, Paris, 1814, torn. ii. p. 213, &'c. An English translation of the Memoire, by the Author or this Work, may be seen in the 1st vol. of the "Jewish Expositor," London; 1816. See also the 37th chap. of Hannah Adams's " History of the Jews."

² See the " Missionary Register" for 1820, p. 384-5; and the "Jewish Expositor" for 1822, p. 295.