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**TRAVELS IN
PALESTINE,
THROUGH THE COUNTRIES OF
BASHAN AND GILEAD),
EAST OF THE RIVER JORDAN:
INCLUDING A VISIT TO
THE CITIES OF GERAZA AND GAMALA,
*IN THE DECAPOLIS.***

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(p. 520) CHAPTER XXIX.

SHECHEM, OR NEAPOLIS, MOUNT EBAL AND GERIZIM, AND THE WELLS
OF SAMARIA.

AFTER taking some bread and olive-oil, as a meal of hospitality with the Sheikh of Subusta, we quitted it about eleven o'clock, and from hence our road lay for half an hour over hills of siliceous stone, going constantly to the southward until we opened upon the long valley of Nablous, running nearly east and west.

We turned off to the eastward, leaving on our right the village of Beit Eiba, on the side of the hill; Beit Oozan, a smaller one, just above it; and on the summit of the range, an enclosed town with (p. 521) walls and towers, called Aijeneid, all peopled by Mohammedans. The valley here is really beautiful, being covered with woods of olives, corn fields now green, reservoirs of water, gardens, aqueducts in different directions, both arched and plain, and all the marks of industry, opulence, and abundance.

We continued our way easterly through this valley, and at noon approached Nablous, by the lower road, scarcely seeing it until we were near the gate. Just without it we passed through some grounds where several parties were spinning, winding off, and bleaching cotton thread; and soon afterwards we entered at the

western gate. Passing through a narrow but crowded bazar, we halted at a public khan, and directed our first enquiries to know when the Damascus caravan would set out. What was my mortification to learn that it departed three days since, that there remained not the least hope of overtaking it, and that no other would go from hence for at least a month to come! I grew almost desperate at this information, and had I not been restrained, would have really set out immediately to follow it alone. A moment's consideration convinced me, however, that this would be rashness rather than enterprise, and that there was no remedy but in a patient search for some other occasion.

The horseman sent with me by Hadjee Ahmed Gerar, insisted that, as the caravan was gone, and we were perfect strangers here, he could not leave me until some arrangements should be made for our future proceeding; but recommended that I should return with him to Sanhoor, whither he would conduct me in safety. This was therefore assented to, as the only alternative remaining; but as there was yet ample time to return before sunset, we halted for an hour to repose our horses, to cast our eyes around on the leading features of the place, and to make, in the mean time, a visit to the well of Samaria, to the eastward of the town.

The name of Sichem, which is one of the most ancient of those by which this place is known, appears, like that of Samaria, to (p. 522) have been applied to a district of country at first. On Abram's coming from Haran into the land of Canaan, he is said to have "passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh."¹ It is said also, in the history of Jacob's journeyings, that "he came to Shalem², a city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Padan-Aram, and pitched his tent before the city."³ The name too was evidently derived from that of the son of Hamor the Hurite, the prince of the country, whose name was Shechem.⁴ Josephus, however, calls Shechem "a *city* of the Canaanites," and the inhabitants of it, Shechemites.⁵ From these children of Hamor, the patriarch bought a parcel of a field here, where he had spread his tent, for an hundred pieces of money; and erected an altar, probably with a view to make it his permanent abode.⁶ And, indeed, this parcel of ground was held so sacred among his descendants, that the bones of Joseph, who died in Egypt, were brought up from thence to be buried here, and it became the inheritance of his children.⁷

¹ Genesis, xii. 5.

² Some critics have thought that as *Shalem* or *Salem* signifies peace, safety, &c. in Hebrew, the original of this passage should be rendered thus: "And he came in peace and safety to the city of Shechem," (Anc. Un. Hist. vol iii. p. 289. 8vo.) which would therefore be meant only of the *city* of Shechem, so called from the prince >f that name, who is expressly said to have been more honourable than all the house of his father. Genesis, xxxiv. 19.

³ Gen. xxxiii. 18.

⁴ Ibid. xxxiv. 2.

⁵ Ant Jud. I. i. c. xxi. S. 1

⁶ Gen. xxxiii. 19,20..

⁷ Joshua, xxiv. 33.

It was after this apparent settlement among them, that Dinah, his daughter, went into the city, during the celebration of a festival among the Shechemites, to see the finery of the women of that country⁸, or, as the Scriptures express it, " She went out to see the daughters of the land."⁹ This young Mesopotamian girl was, however, so much more beautiful or fascinating than those she had gone out to behold, that when Shechem, the son of Hamor, the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he took her, and lay with (p.523) her, and defiled her.¹⁰ Nor was it seemingly the momentary gratification of sensual passion which allured him, for" his soul clave unto Dinah, and he loved the damsel, and spoke kindly unto¹¹ her." And when difficulties arose about his legal marriage with her, he replied, in all the vehemence of a young and ardent lover, "Ask me never so much dowry and gift, and I will give according as ye shall say unto me; but give me the damsel to wife."¹² The Scriptures say, that all the males of Shechem underwent circumcision to obviate the difficulties of an alliance with the family of Jacob; but Josephus omits the mention of this, though both authorities agree in the dreadful vengeance that was taken on them. This was no less than the slaughter of every male with the edge of the sword, by the two brothers of Dinah, Simeon and Levi, who could not, it seems, admit that the honour of their sister was redeemed by marriage, and who were as tenacious on the point of female purity as the Arabs of this same country continue to be to the present hour.

So great a destruction committed in a city by only two individuals, is differently accounted for by the different authorities already cited. Josephus, who mentions nothing of the circumcision of the males, says, "It being now the time of a festival, when the Shechemites were employed in ease and feasting, they fell upon the watch when they were asleep, and coming into the city, slew all the males, as also the king, and his son with them, but spared the women. And when they had done this without their father's consent, they brought away their sister."¹³ The Scriptures say, that it was on the third day after the circumcision of all the males, and when they were yet sore from the wound, that this act of hardihood was undertaken. As in most of the cases of war and revenge in these early records, the mere slaughter of their enemies, however great and terrible it was, did not glut their vengeance, which was wreaked even on the helpless bodies of the dead, and (p. 524) on such of the unoffending wives and infants as remained among the living. "The sons of Jacob," says the inspired writer, after describing the slaughter itself, "came upon the *slain*, and spoiled the city, because they had defiled their sister; they took their sheep, and their oxen, and their asses, and that which was in the city, and that which was in the field, and all their wealth, and all their little ones, and their wives

⁸ Ant. Jud. 1. i. c. 21. s. 1.

⁹ Gen. xxxiv. 1.

¹⁰ Genesis, xxxiv. 2.

¹¹ Ibid. xxxiv. 3

¹² Ibid, xxxiv. 12.

¹³ Joseph. Ant. Jud. Li. c.22. s. 1.

took them captive, and spoiled even all that was in the house."¹⁴ The authors of the Universal History characterise this act of revenge as a treacherous and inhuman massacre of the inhabitants, on the part of Dinah's brothers; and say that Jacob reproved them for their barbarity; though they add, that the rest of the inhabitants of the country would, no doubt, have made them pay dearly for it, had not God interposed, and sent a panic-fear amongst them, insomuch that they even let them depart quietly, and carry off all the plunder they had got from the slaughtered Shechemites.¹⁵

The most remarkable feature of this place was its situation between the two mountains of Gerizim and Ebal, or the mountain of blessing and the mountain of cursing. These hills were fixed on by Moses for the purpose of setting on them the blessings and the curses which he proposed to the children of Israel, after they should have entered the land of Canaan; and though he could never have seen the hills himself, as he did not live to enter the promised land, yet probably, from the information of his spies, he speaks precisely of their local position, "Are they not on the other side Jordan, by the way where the sun goeth down, in the land of the Canaanites, which dwell in the champaign, over against Gilgal, beside the plains of Moreh."¹⁶

His successor, Joshua, having crossed the Jordan, and taken Jericho, went up, after first burning the city of Ai, and hanging its king on a tree, and built an altar unto the God of Israel, in Mount (p. 525) Ebal; placing the one half of the people here, and the other half on the opposite mountain of Gerizim, he read to them from this last all the words of the law, and pronounced the blessings and the cursings to all the congregation of Israel, with the women and the little ones, omitting not a word of all that Moses had commanded.¹⁷ From this it would plainly appear, that these opposite hills were sufficiently near for the human voice to be distinctly heard from the summit of the one to the summit of the other. A more remarkable instance may be cited to prove, too, that though Josephus calls Gerizim "the *highest* of all the mountains that are in Samaria"¹⁸, yet that the human voice could be heard from its summit even in the valley below. In the history of Abimelech, who, after the practice of all pretenders to power still in the same country, raised money with which he hired vain and light persons to follow him, and going into his father's house slew threescore and ten of his own brethren, on one block, and so waded through the blood of his very kinsmen to royalty, it is said, the youngest of his brothers, Jotham, escaped by flight, and when all the men of Shechem were

¹⁴ Genesis, xxxiv. 27—29.

¹⁵ Anc. Univ. Hist. vol. iii. b. 1. e. 7. p. 289, 290. 8vo.

¹⁶ Deut. xi. 30.

¹⁷ Joshua, viii. 28—35.

Shechem, with her suburbs in Mount Ephraim, was one of the cities of refuge liir the slayer. Joshua, xxi. 21.

¹⁸ Ant. Jud. 1. xi. c. 8. s. 2.

gathered together in the plain¹⁹, where they made Abimelech king, he went up and stood on the top of Mount Gerizim, and lifted up his voice to address to those who were below; one of the earliest and most ingenious fables in holy writ.²⁰ These facts, therefore, set the proximity of the mountains beyond doubt, and limit their altitudes to a moderate standard.

(p. 526) As has been before described, in speaking of the destruction of Samaria, and the removal of the Samaritans from thence, these people made Shechem their chief abode, and Josephus mentions it as being their metropolis, and situate at Mount Gerizim, where they had a temple, at the period at which Alexander the Great made his visit to Jerusalem.²¹ It is chiefly known, afterwards, as the seat of these people, who looked upon the adjoining mountain of *Gerizim*, on which Moses had ordered the *blessings* to be pronounced, to be the most holy of mountains; and though Joshua is said to have set up the altar in *Ebal*, they hold that Moses himself had buried certain sacred vessels in Gerizim, though he never came westward of the Jordan. As late as the wars of Antiochus, and Hyrcanus the high priest, in Syria, it still retained the name; for, in speaking of the acts of the latter, Josephus says, "He took Medaba and Samea, with the towns in their neighbourhood, as also Shechem and Gerizim, and besides these [he subdued] the nation of the Cutheans, who dwelt round about that temple, which was built in imitation of the temple at Jerusalem."²²

In the time of Vespasian it was called Neapolis, or the new city, and it is reckoned among the colonies planted, or towns restored by him.²³ Pliny, in enumerating the cities of Palestine, mentions Shechem under the name of Neapolis, which he says was anciently called Mamortha, or Maxbota.²⁴ And Josephus, in detailing the movements of Vespasian's army, in the Judean war, mentions his coming from Emmaus down through the country of Samaria, and hard by the city by others called Neapolis, [or Sechem,] but by the people of that country Mabortha, to Conea, where he pitched his camp.²⁵

It continued to be known afterwards chiefly by this its Greek name; and indeed this is the only one by which it is called in all (P. 527) the histories of the Crusades and Saracen wars, and which it still retains, under the Arabic form of Nablous.²⁶

¹⁹ This word, which in Hebrew is *Alan*, is by some translated "an oak;" and the present version of our Scriptures call it "The plain of the pillar that was in Shechem." There was an altar or pillar set up here by Abram, (Gen. xii. 7.) and another by Jacob, (Gen. xxxiii. 20.) There was also a celebrated oak at the same place, under which Jacob buried all the strange gods and the profane ornaments of his household. (Gen. xxxv. 4.) so that it might have been either of these three that remained; or e\, n the great stone which Joshua set up there long afterwards under this very oak and altar, before his death. (Joshua, xxiv. 26.)

²⁰ Judges, ix. 1—21.

²¹ Joseph. Ant. Jud. 1. 11. c. 8. s. 6.

²² Joseph. Wars of the Jews, b. 1. c. 2. s. 6.

²³ Anc. Un. Hist. vol. xv. p. 36.

²⁴ Pliny, Nat. Hist. b. v. c. 13.

²⁵ Joseph. Jewish Wars, b. iv. c. 8. s. 1.

²⁶ The Arabs having no P in their alphabet, constantly supply its place by the letter B, as in Nablous, (trr^)
*°r Neapolis; Altarabulos, ((jA^Vj^s) for Tripolis; with Butrus, Hoolus, and Butrok, [^~JOJ, ^Jy, <Ji)v) for

This town is seated between the two hills of Gerizim on the south, and Ebal on the north, and so fully occupies the valley between them, that the mountains may be said to press it in on each side, and leave no room to add any thing to its breadth. Its length is not, however, so limited, as there is an extension of the valley, to the east and west, which would admit of the buildings being continued in each of those directions. The town consists chiefly of two long streets, running nearly east and west through the centre of the valley described, and those again intersected by several smaller ones, mostly crossing them at right-angles. At the present time the town is populous and flourishing, and the grounds around it bear the marks of opulence and industry.

Within the town are six mosques, five baths, one Christian church of schismatic Greeks, an excellent covered bazar for fine goods, and an open one for provisions; besides numerous cotton-cloth manufactories, and shops of every description. One of the mosques is built within the precincts of a ruined church of St Helena, the eastern front of which is still perfect. This presents a fine pointed arch, supported by Corinthian columns, and the upper part is highly ornamented, like some of the Saracen doors in Cairo. Within, are plain granite pillars, and the whole presents as singular a mixture of orders, and as grotesque a taste, as the ruin at Subussta.

The resident population of Nablous is thought to amount to ten thousand; though I should conceive it to be somewhat less. These are almost all Mohammedans; the few Greek Christians there scarcely amounting to fifty in number. The town is governed by (p. 528) a Mutesellim, or Beg, as he is termed, subject to Damascus; and he has, at present, about four hundred Amaout soldiers. The men dress partly in the Turkish and partly in the Arabian fashion; but their general appearance approaches nearer to the former. The women wear the whole face covered with a coloured veil, as in the towns of the Yemen; and the scarf thrown over their head and shoulders is of a yellowish white, with a deep red border-* the stuff being, seemingly, a silk manufacture, or, at least, a mixture of that with cotton.

Though Nablous is a place of considerable trade with Damascus, and with the towns on the sea-coast, yet there were no Jews here who remained as permanent residents. As for the Samaritans, though a remnant of them existed so late as the time of Maundrell's journey, or about a century ago, there were not, as I was informed, half a dozen families remaining, and these were so obscurely known, and remained in such privacy, that many who had passed all their days in this town, did not know of the existence of such a sect. To so low a state are the people reduced, who once held this city as their metropolis, and who established here the chief seat of their religious as well as of their temporal power!

Though the name of *Samaritans* might, with propriety, be applied to all the inhabitants of the country of Samaria, it is generally restricted to the sect, who before, and at the time of Christ's being on earth, were so obnoxious to the Jews on

Paul, and Patriarch; as well as Busha (l»b), which the Turks and Persians who hare the P in lb«r alphabets, pronounce invariably Pashiw, (UIIJ). (PLEASE UNDERSTAND THIS EDITOR OF THESAMARITANUPDATE IS NOT ADDING THE ARABIC LETTERS FROM THE ORIGINAL BOOK AT THIS TIME.)

account of their difference of religion. The principal events in the history of these people have been already mentioned, in describing the changes which the city of Samaria or Sebasta had undergone. By the facts there stated, it will appear, that the origin of the Samaritans, properly so called, is to be assigned to that mixed multitude of people who were brought from Assyria to replace the tribes of Israel, that had been carried away captive by Shalmanezzer; and who, though called by the general name of Cutheans²⁷, were composed, (p. 529) as we learn from the sacred records, of Dinaites, Apharsathchites, Tarpelites, Apharsites, Archevites, Babylonians, Susanchites, Dehavites, Elamites, and other nations.²⁸

As the Israelites who were carried away retained their old religion in their captivity, so these foreigners who replaced them adhered to the worship of their own countries; for the Scriptures say, "Howbeit every nation made gods of their own, and put them in the houses of the high places which the Samaritans had²⁹ made." And after enumerating these by name, and recapitulating the commands of God against such idolatry, the sacred writer adds, "Howbeit they did not hearken, but they did after their former manner."³⁰ This was after the Lord had sent lions among them, who devoured them, because they knew not the manner of the God of the land, and after one of the captive priests had been sent back all the way from Assyria to save them from these devouring³¹ lions, by teaching them how to fear the Lord, and instructing them in manner of which they were ignorant.³² The result was a singular mixture of the monotheism of the Jews with the polytheism of their ancestors, however incompatible these two might seem; for the Scriptures add, "So these nations feared the Lord, and served their graven images, both their children, and their children's children; as did their fathers, so do they unto this day."³³

After the return from the captivity of Babylon, when the children of Israel gathered themselves together as one man to Jerusalem, and restored their altars, and were about to rebuild their temple³⁴, these Samaritans were still a distinct people, (p. 530) though it is thought from their own confession that they had abandoned their idolatry. Nevertheless, they are called "the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin," even when they solicited permission to build the temple with them; and though it might be true, as they asserted, that they had sought the God of the Israelites, and sacrificed unto him, since the days of Esarhaddon³⁵, the king of

²⁷ They were called in Hebrew, Cuthim, from Cuthah, one of the provinces out of which they came. (Anc. Un. Hist. vol. x. p. 185.) And Josephus says, that they were (contid p. 529) called in the Hebrew tongue Cuthcans, but in the Greek tongue Samaritans. (Ant Jud. 1. ix. c. 14. s. 3.)

²⁸ Ezra, iv. 9.

²⁹ 2 Kings, xvii. 29.

³⁰ 2 Kings, xvii. 40.

³¹ ³¹ Josephus calls what is here interpreted lions, "a plague." (Ant. Jud. I. ix. c. 14. s. 3.)

³² 2 Kings xvii. 26 to 28.

³³ Ibid. xvii. 41.

³⁴ Ezra, iii. 1.

³⁵ The same with Shalmaneser, as he is called by Josephus, Ant. Jud. 1. xi. c. 4. s. 3.

Assur, who had brought them up out of their own lands, yet it is evident that they had mixed idolatry with their worship. It was still chiefly on this account, therefore, that the Jews replied to them, " Ye have nothing to do with us to build a house unto our God, but we ourselves will build unto the Lord God of Israel, as King Cyrus, the king of Persia hath commanded us."³⁶ Again, when Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian, who appear to have been numbered among the Samaritans, derided the Jews' intentions to rebuild the wall of the city, Nehemiah replied to them, " The God of heaven, he will prosper us, therefore we his servants will arise and build; but ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem."³⁷ This timid restorer of the city seems to have been often alarmed, or " put in fear," as he expresses it, by the sneers³⁸ and letters³⁹, and counsels⁴⁰, and reports⁴¹, of these wordy opponents; so much so, that the work was carried on with the building materials in one hand, and a weapon in the other⁴², and no one, except for the purpose of religious ablutions, ever put off his clothes, even when they lay down to rest.⁴³ Unnecessary as such precautions seemed against so feeble an enemy as these Samaritans, it proves at least how obnoxious they were to the Jews, and how firmly determined these last were to exclude them from (p. 531) all participation in their religious labour, or in their worship at Jerusalem.

Though the Samaritans continued thus distinct from the Jews, no mention is made of any temple among them common to all, either for the worship of the God of Israel, which they sometimes professed, or of their own idols, of which they were accused, until about the period of Alexander's questionable visit to Jerusalem.⁴⁴

The circumstance which then gave rise to their setting up a temple of their own, and separating themselves still more decidedly than before from the Jews, was not unlike that of our Eighth Harry's quarrel with the Pope, which led to the separation of our reformed church from that of Home, and both show how impatiently the yoke of forced marriages, or forced divorces, is likely to be borne, even when it is the holy hands of religion that would bind it fast. Manasseh, who was the brother of Juddua the high priest, and a partner with him in that office, was married to the daughter of a foreigner; and the jealous Jews thinking such a precedent might encourage others who were desirous of marrying strange wives to follow it, ordered him to divorce his wife, or not to approach the altar; while the high-priest,

³⁶ Ezra, iv. 3

³⁷ Nehemiah, ii. 20.

³⁸ Ibid. iv. 2.

³⁹ Ibid. vi. 5.

⁴⁰ Ibid. 9.

⁴¹ Ibid. vi. 13.

⁴² Ibid. iv. 1.

⁴³ Ibid. iv. 23.

⁴⁴ See the arguments against this story, as cited by the authors of the Universal History, vol. viii. b. 1. c. 2. p. 534. 8vo.

joining with the people in their indignation against his brother, drove him away from the sanctuary. Manasseh, says the historian, then went to his father-in-law Sanballat, who, as we have seen, was one of the chief of the Samaritans, and told him that, although he loved his daughter Nicaso, he was not willing to be deprived of the sacerdotal dignity, which was the principal one of the nation, on her account. The father promised him, that if he would keep his daughter for his wife, he would not only preserve to him the honour he now held, but make him governor of all the places he himself now ruled, and build a temple for him like that at Jerusalem, and advance him to the power and dignity of a high priest, and all this with the appro- (p. 532) bation of Darius the king. Manasseh was satisfied with these splendid promises, and abandoned his former office, while many other of the priests and Levites, who were entangled in similar matches, followed his fortunes by coming over to Sanballat, who gave them money, land, and habitations, and divided estates among them, in order in every way, as the historian says, to gratify his son-in-law.⁴⁵

Alexander the Great was about this time entering Syria, after his victories at the Granicus and Issus, and when he began the siege of Tyre, Sanballat renounced his allegiance to Darius, and led with him seven thousand of his own subjects to join the Macedonian army in the siege of that place. This was well received by Alexander, particularly after the Jews' refusal to grant him any aid; and when a convenient opportunity occurred for Sanballat to ask the Macedonian monarch to build a temple on Mount Gerizim, and constitute his son-in-law Manasseh the high priest of it, it was no sooner demanded than granted. The temple was therefore built, and the priest ordained.⁴⁶ On the return of Alexander from Jerusalem, which was almost immediately after this, the Samaritans were settled at Gerizim, and had the city of Shechem, which lies at its foot, for their metropolis.⁴⁷

These people were, from the beginning, remarkable for their indifference to their particular religion, and their character formed a striking contrast to that of the Jews, whose obstinate adherence to the rites of their fathers was the chief cause of all the persecutions that they suffered. It is true, that this character of instability is given to them by an enemy; but the proofs of it are too numerous to render it doubtful. "When they see the Jews in prosperity," says the Jewish historian, they pretend, that they are changed and allied to them, and call them kinsmen, as though they were derived from Joseph, and had by that means an original (p. 533) alliance with them; but when they see them falling into a low condition, they say, they are no way related to them; and that the Jews have no right to expect any kindness or marks of kindred from them, but they declare that they are sojourners that come from other countries."⁴⁸ Even immediately after Alexander had granted

⁴⁵ Joseph. Ant. Jud. 1. xi. c. 8. s. 2.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Joseph. Ant. Jud. I. ix. c. 14. s. 3. A pretty accurate estimate may be formed of the character of thin people, when it is known that all the vagabonds and outcasts of the Jews found refuge among them, and

them permission to build the temple on Mount Gerizim, they petitioned him to remit the tribute of the seventh year to them, because, like the Jews, they did not sow thereon; and when Alexander asked them, who they were that made such a petition, they admitted that they were Hebrews, in order to enforce their claim to exemption from tribute in this Sabbatic year⁴⁹; yet called themselves Sidonians, living at Shechem, and not Jews, in order to avoid being included among these in other edicts.⁵⁰

A still more remarkable instance of this subservience of their religion to their interest or convenience is recorded of them during the terrible persecution of the Jews by Antiochus Epiphanes, who converted the temple of Jerusalem into a temple of Jupiter Olympus, defiled its altars by the sacrifice of swine on them, and executed the most atrocious cruelties, even on the women and children of this unhappy nation. "When the Samaritans," says the historian, "saw the Jews under these sufferings, they no longer confessed that they were of their kindred, or that the temple on Mount Gerizim belonged to Almighty God. This (p. 534) was according to their nature, as we have already shown, and they now said that they were a colony of Medes and Persians, and, indeed, they were a colony of theirs. So they sent ambassadors to Antiochus, and an epistle, whose contents were these: — To King Antiochus, the god Epiphanes, a memorial from the Sidonians who live at Shechem. Our forefathers, upon certain frequent plagues, and as following a certain ancient superstition, had a custom of observing that day which by the Jews is called Sabbath; and when they had erected a temple at the mountain called Gerizim, though without a name, they offered upon it the proper sacrifices. Now upon the just treatment of these wicked Jews, those that manage their affairs, supposing that we were of kin to them, and practised as they do, make us liable to the same accusations, although we be originally Sidonians, as is evident from the public records. We therefore beseech thee, our benefactor and saviour, to give order to Apollonius, the governor of this part of the country, and to Nicanor, the procurator of thy affairs, to give us no disturbance, nor to lay to our charge what the Jews are accused for, since we are aliens from their nation, and from their customs; but let our temple, which at present hath no name at all, be named 'the Temple of Jupiter Hellenicus.' If this were once done, we would be no longer disturbed, but should be more intent on our own occupations with quietness, and so bring in a greater revenue to thee."⁵¹ Their request was granted; and the temple, from being professedly reared to the God of Israel, was soon transformed into that

that they continued to the last to be as mixed a race as they were on their first coming from Assyria to replace the captives of Shalmanezer.

⁴⁹ The Jews were commanded not only to cease from all agricultural labours on this year, but to hold as forbidden the very reaping or gathering of that which grew wild, and of its own accord, (Levit xxv. 1 to 7.) as well as to release all their purchased Hebrew slaves who might desire their freedom, (Exod. xxi. 2.) and to remit or release all debts owing from one Israelite to another (Deut xv. 1.); so that the payment of tribute to a foreign power in such a year would have pressed hard on them indeed.

⁵⁰ Joseph. Ant. Jud. I. xi. c. 8. s. 6.

⁵¹ Joseph. Ant. Jud. I. xii. c. 5. s. 5.

of Jupiter Hellenicus, with the same facility as those of Venus and Adonis were subsequently dedicated to the Blessed Virgin and her Immaculate Son, in the same land.

When Hyrcanus, the Jewish high priest, had completely shaken off the Syrian yoke, as before spoken of, he turned his arms against these Samaritans, and taking the metropolis of Shechem (p. 535) and their holy mountain of Gerizim, demolished this temple of the Hellenian Jupiter, although it had stood two hundred years, as well as all the edifices, altars, and other ornaments, that had been subsequently erected there by Jezebel, and put to death nearly the whole of the Samaritan priesthood.

As long as they continued thus divested of power, they were sufficiently harmless towards the Jews, but they seized with enthusiasm the first occasion of vengeance. It was on the eve of that very feast of the Passover, when Jesus, in his twelfth year, was found in the temple, astonishing the doctors' with his early wisdom⁵², that a number of them having privately stolen into the temple, strewed the galleries and other places of resort with dead men's bones, so that the priests on the next morning, finding that sacred place polluted, were forced to put a stop to the solemnity.⁵³

The conference of Christ with the woman of Samaria, at Shechem or Svchar⁵⁴, not many years after this, when he was grown to manhood, proves how complete the separation and even hatred still was between the Jews and the Samaritans. When he sat on the brink of Jacob's well, there to rest himself, as he was wearied with his journey from Judea towards Galilee, and asked this woman, who was drawing water at the well, to give him drink, she said unto him, " How is it that thou, being a Jew, asketh drink of me, who am a woman of Samaria, for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans?" Yet the result of this conference was the conversion of the woman, from his telling her that she had already had five husbands, and was now living with one, who was not her husband, in adultery: and many of the Samaritans of that city also believed in him, for the saying of the woman, which testified, "He told me all that ever I did."⁵⁵ After the death of Christ, (p. 536) two others of the Samaritans were converted by Philip, Peter, and John, about the time that Simon Magus was practising his sorceries among them, and to whom they attributed great power from God, because he had bewitched them with sorceries.⁵⁶

During the Roman wars in Judea, under Vespasian and his son Titus, there were still left a sufficient number of the original Samaritans to form a distinct people. It

⁵² St. Luke, ii. 41—47.

⁵³ Anc. Un. Hist. v. K. p. 519.

⁵⁴ This was a name given to the city by the Jews, as a terra of reproach, Sychar signifying *drunk* in Hebrew, according to the phrase of the prophet, who call* the rebellious Jews, the *shicore Ephraim*, the drunkards of Ephraim. Isaiah, xxviii. 1. S. See Anc. Isn. Hist v.ii. p. 463., and the Onomasticum Sacrum, p.292.

⁵⁵ St. John, iv. 9—39.

⁵⁶ Acts of the Apostles, viii. 9—11.

was just after the taking of Jotapata by Vespasian, and of Japha by Titus and Trajan, all three afterwards emperors of Rome, that the Samaritans assembled themselves on Mount Gerizim, as a post of defence. Their numbers are stated to have been eleven thousand six hundred; and the Roman general sent against them Cerealis, the commander of the fifth legion, with six hundred horsemen and three hundred footmen. These did not deem it safe to go up upon the hill and give them battle, from the advantage which their enemies possessed in being on such commanding ground; but they encompassed all the lower part of the mountain with the army, and blockaded them there. It was in the middle of summer, and the Samaritans were destitute of water and other necessaries, so that many died from hunger, thirst, and violent heat; and others again, preferring slavery to a death of this kind, deserted to the Romans, while those that still held out, were of course much broken by their sufferings. Cerealis then ascended the hill with his soldiers, and, offering the security of his right hand, invited the Samaritans to surrender; but with an infatuation seemingly unprecedented in their former history, they refused all overtures, and fought until every man among them was slain.

Though Jesus himself commenced the work among the Samaritans, by the conversion of the adulterous woman, and the Apostles had continued it by bringing over the followers of Simon Magus, and even that sorcerer himself, till he was cursed out of their society, for thinking that he could buy of them the power of (p. 537) giving the Holy Ghost to add to his other sorceries; yet, as we have seen in the case of their opposition to the Romans, the great body of the Samaritans still retained their former name, and all their former veneration for the holy mountain of Gerizim, on which they had made so obstinate a stand.

But neither the vengeance which Judas Maccabeus and Hyrcanus had taken of them for their heresies, and all the consequent opposition of the Jewish interest and power to which these religious differences led, nor this almost total annihilation of their race by the Romans as mere enemies of the state, were sufficient to fill up the measure of their sufferings. Five centuries after the Christian era, they had another enemy to sustain the attack of, and, as their numbers seem to have increased in the interval of comparative peace, their defence was more stubborn and of longer duration, though equally unavailable with their former ones. Unprincipled as their own conduct seems on many occasions to have been, this last persecution was not apparently called forth by any obnoxious acts, either of treachery or opposition to the reigning power which inflicted it, and the doctrines which Jesus had preached among them would, least of all, lead them to expect, that while the cross was held out to them in one hand, the scourge should be shaken over them with the other. But such was the spirit of the times, that the very scenes in which the most humane, benevolent, and charitable doctrines were promulgated by the humblest of men, were transformed into theatres of blood and vengeance, by the pride, the cruelty, and unforgiving bigotry of his pretended imitators and most devoted disciples.

The historian who relates this event, says, "The Samaritans were a motley race, an ambiguous sect, rejected as Jews by the pagans, by the Jews as schismatics, and by the Christians as idolaters. The abomination of the cross had already been planted on their holy mount of Gerizim, but the persecution of Justinian offered only the alternative of baptism or rebellion; they chose the latter. Under the standard of a desperate leader; (p. 538) they rose in arms, and retaliated their wrongs on the lives, the property, and the temples of a defenceless people. The Samaritans were finally subdued by the regular forces of the East: twenty thousand were slain, twenty thousand were sold by the Arabs to the infidels of Persia and India, and the remains of that unhappy nation atoned for the crime of treason by the sin of hypocrisy. It has been computed," adds the same historian, "that one hundred thousand subjects were extirpated in the Samaritan war, which converted the once fruitful province into a desolate wilderness. But," he continues, "in the creed of Justinian, the guilt of murder could not be applied to the slaughter of unbelievers, and he piously laboured to establish, with fire and sword, the unity of the Christian faith."⁵⁷

Since that period, a remnant of them has, however, always been found rallied round what might be called the local standard of their religion, the Mountain of Gerizim.⁵⁸ In the year 1676, there was a correspondence between the chief priest of the Samaritans at Nablous, and the learned Scaliger, on the differences between the Hebrew and Samaritan pentateuch; and in the year 1697, Mr. Maundrell had a personal conference with the then residing dignitary; but I was assured by all those who knew of the (p. 539) existence of this people at Nablous, though these were very few, that their numbers were more reduced now than at any former period, and that, at most, there were not more than a dozen families composing their church; these, they said, never visited the summit of Mount Gerizim, but performed their religious rites in studied seclusion and obscurity, and were, if possible, more despised here than the Jews are in other Mohammedan cities.

⁵⁷ Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. vi. c. 47. p. 276. 8vo.

⁵⁸ In the time of Benjamin of Tudela, who visited Neapolis or Sichem, and describes it with great accuracy as seated in a valley between Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal, there were in this city about a hundred Cuthaei, (of whom there were two hundred at Cesarea) who did not observe the law of Moses, and were then, as well as now, called Samaritans. Their priests were of the race of Aaron, and they were called Aaronites. They offered sacrifice on Mount Gerizim, on the Pascal and other feasts, on an altar constructed of stones brought from the Jordan by the children of Israel. They called themselves of the tribe of Ephraim, and had custody of the sepulchre of Joseph the son of Jacob, whose bones were brought up out of Egypt, and buried in Shechem, in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem, for an hundred pieces of silver. Aaron was also buried in a hill here that pertained to Phinehas his son, which was given him in Mount Ephraim, the name of all this range of the mountains of Nablous. (Josh. 24. 32, 33.) Their omission of certain letters in writing the names of the patriarchs, and their substitution of others in their places, was assumed by Benjamin as sufficient proof of their not being of the true seed of Israel. He describes their customs, purifications, &c. at large. Bergeron's Collection.

These Jews, of whom there are none resident here⁵⁹, accuse the Samaritans of believing the Godhead to be a corporeal being. Epiphanius, who numbers them in his catalogue of heretics, insists that they worshipped the traphim or idols, which Rachel had stolen from her father Laban, and which they digged up from under the oak in Shechem, where Jacob had buried them,⁶⁰ And other Jews, again, give out that their religion consists in the adoration of a calf⁶¹; but, say the commentators, "Credat Judaeus."

The account which they themselves give of their own origin, is that they are descended from Joseph by Ephraim; that their temple on Mount Gerizim was built by Joshua, after his taking possession of the promised land; and that they have preserved their genealogy, in uninterrupted succession, from Ruz, of the seed of Aaron, who was their first high-priest, down to the present time. Of the first captivity of the Israelites, they say that the kings of Jerusalem and Syria having revolted against Nebuchadnezzar, he came and took Jerusalem, and went from thence to the Shechemites, whom he ordered to leave that country in seven days, on pain of being massacred, which they did accordingly. The strangers whom he settled in Judea and Shechem in their stead could not live there, because the fairest fruits of the land were (p. 540) tainted with a mortal poison, so that at last the Hebrews were sent back to their own pestilential land again. These are the *devouring lions* of the Scriptures, and the *plague* of Josephus, before mentioned; and the sending back a priest of Israel to restore the worship of the true God. On the return of the captives, say the Samaritans, a dispute arose, whether they should rebuild the temple of Jerusalem or that of Gerizim. Zerubbabel was for the former, and Sanballat for the latter, and each pleaded the sanction of the pentateuch; but as their copies even then differed, one of them fixing on Jerusalem as the site, and the other on Gerizim, each insisted that the copy of his antagonist was corrupted, and his own pure, as still continues to be mutually done by the doctors of the three great sects among whom the writings of Moses are divided. To end the dispute, these champions of truth bethought themselves of an expedient, and agreed that the copy which should withstand the fiery trial should be admitted to be the authentic one. Accordingly Zerubbabel flung his own into the fire; and, sacred as the materials were, they were instantly consumed. Sanballat followed the example, but the word of the Lord God of Israel being imperishable, it came three times out of the flames untouched by fire.⁶² Such a miracle was of course enough to confirm those who were convinced before in the propriety of their choice; yet it had no effect on those who were before of a contrary opinion. But when "the eyes are

⁵⁹ As Nablous is a place of great trade, (and commerce seldom fails to draw these scattered sons of Israel together,) it is not improbable but that some religious prejudice may keep them from residing here; but, from not meeting with any Jews in the place, I could not ascertain this from any authority to be relied upon.

⁶⁰ Genesis, xxxv. 6.

⁶¹ Maundrell's Journey, p. 80. 8vo.

⁶² Anc. Univ. Hist. vol.x. p, 228.

blinded that they shall not see, and the heart is hardened that it shall not believe, what power can open the one or soften the other?"

It is clear, from the many instances already cited, that the hatred of these two sects to each other was quite mutual. Even Jesus reproached them with worshipping they knew not what; and he is thought to have *excluded* them from salvation, when he told them that *this* was of the Jews,⁶³ The Jews, in their turn, when they wished to express their greatest abhorrence of Christ, replied (p. 541) to his reproaches, " Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?"⁶⁴ His disciples themselves could not contain their indignation against them, when they refused to receive their Master, because his face was as though he would go up to Jerusalem, but angrily exclaimed, " Ixird, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, even as Elias did?"⁶⁵ And though Jesus then rebuked them, by telling them that he was not come down to destroy men's lives, but to save them; yet when he sent his disciples forth to preach to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, he expressly commands them, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not."⁶⁶

The summary of their opinions, as collected from the pentateuch. and from the correspondence of their chief priest with Scaliger, before adverted to, is given under the following heads: — They believe in one God, and in the laws of his servant Moses, which they profess to adhere more scrupulously to the observance of than the Jews do; they circumcise their male children invariably on the eighth day; they confine themselves to one wife, and never marry so near in kindred as is common among the Jews; they are rigid in the observance of certain ablutions; they keep the sabbath with all the rigour of a penance; they light no fires in the houses on that day, nor quit their dwellings but to visit the place of worship; the passover is with them the chief festival; but they observe the pentecost and feast of tabernacles with great attention, and regard the great fast of expiation most strictly; they never offer any sacrifice but on Mount Gerizim, and the head of their religion must reside at Shechem.

Their copy of the five books of Moses, on which they found these doctrines and observances, is thought by some to have been brought from Assyria into Samaria by the priest of Israel, whom Esarhaddon or Shalmaneser sent over to destroy the lions that (p. 542) devoured the people because they knew not the God of the⁶⁷ land. Others again think that Manasses, the first high-priest of Gerizim, transcribed it from the copy of Ezra, on his return from the second captivity, or that of Babylon. The authors of the Universal History candidly confess, however, that

⁶³ St. John, iv. 22.

⁶⁴ St. John, viii. 48.

⁶⁵ St. Luke, ix. 54.

⁶⁶ St. Matthew, x. 5.

⁶⁷ Anc . Univ. Hist. vol. x. p. 283.

when and how this manuscript came into the hands of the Samaritans, it is hard to guess, and that each system has its difficulties, which are not easily solved.⁶⁸

Besides the old Hebrew copy, there was one used among them, in the vulgar tongue, which was a mixture of Assyrian, Babylonish, and Chaldee, besides a Greek version of it for the sake of those to whom that language was then common. The Samaritans themselves indeed say, that, at the time of the translation of the Jewish scriptures into Greek by the seventy elders, from which it derives its name, their own high-priest was also invited by Ptolemy to come to Alexandria at the head of a number of learned men, to make a translation of the Samaritan copy; and they add, that on a review of both these works, their own copy was preferred to that of the Jews, and placed in the library of the Egyptian king.⁶⁹

The most learned critics are of opinion, that it was only the first five books of Moses which were translated into Greek, at the Alexandrian court, and that the remaining books of the Jewish Septuagint bear evident marks in their style and language of being done by different hands, and at a much later period, which strengthens the notion that both pentateuchs were translated at the same time. Among the early fathers, Origen and St. Jerome mention the Samaritan pentateuch as differing from that of the Jews; and as these theologians are said both of them to have understood *Hebrew*, it was probably the copy in that language which they had seen. But there are several other fathers of less learning, who, in their allusions to it, are thought to have mentioned the Greek copy, since they are conjectured to have been (p. 543) incapable of understanding either the original Hebrew, or the vulgar version of it.

The learned Scaliger was the first who set about enquiring after this work, by the correspondence already mentioned; and the munificence of Archbishop Usher soon procured several copies of it from Syria and Palestine, the most accurate of which has been printed in the Polyglot of Walton, where it may serve to gratify the curiosity of antiquaries; but, in the language of the Scriptures, "adds not a jot or a tittle to the law or the prophets."

In enquiring for the Bir-el-Yakoab, or Jacob's Well, we were told by every body that this was in the town, which not corresponding with the described place of the well, we were desirous of seeing, led to further explanation; and at length, by telling the story attached to it, we found it was known here only by the name of "Ber Samareea," or the well of Samaria.

Procuring a Christian boy to accompany us, we went out by the eastern gate, and passing through a continuation of the same valley in which Nablous stands, thickly covered with olive-trees, we reached the end of it in about a quarter of an hour, on foot, the pass opening into a round and more extensive vale, and the mountains east of the Jordan being in sight. On the right were some Mohammedan buildings on the sides and at the foot of Mount Gerizim, either

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid. p. 244.

mosques or tombs, now called Mahmoodeea, and said to stand over Joseph's sepulchre. On the left, at the foot of Mount Ebal, were several well-hewn grottoes in the rock; some with arched and others with square doors, most probably ancient sepulchres, without the old city of Sychem or Sychar. These grottoes were called here Khallat Rowgh-ban⁷⁰, but we had no time to examine them.

(p. 544) From hence, in another quarter of an hour, we reached the Well of Samaria. It stands at the commencement of the round vale, which is thought to have been the parcel of ground bought by Jacob for a hundred pieces of money, and which, like the narrow valley west of Nablous, is rich and fertile. Over this well stood anciently a large building, erected by St. Helena, of which there are now no other remains than some shafts of granite pillars; all the rest lying in one undistinguished heap of ruins. The mouth of the well itself had an arched or vaulted building over it, and the only passage down to it at this moment is by a small hole in the roof, scarcely large enough for a moderate-sized person to work himself down through.

We lighted a taper here, and taking off my large Turkish clothes, I did not then get down without bruising myself against the sides, nor was I at all rewarded for such an inconvenience by the sight below. Landing on a heap of dirt and rubbish, we saw a large flat oblong stone, which lay almost on its edge across the mouth of the well, and left barely space enough to see that there was an opening below. We could not ascertain its diameter, but by the time of a stone's descent, it was evident that it was of considerable depth, as well as that it was perfectly dry at this season; the fall of the stone giving forth a dead and hard sound.

Not far from the well of Samaria is the " Bir Yusef," over which is a modern building; and it is said to be, even at this day, frequented for water from Nablous. The well of Samaria might also have been so, therefore, from Sychar, although that city should not have extended farther east than the present town; and indeed it is no uncommon thing in Syria, as I myself have often witnessed, for water to be brought from a much greater distance. It is highly probable, therefore, that this is the identical well at which the interesting conference of Jesus with the woman of Samaria really happened.

I could find nothing of the old wall mentioned by Maundrell, and as the sepulchres of Khallat Rowgh-ban are much nearer the (p.545) town than the well, though they must have been without the city from the nature of the cliffs there, the wall did not probably extend more easterly than the site of the present town. Near the well of Samaria, and at the end of the narrow valley, or where it opens into the broader plain, are several round towers on the hills on each side, of an unknown date, probably watch-posts to guard this passage to the city.

⁷⁰ Rowghwan or Rowghban is a name given in Syria to monks, and more particularly to those who live in convents and other dwellings, remote from towns, and from society; and though Kallah means generally a castle, yet here it would imply only "the retreats of hermits," a purpose to which these caves were very probably at one time or other applied.

One of the chief differences between the Jewish and the Samaritan pentateuch being the transposition of the names of Gerizim and Ebal, I had taken particular notice of these two mountains, or rather hills, both in going out and coming in. But it unfortunately happens, that neither relative positions nor local features are given of these in the sacred records, by which the point at issue might be decided. Josephus, however, is more explicit; for in his version of that command of Moses which has given rise to the dispute in question, he says, "Their leader ordered that, when they had got possession of the land of the Canaanites, and when they had destroyed the whole multitude of its inhabitants as they ought to do, they should erect an altar that should face the rising sun, not far from the city of Shechem, between the two mountains, that of Gerizim situate on the *right* hand, and that called Ebal on the *left*; which, with reference to the run-rising, fixes the former indisputably on the *south*, and the latter on the *north*."⁷¹

In the commands of Moses, delivered to the Israelites while yet on the other side of Jordan eastward, he expressly names Gerizim as the mountain from which the *blessings* are to be pronounced on the congregation, and Ebal as the one from which the *curses* are to be uttered⁷²; yet, in a subsequent chapter, the same lawgiver is made to order that an altar of unhewn stones, over which no iron was to pass, should be raised to the Lord, and the great stones set up plastered with plaster, on which the law was to be written; and those reared on Mount *Ebal*, which had before (p. 546) been made the mountain of *cursing* .⁷³ Joshua, his successor, is afterwards represented as setting up the altar on *Ebal*, and offering burnt-offerings and peace-offerings to the Lord, and inscribing on the plastered stones, as directed, the law which Moses had left to the children of Israel.⁷⁴

The Samaritans have, in these places, substituted *Gerizim* for *Ebal*, and they accuse the Jews of having maliciously altered *their* text, out of odium to the Samaritans, putting for *Gerizim*, *Ebal*, upon no other account but only because the Samaritans worshipped in the former mountain, which they would have, for that reason, not to be the true place appointed by God for his worship and sacrifice. Such was the account of the chief priest of these people to Mr. Maundrell, who questioned him on the subject. To confirm this, says the same traveller, he pleaded that Ebal was the mountain of *cursing* , as we have seen before, and in its own nature an *unpleasant* place; but, on the contrary, Gerizim was the mountain of *Blessing* by God's own appointment, and also in itself *fertile* and *delightful* ; from whence he inferred a probability that this latter must have been the true mountain appointed for these religious festivals, and not, as the Jews have corruptly written it, *Hebal*.⁷⁵

⁷¹ Joseph. Ant. Jud. 1. iv. e. 8. s. 44.

⁷² Deut xi. 29.

⁷³ Deut. xxvii. 1-4.

⁷⁴ Joshua, viii. 30-32

⁷⁵ Maundrell's Journey, p. 81. 8vo.

Mr. Maundrell thought that there was some truth in the Samaritan priest's observations on the superiority of Gerizim to Ebal; for, says he, though neither of the mountains has much to boast of as to their pleasantness, yet, as one passes between them, Gerizim seems to discover a more fruitful aspect than Ebal. My own impression, from seeing both these hills from several points of view, was, that Gerizim was by far the more agreeable, and might be made the more productive of the two, not only from its principal side, or that hanging over Nablous, having a northern aspect, and being therefore less burnt up by the sun in summer, but from its slope of ascent being less abrupt than that of Ebal, and from (p. 547) the soil being therefore more liable to accumulate, and less subject to be washed down by the vernal and autumnal rains.⁷⁶ Their altitudes appeared to be nearly equal, and neither of them exceeded seven or eight hundred feet from the level of the valley, though much higher from the sea, as the whole country here is elevated. We had not an opportunity of ascending either of the hills ourselves; but from all the information I could collect regarding them, no one knew of any great stones or other vestiges of buildings remaining on them, though it must be confessed that we met with only two persons out of at least fifty whom we consulted, that had ever been on the summit of both these hills; and to these the subject, as well as the motive of our enquiry, was alike strange and unaccountable.

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⁷⁶ When Benjamin of Tudela visited this spot, he says that Mount *Garizim* was full of fountains and gardens; while *Ghebal*, as he writes it, was arid and rocky. — Bergeronss Collection.