
A table of contents for *Bibliotheca Sacra* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bib-sacra_01.php

THE SAMARITANS AND THEIR SACRED LAW

The Antiquity of

THE FIVE BOOKS OF MOSES

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MANY and picturesque are the religious sects in the Lands of the Bible today; but none makes a stronger appeal to the imagination than that of the Samaritans. The circumstances of their origin, their age-long feud with the Jews, and the singular vicissitudes of their history, an experience in which romance and tragedy are so strangely mingled, present a fascinating theme for study. It is pathetic to see how a once numerous and prosperous people has dwindled. The community at Nablus, under Mount Gerizim, has shrunk to about 150 souls in all; so that extinction stares them in the face. In a despairing effort to avoid impending doom, early in 1919, the Samaritans approached the Sephardim Jews with proposals for intermarriage. Their friendly overtures were promptly and decisively repelled. One is glad to know that in the wreckage wrought by the Turks during the Great War the Samaritans escaped with comparatively little damage; and that their precious manuscripts were preserved intact.

The most prized possession of the Samaritans is the sacred copy of the Pentateuch—the five Books of Moses—which they claim to have been written by Abishua, the great-grandson of Aaron. It is impossible to credit the existing manuscript with such antiquity; but the investigation of its ancestry and transmission, and the religious life, thought and ritual of which it has been the centre, is a matter of profound interest for Biblical students. It may shed fresh light on many questions affecting especially the composition and date of the books concerned. The books of the Bible comprise the remnant of the literature of the ancient Hebrews that has escaped destruction —an escape manifestly due to the protecting providence of

God. Materials from the records of the ancient world that have survived and are available for the critical study of these documents are scanty. The rubbish heaps of Egypt, the mounds of Palestine and Mesopotamia, the ruins of Syria and Asia Minor have been in some measure explored with results which, if for this particular purpose they are meagre, are yet of priceless value. In view of all this activity a mild wonder may be expressed that a field so rich and promising as the Samaritan Pentateuch opens up should have been so largely neglected.

Gesenius, to whose work a certain revival of interest in the subject was due, started with the assumption that the Massoretic—the Hebrew from which our English translation was made—as compared with the Samaritan, represented the older text, and therefore, as closer to the original, should be accepted as the more accurate. Variations in the Samaritan were regarded as mistakes, accidental or intentional, to be corrected by reference to the Massoretic. His work and that of others who followed him is vitiated by this assumption, which is now seen to be untenable.

Results of real value can be reached only by means of strictly scientific study; careful research and unbiased thought, free from limiting assumption or prejudice, acknowledging only the authority of truth. This Dr. Thomson seeks to furnish in his recently published book.* In respect of comprehensiveness, scholarly research, and careful reasoning, Dr. Thomson's book takes rank as the most important that has yet appeared on the subject. The work has occupied him, more or less, for over thirty years. Part of that time was spent in Palestine, where he consulted with the Samaritans at Nablus, and witnessed their celebration of the Passover on Mount Gerizim. He has examined all known and available manuscripts. Of these a valuable list is given in an appendix (I). He is refreshingly independent in his methods. He is neither surprised by novelty nor overawed by antiquity.

*THE SAMARITANS, Their Testimnoy to the Religion of Israel; Being the Alexander Robertson Lectures, delivered before the University of Glasgow in 1916, by Rev. J. E. H. Thomson, D.D. (Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh.)

Regarding positions widely held as secure he asks disconcerting questions, relentlessly scrutinizing the grounds on which the most confident statements are made. Neither traditional orthodoxy nor the still more uncompromising orthodoxy of the prevailing critical school is to him sacrosanct. He is ready, on cause shown, to do battle with either in the supreme interest of truth.

Some account of Dr. Thomson's work may make it plain that those who challenge the validity of advanced critical theories are not to be labelled as unscholarly, reactionary, or obscurantist. On the other hand, it may show that certain positions which are central to the critical scheme are incapable of defense. The downfall of these involves disaster to the whole critical structure.

Who, then, are the Samaritans? Their own claim is that they belong to the house of Israel. The Jews of the early Christian centuries denied this, and heaped opprobrium upon "that foolish people" who dwelt in Shechem, calling them "Cuthaeans," *i. e.*, descendants of the Assyrian immigrants who took the place of the deported tribes after the fall of Samaria. This takes it for granted that the entire population of the northern kingdom was carried away by the Assyrians—an assumption that underlies every theory that attempts to solve the problem of "The Lost Ten Tribes." At first sight II Kings xviii. 6, seems to support this view. A brief consideration will show that the phrase, "The King of Assyria * * * carried Israel away into Assyria," is a general statement with a perfectly definite meaning, which yet does not signify that every man, woman, and child of Israel was taken away.

When Tiglath-pileser took certain cities with "Gilead and Galilee and all the land of Naphtali, and carried them captive to Assyria," we cannot suppose that these places were left without inhabitant, although no colonists were brought to replace the deported people. When the southern kingdom fell under Nebuchadnezzar we read that "Judah was carried away captive out of his land (II Kings xxv. 21, cf. II Chron. xxxvi. 20). This general statement must be taken with what is said in verse 12: "The poorest of the land" were left "to be vine-

dressers and husbandmen," and with the further statement in verse 22, that Nebuchadnezzar made Gedaliah governor over the people that were left in the land (cf. Jer. xxxix. 10).

The Assyrian policy of deportation was designed to prevent rebellion on the part of conquered peoples. To remove the whole population of any country would only have been to shift the seat of danger. The object in view was far more certainly achieved by leaving a people leaderless. This was the method of Nebuchadnezzar who, with Jehoiachim, "carried away all Jerusalem' —note the general statement—"and all the princes and all the mighty men of valour * * * and all the craftsmen and the smiths * * * and the chief men of the land." "None remained save the poorest sort of the people of the land" (II Kings xxiv. 14*ff*). That is to say, he removed such as were likely to inspire, or lead, or furnish weapons for a rebellion, leaving the mass of the people to pursue their ordinary avocations under an authority appointed by himself. It is a safe inference that in this he followed the practice of the Assyrians, as his empire was in all essentials a continuation of theirs. The inference is confirmed by the inscription found on Sargon's palace walls in which he tells of the conquest of Israel. The habit of monarchs in such inscriptions is to magnify their own achievements. But Sargon boasts of having carried away only 27,280 inhabitants of the land of Samaria. Now if in Menahem's day there were 60,000 "mighty men of wealth" in Israel (II Kings xv. 19, 20), that points to a population of at least two millions. Making liberal allowance for the loss inflicted by Tiglath-pileser and others, there must have remained under Hoshea considerably over 500,000. Of these, only about a twentieth were deported by Sargon. This twentieth undoubtedly comprised the same classes as were taken by Nebuchadnezzar. Here priests are specially mentioned (II Kings xvii. 27*f*). These might lend to rebellion the glamour of religious sanction. The nineteen-twentieths that remained could be no other than

[NOTE.—50 shekels=1 maneh; 60 manehs=1 talent. Therefore 60,000 men contributing 50 shekels each made up the 1,000 talents.]

the humbler members of the tribes of Israel. Speaking of them, Sargon says, "I changed the government of the country and set over it a lieutenant of my own * * * The tribute of the former king I imposed upon them." Empty fields could pay no tribute, nor would a viceroy be appointed over them.

At this point Dr. Thomson makes a most interesting suggestion. Sargon does not name the deputy he appointed. In like circumstances Nebuchadnezzar appointed a Jew, Gedaliah, over those left in Judah. Is it not possible that the Assyrian monarch chose Hezekiah, king of Judah, as the man to represent him in governing Israel? This gains support from the tone of authority in which Hezekiah speaks to the northern tribes in matters of religion (see below). If true it helps to clear up some chronological difficulties in connection with his reign. He is said to have begun to reign in the third year of Hoshea, king of Israel (II Kings xviii. 1), when Ahaz, his father, had still one or two years to live (II Kings xvi. 2; xvii. 1). He must, therefore, have been associated with his father in the government during the last years of the latter's life. From the beginning of this joint rule his reign is reckoned in II Kings xviii. 9, 10). But in II Chr. xxix, 3; xxx. 1, the "first year of his reign" appears to have witnessed the downfall of the northern kingdom (see esp. xxx. 6). May we not suppose that here his reign is reckoned from the first year of his rule over the whole of Israel as the vassal of Assyria?

The sending of posts "through all Israel" as well as Judah, by "commandment of the king" was a proceeding which surely could not have been tolerated by the lieutenant of the Assyrians had he been other than Hezekiah himself: and, obviously, it would not have been undertaken had there not been a numerous population to appeal to. Later we find that Josiah's reforms applied to Israel as well as Judah (II Chr. xxxiv. 6), and at the Passover celebrated in his eighteenth year "the children of Israel" were present—"all Judah and Israel" (II Chr. xxxv. 17, 18). This is confirmed by Josephus, whose testimony to the existence of an important Israelite remnant is all the

more valuable, as he would not willingly justify the Samaritans' claim to be descended from Israel." After these things Josiah went also to all the Israelites who had escaped captivity and slavery under the Assyrians, and persuaded them to desist from their impious practices (*Ant.* X. iv. 5).

It may be objected that when the Samaritans sought permission to share in rebuilding the temple at Jerusalem, their spokesman claimed only that they had been worshippers of Jehovah from the days of Esarhaddon (Ezra iv. 2), "who brought us up hither." Does this not negative the predominantly Israelite character of the northern people?

We have seen that if the prominent men in Israel were removed the purpose of Assyria would be achieved. We may suppose that the Assyrian colonists brought to Samaria would belong to the same class among the more turbulent and dangerous tribes in Mesopotamia. In each case the people, left leaderless, would be comparatively harmless, while the leaders, bereft of followers, would be reduced to impotence.

From the scenes portrayed on the marbles of Nineveh we learn, also, that captives carried their property with them. The new-comers, therefore, although few in number, would exercise the influence attached to wealth in a poor community. Their superior education and habits of command would add to their power. The wide diffusion of Aramaic would largely get over the difficulties of intercourse. On the other hand, the steady pressure of the life, social and religious, of the large community in the midst of which they were placed, would tend to identification of interests. This was the more certain under the heathen ideas which confined the authority of particular deities to limited localities, *e. g.*, the hills or the plains. Further, the colonists were not to begin with a united body. The first contingent was sent by Sargon (Schrader, *Keilinsh.* i. 268); a second two reigns later by Esarhaddon (Ezra iv. 2); and a third by his successor, "the great and noble Asnapper"=Asshur-bani-pal (Ezra iv. 10). They would naturally be drawn from dif-

ferent parts of the empire, and were probably more widely separated from each other in language, custom and religion, than all of them were from the Israelites around them. The more easily, therefore, would the successive companies fall under the influence of their more numerous neighbours. They may even have developed a warmer interest in local affairs than was shown by the Samaritans themselves. Thus the descendants of the earlier English colonists in Ireland are described as *Hibernis Hiberniores*. The Norman nobles in the days of king John claimed to be the spokesmen of the English people; but the relatively small infusion of Norman blood left the prevailingly Teutonic character of the people practically unaltered. So the coming of the Assyrian colonists did little to dilute the blood of the northern tribesmen. Their claim to belong to the chosen race is supported by the personal appearance of the surviving Samaritans today. Dr. Thomson says that as a community they are "tall and fine looking." "Their features represent the finest type of Israelite." This the present writer, from personal knowledge, is able to corroborate.

Dr. Thomson emphasizes the difficulty of transport in the days of Sargon, from Palestine to the regions beyond the Tigris and the Euphrates. The population of north Palestine he calculates could not be less than 500,000. A horde of captives of that size passing through Coele-Syria to Carchemish, and thence down the Euphrates, would have laid the whole country bare, and would have emptied of provisions every store city on the route. This would have interfered for years with the march of Assyrian armies. Sargon's son, Sennacherib, indeed, claims to have deported over 200,000 from the captured towns and villages of Judah. But Sennacherib had a weakness for exaggeration. He boasts that among the treasures given him by Hezekiah were 800 talents of silver. We learn from II Kings xviii. 14, that the amount was 300 talents. If he exaggerates in the same proportion with regard to the captives, his achievement is reduced to 75,000. With the larger numbers, no doubt the difficulties would increase in greater proportion, although they

might not rise to the point of absolute impossibility. A crowd of more than half a million would raise a very different problem.

There are early indications of imperfect sympathies between the northern and the southern tribes, and of a certain rivalry between Ephraim and Judah. Their differences became acute and manifest on the death of Saul, when the kingdom was divided between Ishbosheth and David. After a temporary reconciliation, on occasion furnished by the oppression of Solomon and the folly of Rehoboam, the cleavage recurred and became permanent. Notwithstanding, they had reached this stage as substantially one people, in the course of a common history. The spell of Abraham's name lay on all their hearts; the Patriarchs were their honoured ancestors; Moses was the framer of their laws. Their patriotism was fired by the same traditions of heroic enterprise. Their religious life was nourished and guided by one faith, by an identical revelation of God's will, by prophetic voices which commanded the reverence of all. The inheritance of ritual in divine worship was shared by north and south alike. Whatever documents, historical or religious, existed, they were not the exclusive possession of either; although for safety, towards the end of the period, the majority of these may have been in the custody of the Temple authorities. Until the days of Solomon no one spot was fixed as that in which the nation's worship could be acceptably offered, and the practice of sacrifice on the High Places prevailed (I Sam. ix. 12, 13); I Kings iii. 2, 3, 4, etc.).

After the disruption the main differences religiously between Israel and Judah were the presence of the golden calves at Bethel and at Dan, and the absence of a central sanctuary in the north. The ancient ritual of the High Places was maintained in the north, and, on occasion at least, was followed even by distinguished prophets; *e. g.*, Elijah (I Kings xviii. 30*ff*). There is abundant evidence to show that in Judah, notwithstanding the presence of the Temple, the High Places often glowed with the red fires of sacrifice. If, in spite of this, the worship of Jehovah continued in Judah, we might safely assume that it

continued also in the north. There is, however, no lack of evidence. Take, for example, the names given to children, which, according to prevailing custom, indicated the deities they served. Jeroboam, leader of the revolting tribes, called his first-born Abijah=*Jehovah is my father.* Ahab's sons were Joash=*Whom Jehovah supports;* Ahaziah=*Whom Jehovah upholds*; and Jehoram=*Whom Jehovah exalts.* Ahab's servant is Obadiah=*Servant of Jehovah.* The instrument of vengeance on the house of Ahab is Jehu=*Jehovah is,* and his father's name is Jehoshaphat=*Jehovah judges.* Outstanding prophetic names are Elijah=*Jehovah is my God;* Zedekiah=*Jehovah is just;* and Micaiah=*Who is like Jehovah?* The fact that the great mass of names surviving from that time are "Jehovistic," shows how widely Jehovah was held in honour in Israel, and even in the household of Ahab. This is the more remarkable when we remember the desperate attempt of Jezebel, with at least the connivance of Ahab, to subvert the worship of Jehovah. The princess of Tyre designed to exterminate the prophets of Jehovah. There must have been many; Obadiah alone was able to hide and provide sustenance for a hundred of them until the storm passed. No doubt multitudes of the people bowed to the blast and, while unchanged in mind, offered no overt resistance to the royal will. But there were at least seven thousand whose faith and courage never failed, who were ready to brave the worst the "tiger Jezebel" might do. *Jezebel's attempt at subversion is itself, indeed, a proof that Jehovism was the acknowledged religion of the northern kingdom.*

It is clear, therefore, that the northern tribes, while breaking away from the Davidic monarchy, carried with them their ancestral faith. The familiar ritual marked their worship: and even the fiercest denunciations of the High Places by the prophets do not deny that the homage there rendered was paid to Jehovah (Hosea iv. 15). What then was the reason for the hostility shown by the prophets to the High Places?

The origin of worship on the High Places is lost in the dimness of antiquity. When Israel entered Canaan, the

nations whom they dispossessed were all worshippers of Ba'al, whatever local differences there might be in thought and ritual; and the High Places were their immemorial sanctuaries. These were in conspicuous positions, often dominating town or village. Each was furnished with an altar, a *matztzebah*, or "pillar," an upright, unhewn stone which was the symbol of the divine presence; and an *Asherah* (translated "grove" in our English version), which was properly a tree trunk set up in a socket of stone, as the symbol, or as the "house" of the goddess of that name, whose worship was widely spread through Syria and Canaan. Recent investigations, particularly those of Professor Macalister at Gezer, have shed a lurid light upon the character of Canaanite worship. It was associated with the most revolting license, and orgies of human sacrifice, with feasts upon the victims following. There were at times secret caves under the sacred areas, where these horrible banquets were held, and oracular responses delivered.

Israel did not exterminate the Canaanites. Certain communities were by treaty left intact. Many cities defied capture. Others, such as Jerusalem, taken at first, reverted for a time at least to their heathen inhabitants. The Israelites were therefore in daily contact with people living in their midst for whom this ghastly ritual possessed all the glamour of immemorial custom. Under the influence of the conquerors the worst features would tend to disappear; but, as the altars, the pillars and asherahs were not destroyed, their existence must have been a perpetual invitation to return to the debaucheries of other days.

Ba'al might be the name of any one of many local deities, each with his own shrine and circle of devotees; or it might designate the supreme god, the rival of Jehovah. In this latter significance undoubtedly it is used by Elijah on Mount Carmel (I Kings x viii. 21); and also by Jehu in Samaria (II Kings x. 18*ff*). In the former case Ba'al, followed by a place name, means "Lord of" or "Possessor of." Thus Ba'al-Gad="Lord of Gad" (Josh. xiii. 5); Ba'al-Hazor="Lord of Hazor" (II Sam. xiii.

23). These Ba'als thus localized tended to fall apart, and to be conceived as separate deities. The process resembled that by which in Roman Catholic countries the Virgin of one shrine came to be regarded by the peasantry as a different personality, endowed with different attributes, from Our Lady of another. It was inevitable that the relation of these district "Lords" to the supreme Ba'al should become obscured. With the suppression of the more repulsive parts of the old ritual, the worship of Canaanite and Hebrew would tend to approximate. They offered in sacrifice the same victims—oxen, sheep, goats. The annual round of feasts, suited to the progress of the seasons, would be easily synchronised. The Israelites repudiated the supreme heathen Ba'al, and acknowledged Jehovah as the giver of all good; as "Lord" of the district, and also of the whole land. It would not be strange if they came to see in the deities reverenced on the High Places, local reflections, or representatives of the High God, Jehovah, and to speak of Him under the familiar name of Ba'al, "Lord." That they did so is proved by the prevalence of such names as Bealiah="Jehovah is Ba'al" (I Chr. xii. 5); Ishbaal="Man of Ba'al," son of Saul (I Chr. viii. 33); and Beeliada="Whom Ba'al knows," David's son (I Chr. xiv. 7). This same name appears in II Sam. v. 16 as Eliada="Whom God knows." Later this custom fell into disrepute (Hosea ii. 16).

That the High Places survived so many attempts at their destruction in both Israel and Judah was doubtless due to the fact that the worship there was offered to Jehovah. But plainly the position was one of peril. The associations of the old heathen worship lingered around them. To these influences the Canaanite element in the population would be especially responsive: and the Israelites found it all too easy to slip down into the alluring idolatries of ancient days. The complete destruction of the High Places and their furniture would have meant deliverance of the people from a great and pressing danger. But whilst this is the burden of much prophesying, we must note that it is a prophetic pen that writes, "The High Places were not removed; nevertheless Asa's heart

was perfect with the Lord all his days." That he suffered the continuance of worship at these hoary shrines was but a slight derogation from the eulogy paid to him.

In setting up the golden calves at Bethel and at Dan Jeroboam's object was political. To preserve continuity in religious observances as far as was compatible with that object was obviously good policy. All existing evidence as to the ritual of worship followed at the High Places in the north points to its similarity to that practised in the south. But the evidence goes beyond this, leading to the conclusion that these observances were not merely traditional, but—a matter of much higher importance—were carried out in accordance with a written, authoritative code.

From the story of Elijah on Mount Carmel we learn that the altars were built of unhewn stone, conforming to the regulations in Ex. xx. 25. The victim, a bullock, and the sacrifice, a whole burnt offering, follow the prescriptions of the Levitical law (Lev. i. 3, 5*ff*). The deed was done at the hour of the evening sacrifice. The use of this phrase as a note of time shows that the evening sacrifice was an established custom in Israel (*cf* Ezra ix. 4). From Amos, who prophesied in the days of Jeroboam II, we hear that sacrifices were offered every morning (Am. iv. 4). As from Mount Zion, therefore, so from the northern shrines, morning and evening the smoke of sacrifice floated upward. Tithes were also exacted in Israel, and no doubt furnished the means to maintain the sanctuaries at Bethel, Dan, Gilgal, Beersheba (Am. iv. 4; v. 5; viii. 14). Amos complains that they offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving "with leaven," thus breaking the regulation of Lev. ii. 11, "Ye shall burn no leaven." He further condemns the proclamation and publishing of freewill offerings.

Let it be observed that Amos is neither a priest, a prophet, nor the son of a prophet. He has no connection with the priesthood or with the schools of the prophets. He is a plain man moved by the Spirit of God to rebuke the evils of his time. But he makes no mistake in his use of highly technical terms relating to the conduct of divine

worship. Such terms are *tōdah*, "thank-offering"; *qattēr*, "to burn (incense)"; *nedabōth*, "freewill offerings"; *haggēchem*, "your feast days"; *'atzerothēchem*, "your solemn assemblies"; *'olōth*, "burnt offerings"; *minhothēchem*, "your meat offerings." These all occur in the Priestly Code (P), *minhah* appearing in it alone. And it is important to observe that Amos takes it for granted that they are as familiar to his auditors, the worshipping people of north Israel, as they are to himself. The people are rebuked for breaches of ritual order in terms which imply that they knew and professed to follow the Priestly Code. In passing, we may draw attention to the fact that here we have a practical demonstration of the early existence of the Priestly Code, which the critics tell us first saw the light in the days of Ezra.

The altar of incense at Jerusalem has its counterpart at Bethel (I Kings xiii. 1). The law of the Nazarite, given in Numbers vi. 1-21, was observed in early Israel (Judges xiii. 14; xvi. 17), and the religious order existed alike in the north (Am. ii. 11, 12), and in Judah (Lam. iv. 7).

The absence of a central shrine in the north was, indeed, a serious difference. Perhaps some attempt to put Bethel in the place of Zion may be referred to in Amaziah's declaration that it was the royal sanctuary—King's Chapel (Am. vii. 13; *cf* I Kings xii. 29*ff*). It was shorn of its glory when Samaria fell; and an old tradition says that Shalmaneser secured for himself the golden calf. The priest who came from Assyria to teach the colonists resided here (II Kings xvii. 28). The shrine was finally destroyed by king Josiah (II Kings xxiii. 4, 15).

We must not too readily assume the entire success of Jeroboam's purpose in setting up the golden calves (I Kings xii. 26). All the tribesmen had come for a time under the spell of Zion. The attractions of the Holy Mountain may have been strong enough to brave the anger of the king; and the feet of many worshippers may have trodden the pathway to Jerusalem. Otherwise it is difficult to understand the measures taken by Baasha (I Kings xv. 17; *cf* II Chr. xv. 9*ff*). In Jehoshaphat's day people

from Mount Ephraim were brought back to the God of their fathers (II Chr. xix. 4). Even during the period of Israel's greatest prosperity under Jeroboam II, Hosea regards Zion as the sole seat of legitimate worship (Hos. iv. 15; x. 11; xi. 12), and the house of David as the legitimate rulers (Hos. iii. 5). There is, indeed, no statement that such prophets as Elijah and Elisha ever visited the Temple at Jerusalem. But the argument from silence is always precarious. If it was their custom periodically to worship there, this is just one of the things that might easily escape mention in such records as we possess—things of which common knowledge is assumed. For example, the article in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* on William Wilberforce of anti-slavery fame, never mentions that he attended church. The high honour paid to Elijah by the Jews, and the attitude taken by Elisha towards Jehoshaphat of Judah as against Jehoram of Israel (II Kings iii. 14), hardly consist with their ignoring of Solomon's splendid shrine.

But the worship of the calves was straight in the teeth of the Mosaic Law. It was not, indeed, the worship of Ba'al. Jehu had "destroyed Ba'al out of Israel," but he "departed not from after * * * the golden calves that were in Bethel and that were in Dan" (II Kings x. 28*f*). Even so, how can this be reconciled with the prevailing worship of Jehovah? Confessedly the answer is not easy. Our information is very limited. But the same question may be asked regarding the worship of images by Roman Catholics, while the commandment forbidding it is blazoned on the walls before their eyes. The Romanist distinguishes between two kinds of worship, a lower and a higher. The former he offers to images, the latter is reserved for God alone. This suggests a possible solution of our problem. Under different names, and with various functions, we read of angels in the Old Testament. They are created beings (Psalm cxlviii. 2, 5), of older date than the earth (Job xxxviii. 7). In the New Testament also they play a considerable part, and have a place in the teaching of Jesus (Mat. xxii. 30; xxvi. 53; Mark viii. 38; Luke xvi. 22, etc.). According to Stephen (Acts vii. 53),

Paul (Gal. iii. 19), and the writer to the Hebrews (ii. 2), the Law was not given directly by God to men, but through the intermediation of angels. They are a higher order of beings standing between God and man, entrusted by God with special tasks on behalf of men. It would not be surprising if a certain reverence were paid to them. They are spoken of at times as *elohîm* (Ps. viii. 5, etc.), a name, plural (?) in form, which is applied also to God. In the act of consecrating the calves Jeroboam exclaimed, "Behold thy *elohîm*, O Israel (I Kings xii. 28). May not his meaning have been, "Behold thy angels, O Israel, intermediaries of God—who brought thee out of the land of Egypt?" Note the correspondence between the action and language of Jeroboam and those of Aaron in the wilderness. Aaron's calf may have suggested the form of Jeroboam's idols; and the significance may in each case have been the same. Here perhaps we have the explanation of the comparatively mild denunciation of this particular idolatry by the prophets. They do not, as we should expect, demand the destruction of the calves. It was, however, a dangerous innovation, even if a lower form of worship was offered to the calves. It was a first step towards polytheism; but the movement went no farther.

The priest brought back from Assyria would naturally teach the colonists the ritual which had long been familiar to Israel. He resided at Bethel, evidently the chief of the High Places with which that ritual was associated. The northern tribes shared in the reformations carried out by Hezekiah and Josiah. During the captivity of Judah the gulf between the tribesmen of the north and those of the south gradually narrowed. When Zerubbabel arrived in Jerusalem he found Jews and Samaritans living together on terms of such intimacy that intermarriage was common. This would have been impossible had serious questions of religion been in dispute. The offer of help by the Samaritans in re-building the Temple implied acknowledgment of its superior sanctity; and they claimed that they had been worshippers of Jehovah for some 200 years. Their claim was not denied. And it is to be noted that their offer of assistance was not rejected

on religious grounds. To the Jews themselves had the work of re-building been entrusted, and they were determined to carry out king Cyrus' command to the very letter. The hot resentment roused by this incident had time to cool in succeeding years. North and south resumed their old friendly relationships. But the coming of Ezra and Nehemiah was followed by a rupture all the more inveterate because now religion was involved. And here it is appropriate to observe that, only when the schism took on a religious character did the Samaritans give themselves with resolution and success to the founding of a rival central shrine in the north.

There were no doubt many abuses calling for reform, and clearly Ezra and Nehemiah put all their hearts into the business. Their measures of correction were carried out with ruthless severity. They professed to act upon ancient statutes prohibiting the Ammonite and the Moabite from ever entering the congregation of God, and forbidding intermarriage with the heathen peoples whom they had conquered. Two cases illustrate their methods. (1) Eliashib the High Priest had conceded the claim of Tobiah the Ammonite to be an Israelite, with a right to worship at the central shrine, and had allotted to him a chamber in the sanctuary. It is extremely unlikely that a man with a name meaning "Jehovah is good" would be in fact an Ammonite. This may have been a nickname. Ludovico Sforza, Duke of Milan, in the end of the fifteenth century, had no drop of Moorish blood in his veins; but on account of his dark complexion he was known as "Il Moro," The Moor. The High Priest himself was a relative of Tobiah. This man, thrown out of the sacred precincts with every circumstance of ignominy, allied himself with the Samaritans—if indeed he was not a Samaritan to begin with—and proved one of the Jews' most active and bitter foes. (2) Another relative of the High Priest, his grandson, had married a Samaritan wife, the daughter of Sanballat the Horonite. As a native of Bethhoron the latter was probably of Israelite descent. Sanballat may have been the name given him as an official under the Assyrians; just as Zerubbabel was called Shesh-

bazar. "I chased him from me," is the graphic phrase in which Nehemiah describes his treatment of the offender —an act that seems to have had far-reaching, disastrous results.

The interpretation of the law here acted upon is justified by an extant scripture. Even if Tobiah belonged to the hated people, the prohibition against the Ammonites and Moabites was limited to ten generations (Deut. xxiii. 3); and these were long past. No common ingenuity would be required to make the law forbidding marriage with the heathen Canaanites (Ex. xxxiv. 12, 15*f*) apply to the Samaritans. The zeal of Ezra and Nehemiah in this matter possibly reveals something of the narrow, legalistic spirit that afterwards hardened into Pharisaism. By their instrumentality two peoples boasting common ancestry and traditions, who, even in political separation, had worshipped the one God, following the same ritual, were thrust apart, and sent down the centuries perhaps the most perfect example of mutual hostility and hatred the world has ever seen.

From the foregoing it is manifest that up to the end of the Exile Jews and Samaritans were in agreement as to both sacred books and ritual practice. The rupture that then occurred would make little or no difference in this respect, as both were alike desirous of maintaining continuity with the past. The worship in the temple which as a result of the schism was set up on Mount Gerizim would therefore be as exact a copy as possible of that in the Jerusalem temple. If confirmation of this be required it is furnished in the Aramaic manuscripts found at Assouan in upper Egypt. These date from B. C. 471 to B. C. 411. Here is recorded an appeal made by the Jewish community at Elephantine to "The Sons of Sanballat" in Samaria in terms that acknowledge them as fellow-religionists no less than the High Priest in Jerusalem himself—a thing that would have been impossible had any important differences then existed. According to Josephus (*Antiquities*, XI. vii. 2; viii. 2*ff*), Sanballat built the temple on Gerizim for Manasseh his son-in-law who

had been chased out of the southern sanctuary. (Josephus here unaccountably drops a whole century of history, confused, perhaps, among the kings who bore the names of Darius and Artaxerxes. He makes Alexander the Great grant permission to build the temple, a permission probably given by Darius Nothus). If, as Josephus says, many Jews who were in like case with Manasseh "revolted" to him, and were provided with houses and land by Sanballat, there was an added reason why the ritual in the rival shrine should be identical with that on Zion. From that time forward there was complete separation of Jew and Samaritan. Religious movements in Jerusalem would be suspect on Gerizim; and the last thing the men of the north would dream of doing would be to adopt developments approved by their hated rivals in the south.

It appears, therefore, that at the time of the final rupture the Samaritans possessed a copy of the Pentateuch, with many minor differences which have an importance of their own, but yet agreeing in all essentials with that preserved by the Jews from which our own translation was made. When and how did that copy pass into their hands? The Samaritans claim that it has been in their keeping for over three thousand years. The advanced critical view is that the Samaritans had regarded, if not with explicit approval, yet without protest, the process of revolutionary change which was brought to a conclusion by Ezra: and the theory most in favour is that the High Priest's grandson, chased from the temple by Nehemiah, secured and carried with him to Samaria a copy of the newly completed Pentateuch.

This brings us face to face with an insuperable difficulty. According to the critics the book of Joshua is linked up with the five books of Moses as the outcome of the same literary activity. Their clear-eyed analysis refers the component parts to the same sources—J. E. D. and P. This literary unity consists therefore of six books, not five—a Hexateuch, not a Pentateuch. If this is true, then will someone tell us why the renegade priest took with him only five of the sacred books; and, above all, why he rejected that one which would have made special appeal

to the patriotism and pride of the northern tribes? For Joshua was their most heroic figure, round whose memory were entwined inspiring traditions, whose ashes reposed in their midst. In the situation that had arisen, this book would have met with an enthusiastic reception among the Samaritans. There was every reason why it should be taken; none why it should be rejected. Jewish teachers have always maintained that the book of Joshua and the Pentateuch are entirely distinct and separate. But strangely, with the critics, the weight of Jewish opinion seems to depend upon the scale into which it is cast. The Jewish Rabbin of the third or fourth century excluded the book of Daniel from the "Prophets," and placed it among the "Kethubhîm," the sacred writings. This agrees with the critical view. It is accepted as a palmary argument against the authenticity and historicity of the book. The far earlier decision of the Jewish teachers with regard to Joshua is against the critics. It is therefore rejected as worthless. If the Jewish view were accepted it would get over the difficulty we are dealing with —and destroy the critical theory.

But this is only the beginning of trouble for the higher critics. Further obstacles are raised by their account of the composition of the Torah—the Hebrew name for the Pentateuch. A brief, clear statement of the essential features of that account—its articulated skeleton—will aid us in our study.

About the time of Jehoshaphat, say the critics, one whose name has perished, in the southern kingdom, began to collect and put in writing the legends connected with the origin of the Israelite race. Some hundred years later a writer in the north took up a similar pious task. The Judean spoke of God by his covenant name, Jehovah: the Ephraimite used the more general term, Elohim. For convenience the two resulting documents are distinguished by the initials of these names, the Judean being known as J (Jehovist), and the Ephraimite as E (Elohist). In the reign of Josiah an editor, or redactor, took these two narratives and wove them into one. This combination is known as JE. About the same time, by order of the

king, repairs on a large scale were carried out in the Temple. The need was serious. The employment of hewn stone shows that the masonry in parts was giving way. During the progress of the work Hilkiah, the High Priest, came upon a document which he described as "The Book of the Law." He gave the book to the scribe Shaphan, who passed it on to the king. This document, the critics declare, was the book of Deuteronomy, and it is referred to as D. They maintain that it was the work of certain members of the prophetic school. The object aimed at was the total destruction of the High Places, and the concentration of the national worship in the central shrine in Jerusalem. It was sought to ensure success by invoking the authority of the great law-giver of Israel: so the writing was attributed to Moses himself. With the assistance, or at least with the connivance, of the High Priest, the book thus prepared was concealed in the temple. Those who hide know where to seek. According to the arrangement Hilkiah "discovered" the document; and by its means the end desired was attained. Somewhat later a redactor combined D with JE, expanding and adjusting the narratives in the latter to D. Other redactors followed who, imbued with the spirit of Deuteronomy, operated on the other books of scripture. These are known as D2 and D3; and to them is attributed the insertion, or interpolation, of passages which do not fit into the critical theory.

During the Exile the prophet-priest, Ezekiel, and others likeminded with him, passionately desiring to keep Israel pure, and separate from the heathen, produced what is known as the Law of Holiness (H). Herein is embodied, with variations, the list of clean and unclean animals found in Deuteronomy, while large space is given to matters concerning marriage relationships. An elaborate system of washings and sacrifices was added by the captive priests, and all together constituted what is called the Priestly Code (P). The document combining J and E with D found its way from Palestine to the land of Exile. Whether before leaving Jerusalem or after its arrival in Babylon, later Jehovist, and probably also later Elohist,

hands had laid their mark upon it. Contributions had thus been made by writers indicated as J, J2, J3, E, E2, E3, D, D2, D3, P, P2, P3, and perhaps others. The material thus collected was wrought into the completed Torah, and brought to Jerusalem by Ezra. We have therefore the claim made that the Pentateuch, practically in the form in which the Samaritans possess it, made its first appearance in Palestine with Ezra. If this is true, then clearly the Samaritans could not have had the Torah before the days of that famous scribe.

In examining this theory it will be convenient to begin with Deuteronomy which, the critics allege, was the book "found" in the temple, coming for the first time to light as a pious fraud. The only proof offered in support of this startling assertion is the critics' own averment that (a) Deuteronomy confines the offering of legitimate sacrifices to Jerusalem, and (b) that Josiah alone, after having read this book, carried this legislation into effect. Unfortunately for the theory neither statement is true. So far from absolutely limiting acceptable sacrifice to Jerusalem, explicit instructions are given as to the offering of sacrifice elsewhere, under certain conditions. Note the directions laid down for the conduct of sacrificial worship by those who live "too far" from the central shrine (Deut. xii. 21). It is a sacrificial killing and eating that is referred to here; otherwise, distance from the sanctuary would be unimportant. Again, assuming that altars will be set up by different communities, the erection of *matztzeboth* and *asheroth* is prohibited (Deut. xvi. 21*f*). The temple and its altars were already old when the book of the law was found. It would be grotesque to imagine that Hilkiah and his friends thought it possible that *asherah* or *matztzebah* would be introduced into the sanctuary on Zion. Clearly this regulation contemplated a multiplicity of altars (*cf. Ex.* xx. 24, 25). Now, *what the law regulates it allows.* Further, at Elephantine, in the days of the later Persian monarchs, the community was largely Jewish. They built a local temple in which they worshipped Jehovah according to the law of Moses. As Jews, the supremacy of the temple at Jerusalem would specially

appeal to them: but they betray no trace of feeling that the existence of their shrine in any degree derogates from the honour of that on Zion. The like is true regarding the temple built by Onias at Leontopolis in the time of the Ptolemies.

As to the statement that Josiah was the first to give effect to this legislation it is sufficient to point to II Kings xviii. 4, and to Isaiah xxxvi. 7. Two generations before Josiah was born, king Hezekiah had bent his strength to exactly the same reforms. Such an episode was too arresting to have been forgotten in Josiah's day. The destruction of the brasen serpent itself would make that reformation memorable. It would require something more than a hard-pressed critic's mere *ipsi dixit* to brand the account of Hezekiah's work as an interpolation by a Deuteronomist.

If the critical theory of the origin of Deuteronomy is correct it is a striking fact that the book is singularly poor in regulations for ritual, the very thing we should have expected to find in liberal measure, when a multitude of local sanctuaries, with presumably varying, not to say corrupted, worship, were to be abolished. Again, if the book were introduced for the specific purpose of centralizing the worship at the temple in Jerusalem, it is at least remarkable that Zion is not once named or even referred to. Why did the writer fail to indicate decisively the one legitimate, national shrine? The Samaritan interpolator had no hesitation in naming Mount Gerizim. One is bound to say, also, that it was very unlike a Jerusalem Jew to give such prominence to the Samaritan mountains as they receive in chapters xi. 29; xxvii. 4. The truth is that everything known with certainty points to the book having been written before the final choice of a site for the central shrine (*cf.* Deut. xii. 5; xv. 20; xviii. 6, etc.). If the building of the temple on Mount Zion was the fulfilment of God's purpose, this would indicate the existence of Deuteronomy before the days of David and Solomon.

Once more, according to the critical hypothesis Deuteronomy was the earliest book of ritual law. In JE there

is little legislation, and that is not ritual. Until the appearance of Deuteronomy, therefore, no book of the law written by Moses was known either in Jerusalem or Samaria. No such book was in existence. But let it be observed that the "discoverer" of this document says, "I have found *the* book of the law." If language has any meaning, in thus defining and individualizing the roll, the speaker assumes that it is one the existence of which is a matter of common knowledge. Even so, it does not follow that Deuteronomy was the earliest book of ritual law. That it was later than J and E is evident from references to events recorded in Exodus and Numbers which involve these documents. But this is granted. P, however, is also quoted (Deut. x. 6, 7), an extract being taken from Nu. xxxiii. 30-33; xvi. 13*ff*). There is an obvious reference to the Levitical law concerning leprosy in Deut. xxiv. 8, 9; *cf* Lev. xiii.-xiv. Familiar knowledge of its teaching is assumed. Again, in Deut. xvi. 13*ff* observance of the Feast of Tabernacles is enjoined; but concerning the manner in which it is to be observed Deuteronomy has not a word to say. The reason for this silence is easy to see. Full directions for the due celebration of the Feast were already in the people's hands (Lev. xxiii. 33*ff*). There was no need to repeat them. From all this it follows that the Priestly Code was earlier than Deuteronomy. The critical view that it was added some hundred and fifty years later is therefore untenable.

It would appear then that the roll called by Hilkiah "*the* book of the law," was a copy of the Torah—not merely of Deuteronomy, and that some special importance or sanctity attached to it. Is there any clue to its possible identity? The famous Egyptologist, Dr. Edouard Naville, has made a suggestion of great interest. Solomon, who married a daughter of the Pharaoh, must have had some acquaintance with Egyptian ways. A custom prevailed in the Nile Valley, when temples were being built, of putting portions of the sacred book, the Book of the Dead, in the foundations of these sacred edifices. If this custom appealed to Solomon, what more natural than that he should place a copy of the Hebrew sacred book,

the Torah, in the foundation of the temple? We have seen that, with the lapse of centuries, parts of the masonry were giving way, and in the course of the repairs ordered by Josiah, the mouldering stones were replaced by fresh hewn blocks. If the stone containing the book were of the softer order of limestone its decay might be endangering the stability of the structure. On its removal the contents of its receptacle would be revealed. It will be observed that Hilkiah does not go directly to the king with the roll, as the High Priest might be expected to do. The reason may be that the script in which it was written had, with the lapse of centuries, become archaic, and for its decipherment the skill of an expert was required. It was, therefore, handed to the learned professional scribe, Shaphan, who took it to Josiah. He could clear up obscurities for the king. We can well imagine the impression made upon the royal mind and on that of his subjects by this hoary document so strangely brought to light. But this again would mean that at the very beginning of the Monarchy in Israel the Torah was already sacrosanct.

Let it be granted, however, for sake of argument, that the critical hypothesis is correct. Consider then the happenings on Ezra's arrival in Jerusalem. Nearly a hundred years before, Zerubbabel had built an altar "to offer burnt offerings thereon," it is significantly added, "as it is written in the law of Moses the man of God" (Ezra. iii. 2*f*). Almost three quarters of a century had passed since the temple was rebuilt and a regular service of worship organized—sufficiently long for the ritual followed to have established its hold upon the minds of priests and people alike. All history testifies to the intense repugnance of the Jews to changes affecting even small points in their religious ritual. What must the attitude of these men have been towards this stranger from Babylon, who brought a book to them hitherto unknown, which he claimed to be the complete law of Moses; which contained many new things, in particular, the Priestly Code, which called for a revolution of their religious practices? Can we believe that, being the men they were, they would meekly abandon a ritual hallowed for them by the ex-

perience of more than two generations, and adopt wholesale innovations at the bidding of one who, although belonging to a priestly family, had never himself even seen a legitimate sacrifice? The support of the Tirshatha, backed up by the Great King, would not have eased Ezra's difficulties; for, with men of the Jewish type, a display of force is apt to rouse only more resolute opposition.

Now the impression made by the narrative is that Ezra encountered but little difficulty in securing the acceptance of the Torah. The only suggestion of trouble is with the men who, on his interpretation of the law, had sinned in marrying alien wives. But even the success of his relentless treatment of them cannot be easily explained if the law he so interpreted and applied was new, or of hitherto unacknowledged authority. If, on the other hand, we may assume that the antiquity and authority of the Torah were unquestioned, but that, through the vicissitudes of a long and troubled history, many of its provisions had fallen into desuetude: if we may further suppose that Ezra's appeal quickened the conscience of officials and community alike, who in their hearts were not unaware of their declension, the way would be clear to a reasonable understanding of what took place.

It seems worth while to say that if Ezra had really filled the rôle assigned to him by the critics, few Hebrew names would have been held in more conspicuous honour than his. The Jews have never been ungenerous in celebrating the achievements of their illustrious sons. But the glory given to Ezra by the critics far exceeds that accorded to him by his own people. In Ben Sira's *Hymn of the Fathers*, for example, such men as Zerubbabel, Joshua the High Priest, and Nehemiah are commemorated, while Ezra is not deemed worthy of mention.

But the difficulties in the way of the critical theory are not exhausted. We are asked to believe that the scruples of the Jews were got over, and the new Torah accepted in Jerusalem; that under its provisions the grandson of the High Priest was convicted of infamy, and with contempt and shame was "chased" from the sacred precincts; that this man, whom Josephus calls Manasseh, smarting

under the disgrace, possessed himself forthwith of a copy of the Torah, carried it to Samaria, and commended to his kindred for their adoption and obedience the very law under which he had suffered such unforgettable humiliation and opprobrium. The demand strains even credulity to the breaking point. We could as easily conceive a Puritan, a victim of Archbishop Laud's fiery zeal, having escaped to the freedom of New England, at once becoming an enthusiastic advocate of the whole Laudian system.

Even if we suppose this difficulty surmounted, and Manasseh willing to undertake this singular task, we have still to ask how the Samaritan priests and people would regard the astonishing proposal. They followed a sacrificial ritual learned from accredited teachers, which had mingled for centuries with all their experience of life. The stout religious conservatism of the Orient found a congenial home in the breasts of the Jews and the Samaritans. The old friendly relations between Samaria and Jerusalem had given place to bitter hostility. It is not very easy to believe that the Samaritans gave up a ritual received from their fathers and endeared by familiar use, to accept a new Torah issuing from the hated south, on the invitation of a priest who was himself a fugitive from its provisions, having suffered under them disgrace and degradation. The fact that the Levitical legislation was given effect to in the temple on Gerizim is, indeed, itself a proof that the Priestly Code was known and reverenced by the Samaritans long before the days of Ezra.

So far the question how the Samaritans became possessed of the Pentateuch has not been answered. It is surely abundantly clear that the critical theory is impossible. Is there any better suggestion to offer? We have seen that it is not unreasonable to believe that the complete Torah was extant in the days of Solomon. After the disruption of the kingdom one copy would probably be the parent of those that were in the hands of the northern tribes. When Samaria fell and Priests and leading men were carried away, the Assyrians would make a clean sweep of the sacred literature of the Hebrews. To the poor and ignorant who remained the books would have

been useless. Unable to read, their guides would be memory and tradition. In accordance with old world custom the Assyrian colonists desired to pay homage to the God in whose land they had settled. The exact ritual to be followed, was reckoned of supreme importance. The right attitudes and gestures of the worshippers, the correct titles by which to address the deity, the proper terms of dedication, couched probably in archaic language, these were things the knowledge of which was essential to acceptable worship. They were of too great consequence to be learned with confidence from the lips of an ignorant peasantry. Appeal for guidance was made to the Assyrian king, for whom, as for his people, the whole idea of religion was ritual. We know that the Sargonid monarchs were keenly interested in, and formed collections of, this kind of literature. Would such a king, answering the appeal, think it sufficient to send a priest who should rely entirely upon his memory in teaching ritual—a matter in which even the slightest error might vitiate a whole service? Assuredly he would consider the priest's equipment incomplete without a book to guide him and prevent mistakes.. Such a book as he required was at hand among those carried to Assyria, possibly in the hands of the priests themselves. Armed with a copy of the Torah the success of the priest's mission was well assured. It is easy to understand the reverence with which the Samaritans would regard a book with such a history thus coming into their hands; with what jealous care they would preserve it; and how, with passing time, the sense of sanctity would grow around it. This would fully account for the profound honour in which the Samaritans hold the Pentateuch today.

But, more than that, it would explain why the Pentateuch alone of all the sacred writings of Israel is possessed by the Samaritans. From the conqueror's point of view the Torah was a comparatively harmless book which, if sent to Samaria, might serve a useful end. It was far otherwise with the historical books, and especially with Joshua. The story of the great Ephraimite hero, and his stirring exploits; of the imperial glories of the

days of David and Solomon, could only work mischief among the Hebrew tribesmen, nourishing a spirit of patriotism, rousing national feeling, and preparing the way for revolt. The Assyrians would take good care that none of these rolls should reach Samaria. These historical books are all of prophetic origin. When we remember the hostility prevailing between priests and prophets in the north, it is highly improbable that the teacher-priest at Bethel, while perhaps not ignorant of these books himself, would be at any pains to spread a knowledge of them among the Samaritans.

The Samaritans do indeed betray a certain consciousness that their canon is incomplete as a basis on which to rest their claim to be the true Israel. It is clear that the history of God's chosen people could not have ended on the eastern shore of the Jordan. That is where the Pentateuch leaves them. The Samaritans seem once to have had an authoritative account of the conquest of Palestine; and the place they assign to Joshua is second only to that of Moses. Unfortunately the havoc wrought by the Assyrians was but the beginning of a long series of disasters to Israelite literature; and from the days of Hyrcanus Samaritan manuscripts have frequently suffered wholesale destruction. The result of efforts made to supply the resulting lack of historic documents as seen in the books known as *Tolideh*, the Samaritan *Joshua*, and the *Annals* of Abu'l Fath, can only be described as pathetic.

If, then, the priest from Assyria brought with him a copy of the Torah, we must conclude that this was the law in force in the northern kingdom before the fall of Samaria. When did it come there? We have seen that the Mosaic ritual was known and followed in Israel in the days of Jeroboam II. But that great warrior, who did evil in the sight of the Lord, certainly did not bring it in. Nor can we associate with this any prince of the house of Omri. Jeroboam with his calves may also be dismissed from our minds. The Torah must therefore have been in the possession of Israel before the disruption of the kingdom. Thus, by another line of reasoning, we

are brought back to the times, and to the house of David. In their eagerness to erect a permanent central shrine as the sacred hearth of the nation, they were clearly influenced by one of the ruling ideas of the Deuteronomic legislation. The ritual at the dedication closely followed the Priestly Code, even distinguishing between priests and Levites. And Solomon carried all Israel with him in the solemn service. The law that swayed these splendid monarchs and their people was not a thing of yesterday. It spoke already with the authority of age. If Solomon wished to place a sacred volume in the foundation of the temple, it was there at hand.

The conclusion forced upon us in our study thus far is seen to be practically inevitable as we follow another line of investigation.

The three great texts, the Septuagint—the Greek translation of the Old Testament, said to have been made in Alexandria in the time of Ptolemy Philadelphus (285-247 B. C.), and often quoted in the New Testament—the Massoretic, and the Samaritan, are all derived ultimately from one original. Their mutual variations and agreements are deeply interesting, casting light upon their history, the influences to which they have been subjected, and also upon the question of their relative priority in date. Here, however, we are not concerned to learn which is the oldest. We are in search of evidence as to the age of the Parent Manuscript. For this purpose we may concentrate attention mainly upon the Massoretic and the Samaritan. Our object will be gained if we can determine approximately the date when the divergence from the parent manuscript took place, giving rise to the manuscripts from which these are descended. The required evidence is to be found in a study of the differences between the Massoretic and Samaritan texts, and in the discovery of the causes of these differences. After a careful scrutiny of the variants Dr. Thomson classifies them as due (1) to accident and (2) to intention. Accidental variants may arise from mistakes (a) of hearing or (b) of sight, or from (c) defective attention. Intentional

variants may be corrections (a) grammatical, (b) logical, or (c) theological. Each of these sources of variants is important, and Dr. Thomson, with characteristic thoroughness, explores them all. For our present purpose, however, it will be enough to consider the variants arising from mistakes of sight, *i. e.*, errors made by readers who have confused one letter with another which, in the script before them, was like it in shape.

The results achieved in recent decades in the field of Semitic epigraphy have made available a great body of inscriptions covering a period of more than a thousand years. The dates of the various Semitic scripts can thus be known with approximate accuracy. The oldest form of Hebrew writing, the angular script, exists today only in inscriptions. Through a period of some five hundred years we can follow the changes by gradual modifications in this script from the Moabite Stone, inscribed in the days of Jehoram, son of Ahab; the Ba'al Lebanon and Siloam inscriptions, down to the sarcophagus of Ashmunazar, a contemporary of the younger Cyrus, at Sidon. The angular script was succeeded by the Samaritan, examples of which are first found on the coins of Simon the Maccabee, about 140 B. C. Then, some three hundred and forty years later appears the familiar square character in which our Hebrew bibles are printed. It is true, of course, that no manuscript has been found written in the old angular script; but it would be unsafe to infer that no such manuscript ever existed, or that such a document may not one day be discovered. Changes in the form of the incised letters in the inscriptions are evidently due to the influence of writing, say with a reed pen on papyrus. However, any doubt as to the practice of writing in the ancient script is dispelled by the discovery made by American explorers in the foundation of Ahab's palace at Samaria, of ostraka—bits of broken earthenware jars —with inscriptions *written* in the ancient character.

If the water from, say the Mississippi River near the sea, were analyzed, it would be found to contain traces of all the different soils through which it has passed in the course of its long journey. In like manner, a manuscript

of the Old Testament, written in the latest script, may contain marks of every transmission, and of every script in which it has been copied and handed down from generation to generation. In such a manuscript there may be errors due to confusion of letters that are like each other in a recent script; and alongside of these may stand mistakes arising from similarity of character in an ancient script. Manifestly the individual document cannot be older than the most recent script it contains: but the age of the contents is determined by the oldest.

For this investigation it is obvious how important it is that the forms of the letters should be correctly copied from the Samaritan manuscripts. In printed works Dr. Thomson found much evidence of carelessness in this respect, the Germans, from Gesenius to Petermann, being the worst offenders. He gives therefore (p. 222) a careful transcription of the various Semitic alphabets.

Take first the letters *dal* ד and *resh* ר. These two closely resemble each other in the square character. In the Samaritan character they are not so much alike, 𐤃 and 𐤓, respectively. But in the Ashmunazar inscription and in that of Ba'al Lebanon, 𐤓 and 𐤒; 𐤃 and 𐤀, respectively, they could easily be mistaken. Now in Genesis x. 4, the Massoretic reads a certain name *Dodanim*: the Samaritan reads *Rodanim*. Here the Septuagint supports the Samaritan: and in I Chron. i. 7, the name appears as in the Samaritan. The Samaritan copyist has evidently avoided a mistake into which the Massoretic has fallen. But in what script was the manuscript written from which the copies were made? As we have seen, it could not have been the Samaritan. We must go back to the old angular script for the source of this error. This points to the high antiquity of the contents of this book. A similar variant in which the Samaritan seems to be right is found in Genesis xlvii. 21. The Massoretic reads "he removed them, *i. e.*, the Israelites to the cities" etc. The Samaritan reads "he enslaved them." There are, indeed, two variants in the one phrase. The Massoretic takes *resh* for *dal* in the first, and also in the third word: and there is the further difference in the third word that

either the Massoretic has dropped a *beth* after the second letter, or the Samaritan has inserted one. In favour of the Samaritan we may point out that it carries on naturally the process narrated in the preceding verses. The Egyptians had successively sold their cattle and their lands to Pharaoh. The next step was to sell themselves. The Egyptians did not begin to live in cities in the days of Joseph, as the Massoretic seems to imply. The annual rise of the Nile would make this necessary from the very first. The Septuagint here again supports the Samaritan; and once more for the origin of the mistake we must turn to the old angular script. These are typical examples of the confusion of *resh* and *dal*.

Take now the letters *mem* and *nun*. There is absolutely no resemblance between these two letters either in the square (ם, final form ם; and נ, final form ן), or in the Samaritan (𐤌, and 𐤍) script; but in the earliest angular script (𐤌, and 𐤍), the likeness is close enough to make mistakes easy. This is illustrated in a name of frequent occurrence, that of Jacob's youngest son. In the Massoretic it is consistently written *Benjamin*, and in the Samaritan invariably *Benjamim*. Who blundered it is impossible to say. Both forms yield a good and suitable meaning: *Benjamin*, "Son of the right hand" —*i. e.*, favourite son: *Benjamim*, "Son of days," referring either to his father's age, or forecasting length of days for himself. The one thing certain is that error could have arisen only in copying from a manuscript in the old angular script. Again the Samaritan has *Pithon*, and the Massoretic *Pithom* in Ex. i. 11, where, as closer to the Egyptian, the latter is probably correct. Other cases are found, *e. g.*, in Numbers xxxii. 35—Massoretic, *Shophan;* Samaritan *Shuphim*, and in Deut. xii. 21. In this latter case there is also a confusion between *kaph* and *vav*, which have any resemblance to each other only in the ancient script. But if the Torah once existed in the old angular characters, this carries us back to a very early period in the history of Israel.

We may glance for a moment at a set of variants which, while properly included under those arising from mis-

takes of hearing, are due to a Samaritan peculiarity. In reading Hebrew the Samaritans have never pronounced the gutturals. A scribe, therefore, writing to dictation, unless well acquainted with the text, might easily mistake *aleph* for *'ain*, *he* for *cheth*, and so on. In this way numerous variants have arisen. Many of the Samaritan acrostic poems begin with *'ain* instead of *aleph*. This defective pronunciation is not due to any inability like that from which the Ephraimites suffered in the days of Jephthah (Judge xii. 6). Arabic, a language rich in gutturals, they speak perfectly. When did they acquire the peculiarity, and why do they adhere to it so tenaciously? They did not learn it from the Greeks, who had χ, *chi*, and the rough breathing, as well as γ, *gamma*, which early began to be pronounced like the Arabic *ghain*: nor from the Persians; for under them Aramaic, a language with its full complement of gutturals, was spoken: nor from the Assyrians; for they had at least one strong guttural, *cheth*, as heard in the names of Sennacherib and Esarhaddon. Going back to the days of Ahab we find, through the alliance of that monarch with Tyre, a regnant Phoenician influence in Israel. Now, the Phoenicians spoke Hebrew, dropping the gutturals as the Samaritans do. This custom evidently prevailed when the Greeks received from them their alphabet, not later than 1400 B. C. The Greeks attached vowel sounds to the unpronounced gutteral symbols of the Phoenicians, and invented signs for their own gutturals. During Phoenician ascendancy, under patronage of the court, men might come to regard this pronunciation as a mark of refinement and culture. No more would be required to secure its rapid spread among the people. Under a similar idea the Arabic *qaf* has almost disappeared in certain districts of Syria and Palestine, being thinned away to a mere catch in the breath. The higher and better educated classes would be the more susceptible to this influence. The Law would therefore be read in this way: and the custom would be maintained with all the greater firmness because it furnished an added note of distinction between them and the men of the south. The priest who brought back the law

from Assyria would bring back also the patriotic pronunciation; and it would be stereotyped for the Samaritans as a holy thing from its association with the sacred volume. The pronunciation, therefore, may be regarded as a witness to the ancient date of the Torah.

Following various lines of inquiry, we have been led decisively to the conclusion that the positions of advanced criticism assailed in these articles—positions essential to the whole critical system—are quite untenable. As against critical assertions evidence has been led which shows that Deuteronomy was no "pious fraud," and could not have been the earliest legislative book; that the complete Torah must have been in the hands of Israel long before the days of Ezra; while there is good reason to believe that it existed in its integrity at least at the beginning of the Hebrew monarchy.

Beyond this, at the moment, we cannot carry our investigations: but what is written may enable impartial readers to see that the critical building, with all its boasted strength and symmetry, tends to crumble in the light of growing knowledge as a dream-palace dissolves at the touch of dawn.