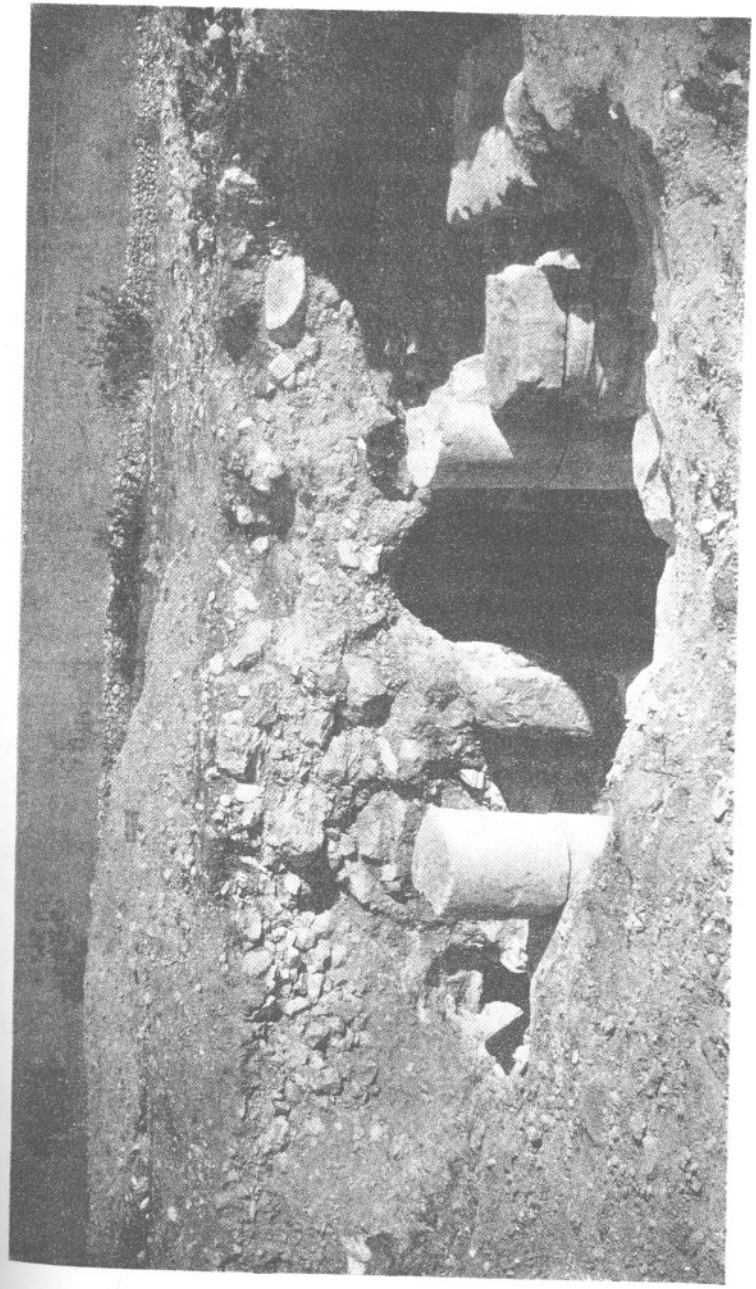
CHAPTER IX.

THE SAMARITANS IN THE APOCRYPHAL LITERATURE, THE NEW TESTAMENT, AND JOSEPHUS.

In the preceding Chapters we have examined the secular history of the Samaritans; it is a story redolent of friction and conflicts between them and the Jews since the beginning of the schism. The obscurity concerning the origin of the northern sect has been made evident in Chapter IV; however in the Hellenic period the cleft between the two sects had established itself, a fact demonstrated by John Hyrcanus's capture of Shechem as a hostile city. But it remains now, apart from external politics, to investigate the actual spiritual relations between the Jews and the Samaritans in the three or four centuries respectively before and after the beginning of the Christian era. For this study the Samaritan literature is almost absolutely worthless so far as direct references are concerned, for none of it except the Samaritan edition of the Pentateuch can be dated with certainty earlier than the IVth Century A. C. We are therefore thrown back upon the Judaistic literature exclusively, the examination of which will show what the Jews, "the enemies themselves being judges," thought in that period concerning the Samaritans.

There appear to be but two references to that sect in the early non-canonical literature of the Jews.[1] The one is *Ecclus.* 50, 25f: "With two races is my soul vexed; and the third is no nation: with the dwellers of Seir and

[1] For reference to certain Hellenistic literature, see Chap. XIV, § 5.



JACOB'S WELL.

Philistia, and with the foolish race that sojourns in Shechem." It is to be noticed that the tone of the writer is one of contempt towards the Samaritans. The identical contemptuous attitude appears in the apocryphal *Testament of Levi,* c. 7: "From this day will Shechem be called the City of Fools" (πόλις ἀσυνέτων).[2] This epithet of fool as applied to the northern sectarian is further witnessed to in the New Testament. In *Jn.* 8, 48 the Jews are represented as saying to Jesus: "Do we not well say, Thou art a Samaritan and hast a devil?" In what sense was Jesus called a Samaritan? The answer has not been satisfactorily given. Commentators variously hold that the epithet refers to Jesus' heresy, to his not being a genuine son of Abraham (cf. v. 39ff), or to his hostility to the Jews. But the context leads much rather to the inference that "Samaritan" means here "fool." This comes out clearly in the subsequent conversation, v. 51ff: "Verily, verily I say unto you, if a man keep my saying, he shall never see death. The Jews said to him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets, and thou sayest," etc. That is, their argument lies against the utter absurdity of Jesus' words. There are thus three distinct references from as many quarters in which the epithet "fool" appears as a byword of common application to the Samaritans. The origin of the epithet is most probably the contempt felt by the Jews for the absurd pretensions of their rivals. That the term was an extreme one, but nevertheless was used by the Jews among themselves, is shown by *Mt.* 5, 22.[3]

[2] See Kautzsch, *Apokryphen,* ii, 467. The date of the Jewish basis of the *Testaments* is uncertain; Schnapp, *ibid.,* 460, inclines to the Ist Century A. C.

[3] It must be left an open question whether there was also a paranomasia between the Hebrew *nabal,* fool, and *nabel,* fading, which occurs in the denunciation of Ephraim in *Is.* 28, 1. The same root is used for various other unpleasant connotations, *e. g.* corpse, or that which is morally corrupt. This paranomasia would be parallel to that which has been suggested (first, I believe, by Reland, *Dissertationes*

Before studying the scattered New Testament references to Samaria, it may be convenient to examine the attitude held towards them by the great Jewish historian of the Ist Century, Josephus, who has abundant opportunity to refer to the Samaritans. These appear in his pages under that name, and also as Kuthæans and Shechemites. As Josephus was a well-informed man in contemporary affairs, and also as he had friends in Samaria,[4] he might be taken as a reliable authority. But unfortunately he no more than reflects the current Jewish prejudices of his day, and allows us to perceive some of the truth only through the contradictions in which he involves himself. In his account of the fall of Northern Israel, he adds to the letter of the Biblical narrative that "all" of the people of the Northern kingdom were deported.[5] This must have been the prevailing vulgar opinion in Judaism, and indeed has at least the negative support of the Biblical account. He also draws the inference, so plausible to the reader of *Ezra-Nehemia*, that it was the Samaritan sectarians who interfered throughout with the restoration of Jerusalem and the temple.[6] He charges that the Samaritans affected to be Jews when it suited their advantage, and otherwise claimed to be Sidonians.[7] But an intimation of another side of the question crops out. He tells us in one place that "Shechem is inhabited by apostates of the Jewish nation," and that the Samaritans profess to be Hebrews, although not Jews.[8] And he adds that this apostate community was increased by

miscellaneæ, i, 140) between the *shikkore*, drunkards, of the same passage and Sychar, as an abusive epithet for Shechem, *Jn.* 4, 5. I would suggest that in the epithet "fool" there is a play upon the place More, in the neighborhood of Shechem. The Greek μωρός, "fool", was adopted by the late Hebrew in the same sense; see Jastrow, *Dictionary*, p. 749, and cf. *Mt.* 5, 22, and commentators *ad loc.*

[4] *Life*, 52.

[5] *AJ* ix, 14, 3; cf. x, 9, 7.

[6] *AJ* xi, cc. 2, 4; c. 5, 8.

[7] See Additional Note B.

[8] *AJ* xi, 8, 6.

Jews who had eaten unclean things, broken the Sabbath, or committed like offences, and who fled to Shechem.[9] Josephus thus admits, however unwillingly and unconsciously that the Samaritans were Israelites, and that they were nearly enough related to the Jews to be an asylum for the discontented or excommunicates of the Jewish Church. The worthy historian is a good example of the ambiguity which affects the whole Jewish attitude toward the sect.

The New Testament has not been sufficiently applied for the understanding of the Jewish treatment of the Samaritans, and the commentators have largely failed in the treatment of the several pertinent passages to apprehend the status of the Samaritans according to the Jewish mind of the Ist Century. But the volume throws considerable light upon our quest. Jesus himself twice met with Samaritan discourtesy, twice used the Samaritans to point a moral, twice referred to the Samaritans in defining the scope of his Gospel, and once had the epithet "Samaritan" coarsely applied to himself.[10] And in the subsequent history, the action of his Church in regard to the evangelization of Samaria is instructive for our study.

In *Jn.* 4 occurs the story of Jesus' conversation with the woman of Sychar by Jacob's Well, a meeting which resulted in his sojourn in the town for two days, when many Samaritans came to believe in him.[11] The scene in which the Samaritan woman at first churlishly refused the wearied

[9] *Ibid.*, § 7. He also knows that Samaritans were up to his own day admitted into the temple precincts; xviii, 2, 2.

[10] See above, p. 155.

[11] The author accepts this story as authentic, and as one of the many instances in which the evangelist appears true to local conditions and color. The mere reference to the Samaritan belief in a Messiah adds corroboration to the anecdote. The city Sychar I take to be Shechem; see above, p. 20. It may be noted here that the Roman martyrology celebrates March 20 as the anniversary of the Samaritan woman "Photina," who is said to have suffered martyrdom along with her sons Joseph and Victor.

Jew a cup of cold water is the classic instance of the mutual hatred of the two sects.

Again, *Luke* 9, 51ff describes a journey Jesus took up to Jerusalem, apparently by the route through Samaria. On this occasion "he sent messengers before him, and they entered into a village of Samaritans, so as to make ready for him; and they would not receive him, because he was evidently going to Jerusalem." This village may have been Ginaia, the ancient En-gannim and modern Jenin, doubtless the scene of frequent conflicts between the Samaritans and Jewish pilgrims, one bloody instance of which is recorded by Josephus.[12] In response to this inhospitality the Jewish feeling of the disciples blazes forth in the spirit of Elija: "Sir, wilt thou that we bid fire to come down from heaven and destroy them?" But Jesus' own mind is revealed by the rebuke he administers to his followers. The party then went into another village where they were more hospitably received.[13]

It is to be observed that in both of these passages narrating the transit of Jews through Samaria, it is taken as a matter of course that Jesus and his disciples lodged in Samaritan villages and purchased Samaritan food. To be sure, the coarse and yet natural inhospitality of the Samaritans toward the Jews broke out on both occasions. With these facts the comment of the Fourth Gospel: "For the Jews have no dealings with (συγχρῶνται) the Samaritans" (4, 7), as generally interpreted, disagrees, for in the next breath the evangelist tells how the disciples had gone into the town

[12] See above, p. 85.

[13] The possible identification with Ginaia presupposes, with most modern commentators, that Luke gives the story out of historical connection, inasmuch as the last journey of Jesus to Jerusalem, with which the evangelist connects the incident, was by way of the Trans-Jordanic route. If the incident be rightly connected with Jesus' final journey,— so for example by Godet,— then the Samaritan village may have lain in the plain of Scythopolis, or even across Jordan; see Chap. VIII. This would easily explain how the party found "another kind of village", ἑτέραν κώμην, in the close neighborhood.

to buy food. But there are grave doubts as to the genuineness of the clause, which is omitted in the Alexandrine Codex, the Codex Bezæ, and in the Italic MSS a, b, e; it is rejected by Tischendorf, and bracketed by Westcott-Hort and Nestle. The probabilities favor the view that it is a gloss representing the actual conditions of a later age. If it is to be preserved, then either the author is guilty of an inexact expression, or else the verb requires some different translation than the one generally given to it.[14] But the evangelical narratives show that the Jews in that period exercised considerable liberty in entering Samaritan markets and accepting Samaritan hospitality, a liberty that was the greater when we recall that there were few foods which could not easily be rendered unlawful. Indeed, as the following Chapter will show, this liberty was preserved both in theory and practice well down into the Talmudic age. Also the common statement that the Jews avoided Samaria as an unclean land and therefore preferred the Peræan route, cannot be maintained.[15] For in addition to these Gospel narratives, there is the distinct testimony of Josephus that it was the custom of the Galilæan pilgrims to go through Samaria,[16] a liberty followed into late times by the Jewish rabbis. Finally, there is the explicit Rabbinic dictum that "the land of Samaria is clean."[17] Jesus however seems generally to have gone up to Jerusalem by way of Peræa, and the Fourth Evangelist takes occasion to explain the deviation from his usual custom by the statement

[14] J. Lightfoot, *ad loc.* (*Works,* 1684, ii, 538), seems to be the only commentator who recognizes, quite apart from the textual argument, the difficulty of the clause. The verb συγχρᾶσθαι corresponds to the Talmudic *histappeq,* which is used by R. Abbahu in the IVth Century in admitting that in earlier days the Jews had dealings with the Samaritans; see below, p. 192.

[15] E.g. Smith, *HG* 256; Edersheim, *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah,* ed. 8, New York, i, 394. In another passage Edersheim corrects himself, p. 400.

[16] *AJ* xx, 6, 1.

[17] See Chap. X, note 27.

that "he had to pass through Samaria," the necessity appearing from the context to be his desire to get quickly away from the hostility of the Judæan authorities.[18] The Jews naturally took the eastern route to avoid the unpleasantness of the journey through Samaria.

The Gospel of Luke, whose interest in "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" is characteristic, also gives the story of the healing of ten lepers, one of whom was a Samaritan, 17, 11–19. Jesus responds to their request that he compassionate them by bidding them go and show themselves to the priests. In thus holding them to the Levitical law, he included the Samaritan with the rest as an Israelite, and the inferred acceptability of the Samaritan as a subject of the Jewish laws of purification at the temple, is in entire accord with the Talmudic spirit; Josephus himself records the permitted participation of Samaritans at the temple feasts.[19] The story proceeds to tell how on the way to the priests the lepers were cleansed, but only one of them turned back to thank his benefactor, and "he was a Samaritan." Jesus responds: "Were there not ten cleansed, but where are the nine? None has returned to give glory to God save this stranger."[20] The gratitude of the Samaritan was made to point a moral to the Jews even as was the faith of a heathen centurion upon another occasion, *Mt.* 8, 5ff.

From this episode we pass naturally to the Parable of

[18] I cannot enter into the discussion concerning the place of Jesus' baptizing, *Jn.* 3, 22f. There is no reason to adopt Robinson's suggestion, *LBR* 333, supported by Stevens, *JBL* 1883, p. 128, and hypothetically adopted by the map of the Survey of Western Palestine, that Salim and Aenon are in the neighborhood of Shechem; the suggestion contradicts all that we know of the fields of labor of John Baptist and Jesus.

[19] See above, note 9.

[20] Ἀλλογενής. This word is used in the Greek to translate *bennekar*, e. g. *Gen.* 17, 27; *Ex.* 12, 43. In *Ecclus.* 45, 13, it refers to a member of another tribe within Israel, translating *zar*. Its sense then is weaker than ἀλλόφυλος, which was used of Gentiles alone, especially of the Philistines. As will be shown below, Jesus maintained the actual distinction between Jew and Samaritan.

the Good Samaritan, *Luke,* 10, 25ff, which in its fame is equalled only by the Parable of the Prodigal Son. The parable has been somewhat stretched by exegetes so as to make it appear that Jesus allowed no difference between Jew and Samaritan, and was indeed inclined to find Samaritans better people than the Jews. This is a fallacy of modern interpretation which would make out of Jesus nothing else than a modern liberal. But the story is merely an answer to the lawyer's question, "Who is my neighbor?" A good Pagan would have served as an example, but the Samaritan was nearer home, while the motive of religious disgust at the bloody and unclean body of the man who fell among thieves could only come into play if an Israelite were the hero. It has been generally overlooked that Jesus' postulate of the possibility of high virtue in the Samaritans is paralleled by the saying of Rabbi Simon ben Gamaliel, frequently quoted and allowed by the Talmud: "Every law which the Samaritans have accepted, they are more punctilious in observing than the Jews."[21] The Talmud also gives an anecdote of an act of courtesy towards a Jewish rabbi on the part of the Samaritans.[22] In fact the argument of Jesus was all the stronger to his hearers because of their recognition of the possible virtues of the Samaritans; they could not retort to him that he was inventing an imaginary good Samaritan.

The dogmatic position of Jesus toward the Samaritans is positively stated in his conversation with the Samaritan woman. The latter enters into a theological argument with the mysterious stranger: "Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, and thou sayest that the place to worship is in Jerusalem. Jesus says to her: Woman, believe me that the time is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem shall ye

[21] See below, p. 170.

[22] See below, p. 193.

worship the Father. Ye worship what ye know not, we worship what we know; for salvation is of the Jews." This theological depreciation of the Samaritans is exactly that of the Jewish Church, although deprived of all malice. The assertion of the peculiar privilege of the Jews was also the doctrine of the Christian Church, which followed its Master, being abundantly expressed by the broadest-minded apostle, Paul, e.g. *Rom.* 3, 1ff. Nor did Jesus respect the institutions of Samaritanism; the cleansed Samaritan he bade go with his Jewish fellows to the priests at Jerusalem. Further, throughout his ministry Jesus carefully distinguished between Jew and Samaritan. In his commission to his disciples he commanded them: "Go not into the way of Gentiles, and enter no city of Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," *Mt.* 10, 5f. And this restriction against that sect he himself carefully observed; only in the case of the favorable reception accidentally accorded him at Shechem did he give himself out to the Samaritans; but this is as evident an exception to his custom as was the healing of the Phœnician woman's daughter on the borders of Tyre, *Mk.* 7, 24ff; *Mt.* 15, 21ff.[22a]

To the present writer's understanding of Jesus' character and purpose, the limitation of his work to orthodox Judaism was with the deliberate practical intention of devoting himself exclusively in his lifetime to the community which he regarded as the one true Church. But it would be erroneous to gather from *Mt.* 10, 5f, that Jesus put the Samaritans on the same plane with the Gentiles; if so, he would have stood below the level of Judaism, which recognized the Israelitish character of that sect. His mind concerning the Samaritans appears in one of his final instructions to his

[22a] There is absolutely no reason to hold with Godet that in *Lu.* 9, 51ff Jesus was attempting a mission in northern Samaria so as to exercise his disciples in the more catholic ideas of his Gospel.

disciples. In *Acts,* 1, 8, he is recorded as saying to them: "Ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem and all Judæa and Samaria and to the end of the earth." Here Samaria is distinguished as apart from Jewry, but equally apart from the rest of the world. Its Lord's injunction the Apostolic Church followed as soon as the opportunity came. According to *Acts,* 8, 1, upon the persecution following Stephen's death "all were scattered into the lands of Judæa and Samaria, except the Apostles." Then in v. 5ff is given the history of the deacon Philip's evangelistic labors in a city of Samaria, doubtless Shechem;[23] he was well received by the people because of his miracles and teachings. Thereupon the Apostles in Jerusalem sent down Peter and John as their commissioners to the Samaritan city, who laid their hands upon the converts that they might receive the Holy Spirit. It appears that according to this history the admission of the Samaritans was regarded as a step forward, and so required the formal cognizance of the mother-church. But in general this action of the Church in freely and easily admitting the Samaritans to fellowship in the Gospel was in full accord with the better Jewish view, which never was able to deny that the Samaritans were Israelites. It is to be noticed that no outpouring of the Spirit in advance is recorded, as in the case of the admission of Cornelius and his family, to give divine endorsement to an extraordinary innovation. The history includes the story of Simon Magus and closes with a reference to the evangelization of

[23] Gr: *εἰς (τὴν) πόλιν τῆς Σαμαρίας.* The article *τήν* appears in Cod. Sin., A, B, 31, 40, and is adopted by Tischendorf, Westcott-Hort, Nestle. On its face "the city of Samaria" can only mean, as Wendt says *ad loc.,* the chief city of the land, which would be Samaria-Sebaste. But as the whole narrative evidently deals with the Samaritan sect, with which Sebaste had no connection, being a thoroughly Gentile city, doubtless the original tradition meant Shechem, which was the only Polis of the sect. The Syriac has therefore "the city of the Samaritans." In general, the author of Acts seems ignorant of the place referred to, and may have indulged in the confusion, which appears in later literature, between Sebaste and Shechem.

many Samaritan villages.[24] Of these new converts *Acts* offers but little further information; the Church in Samaria is referred to again in 9, 31 and 15, 3.

To sum up the witness of the New Testament: the Samaritan appears as an Israelite, but one whose religion is in the condition of ignorance and whose institutions are irregular. But there is no question over his right as an Israelite to admission to the Kingdom of Heaven. This witness, which is also that of the earlier strata of the Talmud, is truer than the prejudiced opinion of Josephus. As evidence for the Ist Century the New Testament is thus a valuable auxiliary to the testimony of the Talmud, to the consideration of which we shall proceed in the next Chapter.

In Chapters XII. and XIII. the most important of the Patristic references to the Samaritans will be reviewed. Those authorities correctly regard the race as a Jewish sect, or rather as one of the initial heresies of the True Religion. Here may be noticed a passage from Justin Martyr (IId Century), a Neapolitan by birth, in which he closely associates the Jews and Samaritans as branches of the Chosen People. The reference is as follows:[25] "All the other human races are called Gentiles by the Spirit of prophecy; but the Jewish and Samaritan races are called the tribe of Israel and the house of Jacob. And the prophecy in which it was predicted that there should be more believers from the Gentiles than from the Jews and the Samaritans, we will produce."

[24] For Simon, see Chap. XIII, § 2.

[25] *First Apology*, c. 53. Justin does not display any exact information concerning the Samaritan sect. His references to them belong almost entirely to his reports of the Simonian heresy, into which he asserts almost the whole community fell — an erroneous statement, doubtless based on *Acts* 8, 10.

CHAPTER X.

THE SAMARITANS IN THE TALMUDS AND OTHER RABBINIC LITERATURE.[1]

Our chief sources for this Chapter are the Talmuds of Babylon and Jerusalem and their auxiliary collections of Toseftas (i.e. Additions). Foremost in this material stands the *Masseket Kutim*, or Tractate on the Samaritans, of which a description and translation with notes appear in the next Chapter. Also the Midrashim, especially the great commentary on Genesis, *Bereshit Rabba*, present much Haggadic material. The mediæval Jewish literature contains almost no first-hand information on the subject.

Indeed so hazy did this later Jewish mind become over the Samaritans that provisions concerning the Gentiles came to include as a matter of course the Samaritans. Later, upon the arbitrary exercise of the Christian censor's power over the printed editions of the Talmud, "Kuthim" was easily

[1] The most convenient survey of this subject is the article of Hamburger in his *REJud.* ii, *s. v. Samaritaner*. An abundant and critical collection of material is found in Kirchheim *Septem libri Talmudici parvi Hierosolymitani*, and *Introductio in librum Talmudicum "de Samaritanis"* (*Karme Shomeron*); both Frankfurt, 1851 (in Hebrew). Taglicht has given a brief dissertation, *Die Kuthäer als Beobachter des Gesetzes nach talmudischen Quellen*, Berlin, 1888. See also Geiger, *Urschrift, passim;* Frankel, *Ueber den Einfluss der palästinensichen Exegese*, 244; Nutt, *Samaritan Targum;* Edersheim, *Jesus the Messiah*, vol. i, bk. iii, c. vii. Wreschner, in *Samaritanische Traditionen*, Berlin, 1888, treats especially of points of comparison with the Karaites. *The Works of John Lightfoot*, London, 1684, is a thesaurus of references on the present subject. For the Tosefta I refer to M. S. Zuckermandel, *Tosefta*, 1881. The references to the Jerusalem Talmud are made according to the Krotoschin edition, 1866. For references to *Masseket Kutim*, cf. Chapter XI.