

bitter hatred existed. *Worshipped in this mountain*; Mount Gerizim (see Geography Lesson). A rival temple to that at Jerusalem had been erected there in the days of Nehemiah. This was probably the beginning of the intense antipathy between Jews and Samaritans. A small Samaritan community still exists at Nâblus, the modern name of the near-by town of Shechem. (See also Light from the East.) The woman asks point-blank, "Which is the true seat of worship, Gerizim or Jerusalem?"

V. 21. *Believe me*; words introducing a statement of great importance. *The hour*; the time of true gospel worship, in which time and place matter nothing, and spirit matters everything. *Neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem* (Rev. Ver.). This word proclaims a revolution in religion. In ancient times, fixed localities were deemed indispensable to worship. But Jesus shifts the emphasis from the place of worship to the spirit of the worshiper. God is to be worshiped, not here and there only, but wherever there is a loving, trustful heart. *The Father*. Here is another revelation to the woman. The name Father, as God's highest name, changes the whole idea of worship. The child can find his Father anywhere, and wherever he is, can offer to the Father the love, reverence and obedience, which constitute true worship.

V. 22. *Ye know not*, etc. There was a difference between Samaritan and Jewish worship. But the important distinction was not that between Gerizim and Jerusalem. The Samaritans accepted as scripture only the Pentateuch, or Five Books of Moses. Hence they were on a side stream, out of touch with the main current of God's revelation of Himself in the history of Israel after the settlement in Canaan. Hence, as compared with the Jews, their knowledge of God's character was very imperfect. *Salvation is of the Jews*; because theirs were the ancient promises and from them Christ was to come.

Vs. 23, 24. *Worship . . . in spirit*; recognizing that the essential thing in worship is, not that it should be offered in certain places, but that the heart should be put into it. *In truth*; with reality and intelligence. *Father seeketh*; more eager to welcome our worship

than we are to bring it—a most precious encouragement. *God is a Spirit*. Here is the great principle which sweeps aside all merely local ideas of God and His worship. As Spirit, He is raised above all those notions of space, time, etc., by which men lower their idea of Him. "As Spirit alone, we might reverence Him, not love Him. As Father alone, we might think of Him with feelings unworthy of His glory. The Spirit guards the Fatherhood, and the Fatherhood makes the Spirit personal and real." (Reith.)

II. The Messiah, 25-29.

Vs. 25, 26. *I know that Messiah cometh*. The Samaritans had a dim notion of the Messiah from Deut. 18: 15, and other passages in the Books of Moses. They also had some knowledge of Him through the Jews. They still expect Him as the Mahdi or Guide. *Tell us all things*. How eager Jesus was to tell her the one thing of all others she needed to know, how she might be saved from her sins! *I . . . am he*. Jesus gave this sin-burdened woman a revelation of Himself, such as He had never before, in all likelihood, given publicly, simply because her salvation at that hour depended on her surrender to Him.

Vs. 27-29. *Disciples . . . marvelled*. There is a famous saying of the Rabbis, "Prolong not converse with a woman". The raising of the position of woman was directly due to the religion of Christ. The famous Greek philosopher, Aristotle, one of the most remarkable thinkers of the ancient world, in describing women and slaves, whom he grouped together, said, "The one is of an inferior type, the other is wholly worthless". *Is not this the Christ?* It was chiefly His straight appeal to her own guilty conscience that convinced her that He was indeed the Messiah.

The going out of the Samaritans to Jesus, His conversation with His disciples and His two days' stay amongst the Samaritans, during which many of them accepted Him as their Saviour, are related in vs. 30 to 42.

Light from the East

"THIS MOUNTAIN"—Gerizim became the sacred place of the Samaritans under circumstances related by Nehemiah, and more fully by Josephus. The temple which San-