

land. But its elevation of thought, its reasonableness, its merciful character, would also tell on its behalf. The ultimate disappearance of the pagan features of Samaritanism would seem to indicate that the priest of Bethel was a good and faithful man, who did not limit himself to a re-organization of the ancient ritual, but taught the people to serve Jehovah in spirit and in truth. Had he no written manual of instruction, for his own guidance and that of his people? Ask a Samaritan to-day, and he will show you the Pentateuch. The higher critics object, however, that the Pentateuch was not in existence so early as 721 B. C. The burden of proof lies on those who maintain that position. Meantime let us note that the book of the law was discovered in the temple at Jerusalem about a century later—say 624 B. C. That book—be it the Pentateuch, or Deuteronomy, or a part of Deuteronomy—is not likely to have been written during the long reign of Manasseh. A reign of misrule for two generations had made the law and its records obsolete. We must go back at least to the reign of Hezekiah; and to the beginning of his reign, for he set out from the first as a religious reformer. He clave to the Lord, and kept his commandments, *which the Lord commanded Moses* (2 Kg. xviii. 6). Of course he had these commandments in written form. One would suppose he had the Pentateuch. He entered into friendly relations with those who found the Lord in northern Israel near the time when Shalman-ezer besieged Samaria; (2 Chr. xxx, 11). If they needed copies of the law, no doubt he would have supplied them. The first year of Hezekiah's reign afforded a favorable opportunity for obtaining a copy of any book of the law of Moses which he possessed. Or, if a few years later, the priest of Bethel wished to procure a copy, he had only to apply for it. The enmity between Jew and Samaritan had not yet begun, and did not begin till after the return of the exiles to Jerusalem—nearly two centuries later.

Unpleasant things sometimes have their uses. It is the alienation between Jew and Samaritan—an alienation extending from 535 B. C. to the present day—that gives its special interests to the Samaritan Pentateuch. We have here a text of the first four books of the Old Testament that has come down to us through a line of transmission quite apart from that of the Masoretes of