

Samaritan"). The woman may have been suspicious, possibly there was a good deal of scorn in the words, seeing that a Jew was compelled to ask a favor from a woman of a despised race. *If thou knewest*; though that were impossible. Jesus does not answer her surprise, but suggests something profounder. Why did this Jew deal with her so differently from all other Jews? Because in his presence all differences of race and social station are lost in a common salvation, Gal. 3:28. *The gift of God*; his Son (ch. 3:16), in whom all may find life, even the sinful Samaritan woman. *And who it is*. She would not have waited for Jesus to ask her for spring water before asking of him the living water, so near, and for which she was athirst. *Living water*; springing up as from a well (Gen. 26:19; Jer. 2:13), as distinct from water stored in cisterns. Christ's words are living and life-giving, ch. 6:63 (compare 1 Peter 1:23). "The pathos of the situation strikes Jesus. The woman stands on the brink of the greatest possibilities, but is unconscious of them." (Expositor's Greek Testament.)

III. Jesus' Teaching, 19-24.

Vs. 19, 20. *Sir*; a title of respect. *Thou art a prophet*. By this time the woman is genuinely amazed. Early in the conversation she had been deeply impressed by Jesus, but when he reveals the darkest and saddest secrets of her own life, she feels compelled to acknowledge that he is a "prophet," a man of God, one possessing special knowledge of the spiritual world. *Our fathers*; ancestors. The Samaritans claimed to be true Israelites, and professed to keep the laws of Moses; but between them and the people of Judea bitter hatred existed. *Worshipped in this mountain*; Mount Gerizim. 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. 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 pro-

claims 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.)

Light from the East

By Rev. Professor R. Davidson, D.D., Toronto

"THIS MOUNTAIN" (v. 20)—From far out at sea, you see the middle of the Palestinian plateau marked by two peaks with a deep