

BIBLIOTHECA SACRA

THE WAR AND THE SAMARITAN COLONY

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THE purpose of the present paper is twofold: First, to report the progress and vicissitudes of the little Samaritan colony at Nablus during the past five years; and, secondly, to announce the accomplishment of an achievement of genuine importance in the photographing of what is generally believed to be the oldest Biblical manuscript in the world.

It will be many years before we are able to estimate the far-reaching effects of the Great War. Such an inundation has many and unexpected backwaters, submerging individuals and institutions whose very existence is not remembered on the battlefield. One easily possible effect of the recent struggle might have been the complete obliteration of the little remnant of the Samaritan nation at Nablus. I am happy to report that communication with this feeble colony has been reestablished; and that, while the community has suffered great hardship and serious loss, it still exists with reasonable hope of a continued survival.

My own acquaintance with the Samaritans began in the spring of 1902. I made a visit to the Samaritan colony, which I later described somewhat in detail in a paper read before the Chicago Society of Biblical Research and published in the BIBLIOTHECA SACRA for October, 1903. On the occasion of this visit I made the acquaintance of the High Priest, Jacob, son of Aaron, and his two sons, the elder of whom has since died, and his cousin and rival, Isaac ben-Amram. At that time I purchased a Pentateuch and a scroll containing the Book of Genesis, which I have previously described; and my correspondence with the High

Priest continued until the war cut off communication between the United States and Palestine.

My friend, Mr. E. K. Warren, whose death on January 16, 1919, took from this world an upright man and a friend of many good causes, had visited Palestine in 1901. Two years after my own visit he returned again to Jerusalem to attend the World's Sunday-school Convention, in which he was the leading spirit. Through his influence and generosity the Samaritan High Priest visited the Sunday-school Convention and delivered a brief address, saluting the Christian people of the United States and of Europe. Mr. Warren became greatly interested in the Samaritans, and organized the American Samaritan Committee, of whose Board I have been a member from the beginning. Under the direction of this Committee, and chiefly through the gifts of Mr. Warren, we established a school in Nablus. The Samaritan boys were taught Arabic, Hebrew, French, and English; the girls were taught to read and also to make lace. Other measures were adopted for the benefit of the colony, and others still larger were contemplated. The war, of course, terminated direct communication between America and the Samaritans; but there remained a balance of money in Jerusalem, a portion of which was used for the relief of these people after the war had made direct communication impossible.

In conference with Mr. Warren, I represented at different times the desirability of securing an exact census of the Samaritan colony. Every scholar visiting Nablus brought back a report of the approximate number of people who composed this little remnant of a nation, but no one knew precisely how many people there were, or whether the community was growing or diminishing.

Our Samaritan School was established in December, 1913. This made possible the beginning of our census. At first boys only were received. They were taught Hebrew, Arabic, arithmetic, and other elementary studies. No attempt was made to win them to formal acceptance of the Christian faith. Mr. Warren was a man of strong evangel-

ical convictions, but was gifted also with rare common sense. He felt, and the Samaritan Committee was in entire accord with him, that it would be better for us as Christian Americans to go to this forlorn little community and endeavor to manifest a Christian spirit, than to undertake a campaign for their conversion. Mr. Warren said that as the Lord had permitted this colony to remain under the influence of their own religion from the time of the Exile until now, we could afford to wait and be sure that we were not attempting to force the hand of Providence by a too sudden anxiety for their instantaneous conversion.

In the spring of 1914, the school was opened for girls. They, as well as the boys, proved to be very bright and capable, and in the course of fifteen months they were able to read Hebrew and Arabic fluently.

The enrollment of the Samaritan children made it possible to continue the census, of which the Samaritans at first had been very suspicious. The taking of a census in Palestine has been a hazardous adventure from the days of Quirinius until now; but our school opened the way for its accomplishment.

On March 1, 1915, a census of the entire Samaritan nation was completed, under the direction of Hon. John D. Whiting, United States Vice-Consul at Jerusalem, acting as the Palestine representative of the Samaritan Committee. This census showed the following totals:—

Males	97	Adults	135
Females	71	Children	33
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	168		168
	Soldiers	24	

These figures confirm information which I had in 1902: First, that the number of children was small in its proportion to the adults; and, secondly, that the most serious lack of the colony in its hope of perpetuity was that of marriageable young women. There were a number of young men in 1902 for whom there were said to be no

wives. Already there had been too much inbreeding. The colony lacked, and still lacks, new blood.

The war came very near to shifting the balance in alarming fashion. Twenty-four men, including practically the whole potential fatherhood of the colony, were impressed as soldiers. They were all enrolled in the same division, and a single well-directed shell might have wiped out the whole Samaritan hope of issue.

We had news from the Samaritans as late as October 13, 1916. Upon the whole it was encouraging. The school was still in session. Our Committee had distributed relief on two occasions, amounting each time to about a bushel of grain for each adult, and half that amount for each child. Shoes were purchased for those who needed them. At Christmas, 1915, the girls received gifts of clothing, and the boys, suitable and useful presents. The Samaritan Passover was celebrated in April of 1916. The Samaritan Committee purchased and paid for the lambs that were then offered in sacrifice. Photographs of this celebration have lately appeared in the *National Geographic Magazine* and the *Illustrated London News*. I have the impression that there has been no such celebration since, until 1920. At the time of the above-mentioned letter (Oct. 13, 1916), the twenty-four men, who were serving in the Turkish Army, were all in good health. They had been kept away from the battlefield and within the borders of Palestine. Subsequently, as we have since learned, they were transported to the region of Anatolia, and the special consideration which was shown them at the beginning of the war was withdrawn. Some of the hardships and perils which they endured will appear in their letters; it is sufficient for our present purpose that the men were not obliterated.

At my request a census has been taken since the close of the war. On March 20, 1919, there were, according to their report to me:—

Men	56	Women and girls	60
Male children	25	Males	81
	<hr/>		<hr/>
	81		141

The net losses during the four years of the war, or between the census of March 1, 1915, and that of March 20, 1919, were:—

Male	16	Female	11	Total	27
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This is a net loss of 16 per cent; and it leaves the colony with fewer fathers, but still with too few potential mothers.

However, there are still thirty-nine more people than crossed in the *Mayflower*; and the Samaritan colony may, under favorable conditions, not only survive, but increase. The war has not destroyed its hope of survival.

Our communication of October 13, 1916, informed us of the death of the Samaritan high priest, which occurred on Sunday evening, April 23, 1916, at his home in Nablus. Although he was an aged man, it was believed that his death was hastened by the anxieties which he had undergone during the war, and especially by reason of his grief for his daughter-in-law, the widow of his eldest son, whose death occurred a short time before. He was able to bear his part in the celebration of the Passover, but that was the ending of his career. I had corresponded with him for years, had published a number of his pamphlets, and had come to hold him as a warm personal friend. The terms of endearment with which he was accustomed to address me manifested the customary Oriental extravagance. He said, and his son has said concerning him since his death, that he loved me "as an only brother." I do not interpret this too literally, but I have no reason to doubt that his affection for me was sincere. Some details concerning his death I shall quote later in the letter of his son.

The first communications received from the Samaritans after the war were dated November 7, 1918, which was four days before our armistice with Germany. General Allenby had rescued Palestine from the Turk, and the Samaritans

lost no time in writing to their friends in America. Three communications came through in one mail. One was a letter from Abu-l Hassan to Mr. Warren. Another was a letter from Abu-l Hassan, the surviving son of Jacob, the old high priest, addressed to me. The third was a document signed by a committee of seven, addressed to Mr. Warren. These reached Chicago only a few days before Mr. Warren died. He personally received those that were addressed to him, and sent them to me; but he did not live to read the translation, which was made for me by Mr. M. Sprengling, of the University of Chicago.

A portion of each of these communications was devoted to criticism of certain of the local agents through whom the relief provided by the American Samaritan Committee had been distributed during the war. The Samaritans claimed that when communication with America was cut off, these agents grew arrogant and niggardly, and gave them less than they should. I elide from this paper all those portions of the correspondence, as being of no value to this document. It is easy to understand how, under such conditions, misunderstandings could have arisen, and they are, as we hope, in process of adjustment. But I quote from these and subsequent letters such portions as tell of the fortunes of the Samaritan colony during the war, including the story of the death of the High Priest, and the memorial service, which seems to me a very touching tribute, for Mr. Warren:—

NABLUS, 14th Tishri.

MY DEAR MR. WARREN:—

May he live long. Amen. After inquiring of your exalted welfare, it grieves me sorely to acquaint Your Worship with the intensity of my sorrow over what happened to me in the death of my lord, the father, by the mercy of God, and what of exalted choices have fallen to my lot; because he was to me, as it were, my sole support and my helper to victory in the battlefield of this life. And already I am broken down since, with great care and fatigue, in seeking means of subsistence for my numerous family. But of that which gives me consolation and comfort, the chief thing is the existence of Your Lordship as a friend

of my mourned father. And it is as if his spirit whispered to me in the world of spirits that I should rely upon the counsels of his only friend [i.e. Mr. Warren]. And that was a guide to the fact that there were between the two friends bonds of love. And therefore I tarried awhile, faltering in writing to you, O excellent one, to remind Your Worship of what was between you and my father of friendship and love. And now that opportunity has come for free intercourse, I come to you with this letter, hoping that you will be a support to the son of your friend, indicated, and that you will remember forever that he was the only man who used to love you thus, and that he relied upon your friendship beyond that of all other men. I hope, therefore, that I may be in his place in your regard from now and henceforth, in order that I may be of easy mind, and in order that I may not be denied your greeting in what will guarantee to me a good future. And, lo, I promise Your Worship that I will be your faithful servant; and that I am prepared to anticipate whatsoever questions you may ask and any demands which you may make upon me which concern the Samaritan nation, according to the official and spiritual instructions of my regretted father before his demise. Behold, therefore, I am prepared to take up in detail your questions.

In conclusion accept from me the dues of love to you and the whole of your honored community; and particularly I hope that you will transmit my greeting to our friend, Mr. William Barton.

And so, as you were to my father, may you still abide to his humble son,

ABU-L. HASSAN, Son of Jacob ben-Aaron,
Priest of the Samaritans.

[Official Letter to Mr. E. K. Warren from a Committee of the Samaritans.]

November 7, 1918.

TO HIS EXCELLENCY, MOST ILLUSTRIOUS BENEFACTOR:—

Peace and love. Our Committee, selected from the whole body of the Samaritan community, has the honor to let Your Worship know how very glad we are at the release of the restrictions just passed, in view of the occupation by the most exalted Britanic Government of the Palestinian land, and hence of our ability now to send information to Your Excellency in perfect liberty and freedom of thought.

Everyone who has even the most cursory acquaintance with the history of the Samaritan community and its present circumstances, knows something of the fact that Your Worship is, after God, the sole support of this community. You have been, and have not ceased to be, the repository of its hopes. Upon you rests its confidence for coming days. You have caused it to be the object of your solicitude, and have counted it your religious duty to employ the utmost exertion toward raising it from the grasp of ignorance and poverty. And that is what makes for you in our hearts, and the hearts of those who appreciate kindness, a place of enduring name and fame.

Your Excellency knows long since, without going into detail, the woes that we suffered during the entire four years passed, and how they encompassed us with great losses; and the abode in misery of a portion of our people in the regions of Anatolia under Turkish rule; and what terrible chastisement they underwent there while their families were here, in addition to the condition to which they have been reduced at present by the loss of our goods and the sale of our furniture and the failure of the imports of food upon which we were dependent until our rich and poor alike are in such a deplorable state; and there remains scarcely enough clothing to cover our nakedness. This is a grievous state, threatening the very life of our colony. We have endured this with noble fortitude; and now there sustains our hopes, and comforts us against the extremity of our misfortune, the existence of Your Excellency as a protector and helper.

Mr. Whiting produced before us a letter in the name of Your Excellency, requesting us to permit him to make a photograph of our sacred Torah, against which there is repugnance to have eyes gaze upon it; and we loved it with the love of its servant, and we used to withhold from looking upon it even kings and governments, and we substituted for their gaze the second ancient copy taken from it. This we did because of what has been our time-honored custom. But in view of your beneficence we complied with this request, especially because we knew its purpose to be giving copies in number by your means, in order that humanity might come pouring forth abundantly their beneficence toward this unfortunate community. Besides permitting the taking of the photograph of the Torah, which is celebrated in the East and in the West of the earth, we also permitted the taking of the photographs of

the Passover feasts, and pictures of our men and women and children in various attitudes.

And now with free self-restraint we await what will emanate from your will, because it will be the passing of the disorder which fell unexpectedly upon us, and our deliverance from the wolf that has uninterruptedly pursued us. These hard conditions made it necessary for us, for the safety of our own and our children's future, to endure great hardship; and we now wait the fulfillment of your noble promise concerning the purchase of curtains and the renewal of our synagogue and the procuring of dwelling places and the reopening of the school, whose closing these two years past was due to well-known conditions.

In the seventh of November, 1918. Signed by a committee of seven, including Isaac the High Priest, and Abu-l Hassan, priest and son of Jacob ben-Aaron, the deceased high priest.

[A Letter to Dr. Barton from Abu-l Hassan.]

20 March, 1919.

DEAR SIR AND SOLE FRIEND, MR. WILLIAM BARTON,—

May he live long. Amen. After inquiry of your illustrious welfare, I begin. Your letter dated 5th February reached me. And I rejoice greatly that you are well, and that you have not ceased to the present guarding your friendship and love to my beloved father, and this is the greatest thing I have wished for.

You inquire concerning the manner of my father's demise and what were the causes. The causes were numerous. Firstly, the very hard behavior of the Turks against him and his nation in taking their young men in the military muster, a matter which they had not known up to the present, nor their fathers before them; and on top of that their taking the writer of this letter with his cousins, the priestly family, and burdening them with the additional expenditure of buying themselves out until, with the whole nation, they faced extreme poverty, being unable to feed themselves. And because of the severity of the need and the famine which came upon them, they were afflicted with diseases, scab in their bodies, and typhus. And there died thereby nearly forty-five souls; and they were forced to sell the most of their movables, until they were in a state of misery.

And as for my master, my beloved father, in the year of his demise, which was the year 1916, there approached him

the feast of the Passover, and he had not a solitary farthing. And the wife of his son, who had passed away, was sick with typhus. Now he had a Torah which comprised three languages, viz. Samaritan Hebrew, Syriac, and Arabic, and he had persevered in the copying of them for thirteen years. And the dire need forced him to offer it for sale, and for the whole beautiful copy we were paid the price of ten paper Ottoman bank notes, value of each paper fifteen francs. And after that the widow of his son died four days before the arrival of the Passover feast. And we ascended the mountain, while we were still lamenting over her, for she had left behind unto us a son and a daughter orphaned of both father and mother. And we celebrated the feast of Passover, and sacrificed the sacrifices according to our customs, and on the last feast day on the mount, my lord, my beloved father, was standing in prayer in his sacred office, exhorting the nation, when suddenly his senses left him and he sat down, stretched out upon the ground. At that time approached the greater portion of the nation, and brought him to his place in the tents. There he remained ill of typhus after the feast five days. On the second of them he besought, by word of mouth, to be taken down to his house in Nablus. So I took him down in all comfort. On the night of his arrival the disease became severe and he lost the power of speech, though even after his fall he had continued to speak for about a minute, enjoining the community to keep their religious cult, and enjoining the writer of this letter to keep up the friendship with his friends and to take them instead of him for a help during my life; and he gave me injunctions concerning many things which this letter cannot contain. And on Monday night, 3rd May, 1916, one half hour before sunset, his spirit passed unto the mercy of God exalted. After his demise we hastened to wash him, according to the Samaritan customs, and we dressed him in his clothes prepared for the Sabbath, and we laid him in the synagogue for the space of that night. And we read over him the five books of Moses, and after every book the learned of our nation pronounced over him eulogies, expatiating on the excellence of his goodness which had been patent in his work with them and with every man. In the morning the young men of our nation came and bore him to his tomb, at the foot of Mount Gerizim, and his burial took place at the 21st hour of the Monday mentioned.

After his demise the Government became severe with the writer of this letter, and with his cousins, to seize them for the army. And we protested much, but did not succeed greatly, until we tried to pay for substitutes. So we went to Jerusalem to borrow moneys for us. And we offered as a pledge, for two hundred paper (3,000 francs, \$600) Turkish bank notes, a Samaritan Torah volume; but we obtained nothing at all. We went up with little, and we returned with our hopes shattered. Then after we came to Nablus we approached one of the merchants of Nablus and deposited [i.e. pawned] the Torah with him, and the aforesaid Torah to the present time is in the hands of the aforesaid merchant, and every year we pay him interest thereon, twenty liras gold. And our hope was after the war to lay our affair before Mr. Warren, because of our management in this misfortune which came upon us, and that we might pay in full that merchant aforementioned and bring back the Torah to the house of our worship. But our hopes failed us, and Mr. Warren passed on to the mercy of God before we could obtain his aid. If God please, the fulfillment of our petitions may come about through Your Worship by the publication of our hopes, so as to rouse the zeal of the family of Mr. Warren and the community to look into our circumstances; and do you receive kindly our honest petition to you and to your honored community, from us and all our nation.

You have in your letter brought grievous news, the demise of His Excellency, the beloved friend of the Samaritan nation, Mr. Warren, news of which fairly drove us out of our senses, me and the Samaritan nation. And we, all of us, were in the greatest grief over the death of that source of great favor, the benefactor in whom our hopes were centered excessively; and, besides, he was like a compassionate father, and we were awaiting his benefactions after these days which have passed over us with the greatest anxiety and distress, and the indemnification of our losses and what we spent and pledged and sold of our household utensils to sustain and cover us in those different times. And we knew no other resource, when that terrible news came upon us, but to run and open the house of worship and deck it in mourning trappings, and we made for him a great cortege, the whole Samaritan nation being present, and we pronounced for him lamenting eulogies, and we mentioned his titles and his good qualities, as he had done by us. And among the discourses spoken in that gathering there arose one of our community and

pronounced a sorrowful sermon superlatively, by which straightway were overcome those present, and the hearts of the hearers — men, children, and women — were moved thereby, and the whole gathering rained tears like torrential rain from heaven; and, oh, the grief from that grievous hour, until yet there is no end. We pray to God exalted to grant unto Mr. Warren's family and to us sweet fortitude, and to raise up for us a benefactor in his stead from his offspring; and that He may not withhold from us the benefactions of this honored community, the whole of our hopes being their fulfillment by the hand of his providentially surviving son, Mr. Paul, and his widow, Mrs. Warren. And we pray that God may cause him to dwell in the kingdom of heaven. Amen.

I hope from your kindness that you will act as our representative, that is, in inquiring concerning the purpose of Mr. Warren's aforementioned son and his widow and his son-in-law, Mr. Chamberlain, and your incomparable community. And I hope that you will express to them my condolences, and transmit to them a full copy of this letter and inform every one of them what we did during the days of the war. And concerning the taking of our young men in the military muster and their separation from their families for the space of three and one half years, I have to inform you of the death of four of them in the war and the missing of three, of whom it is not known how they are. And concerning those who bore weapons, I must inform you that they were fifteen men, and some were employed in fatiguing road work and in cutting firewood, and a few were employed in clerical work in the soldiers' barracks.

And as for the priestly family, because the bearing of arms was a forbidden thing among us, and because any deviation in religious matters is grievous to us, and fearing that they might shave our heads in the soldiery, when, after having paid for substitutes, they sought us for a second time, we hid for a considerable space; and thereafter, they being excessively severe against us, we placed ourselves instead in the service of people at a day's wage of from two to three francs.

This was our condition, and so it went with us in the aforementioned days. There remain of our nation after the war, and this is the greatest distress, a total of fifty-six men, twenty-five children, and sixty women and girls. Yet with the help of God exalted we cut off nothing at all with our religious ordinances.

The schoolhouse which was opened in the name of Mr. Warren has been locked for a space of two years, and up to the present has not been opened.

I grieve greatly to learn in your letter of the destruction by fire of your house of worship, in which the noblest of congregations assembles, and I rejoice to hear of its restoration as it was. Now I would present Your Worship with a picture of myself and my beloved father before his demise, but that there is not with me a painter or photographer to take a new picture to send to Your Worship.

Accept from me and my family, the priestly house, and from every member of my nation, superlative honor and peace to you and the whole of your honored community. Let me be remembered to the translator of your letter from Arabic into English, Mr. Sprengling. May you live long, and may our God protect you, My Lord.

He that prays for you is the son of your friend,

ABU-L HASSAN, ben-Jacob,
the priest in Nablus.

[Letter from Abu-l Hassan to Dr. Barton.]

NABLUS, SYRIA, May 12, 1919.

MY DEAR AND HONORED FRIEND, MR. WILLIAM BARTON:—

Thy letter reached me on the 28th of February, 1919, with the announcement which you had published in the newspapers concerning the death of the beloved Mr. Warren. You inform me that his son, Mr. Paul, had sent to you all the correspondence which had passed between my beloved father and his father, especially concerning the affairs of the Samaritan congregation. Therefore I am very glad, because I perceive that our business is to be linked up with your affairs and your forethought, and that you are our supporter in that good deed. And we pray to God, that we may be friends, as were our fathers aforetime.

Before now I sent Your Worship a letter in Arabic replying to your first letter, and in it I informed you sufficiently concerning the death of my beloved father and to what circumstances we were reduced thereby in the time of war. I also told you the number of those of our congregation who died and the number of those remaining alive. Likewise I indicated to Your Worship the reason for the closing of our school.

You asked to be informed of the work of business affairs, the members of our congregation after the war, and how

they are able to obtain the needful food. I am very sorry to have to tell you that they are without employment, and that there is not found among them one who has a position or business. For they who were in business lost it during the war, and now they have resorted for their subsistence to the sale of the ancient books transmitted to them from their fathers, and held by them to be beyond price. Cast thy regard upon this lowly nation, and thou wilt see it upon the brink of death by total extinction, if you do not set a bound thereto by assistance in its business affairs. And if not, then, as I see and as every intelligent man sees, lo, after a little while you will be able to read in history that there once existed a Samaritan nation in the world. As for the priestly family they have been kept barely alive by the income of the synagogue and from the sale of books which they copied with their hands. And now with sorrow I must tell you that they are in a pitiful condition, and that the nation cannot remain alive for lack of employment.

You ask concerning our religious rites on the Sabbath and on peace days. This would require a special book. If you like, I am prepared when I have time to write it in full for Your Worship.

With regard to the school, we would love from our whole heart its opening and restoration, because it is the sole foundation for the safeguarding of the future existence of our children and securing for them against their being cut off. And if you think fit, let it be endowed, for the most of the children are poor and orphaned. If it be not endowed, so that the children can eat there, then most of the children will be driven to forsake the school and go into service to make their living at some employment because they are poor and orphaned, as I have pointed out to you. This point is the most important thing to which attention should be directed.

As for the school, it continued during the war for two years only; then it was locked up.

As for the selection of a priest, that is the affair of the nation in general. They look for the most upright of the priestly, Levite family. Now after my beloved father's death, the agreement among the Samaritans is, that the priest Isaac, son of Amram, has the first leadership in presenting the blessing over his community; and the priest Tawfig, son of Phinehas, has the leadership of the service in the synagogue; and the writer, Abu-l Hassan, son of Jacob, has the offering of the admonition [i.e. the sermon,

in the service on Sabbaths and feast days]. This is all that has been agreed upon to the present.

Because there is no preacher of any kind in Nablus, I have written you this letter in the Arabic tongue.

Finally, accept from me and my family and my whole nation much greeting to you and your congregation, and especially to Mrs. Warren and to her son, Mr. Paul; and I pray God concerning you that He may keep you safe unto every good thing. Amen.

He that makes this prayer on your behalf is the son of your friend,

ABU-L HASSAN, son of the High Priest,
Jacob, son of Aaron.

This gives a sufficient account of the present condition of the Samaritans. The priesthood appears to be in a somewhat unsettled condition. The long-standing controversy between two branches of the priestly family has been laid upon the table with a compromise, which distributes the priestly duties among three different members of the sacerdotal class. However, Isaac, who was the son of Amram, the priest preceding Jacob, but who was not chosen high priest on the death of his father, because Isaac was only fourteen years old when his father died, has written me in answer to an inquiry:—

NABLUS, May 1, 1919.

DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER, MR. WILLIAM BARTON:—

I long to inform you that I have seen your letter sent to us in the name of the son of the late high priest, Jacob. I showed him how to write you the answer, and I hope that you have received his letter. You ask about the legals about choosing priests. They are as follows:—

The high priest must be of the tribe of Aaron.

He must be experienced in all the rites and customs of the Samaritan religion.

He must be faithful and honorable. He must be the cleverest and the eldest of the priestly tribe.

When our cousin Jacob died I had the right to be chosen to the high priesthood according to the above-mentioned conditions.

I with great pleasure and much obligation write you this letter, and so commend to your pity our Samaritan nation.

All the Samaritans and my family give you their best regards and wish for you good times. I remain

Yours sincerely,

ISAAC, son of Amram,

priest of the Samaritans.

With this, Isaac incloses me a photograph and his newly printed card, which contains his name and title in four languages, "Isaac, son of Amram, Samaritan High Priest."

Isaac apparently regards the priesthood as settled; but I have information from other branches of the priestly family that they still regard it as an open question who is finally to be high priest.

I come now to what I regard as a matter of large importance to Biblical scholarship. We have succeeded in photographing completely the ancient Samaritan codex. This result we owe to the tact and practical wisdom of Mr. Warren.

From time to time, in conversation with Mr. Warren, I spoke of the desirability of securing such photographs. He knew, and I knew, that the Samaritans in their poverty had sold some of their really good manuscripts and mortgaged others. There seemed to be some real danger that this great manuscript might ultimately be lost. The building in which it is kept is not fireproof, and there were several unpleasant possibilities.

The Samaritans objected strongly to the photographing of this document. They said that very few persons outside their own colony had ever seen it; they admitted that they had substituted another old manuscript for this whenever they professed to have shown the ancient scroll. It had been photographed in its case, showing two or three columns of the writing, but they declared that to remove it from the case and unroll it would be a very dangerous thing, as the parchment was very old and liable to be damaged beyond possible restoration.

However, at length they consented. Mr. Warren ar-

ranged through the American Colony, to have photographers visit Nablus and make photographs with a large camera on plates $11\frac{1}{2} \times 15\frac{1}{2}$.

Then came the war, and for three years we had no word from Palestine. We did not know whether the photographing had actually been accomplished. When the war ended, there was long delay in sending photographs to this country. They lacked paper on which to print from these large negatives, and there were other unfavorable conditions.

Our first hint that the photographing had actually been achieved was contained in these letters of November 17, 1918. They complained that a Dutch scholar had published a portion of the text without their permission. We immediately made inquiry of Mr. Whiting. He replied that he had indeed furnished this Dutch scholar with a single print, but no one had had a set of the photographs, nor could he immediately secure a set. He reported, however, that the photographing had been completely successful, and he sent a single print to accompany an article of his, which appeared in the *National Geographic Magazine* for January, 1920; the manuscript and photographs being brought to this country, before the mails were opened, by President John Finley, of the University of New York, who was in Palestine during the war.

In February, 1920, a complete set of photographs arrived. I am assured that this is the very first set of prints to be made from these negatives. It is wholly fitting that these photographs should be first exhibited before a learned society in Mr. Warren's own city; and they were first shown at this meeting of the Chicago Society of Biblical Research on March 20, 1920, and this is the first account to be published of the achievement.

I am glad to present exact measurements of this Codex. The scroll is 23.69 meters long and 39 centimeters wide. The manuscript has been described as double, or backed with newer skins. Mr. Whiting states that this

is not so. It is not backed except where patched. The color is an old brown.

The case in which this scroll is kept is silver gilt and modern, made for it about 1860. The removal of the manuscript from the old brass case to the new silver one gave to two Europeans the only opportunity that has ever been given, so far as is known, to see the codex unrolled, until these photographs were made. Important data were preserved from that unrolling, and published in a letter of Professor George Rosen to Professor Fleischer. The date of the letter is October 3, 1861, and the letter was published in *Der Deutschen Morgenlaendischen Gesellschaft* in 1864, pp. 582-589.

In this letter Professor Rosen states that he had several times seen the manuscript in its case, but had been permitted to see only the portion that was open; it was not rolled either forward or backward to permit him to examine it further. The part exposed was much blackened and blurred by kissing; this section is clearly recognizable in the photographs.

At that time Amram was high priest, and he assured Rosen that the manuscript had never been taken from the case within his knowledge, and that it was used only for the purpose of allowing it to be kissed by the faithful on important occasions. For reading and other parts of worship other manuscripts were used.

In the summer of 1860, as Rosen states, two learned proselytes, Hofrath Levison, of St. Petersburg, and Mr. Kraus, of Württemberg, were rewarded for various services they had rendered the priest Amram by being permitted to be present when the manuscript was unrolled and transferred from one case to another. Mr. Kraus made notes on which Professor Rosen depended.

The manuscript, as he described it, is written on something more than twenty rams' skins, of unequal size. They are sewed together with fine flat threads or straps of the same material. These rams, it was said to him, had been offered in sacrifice as thank offerings.

He said that though the manuscript had been very carefully handled for centuries, it was in a very bad state of preservation, thin as letter paper in places and with many holes. It was unrolled in his presence, and that of Mr. Levison, and laid upon the matting in the synagogue, and carefully rolled into the new silver case.

I have not yet had time to attempt anything in the way of a critical examination of these photographs. Before doing so I shall need assistance of scholars more familiar than I with the ancient text. I am able, however, to give a description of its general appearance.

The photographs are forty-three in number; each of them reproduces three full columns of text. In one or two cases where the columns are narrower, four columns appear on the negative. The columns vary in width and height. The photographers have been careful to permit the margins of the exposures to overlap, so that the prints can be trimmed, and a scroll made without cutting into the text at any place.

In my own scroll which is modern the lines are blind-ruled. There are fifty-four lines to the columns, and they are five inches wide. In the ancient codex they are considerably wider, irregular, not ruled, and the number of lines varies from 68 to 75 as I have counted specimen columns at random. My own scroll is 106 feet long from end to end, and contains 228 columns. The ancient codex contains 129 columns.

Readers will be interested in the plans which have now been adopted concerning the use of these photographs. These plans were considered and adopted at a meeting of the American Samaritan Committee, held in Chicago, on June 12, 1920.

At that meeting reports were presented by Professor F. S. Goodrich and Mr. Chamberlain concerning the Committee's financial condition. All liabilities are paid and there is a small cash balance in the treasury. Our schools continued to operate during the first two years of the war,

and even after communication with America was cut off considerable sums were expended for the relief of the Samaritan people by this Committee through John W. Whiting, its Palestinian representative. This timely relief, aggregating several thousand dollars, was instrumental in saving the Samaritan people from what appeared to be the menace of extinction. They have come through the war poor, but in more favorable case than at one time seemed possible.

The Committee considered the questions before it with special reference to the situation created by the death of Mr. E. K. Warren, whose interest in, and liberality toward, the Samaritan people has been throughout the chief reliance of this Committee.

There appeared to the Committee no immediate reason for distributing relief to the Samaritan people, nor were they clear that it would be feasible to reorganize the schools immediately, or that, when reorganized, this Committee would be the best agency through which these schools should function. The hope of Mr. Warren that a museum might be established at Nablus, and a tract of land purchased for the Samaritan Committee, appeared to the Committee to be matters which the changes wrought by the war had put well out of the foreground of probable events.

Report was made of the photographing entire of the ancient Samaritan Torah and of the receipt in this country of the first set of photographs. After full discussion the following was adopted as the program of this Committee:—

This Committee will continue its corporate existence though there is no prospective need of frequent meetings.

It will retain the ownership of the photographic plates of the Samaritan Pentateuch for the present and until further action. These plates will remain in the custody of the American Colony at Jerusalem. Permission is given to the American Colony to make prints from these plates in any salable form. Mr. Chamberlain is authorized to

arrange with the American Colony a suitable royalty to be paid to this Committee upon all photographs made from the plates, the proceeds to be used for the benefit of the Samaritan people. It was agreed that these photographs shall not be copyrighted but freely opened for the use of scholars throughout the world.

The Committee owns several manuscripts believed to be ancient and deposited in Palestine awaiting its order, and a larger number of recent manuscripts made by the Samaritans and awaiting its order. It is agreed that all personal property, excepting photographic plates, belonging to this Committee, shall be forwarded to this country; that the older manuscripts be deposited for the present in the Libraries of the prominent Universities, where they will have care and be available for scholarly study; the recent manuscripts to be placed on sale and the proceeds to be deposited in the treasury of this Committee for the ultimate benefit of the Samaritan people.

The following officers were elected for the ensuing year, and until such later time as their successors shall be elected and shall qualify: Mr. F. W. Chamberlain, Chicago, Chairman; Prof. F. S. Goodrich, Albion, Mich., Secretary-Treasurer; Rev. William E. Barton, Oak Park, Ill., Historian. These shall constitute an Executive Committee authorized to transact any necessary business in the name of the Committee between its specially called meetings.

Scholars will welcome the news that they are at liberty to purchase and to publish these photographs without restriction; and for this purpose they are at liberty to communicate direct with Mr. Whiting in Jerusalem. The American Samaritan Committee will have in due time a number of modern Pentateuchs for sale, the proceeds to be used for the benefit of the Samaritans. These manuscripts have just now arrived in this country, and have not yet been examined critically. It is hoped that they will be purchased, at very reasonable prices, and placed in Theological and University libraries or in good private collections, where they will be of value.

What purpose is yet to be served by the preservation of this little colony, this most ancient and tiny of all the nations on earth, is not yet apparent. We shall continue our friendly interest in them, glad that they have emerged from the war, and that there is still hope for their future, and for the outworking of the Divine purpose for which they have been so long and so wonderfully preserved.