

**A GRAMMAR OF  
THE NEW  
TESTAMENT DIALECT**

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A Grammar of the New Testament Dialect by M. Stuart

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GRAMMAR

OF THE

NEW TESTAMENT DIALECT.

BY  
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## PREFACE.

A GRAMMAR of the dialect peculiar to the New Testament, is needed by all who critically study its original language. The time has been, when to call in question the pure *Atticism* of the New Testament writers was deemed and treated as an offence against the claims of inspiration. That period is now past. It is generally felt and acknowledged, at the present time, that if the *Purists* could have established the claims which they made for the Greek of the New Testament, one of the very best arguments of a critical nature, to prove that *Hebrews* were the real authors of this volume, would have been confuted.

The most accurate description which can be given of the Greek idiom of the New Testament, is, that it consists of *Hebrew thoughts invested with Greek costume*. The sentiment, the phraseology, and the colouring of the whole, are Hebrew; which is just what we should naturally expect in a system of religious history, discussion, and precepts, composed by Hebrews. No *native* heathen Greek, unless by aid truly miraculous, could have composed such a book as to style and idiom. All is just as it should be, on the supposition that its authors were Hebrews; the entire volume is altogether in conformity with the demands of criticism, which takes its stand upon this basis.

But while we allow thus much, we must be careful not to extend the *Hebraism* of the New Testament beyond just and proper bounds. The *Purists* would allow of nothing but pure Attic Greek in it. Their antagonists, the *Hellenists*, after a long and arduous contest, drove them from the field. But not content with this, they pushed their conquest, as victors are very apt to do, far beyond the

bounds of sober consideration. The second generation of Hellenists found Hebraisms every where. Not only the phraseology and colouring and sentiment of the New Testament were represented as Hebraistic, but the construction and regimen of the great mass of words were deemed to be Hebrew; the meaning and regimen of the particles were Hebrew; the tenses of verbs and the cases of nouns were conformed to the Hebrew; the article was used in the manner of the Hebrew one; and even the syntax was, in innumerable passages, represented as being conformed to the model of the Hebrew. In a word, any difficulty as to the meaning of a Greek word, or as to its construction, was solved, if possible, by a resort to the usages of the Hebrew language.

Time and further examination have corrected these errors and extravagances. Accurate and extensive investigation, such as has recently been made by Planck and Winer, has shewn, that there is scarcely a unique and peculiar *form* of a Greek word in the whole range of the New Testament, nor a single principle of syntax of any importance, which has not its parallel among more or less of the native Greek writers. It is true, beyond all doubt, that there are many words in the New Testament to which the writers have assigned a *sense* different from that which can be found in any of the native Greek authors. But this alters neither the form nor the syntax of such words. Nor is it to be considered merely as Hebraism. It arises from the necessity of the case. How could a Hebrew express ideas of a religious nature, and pertaining to the worship of Jehovah, in a language which mere heathen had formed, into whose minds, in a variety of cases, no such ideas as the Hebrew writer designed to communicate had ever entered? One may answer this question by asking, how a writer of the present day could express, in Latin and Greek, the ideas contained in a treatise on electricity, magnetism, or steamboats?

The writers of the New Testament did just what all writers are ever obliged to do; where the language which they employ is not adequate to express their conceptions, they either coin new words, or else use old words in new senses. Both of these the New Testament writers have done; and done as often as they were necessitated to do it, but generally no oftener. Who can blame them for

this? Or who can wonder that they should have so done? They must either proceed in this way, or refrain from communicating what they wished to write.

In the formation of new words, however, whether by composition or otherwise, they have followed throughout the common analogies and laws of the Greek language. From its syntax they scarcely, if ever, depart, even in the minutiae of it. Hence a Grammar of the New Testament idiom, must for substance be a grammar of the Greek κοινή διάλεκτος; and so it is exhibited, in the following sheets.

The European grammars of the New Testament idiom omit the *Formenlehre*, i. e. an exhibition of the various forms of words, merely designating a few variations of a peculiar or a dialectic nature. The great body of them, therefore, is made up entirely of syntax, and critical remarks on particular readings, etc. The inconvenience of this to the student who is not quite familiar with Greek, is obviously very great. He is obliged to keep two grammars by him; and even then, unless he chooses the one to which the author of his New Testament grammar had reference, he will not be freed from embarrassment. At all events, much delay and inconvenience are experienced by him; and in order to avoid this, I have here inserted the *formal* as well as the *syntactical* part of grammar. I was necessitated to do so, by the wants of the young men whom I am called to teach. Most individuals come to this Seminary with a very imperfect knowledge of the Greek; its flexions, therefore, are recalled with much labour and difficulty. They bring here the different grammars of our country, studied at the different institutions where they have been educated. The difficulty of bringing about a uniform method of linguistic discipline, thus becomes very great; and every teacher knows how desirable this is, with respect to any class which is under his care.

On these grounds I have ventured upon the experiment of endeavouring to make a New Testament grammar, which should be so complete in itself as to render a reference to and the use of other grammars unnecessary. But such a grammar must in substance be a grammar of the κοινή διάλεκτος; for such, as we have seen, is the Greek of the New Testament as to *form* and *syntax*. Of course



the reader must expect to meet here with what he has met in other grammars. But the references for illustration and example are mostly taken from the New Testament ; which all will acknowledge to be proper.

In respect to the *forms* and *inflections*, I have consulted, (I believe I may truly say *studied*), Buttmann, Rost, Matthiae, Hermann, and Thiersch. I have made a free use of them in acquiring information, but have not confined myself, except in some few places and small matters, to their *mode* of exhibition. To original and extended investigation, by a protracted course of reading in the Greek classics, I make no pretensions in this work. It is not designed to occupy the place of Buttmann, Hermann, Matthiae, or Winer, in some respects. But any one acquainted with the works of these great masters will know well, that very little is now left to be gleaned from classical reading. Matthiae, in particular, has embodied an immense mass of facts and examples ; so immense that few readers will ever have the patience even to peruse them, much less to study them. Yet his work is an exceedingly useful one to the inquirer, who wishes to push his investigations beyond the ordinary limits of most grammars.

My purpose has been, *to bring together all the important forms and principles of Greek Grammar, in as short a compass as possible, and yet be perspicuous and satisfactory.* The labour of doing this, I am quite sure, cannot well be estimated, except by those who have made the like attempts. Whether I have succeeded, must be determined before another tribunal, not before my own.

The reader may be assured, that he will find Greek grammar exhibited here according to the stand which this science has most recently taken, under the guidance of the great masters named above. The doctrine of the Greek tenses he will find very different, in some respects, from the representation of it in the old grammars. This difference has, as yet, been but partially recognized in any of our American grammars. The reader will not, I trust, deem every thing of course to be strange or unfounded, that he may find to be new to him.

My *mode* of exhibiting the third declension and explaining its forms, is somewhat different from that which I have found in any

grammar. Buttman has the leading principles ; but I differ somewhat from him in the detail and in the mode of exhibition. I have done my best in order to make this matter simple and intelligible to all.

That part of the syntax which respects the *article*, is as much my own as the nature of the case permitted. The order, arrangement, mode of exhibition, limitations, and some of the principles themselves, are entirely the result of my own labours. The examples and facts are most of them from Matthiae and Winer, where I found them already detailed.

As Winer has no forms, paradigms, etc., in his Grammar, it will of course be understood that in the *formal* part of my book, I have not followed him, excepting as to the notice of a few peculiar forms of words in the New Testament. In regard to the syntax, I have used him much to my purpose ; and I here make my most grateful acknowledgments for his laboured, acute, and copious display of the New Testament syntax. Yet my work differs not a little from his, in the mode of exhibition. His syntax is constructed, almost every where, upon the previous knowledge of the student, or upon that of other grammars ; mine aims at being sufficiently complete in itself.

Very much of Winer's excellent grammar is occupied with *critical* discussions about particular texts. I am thankful for such acute criticisms, let me find them where I may ; but still, I cannot help thinking, that the more proper place for them is in a *Commentarius Criticus*. His book consists of some five hundred and twenty pages, made up principally of syntax : mine, which contains the *forms* and *flexions* of the language as well as the syntax, does not extend to one half of this length. Our plans are very different ; and of course the measure of the one is no rule for the other.

As to the expediency of inserting here the *forms* and *flexions* of the language, my friend and former Colleague, Prof. E. Robinson, has expressed his entire concurrence in my views. It will be remembered, that he was a fellow labourer with me, in translating and publishing the first edition of Winer's New Testament Grammar ; a work which has sold so slowly, that I have some reason to be apprehensive in respect to the result of my present labours. I would hope, however, that the plan of the present work will be

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found more acceptable and useful to those who study sacred criticism. The state of science and method of study in Germany, are so different from our own, that a work well adapted for that country, may meet with a very slow reception in this, or even fall into desuetude. Every work of such a nature as a grammar, should be adapted to the times and to the country in which one lives.

That the divine blessing may rest upon this effort to promote the critical and accurate study of the New Testament, is the sincere wish and prayer of

**M. STUART.**