

**A GRAMMAR OF THE
SAMARITAN LANGUAGE,
WITH EXTRACTS AND
VOCABULARY**

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A grammar of the Samaritan language, with extracts and vocabulary by G. F. Nicholls

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EXTRACTS AND VOCABULARY.

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P R E F A C E.

IN offering to the public a work of so *novel* a character as the present, the author has seized the opportunity of stating the grounds on which it was undertaken.

The importance of the study of the Biblical languages has never been questioned, excepting by those men who are ignorant of them, and are disposed to condemn *in toto* the utility of that which they have not the means or opportunity to acquire. On the other hand, those illustrious scholars, whose definition of the utilitarian *cui bono* is directly opposed to the former, have not only inculcated the momentous importance of linguistic study by *precept*, but have led the van thereof conspicuously by *example*.

To recount the imperishable names of those who, from the earliest ages of Christianity, have patronised or pursued this study, is unnecessary in this place; their opinions of its importance may be summed up in the words of the learned Dr. Jahn: "occurrit et illud, quod est totius theologiæ fundamentum, neque tamen *sine subtili et intimâ linguarum Biblicarum cognitione* satis firmari potest, γρησιότης, inquam,

sacrorum librorum, *quâ labefactatâ*, ruit autoritas horum documentorum, et theologiæ ædificium evertitur." And again, "librorum *γνησιώτητα* et verum sensum, *absque subtili et intimâ linguarum scientiâ*, comprobare nemo potest."

The phrase "Biblical Languages," although capable of extension to all those versions of the Sacred Scriptures which have been made during the last century into almost every important language and dialect, is usually confined to the following: viz. Hebrew, Chaldee, Syriac, Arabic, Samaritan, Ethiopic, Amharic, and Coptic; to which, of course, the Greek and Latin may be added.

The first four of the languages just enumerated have received especial attention at the hands of scholars; while the four latter have been wholly neglected or forgotten. In fact, during the last few years, so little attention and study have they attracted, that, at the present time, it is impossible to acquire even the rudiments of them, except through the medium of the Latin tongue. Why they have been allowed to fall into such disrepute, it is not worth while to inquire, but we have only to do with the fact that such is the case, and, if possible, to remedy it.

The present work is a Grammar of the Samaritan Language; it is strictly *Rudimentary*, and is intended as a precursor to a more critical and philological view of the tongue. The main object of the author has been to deal with the ordinary facts of Etymology and Syntax, and to produce such a work (to use an illustrious scholar's words), "non ut in ipso hæreat juvenus, sed ut per eum transeat,

per eum excolatur, et ad altiora præparetur." How far he has succeeded in his endeavours will be for the discerning public to determine; to whose favour he would commend his present attempt.

The author has consulted nearly the whole of the extant writers on the subject,—as Cellarius, Morinus, Castellus, Leusdenius, and others. To the first he is *especially* indebted in the Etymological part of the work; whose facts, notwithstanding they are undigested, and expressed in questionable Latinity, are undoubtedly invaluable.

The Syntax is, however, wholly original; and the author has especially aimed at giving the ordinary rules, to the exclusion of all which might seem hypercritical to the young scholar.

The Work is preceded by a brief dissertation upon the Samaritans, their language and literature, which the author hopes will not be unacceptable to the reader, and is concluded by an extract, from Walton's Polyglot, of three chapters of the Samaritan version of the Pentateuch, with exegetical remarks upon the text, together with a short Lexicon, carefully compiled by actual reading and observation. The student will do well, after he has mastered the Grammar, to construe, by the aid of the Lexicon, and parse the whole of the extracts, in doing which he will find his labours considerably diminished by observing the analogy which the Samaritan bears to the Syriac and Chaldee.

Before concluding, it is scarcely necessary to dwell upon

the extent to which the Samaritan text as edited in the books is vitiated; and no doubt many of the anomalies, which have come to be considered *grammatical* peculiarities, are to be referred to this cause. The fact is simply mentioned here, to show that the reader must bear with some things, which in the *present* state of the text are unavoidable.

The author hopes to have an opportunity of editing a critical and philological Grammar, which, with a Lexicon and a revised text of the Samaritan Pentateuch, would form a somewhat complete library of Samaritan literature.

LONDON:
1853.

INTRODUCTION.

BEFORE entering upon the Grammar, a brief account of the Samaritans, their language and literature, may not be unacceptable to the generality of our readers.

It appears that the ten tribes of Israel who had revolted from Solomon's son, elected Jeroboam as their king, who fixed his capital at Shechem, in mount Ephraim.

The Israelitish king, in order to prevent his people from going to Jerusalem, set up two golden calves, one in Dan, and the other in Bethel, to which they might offer the usual sacrifices.

We pass over the remaining acts of Jeroboam and his successors, until we come to Omri, the sixth king of Israel, who began his reign, A.M. 3079. He it was who purchased the hill of Samaria from Shemer, and built on it a city called by the same name, from which the gentile noun, *Samaritans*, is derived.

The city Samaria was besieged during Ahab's reign, by the Syrian king, Ben-hadad, but without success: in the reign of Hoshea, however, Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, attacked it, and after three years' siege succeeded in taking it, and carrying away the Israelites captive into Assyria.

The territories of the banished Jews were occupied by a mixed people, brought from different parts of the Assyrian empire,—from Babylon, Cuthah, Ava, Hamath, and Se-

pharvaim. It is to these colonists that the name *Samaritans* is specially, though not exclusively, applicable. According to Josephus, they were called *Κουθαίοι* *Cuthai*, as the following extract will show (B. ix. c. 14):—οἱ δὲ μετοικισθέντες εἰς τὴν Σαμάρειαν Κουθαῖοι—ταύτη γὰρ ἔχρῶντο μέχρι δεῦρο τῇ προσηγορίᾳ, διὰ τὸ ἐκ τῆς Κουθᾶς καλουμένης χώρας μεταχθῆναι, αὕτη δ' ἐστὶν ἐν τῇ Περσίδι καὶ ποταμὸς τοῦτ' ἔχων ὄνομα, etc.

It appears, moreover, that these colonists were infested with lions, on account of their idolatry; and believing the cause of this visitation to be their ignorance of the worship due to the "God of the land," they resolved to request Shalmaneser to send them a priest or priests of the captive people, who might teach them "the manner of the God of the land." This request was complied with,—a priest was sent. But it does not appear that the instruction he imparted had the effect of totally eradicating idolatry from among them; for we read, that "they feared the Lord, but served their graven images." How long this semi-idolatry continued it is impossible to say: it would appear, however, that on the return from the Babylonish captivity it had ceased; for they not only made an application to Judah and Benjamin to be allowed to participate in rebuilding the temple, for which the latter had obtained a decree, but added, as if reprobating their former wickedness, "we seek your God, as ye do; and we do sacrifice unto him since the days of Esar-haddon, king of Assur, which brought us up here." This proposal was refused by Ezra and Nehemiah, and the other Jews; who were not only empowered by the decree of Cyrus to rebuild their temple, but also to fortify their city. This refusal on the part of the Jews, gave rise to that im-