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A Pilgrimage to the Land of My Fathers

By Rev. Moses Margoliouth

In Two Volumes

Vol. II

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1850

(p. 269) Letter XXVI.
To The Rev. Dr. Horlock, Box.
Nablous, April, 1850

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On we galloped till we came to Sebasta, where we halted, and I allowed my eyes to feast for some time on the noble columns there. From thence we proceeded direct to Nablous. I took up my quarters for a few hours in the house of a Christian, from which terrace I could see and hear all that was going on in the Jewish quarter, which is not very large here. As soon as I had rested a little, I proceeded to the Samaritan synagogue; and because I could read the Samaritan inscriptions fluently, the high priest insisted that I was a Samaritan, and that I was therefore entitled to a few privileges. I was permitted to see the real Pentateuch of antiquity; I was permitted, moreover, to compare my Hebrew pocket-Bible with it, so as to mark the *varies lectiones* in my copy.¹

(p. 277) Being the eve of the Feast of the Passover, I witnessed the sacrifice of the Paschal Lamb on Mount Gerizim. I then went into the Jewish quarter, and listened to the interesting prayers and hymns there. I observed a curious amulet in the Jewish synagogue, consisting of the whole Book of Canticles, fantastically written in such a manner as to delineate all the furniture of the Temple; around which is an invocation on the influence of God's thirty-three auspicious eyes against the thirty-three species of evil eyes.

(p. 290) Letter XXIX To Mrs. John Hollist, Manchester
Tranmere, April, 1849
My dear Madam,

I fondly hope that you will adopt the old English adage, and exclaim on the receipt of this, "Better late than never." Many a time did I long to fulfil my promise to you—for it gave me unfeigned pleasure to think of my rambles in loved Palestine—but could not possibly find time to sit down to the grateful task. However, I managed to find leisure to-day, and here you have a letter on Nablous according to promise.

¹ See Appendix.

Next Monday will be the anniversary of my first visit to the principality of Samaria, the Shechem of the Old Testament, and the Sychar of the New. I left favoured Nazareth on that morning, and after a ride of two hours over rugged, though picturesque mountains, I descended into the beautiful Valley of Jezreel. I arrived about ten o'clock, A.M., at a place now called Jenin, the En-gannim of Joshua; from thence I proceeded over mountains and valleys all covered with large flocks of storks, till I came to Sebasta, where I spent a couple of hours; and about five, P.M., I arrived at Nablous.

The first view the traveller gets of the spot, from the summit of Mount Ebal, as was my good fortune, is ex- (p. 291) quisitely charming. You behold the city—though at a considerable distance—embosomed by the two grand mountains of Ephraim, Gerizim and Ebal, renowned in sacred story; the valley that is between those mountains— which is the site of Nablous—being cultivated in a superior style; and you thus see the environs of the city beautifully variegated with fields of different hues and colours. I was exceedingly charmed with the different scenes of Nablous, which I beheld from various points of view, but I must not stop to describe them now. At present I shall confine myself to an account of the existing state of the Jews and Samaritan Israelites, who are to be found in that city. It so happened, that the day I arrived there, was the Passover eve. The Samaritan Israelites have a synagogue, which they call the temple, on Mount Gerizim, in which they still offer up sacrifices. I therefore repaired to that place of worship first. The high priest, as the principal functionary of the synagogue is called, would not at first allow me to enter the precincts of the building, bidding me first to undergo all the preparatory rites of ablution. After a tedious discussion on the subject, I was bid to put off my shoes and enter. I was thus permitted to witness the sacrifice of the Paschal Lamb. This circumstance gave me a most favourable opportunity of directing the attention of the whole congregation to the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world; and, I am thankful to say, I was listened to with undivided attention. After I had preached about an hour to them, I cast my eyes upon a tablet with a Samaritan inscription, which I began to read. This made my audience conclude that I was one of them; they insisted upon it for some time. I then said: "If so, then your faith must be the same as mine," which brought (p. 292) me back to the former subject. I read to them John iv., containing an account of the first Samaritan believers, which pleased them so much that they went to the trouble of copying the whole chapter in the Samaritan characters, and deposited it in their most sacred shrine. They were extremely delighted with Luke x. 30—35, the narrative of the good Samaritan, and exclaimed: "None but a Samaritan would be so good!" But they cast then eyes downwards, when I read to them the following: "And He sent messengers before His face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for Him. And they did not receive Him because His face was as though He would go to Jerusalem. And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt Thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? But He turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village. And it came to pass, that as they went in the way, a certain man said unto Him, Lord, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest."²

² Luke ix. 52—57.

I revived their spirits by reading Luke XVII. 12—19, the account of the thankful Samaritan. I then endeavoured to apply the whole to them in a variety of views; and I trust, with the blessing of God, that some impression was made on their hearts. They followed me with invocations of blessings on my head, and when I visited Nablous a second time they appeared to have a grateful remembrance of me. Of a very different character, but (p. 293) of an equally interesting nature was my visit to the Jewish synagogue. About the present state of the Nablous Christians, you have a copy of Bishop Gobat's letter to me. It got late, but it was a moonlight night, and the scenery, as steeped in the gentle colouring of the moonbeams, looked enchanting, literally so. How solemnized my mind felt! I often recur to that time.

"How sweet its mem'ry still."

My face was then steadfastly set to go to Jerusalem; I would not, therefore, allow myself any sleep that night, but set out, with a young Arab boy, a little after twelve o'clock, at midnight, for Jerusalem. About one o'clock, we reached Jacob's Well, where I rested for nearly an hour, reading John iv. Oh, for the sacred thoughts, that filled my mind then!

I find my notes on that locality, and of that evening, too voluminous for a hasty letter; I must, therefore, for the present, say, Farewell. I may, some day, furnish you with a supplementary epistle, to make up for the present laconic one.

(p. 427) Appendix. Vol. II

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The copying of the *varus lectiones* into the author's Bible, was found very important in a controversy which agitated the minds of British Christians during the latter part of last year, as will be seen from the following letter:

Traamere Lodge, Higher Tranniere, Cheshire, Oct. 19, 1849.

My dear Sir,

There is not the remotest approach to truth in the assertion made by "an advocate of the Society for the Abolition of Capital Punishment," with respect to Gen. ix. 6. The words, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed," are to be found in the oldest MSS. in the world. I have seen the Samaritan Pentateuch—and if it were an interpolation of the fourth century, that Pentateuch would be judge—I saw it twice in the year 1848, at Nablous, and got permission from the Priest of the Samaritan congregation there, to compare it with my pocket Hebrew Pentateuch, which I did, and entered all the *varix lectiones* in the margin of my book, and I find that Gen. ix. 6. is exactly alike in both versions, with the exception of the word "man:" in the Samaritan Pentateuch it is written, "Adam," whilst in the Hebrew it is written, אָדָם, *Haadam*. The sole difference, an article consisting of one letter. The Samaritan Pentateuch to which I allude is believed, by the Samaritans, to have been written by Abishna, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron. Be the antiquity of that copy what it may, it is certain that the Samaritans would never tolerate a Jewish interpolation. Again, what object could the Jews in the fourth century have had in introducing such a passage into their code of laws? The advocate for the "abolition of capital punishment" seems pitifully ignorant of the history of the Jews. It is marvellous how unscrupulous people are—when wedded to a

certain notion—in making assertions in order to suit their pet theories. I tremble for the safety of persons given to such random statements. I fear they would not scruple to reject any passage of the Scripture of Truth, if (p. 428) it should happen to clash with a favourite theory of theirs. I always feel it my bounden duty to expose the falsehood of such statements. Satan is too glad to foster them. Christians must therefore crush them at once.

I am, my dear Sir,
Very truly yours in Gospel bonds,
M. MARGOHOOTH.

Rev. T. Methuen.

P.S. After I had finished the above, I opened my Hebrew Bible (Bagster's edition), and my eye fell upon *variae lectiones Pentateuchi, Hebraei, et Hebraeo-Samaritani*. I find no difference noticed except the one I mentioned.

The above letter was published in the "Devizes Gazette," and has given rise to a long and spirited controversy in that paper, in which I was obliged to take part. The whole correspondence is to be found in that Gazette of November and December last.

Comments on this section from the Editor of theSamaritanUpdate.com

This reference is not located in *A Bibliography of the Samaritans, Third Edition, Revised, Expanded, and Annotated*, by Alan David Crown and Reinhard Pummer, ATLA Bibliography, No. 51, The Scarecrow Press, Inc. Lanham, Maryland, Toronto, Oxford. 2005

Rev. Moses Margoliouth (1818 - 1881), Jewish historian, uncle of [David Samuel Margoliouth](#).

Born in Suwalki, Poland in 1818, he arrived in England in 1837 and converted to the Christian faith the following year (an Anglican convert from Judaism). "In 1840 he entered Trinity College, Dublin, and, after completing his studies, was ordained in 1844. He held various positions in the Episcopal Church, and at the time of his death, Feb. 25, 1881, he was vicar of Little Linford, near Newport Pagnell, Bucks, England. He is the author of many works: *Fundamental Principles of Modern Judaism Investigated* (London 1843); *History of the Jews in Great Britain* (ibid., 1846); *A Pilgrimage to the Land of my Fathers* (ibid. 1850, 2 vols.); *History of the Jews in Great Britain* (expanded 1851, 3 vols.); *Abyssinia, its Past, Present, and Future* (1866); *The Spirit of Prophecy* (1864); *Sacred Minstrelsy: A Lecture on Biblical and Post-Biblical Hebrew Music* (1863); *The Oracles of God and their Vindication* (1870); *Vestiges of the Historic Anglo-Hebrews in East Anglia* (eod.); *The Poetry of the Hebrew Pentateuch* (1871); *The Lord's Prayer No Adaptation of Existing Jewish Petitions* (1876). Besides, he left a great many works in manuscript."