

The Ethiopic Manuscripts of Enoch in the British Museum.

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In these days when the attention of New Testament scholars is being attracted more and more to the Pseudepigrapha, and particularly to the Book of Enoch, it is a matter of no little surprise that the learned world seems to be in ignorance of the valuable Ethiopic MSS. of Enoch in the British Museum. The Ethiopic text, edited by Dillmann, in 1851, is founded on five MSS.—the only accessible MSS. at the time, and Dillmann's German translation of 1853 and Schodde's English translation of 1882 are alike founded on this text. But the MSS. used by Dillmann, when compared with the nine MSS. in the British Museum, betray a later origin, and show signs of a late recension, which removes them still further from the true text. The translations which are founded on Dillmann's text share, of course, in the imperfections of their source. In my forthcoming edition of Enoch, I will advance some evidence towards justifying the above statement.

It is further noteworthy that amongst the nine MSS. in the British Museum, one is far superior to the rest. Whilst the other eight MSS. belong to the eighteenth century, this MS., which I shall designate G, dates from the beginning of the sixteenth century; and whereas the former bear the marks of a recension,—an earlier one apparently than that to which Dillmann's MSS. belong,—this MS. G preserves many true readings which were lost through this recension. To prove the superiority of G to all other known MSS. it will be sufficient to quote two or three instances where it preserves the demonstrably true reading, and that against the whole body of other MSS. at present known. In chap. lxxxix. 42, all MSS. except G agree in giving the reading *eska tansea*. If this reading be accepted, the whole clause must be translated "till another sheep arose," and the words "Lord of the sheep" must be omitted as an interpolation, as Dillmann has actually done. But the fragment of the Greek version of Enoch

discovered in the Vatican contains this passage; it runs: *μεχρι ου ηγειρεν ο κυριος των προβατων κριον ενα*. This shows, firstly, that the phrase "Lord of the sheep" is no interpolation in the Ethiopic, and that *ansea* active and not *tansea* neuter should be the reading of the Ethiopic. Now, as a matter of fact, the reading of G is *ansea*, and not *tansea* as all the other MSS. read. Thus the true text, preserved in G alone, is "till the Lord of the sheep raised up another sheep." In G also we find the explanation of the later and false reading; for the words "another sheep," which ought to be in the accusative *kala бага*, appear through a clerical error in the nominative *kale бage*, and thus readily suggested the emendation of *ansea* into *tansea*.

In viii. 3, the reading *fat̄ha* is against both context and grammar. Dillmann (*in loc.*) says that *fat̄ha* is required, and so translates. And this is the actual reading of G and of G alone.

In x. 3, G gives a literal rendering of the Greek: all the others agree in only giving the sense.

In i. 9, G alone gives the exact equivalent of *ελεγχων* in St. Jude 15, "convict;" the other MSS. give a word meaning "to litigate with."

In many other passages, G gives what is obviously the true text, supported at times by a minority, at times by a majority of the remaining MSS.

We can better appraise the value of the Ethiopic MSS. in the British Museum, when we consider that in the Bodleian there are but two MSS., in the great library in Paris there are likewise only two,—one of them being a copy of the chief Bodleian MS. of Enoch,—and that in Berlin there is only a fragment.

The MSS. in the British Museum fell into the hands of the expedition which was sent against King Theodore. Their superiority to all MSS. previously known lowers the scientific value of Dillmann's Ethiopic text, and renders a new edition a growing desideratum.