

# **THE BOOK OF THE SECRETS OF ENOCH**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649026555

The Book of the Secrets of Enoch by R. H. Charles

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

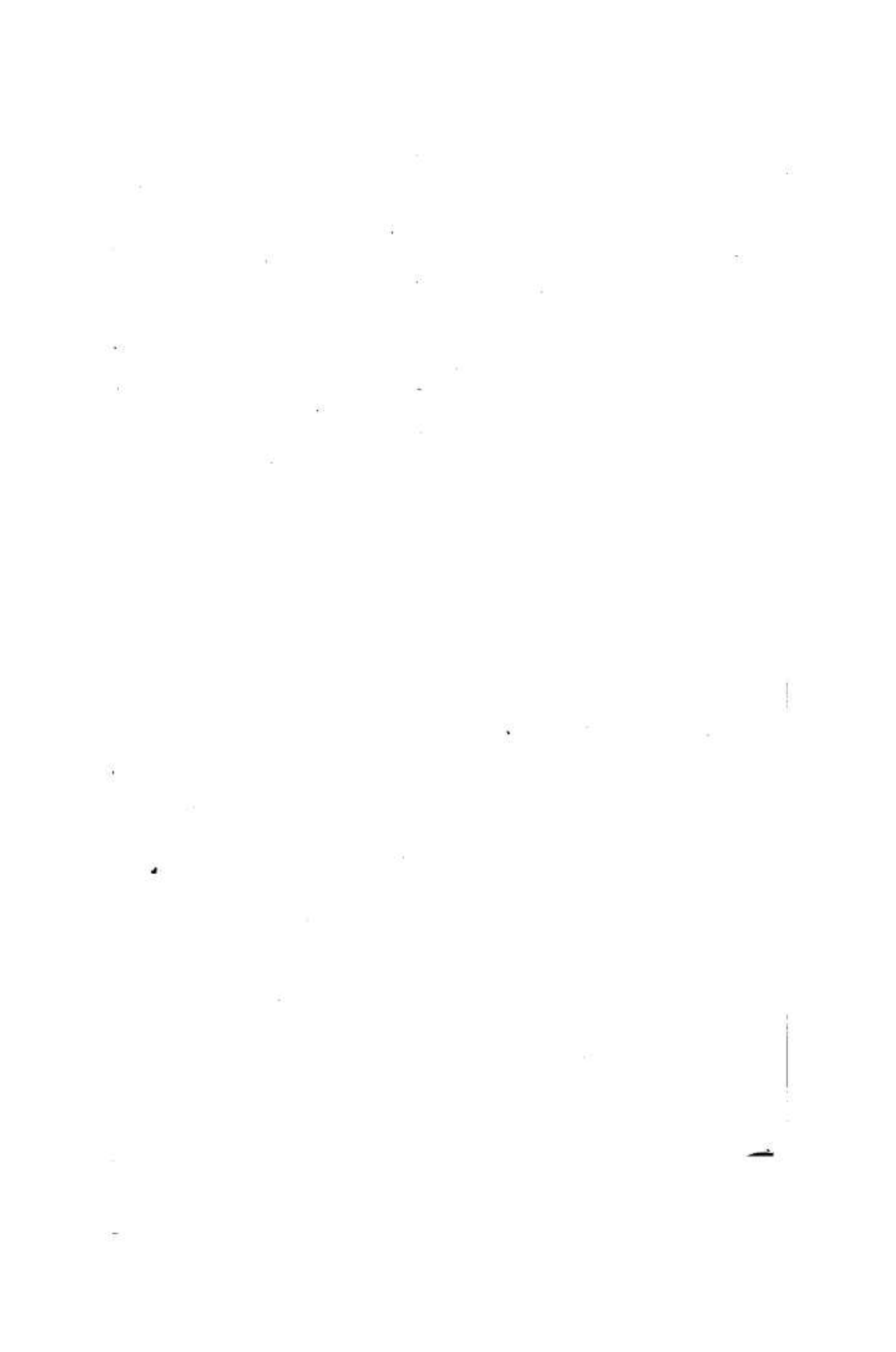
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**R. H. CHARLES**

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THE BOOK OF  
THE SECRETS OF ENOCH

HENRY FROWDE, M.A.  
PUBLISHER TO THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD



LONDON, EDINBURGH, AND NEW YORK



Bible. O.T. Apocryphal books. 2 Enoch.  
English. 1896

THE BOOK  
OF THE  
SECRETS OF ENOCH

TRANSLATED FROM THE SLAVONIC

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Oxford

AT THE CLARENDON PRESS

1896

05.28.23 S.M.

## PREFACE

THE Book of the Secrets of Enoch cannot fail to be of interest to students of Apocalyptic literature and of the origins of Christianity. It is with a view to help such that this the first edition of the book has been undertaken. In certain respects it will appeal also to specialists in Assyriology. So far indeed as it does so, I have been able to do little more than refer to the leading scholars in this department, as my knowledge of such subjects is very slight, and all secondhand.

This book has had a peculiar history. For more than 1200 years it has been unknown save in Russia, where acquaintance with it goes several centuries back. Further, by its present name it was never known in any literature save the Slavonic. Even in Slavonic the name was not quite constant, if we may trust one of the MSS. (B); for there it appears as 'The Secret Books of God which were shown to Enoch.' And yet the book was much read in many circles in the first three centuries of the Church, and has left more traces of its influence than many a well-known book of the same literature (see § 5), and it is undoubtedly of much greater importance in respect of exegesis. In its Greek form it passed current probably under the general designation of Enoch. Occasionally we find that it was not distinguished by those who used it from the older book which has come down to us through the Ethiopic. We have, in fact, in this book another fragmentary survival of the literature that once circulated under the name of Enoch.

Revised 0-2-23, 41/6

That such a book had ever existed was not known in Western Europe till 1892, when a writer in a German review stated that there was a Slavonic version of the Ethiopic Book of Enoch. By Mr. Morfill's help it soon became clear that there was no foundation whatever for such a statement, and subsequent study showed that we had recovered therein an old and valuable pseudepigraph. The next step was naturally to secure its publication, and this was soon made possible through the kindness of the Delegates of the Press.

It will be generally understood that great difficulties beset such an undertaking, and particularly in the case of a book of whose existence there had never been even a surmise in the world of scholarship, and to which there was not a single unmistakable allusion in all ancient literature. The editor in such a case has to pursue untravelled ways, and if, in his efforts to discover the literary environment, the religious views, the date, and language of his author, he has fallen once and again into errors of perception or judgement, he can therein but throw himself on the indulgence of his critics.

The first edition of such a work must have many shortcomings. The editor will be grateful for corrections and further elucidations of the text.

In order to appreciate the value of this book in elucidating contemporary and subsequent religious thought, the reader should consult pp. xxix-xlvii of the Introduction.

In conclusion, I must express my gratitude to Mr. Morfill for his great kindness in undertaking the translation of the Slavonic texts, and for his unfailing courtesy and unwearying energy in the prosecution of the task. It is to him that I am indebted for the account of the Slavonic MSS. in § 2.

R. H. C.