

INTRODUCTION TO THE FORGOTTEN BOOKS OF EDEN

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AN American Indian's Song is his very own. No other man can sing it without his explicit permission. It is impregnate with his aura. It is not in our sense, however, property. It is believed to invest magically the singer with the mood whence it proceeded, and must, therefore, merge in some way the performer's identity with that of the originator's. To sing another's song is an invasion of his personality, a sort of spiritual piracy involving sacrilege.

When last year in Arcady and Andritzana, I induced primitive shepherds to sing and play for me lustily all sorts of occasional songs and rituals, they refused to do a burial chant, most positively. For to perform one would surely cause a death in the house.

A little reflection on these two paragraphs may perhaps, make the reader realize that authorship was once a thing of great hazards. If one had something great and new to say, and wanted it to circulate widely, one would naturally prefer anonymity.

Indeed, by the Hebrews a story was popularly presumed to have its hero for its author. Moses wrote the account of his own death. Deuteronomy was of course, his own work, although obviously intended to alter the traditional religion. Jonah wrote the little novel about himself. David was the author of the Psalms because reported to have instituted the first temple choir, and as a lad to have played the harp soothing the nerves of King Saul. When an author for the book of Job was wanted, though the whole discussion of the work proves it was written to refute the Wisdom literature which by tradition began with the Proverbs of Solomon, Moses was chosen as a suitable author!

So for centuries among the Jews, writers sought to shelter themselves behind the names of the great dead. In this

they were guilty of no fraud. They imagined what Solomon or Enoch would say, or sing, upon a particular theme under given circumstances. It was not really they themselves, but their Solomon, their Enoch, Solomon or Enoch in them, who uttered the new prophesies or temple praises.

Thus arose that body of literature, called by modern scholars, "Pseudepigrapha," that is, writings erroneously, un-historically, and yet sincerely, ascribed to heroic figures summed from the vasty deep by a self-denying imagination, eager to alter man's belief and custom, to interpret his hope and sorrow, without personal gain or fame, and also, may one add, without the deterrent of persecution to arrest free utterance!

Now it is a foolish modern prejudice against an ancient piece of literature that its author veiled his person in this fashion. The only question is: Was the writing of inherent value? Did it exercise influence?

It is not too much to say that no modern can intelligently understand the New Testament, unless he is acquainted with the so-called "Apocrypha," and with the "Pseudepigrapha" as well. The very words of Jesus were in many instances, suggested by sayings current in his day, more or less as unconscious quotations from the Testaments of the 12 Patriarchs.

The figure of the Messiah which Jesus adapted to his creative purpose, cannot be imagined by a modern without a perusal of the book of Enoch which is its classic and most entrancing glorification. Without the Odes and Songs of Solomon the atmosphere breathed by the earliest church cannot be divined.

Hitherto access to this literature has been confined to technical scholars. Its assembly would require special information and considerable expenditure. With this enterprise of the Alpha House, Inc., it becomes democratic property. We shall have a more intelligent clergy and laity, when this volume has taken its place in every library, and is familiarly brought into every discussion of the historic Christ and of His times.