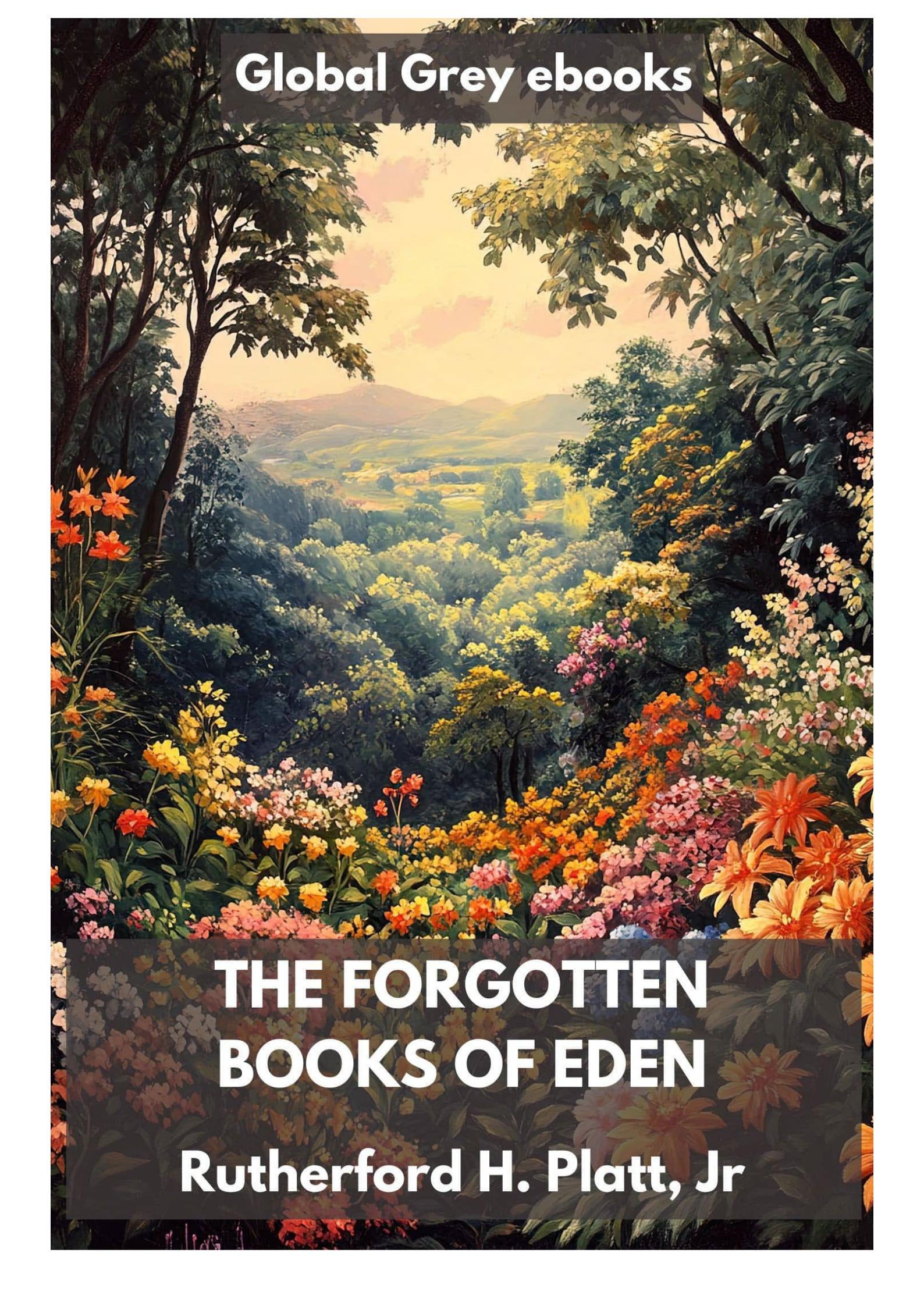


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THE FORGOTTEN BOOKS OF EDEN

Rutherford H. Platt, Jr

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Introduction To The Forgotten Books Of Eden

By WILLIAM N. GUTHRIE, D.D.

Rector of St. Mark's-in-the-Bouwerie.

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 Andritzena, 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, unhistorically, 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.

The Second Book Of Adam And Eve

CHAP. I.

The grief stricken family. Cain marries Luluwa and they move away.

WHEN Luluwa heard Cain's words, she wept and went to her father and mother, and told them how that Cain had killed his brother Abel.

2 Then they all cried aloud and lifted up their voices, and slapped their faces, and threw dust upon their heads, and rent asunder their garments, and went out and came to the place where Abel was killed.

3 And they found him lying on the earth, killed, and beasts around him; while they wept and cried because of this just one. From his body, by reason of its purity, went forth a smell of sweet spices.

4 And Adam carried him, his tears streaming down his face; and went to the Cave of Treasures, where he laid him, and wound him up with sweet spices and myrrh.

5 And Adam and Eve continued by the burial of him in great grief a hundred and forty days. Abel was fifteen and a half years old, and Cain seventeen years and a half.

6 As for Cain, when the mourning for his brother was ended, he took his sister Luluwa and married her, without leave from his father and mother; for they could not keep him from her, by reason of their heavy heart.

7 He then went down to the bottom of the mountain, away from the garden, near to the place where he had killed his brother.

8 And in that place were many fruit trees and forest trees. His sister bare him children, who in their turn began to multiply by degrees until they filled that place.

9 But as for Adam and Eve, they came not together after Abel's funeral, for seven years. After this, however, Eve conceived; and while she was with child, Adam said to her "Come, let us take an offering and offer it up unto God, and ask Him to give us a fair child, in whom we may find comfort, and whom we may join in marriage to Abel's sister."

10 Then they prepared an offering and brought it up to the altar, and offered it before the Lord, and began to entreat Him to accept their offering, and to give them a good offspring.

11 And God heard Adam and accepted his offering. Then, they worshipped, Adam, Eve, and their daughter, and came down to the Cave of Treasures and placed a lamp in it, to burn by night and by day, before the body of Abel.

12 Then Adam and Eve continued fasting and praying until Eve's time came that she should be delivered, when she said to Adam: "I wish to go to the cave in the rock, to bring forth in it."

13 And he said, "Go and take with thee thy daughter to wait on thee; but I will remain in this Cave of Treasures before the body of my son Abel."

14 Then Eve hearkened to Adam, and went, she and her daughter. But Adam remained by himself in the Cave of Treasures.

CHAP. II.

A third son is born to Adam and Eve.

AND Eve brought forth a son perfectly beautiful in figure and in countenance. His beauty was like that of his father Adam, yet more beautiful.

2 Then Eve was comforted when she saw him, and remained eight days in the cave; then she sent her daughter unto Adam to tell him to come and see the child and name him. But the daughter stayed in his place by the body of her brother, until Adam returned. So did she.

3 But when Adam came and saw the child's good looks, his beauty, and his perfect figure, he rejoiced over him, and was comforted for Abel. Then he named the child Seth, that means, "that God has heard my prayer, and has delivered me out of my affliction." But it means also "power and strength."

4 Then after Adam had named the child, he returned to the Cave of Treasures; and his daughter went back to her mother.

5 But Eve continued in her cave, until forty days were fulfilled, when she came to Adam, and brought with her the child and her daughter.

6 And they came to a river of water, where Adam and his daughter washed themselves, because of their sorrow for Abel; but Eve and the babe washed for purification.

7 Then they returned, and took an offering, and went to the mountain and offered it up, for the babe; and God accepted their offering, and sent His blessing upon them, and upon their son Seth; and they came back to the Cave of Treasures.

8 As for Adam, he knew not again his wife Eve, all the days of his life; neither was any more offspring born of them; but only those five, Cain, Luluwa, Abel, Aklia, and Seth alone.

9 But Seth waxed in stature and in strength; and began to fast and pray, fervently.

CHAP. III

Satan appears as a beautiful woman tempting Adam, telling him he is still a youth. "Spend thy youth in mirth and pleasure." (12) The different forms which Satan takes (15).

AS for our father Adam, at the end of seven years from the day he had been severed from his wife Eve, Satan envied him, when he saw him thus separated from her; and strove to make him live with her again.

2 Then Adam arose and went up above the Cave of Treasures; and continued to sleep there night by night. But as soon as it was light every day he came down to the cave, to pray there and to receive a blessing from it.

3 But when it was evening he went up on the roof of the cave, where he slept by himself, fearing lest Satan should overcome him. And he continued thus apart thirty-nine days.

4 Then Satan, the hater of all good, when he saw Adam thus alone, fasting and praying, appeared unto him in the form of a beautiful woman, who came and stood before him in the night of the fortieth day, and said unto him:--

5 "O Adam, from the time ye have dwelt in this cave, we have experienced great peace from you, and your prayers have reached us, and we have been comforted about you.

6 "But now, O Adam, that thou hast gone up over the roof of the cave to sleep, we have had doubts about thee, and a great sorrow has come upon us because of thy separation from Eve. Then again, when thou art on the roof of this cave, thy prayer is poured out, and thy heart wanders from side to side.

7 "But when thou wast in the cave thy prayer was like fire gathered together; it came down to us, and thou didst find rest.

To turn back the obedient soul from folly that is wrought in ignorance.
May God cleanse Israel against the day of mercy and blessing,
Against the day of choice when
Blessed shall they be that shall be in those days,
He bringeth back His anointed.
In that they shall see the goodness of the Lord which He shall perform for the generation that
is to come,
Under the rod of chastening of the Lord's anointed in the fear of his God,
In the spirit of wisdom and righteousness and strength;
That he may direct every man in the works of righteousness by the fear of God,
That he may establish them all before the Lord,
A good generation living in the fear of God in the days of mercy. Selah.
Great is our God and glorious, dwelling in the highest.
It is He who hath established in their courses the lights of heaven for determining seasons
from year to year,
And they have not turned aside from the way which He appointed them.
In the fear of God they pursue their path every day,
From the day God created them and for evermore.
And they have erred not since the day He created them.
Since the generations of old they have not withdrawn from their path,
Unless God commanded them so to do by the command of His servants.

The Odes Of Solomon

HERE are some of the most beautiful songs of peace and joy that the world possesses. Yet their origin, the date of their writing, and the exact meaning of many of the verses remain one of the great literary mysteries.

They have come down to us in a single and very ancient document in Syriac language. Evidently that document is a translation from the original Greek. Critical debate has raged around these Odes; one of the most plausible explanations is that they are songs of newly baptized Christians of the First Century.

They are strangely lacking in historical allusions. Their radiance is no reflection of other days. They do not borrow from either the Old Testament or the Gospels. The inspiration of these verses is first-hand. They remind you of Aristides' remark, "*A new people with whom something Divine is mingled.*" Here is vigor and insight to which we can find parallels only in the most exalted parts of the Scriptures.

For these dazzling mystery odes, we owe our translation to J. Rendel Harris, MA., Hon. Fellow of Clare College, Cambridge. He says about them: "There does not seem to be anything about which everyone seem agreed unless it be that the Odes are of singular beauty and high spiritual value."

ODE 1.

- 1 The Lord is on my head like a crown, and I shall not be without Him.
- 2 They wove for me a crown of truth, and it caused thy branches to bud in me.
- 3 For it is not like a withered crown which buddeth not: but thou livest upon my head, and thou hast blossomed upon my head.
- 4 Thy fruits are full-grown and perfect, they are full of thy salvation.

ODE 2.

(No part of this Ode has ever been identified.)

ODE 3.

The first words of this Ode have disappeared.

- 1 ... I put on:
- 2 And his members are with him. And on them do I stand, and He loves me:
- 3 For I should not have known how to love the Lord, if He had not loved me.
- 4 For who is able to distinguish love, except the one that is loved?
- 5 I love the Beloved, and my soul loves Him:
- 6 And where His rest is, there also am I;
- 7 And I shall be no stranger, for with the Lord Most High and Merciful there is no grudging.
- 8 I have been united to I-run, for the Lover has found the Beloved,
- 9 And because I shall love Him that, is the Son, I shall become a son;
- 10 For he that is joined to Him that is immortal, will also himself become immortal;
- 11 And he who has pleasure in the Living One, will become living.
- 12 This is the Spirit of the Lord, which doth not lie, which teacheth the sons of men to know His ways.
- 13 Be wise and understanding and vigilant. Hallelujah.

ODE 4.