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BIBLE ROMANCES, FIRST
SERIES

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G. W. Foote

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THE CREATION STORY BIBLE ROMANCES. – 1

By G. W. FOOTE.

The Book of Genesis is generally thought, as Professor Huxley says, to contain the beginning and the end of sound science. The mythology of the Jews is held to be a divine revelation of the early history of man, and of the cosmic changes preparatory to his creation. The masses of the people in every Christian country are taught in their childhood that God created the universe, including this earth with all its flora and fauna, in five days; that he created man, "the bright consummate flower" of his work, on the sixth day, and rested on the seventh. Yet every student knows this conception to be utterly false; every man of science rejects it as absurd; and even the clergy themselves mostly disbelieve it. Why, then, do they not disabuse the popular mind, and preach what they deem true instead of what they know to be false? The answer is very simple. Because they feel that the doctrine of the Fall is bound up with the Genesiac account of Creation, and that if the latter be discredited the former will not long be retained. The doctrine of the Fall being the foundation of the scheme of Atonement, the clergy will never admit the Creation Story to be mythical until they are forced to do so by external pressure. At any rate they cannot be expected to proclaim its falsity, since by so doing they would destroy the main prop of their power. What the recognised teachers of religion will not do, however, should not be left undone, especially when it is so needful and important. Men of science, by teaching positive and indisputable truths, are gradually but surely revolutionising the world of thought, and dethroning the priesthoods of mystery and superstition. Yet their influence on the masses is indirect, and they do not often trouble themselves to show the contradiction between their discoveries and what is preached from the pulpit. Perhaps they are right. But it is also right that others should appeal to the people in the name not only of science, but also of scholarship and common sense, and show them the incredible absurdity of much that the clergy are handsomely paid to preach as the veritable and infallible Word of God.

The Creation Story, with which the Book of Genesis opens, is incoherent, discrepant, and intrinsically absurd, as we shall attempt to show. It is also discordant with the plainest truths of Science. Let us examine it, after casting aside all prejudice and predilection.

If the universe, including this earth and its principal inhabitant, man, was created in six days, it follows that less than six thousand years ago chaos reigned throughout nature. This, however, is clearly untrue. Our earth has revolved round its central sun for numberless millions of years. Geology proves also that million years have elapsed since organic existence first appeared on the earth's surface, and this world became the theatre of life and death. Darwin speaks of the known history of the world as "of a length quite incomprehensible by us," yet even that he affirms "will hereafter be recognised as a mere fragment of time" compared with the vast periods which Biology will demand. The instructed members of the Church have long recognised these statements as substantially true, and they have tried to reconcile them with Scripture by assuming that the word which in the History of Creation is rendered *day* really means a *period*, that is an elastic space of time which may be expanded or contracted to suit all requirements. But there are two fatal objections to this assumption. In the first place, the same word is rendered *day* in the fourth commandment, and if it means period in Genesis it means period in Exodus. In that case we are commanded to work six periods and rest on the seventh, and each period must cover a geological epoch. How pleasant for those who happen to be born in the

seventh period, how unpleasant for those born in one of the six! The lives of the one class all work, those of the other all play! In the second place, the account of each day's creation concludes with the refrain "and the evening and the morning were the first (or other) day." Now evening and morning are terms which mark the luminous gradations between night and day, and these phenomena, like night and day, depend on the earth's revolving on its axis and presenting different portions of its surface to the sun. Evening and morning clearly imply a space of twenty-four hours, and the writer of Genesis, whoever he was, would probably be surprised at any other interpretation of his words. It is sometimes argued, as for instance by Dr. M'Caul, that these primeval days were of vast and unknown duration, the evening and the morning not being dependent on their present causes. But this supposition could only apply to the first three days, for the sun, moon, and stars were created on the fourth day, expressly "to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness." The fifth and sixth days, at least, must be understood as of normal length, and thus the chronological difficulties remain. All animal life was brought into existence on the last two days, and therefore the Bible still allows an antiquity of less than six thousand years for the world's fauna. Geology and Biology allow millions of years. Here then Science and the Bible are in flagrant and irreconcilable contradiction.

The fact that the writer of Genesis represents light as existing three days before the creation of the sun, the source of light, has frequently been noticed. One learned commentator supposed that God had infused a certain "luminosity" through the air, which was not exactly the same as the light of the sun. But light is not a *thing*; it is a phenomenon caused by definite laws of astronomy and optics. Such explanations are but fanciful refuges of superstition. "God said let there be light and there was light," is not the language of science and history, but the language of poetry. As such it is sublime. We find a similar expression in the Vedas of the Hindoos: "He thought, I will create worlds, and they were there!" Both become ridiculous when presented to us as a scientific statement. The physical astronomer knows how worlds are formed, as well as how their movements are determined; he knows also the causes of light; and he knows that none of these processes resembles the accounts given in the Creation Stories of the Hebrews and the Hindoos.

Science knows nothing of six creative epochs, any more than of six creative days; and it is quite certain that the order of Creation given in Genesis differs widely from the revelations of Geology. For instance (and one instance in such a case is as good as a thousand), fish and fowl are said to have been created on the same day. Let us, for the sake of argument, assume that day means period. The conclusion still is that fish and fowl were created together. Starting from this conclusion, what should we expect to find in our geological researches? Why, the fossil remains of fish and of fowl in the same epochs. But we find nothing of the kind. Marine animals antedate the carboniferous period, during which all our coal deposits were laid, but no remains of fowl are found until a later period. Now the carboniferous period alone, according to Sir William Thompson, covers many millions of years; so that instead of fish and fowl being contemporaneous, we find them geologically separated by inconceivable spaces of time. Here again the Bible and Science fatally disagree.

Even if we admit that the fifth day of creation was a *period*, the chronology of the Bible is still fatally at variance with fact. With respect to the antiquity of the human race, it is precise and unmistakable. It gives us the age of Adam at his death, and the ages of the other antediluvian patriarchs. From the Flood the genealogies are carefully recorded, until we enter the historic period, after which there is not much room for dispute. From the creation of Adam to the birth of Christ, the Bible allows about four thousand years. The antiquity of the human race, therefore, according to Scripture, is less than six thousand years. Science, however, proves that this is but a fragment of the vast period during which man has inhabited the earth. There was a civilisation in Egypt thousands of years before the alleged creation of Adam. The Cushite civilisation was even more ancient. Archaeology shows us traces of man's presence, in a ruder state, long before that. The researches of Mr. Pengelly in Kent's Cavern prove that cave-men lived there more than two-hundred thousand years ago; while geological investigations in the Valley of the Somme have established the

fact that primitive men existed there in the tertiary period. Professor Draper writes: – "So far as investigations have gone, they indisputably-refer the existence of man to a date remote from us by many hundreds of thousands of years. It must be borne in mind that these investigations are quite recent, and confined to a very limited geographical space. No researches have yet been made in those regions which might reasonably be regarded as the primitive habitat of man. We are thus carried back immeasurably beyond the six thousand years of Patristic chronology. It is difficult to assign a shorter date for the last glaciation of Europe than a quarter of a million of years, and *human existence antedates that*. The chronology of the Bible is thus altogether obsolete."

The idea of a seven-days' creation was not confined to the Jews: it was shared by the Persians and Etruscans. The division of the year into months and weeks is a general, although not a universal practice. The ancient Egyptians observed a ten-days' week, but the seven-days' week was well known to them. The naming of the days of the week after the seven Planets was noted by Dion Cassius as originally an Egyptian custom, which spread from Egypt into the Roman Empire. The Brahmins of India also distinguish the days of the week by the planetary names. This division of time was purely astronomical. The Jews kept the Feast of the New Moon, and other of their ceremonies were determined by lunar and solar phenomena. We may be sure that the myth of a seven-days' creation followed and did not precede the regular observance of that period.

There is one feature of the Hebrew story of creation which shows how anthropomorphic they were. The Persians represent Ormuzd as keeping high festival with his angels on the seventh day, after creating all things in six. But the Hebrews represent Jehovah as *resting* on the seventh day, as though the arduous labors of creation had completely exhausted his energies. Fancy *Omnipotence* requiring rest to recruit its strength! The Bible, and especially in its earlier parts, is grossly anthropomorphic. It exhibits God as conversing with men, sharing their repasts, and helping them to slaughter their foes. It represents him as visible to human eyes, and in one instance as giving Moses a back view of his person. Yet these childish fancies are still thrust upon as divine truths, which if we disbelieve we shall be eternally damned!

Let us now examine the Creation Story internally. In the first place we find two distinct records, the one occupying the whole of the first chapter of Genesis and the first three verses of the second, at which point the other commences. These two records belong to different periods of Jewish history. The older one is the Elohistic, so called because the creator is designated by the plural term *Elohim*, which in our version is translated *God*. The more modern one is the Jehovistic, in which *Elohim* is combined with the singular term *Jehovah*, translated in our-version *the Lord God*. The Elohistic and Jehovistic accounts both relate the creation of man, but instead of agreeing they widely differ. The former makes God create man in his own image; the latter does not even allude to this important circumstance. The former represents man as created male and female at the outset; the latter represents the male as created first, and the female for a special reason afterwards. In the former God enjoins the primal pair to "be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth;" in the latter there is no such injunction, but on the contrary, the bringing forth of children in sorrow is imposed upon the woman as a punishment for her sin, and she does not appear to have borne any offspring until after the expulsion from the Garden of Eden. Lastly, the Elohistic record makes no mention of this Paradise, in which, according to the Jehovistic record, the drama of the Fall was enacted, but represents man as immediately commissioned to subdue and populate the world. Such discrepancies are enough to stagger the blindest credulity.

We now proceed to examine the Jehovistic account of Creation in detail. We read that the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, the Hebrew word for which is *adamah*. The word Adam means "be red," and *adamah* may be referred to the red soil of Palestine. Kalisch also observes that man may have been originally called Adam on account of the red color of his skin. The Chinese represent man as kneaded of *yellow* earth, and the *red* Indians of *red* clay. The belief that man was formed of earth was not confined to the Jews, but has been almost universal, and undoubtedly arose

from the fact that our bodies after death return to the earth and resolve into the elements. The Lord God placed this forlorn first man in the Garden of Eden with the command to till it, and permission to eat of the fruit of all its trees except "the tree of knowledge of good and evil." How Adam trespassed and fell, and brought a curse upon himself and all his innocent posterity, we shall consider in another pamphlet. The story of the Fall is infinitely curious and diverting, and must be treated separately.

Adam's first exploit, after he had taken a good look round him, was very marvellous. All the cattle and beasts of the field and fowl of the air were brought before him to be named, and "whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof." This first Zoological Dictionary is unfortunately lost, or we should be able to call every animal by its right name, which would doubtless gratify them as well as ourselves. The fishes and insects were not included in this primitive nomenclature, so the loss of the Dictionary does not concern them.

The Lord made the animals pass before Adam seemingly with the expectation that he would choose a partner from amongst them. Nothing, however, struck his fancy. If he had fallen in love with a female gorilla or ourang-outang, what a difference it would have made in the world's history!

After this wonderful exploit "the Lord caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam," who surely must have been tired enough to fall into a good sound natural sleep, without a heavenly narcotic. While in this state one of his ribs was extracted for a purpose we shall presently refer to, and which he discovered when he awoke. This curious surgical operation involves a dilemma. If Adam was upright after it, he must have been lopsided before; if he was upright before it, he must have been lopsided after. In either case the poor man was very scurvily treated.

It has been maintained that God provided Adam with another rib in place of the one extracted. But this is a mere conjecture. Besides, if the Lord had a spare rib in stock he might have made a woman of it, without cutting poor Adam open and making a *pre mortem* examination of his inside.

The divine operator's purpose was a good one, whatever we may think of his means. He had discovered, what Omniscience would have foreknown, that it was not good for man to be alone, and had resolved to make him a help-meet. Adam's "spare rib" was the raw material of which his wife was manufactured. The Greenlanders believed that the first woman was fashioned out of the man's *thumb*. The woman was brought to Adam, who said – "This is now bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh." Not a word did he say about "soul of my soul." Perhaps he suspected she had none, and with some truth, if we go no further than our English version. When the Lord God made man, he "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul," but apparently no such operation was performed on Eve. Indeed, it is very difficult to prove from the Bible that woman has a soul at all. Women should reflect on this. They should also reflect on the invidious fact that they were not included in the original scheme of things, but thrown in as a make-weight afterwards. Let them ponder this a while, and the churches and chapels in which this story is taught would soon be emptied. The majority of those who occupy seats in such places wear bonnets, and most of those who don't, go there for the sake of those who do.

When Adam had thus accosted his bride he grew prophetic. "Therefore," said he, "shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." In his desire to give the institution of marriage the highest sanction, the writer of this story perpetrated a gross anachronism. Adam had no parents, nor any experience of marriage. Unless, therefore, we credit him with superhuman prescience, it is absurd to make him talk in this way.

Eve's name, no less than Adam's, betrays the mythological character of the story. It means the "mother of all," and was evidently applied to her by the Jewish writers in order to signify her supposed relationship to the human race.

While God was engaged in the work of creation, why did he not make two human couples, instead of one? The arrangement he adopted involved the propagation of the human species through incest. Adam and Eve's sons must have had children by their sisters. If two couples had been created, their families might have intermarried, and mankind would not then have sprang from the incestuous

intercourse of the very first generation. Surely omnipotence might have obviated the necessity of a crime against which civilised consciences revolt with unspeakable disgust.

Adam and Eve were placed by God in the Garden of Eden. "Eden," says Kalisch, "comprised that tract of land where the Euphrates and Tigris separate; from that spot the 'garden in Eden' cannot be distant. Let it suffice that we know its general position." Its exact position can never be ascertained. What a pity it is that Noah did not occupy some of his leisure time, during the centuries he lived after his exit from the ark, in writing a typography of the antediluvian world! The Greeks placed Paradise in the Islands of the Blessed, beyond the Pillars of Hercules in the western main. The Swede, Rudbeck, asserts that Paradise was in Scandinavia; some Russian writers supposed it to have been in Siberia; and the German writers, Hasse and Schulz, on the coast of Prussia. Eastern traditions place it in Ceylon, and regard the mountain of Rahoun as the spot where Adam was buried. Some old Christian writers hazarded the theory that Paradise was beyond the earth altogether, on the other side of the ocean which they conceived to encircle it, and that Noah was conveyed to our planet by the deluge. Kalisch gives a long list of ancient and modern authorities on the subject, who differ widely from each other as to the actual position of Eden, their only point of agreement being that it was *somewhere*.

The Creation Story of the Bible cannot be considered as anything but a Hebrew myth. Scholars have abundantly shown the absurdity of supposing that Moses wrote it. Doubtless, as a piece of traditional mythology, it is very ancient, but it cannot be traced back in its present literary form beyond the Babylonish captivity. Men of science without exception disbelieve it, not only with regard to the world in general, but also with regard to the human race. In his famous article on "The Method and Results of Ethnology," Professor Huxley made this declaration: – "There are those who represent the most numerous, respectable, and would-be orthodox of the public, and who may be called 'Adamites,' pure and simple. They believe that Adam was made out of earth somewhere in Asia, about six thousand years ago; that Eve was modelled from one of his ribs; and that the progeny of these two having been reduced to the eight persons who landed on the summit of Mount Ararat after an universal deluge, all the nations of the earth have proceeded from these last, have migrated to their present localities, and have become converted into negroes, Australians, Mongolians, etc., within that time. Five-sixths of the public are taught this Adamitic Monogenism as if it were an established truth, and believe it. I do not; and I am not acquainted with any man of science, or duly instructed person, who does." The clergy, then, who go on teaching this old Creation Story as true, are either unduly instructed or dishonest, ignorant or fraudulent, blind guides or base deceivers. It is not for us to determine to which class any priest or preacher belongs: let the conscience of each, as assuredly it will, decide that for himself. But ignorant or dishonest, we affirm, is every one of them who still teaches the Creation Story as a record of actual facts, or as anything but a Hebrew myth.

The origin of the human race is far different from that recorded in Genesis. Man has undoubtedly been developed from a lower form of life. The rude remains of primitive men show that they were vastly inferior to the present civilised inhabitants of the world, and even inferior to the lowest savages with whom we are now acquainted. Their physical and mental condition was not far removed from that of the higher apes; and the general opinion of biologists is that they were descended from the Old World branch of the great Simian family. There is, indeed, no *absolute* proof of this, nor is it probable that there ever will be, as the fossil links between primitive man and his Simian progenitor, if they exist at all, are most likely buried in that sunken continent over which roll the waters of the South Pacific Ocean. But as the line of natural development can be carried back so far without break, there is no reason why it should not be carried farther. The evolution theory is now almost universally accepted by men of science, and few of them suppose that man can be exempted from the general laws of biology. At any rate, the Bible account of Creation is thoroughly exploded, and when that is gone there is nothing to hinder our complete acceptance of the only theory of man's origin which is consistent with the facts of his history, and explains the peculiarities of his physical structure.

NOAH'S FLOOD BIBLE ROMANCES – 2

By G. W. FOOTE.

The Bible story of the Deluge is at once the biggest and the most ridiculous in the whole volume. Any person who reads it with the eyes of common sense, and some slight knowledge of science, must admit that it is altogether incredible and absurd, and that the book which contains it cannot be the Word of God.

About 1,656 years after God created Adam, and placed him in the garden of Eden, the world had become populous and extremely wicked; indeed, every thought and imagination of man's heart was evil continually. What was the cause of all this wickedness we are not informed; but we are told that the sons of God took unto them wives of the daughters of men because they were fair, and we are led to suppose that these matches produced giants and other incurably wicked offspring. No physiological reason is assigned for this Strange result, nor perhaps was there any present to the mind of the writer, who probably had witnessed unhappy marriages in his own family, and was anxious to warn his readers, however vaguely, against allowing their daughters to be inveigled into matrimonial bonds with pious sniffing fellows, who professed themselves peculiarly the children of their Father in heaven. However, the narrative is clear as to the fact itself: men had all gone irrecoverably astray, and God had repented that he ever made them. In such a case an earthly human father would naturally have attempted to improve his family; but the Almighty Father either was too indifferent to do so, or was too well aware of the impossibility of reforming his own wretched offspring; and therefore he determined to drown them all at one fell swoop, just as cat-loving old ladies dispose of a too numerous and embarrassing feline progeny. Bethinking him, however, God resolved to save alive one family to perpetuate the race: he was willing to give his creatures another chance, and then, if they persisted in going the wrong way, it would still be easy to drown the lot of them again, and that without any reservation. He had also resolved at first to destroy every living thing from off the face of the earth; but he afterwards decided to spare from destruction two of every species of unclean beasts, male and female, and fourteen, male and female, of all clean beasts and of all fowls of the air and of every creeping thing. Noah, his wife, his three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japhet, and their wives (eight persons in all), were the only human beings to be preserved from the terrible fate of drowning.

Noah was commanded by God to build an ark for the reception-of the precious living freight, the dimensions of which were to be, in English measure, *550 feet long, 93 feet wide, and 55 feet deep*. Into this floating box they all got; the flood then came and covered the earth, and all besides were drowned.

Now this is a very strange, a very startling story; it seems more like a chapter from the "Arabian Nights" or the "Adventures of Baron Munchausen" than from the sacred Scriptures of any Religion. Carnal reason prompts us to ask many questions about it.

1. How did Noah contrive to bring these beasts, birds, and insects all together in one spot? The task seems superhuman. Some species could be found only in very remote places – the kangaroo only in Australia, the sloth only in South America, the polar bear only in the Arctic regions. How could Noah, in those days of difficult locomotion, have journeyed in search of these across broad rivers, and over continents and oceans? Did he bring them singly to his dwelling-place in Asia, or did he travel hither and thither with his menagerie, and finish the collection before returning home? There are, according to Hugh Miller, 1,658 known species of mammalia, 6,266 of birds, 642 of reptiles, and 550,000 of insects; how *could* one man, or a hundred men, have collected specimens of these in those days, and in such & brief space of time? The beasts, clean and unclean, male and female, might be got together by means of terrible exertion; but surely to assemble the birds and reptiles and insects

must transcend human capacity. Some of the last class would of course not require much seeking; they visit us whether we desire their company or not; and the difficulty would not be how to get them into the ark, but how on earth to keep them out. Others, however, would give infinite trouble. Fancy Noah occupied in a *wild-goose* chase, or selecting specimens from a wasps' or hornets' nest, or giving assiduous chase to a vigilant and elusive bluebottle fly!

But suppose Noah to have succeeded in his arduous enterprise, the question still remains, how did he keep his wonderful zoological collection alive? Some of them could live only in certain latitudes; the inhabitants of cold climates would melt away amidst the torrid heat of Central Asia. Then, again, there are some insects that live only a few hours, and some that live a few days at the utmost: what means were adopted for preserving these? Some animals, too, do not pair, but run in herds; many species of fish swim in shoals; sometimes males and sometimes females predominate, as in the case of deer, where one male heads and appropriates a whole herd of females, or in the case of bees, where many males are devoted to the queen of the hive. These could not have gone in pairs, or lived in pairs; their instincts pointed to another method of grouping. How did Noah provide for *their* due preservation? When these questions are answered others speedily arise; in fact, there is no end to the difficulties of this marvellous story.

2. Whence and how did Noah procure the food for his huge menagerie? That he was obliged to do so, that the animals were not miraculously preserved without food, we are certain; for he was expressly commanded by God to gather food for himself and for them. "Take thou unto thee," it was said to him, "of all food that is eaten, and thou shalt gather it to thee; and it shall be for food for thee, and for them." What provision was made for the *carnivorous* animals, for lions, tigers, vultures, kites, and hawks? Some of these would require not simply meat, but *fresh* meat, which could not be provided for them unless superfluous animals were taken into the ark to be killed, or Noah had learned the art of potting flesh. Otters would require fish, chameleons flies, woodpeckers grubs, night-hawks moths, and humming-birds the honey of flowers. What vast quantities of water also would be consumed! In fact, the task of collecting food to last all the inmates of the ark, including the eight human beings, for more than a year, must have been greater even than that of bringing them together in the first place from every zone. The labors of Hercules were mere trifles compared with those of Noah. Poor old patriarch! He amply earned *his* salvation. Had he been possessed of one tithe of Jacob's cunning and business sagacity, he would have struck a better bargain with God, and have got into the ark on somewhat easier terms. Few men would have undertaken so much to gain so little.

3. How were all the animals, with their food, got into the ark? The dimensions as given in the Bible would be insufficient to accommodate a tithe of them; the ark could not have contained them all, if they were packed together like herrings or sardines. Even if they were so packed, space would still be required for their food; and for what a vast quantity! An animal even with man's moderate appetite would consume in the course of twelve months solid matter to the extent of four or five times its own weight, and some animals are of course far more voracious. This difficulty as to stowing the animals and their food into the ark is quite insuperable; it is not to be obviated by any employment of miraculous intervention. Not even omnipotence can make a clock strike less than one, and God himself must fail to make two things occupy the same space at the same time.

4. How were the inmates of this floating menagerie, supposing them got in, supplied with fresh air? According to the Bible narrative the ark was furnished with but one window of a cubit square, and one door which was shut by God himself, and it may be presumed, quite securely fastened. Talk about the Black-hole of Calcutta, why it was nothing to this! What a scramble there must have been for that solitary window and a mouthful of fresh air! Lions, tigers, jackals, hyaenas, boa-constrictors, kangaroos, eagles, owls, bees, wasps, bluebottles, with Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japhet, and their wives, all in one fierce melee. But the contention for the precious vital air must, however violent, have soon subsided: fifteen minutes would have settled them all. Yet curiously enough the choking animals-suffered no appreciable injury; by some occult means they were all preserved from harm; which

furnishes another illustration of the mysterious ways of God. What powerful perfumes, too, must have arisen from all those animals! So powerful indeed that even the rancid flavor of foxes and skunks must have been undistinguishable from the blended scents of all their fellow passengers. Those who have visited Wombwell's menagerie, or stood in the monkey-house of the Zoological Gardens, doubtless retain a lively recollection of olfactory disgust, even although in those places the most scrupulous cleanliness is observed; but their experience of such smells would have been totally eclipsed if they could but for a moment have stood within Noah's ark amidst all its heterogeneous denizens. However the patriarch and his sons managed to cleanse this worse than Augean stable passes all understanding. And then what trappings they must have had up and down those flights of stairs communicating with the three storeys of the ark, in order to cast all the filth out of that one window. No wonder their children afterwards began to build a tower of Babel to reach unto heaven; it was quite natural that they should desire plenty of steps, to mount, so as to gratify fully the itch of climbing they had inherited from their parents.

5. Where did all the water come from? According to the Bible story the waters prevailed upon the earth a hundred and fifty days, and covered all the high hills and mountains under the whole heaven. Now Mount Ararat itself, on which the Ark eventually rested, is seventeen thousand feet high, and the utmost peaks of Himalaya are nearly twice as high as that; and to cover the whole earth with water to such a tremendous height would require an immense quantity of water; in fact, about eight times as much as is contained in all the rivers, lakes, seas, and oceans of our globe. Whence did all this water come? The Scripture explanation is sadly insufficient; the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened, and the rain was upon the earth for forty days and forty nights. The writer evidently thought that there were great fountains at the bottom of the sea, capable of supplying water in unlimited quantities from some central reservoir; but science knows nothing whatever about them; nay, science tells us that the internal reservoir, if there be one, must contain not water, but liquid fire. If *this* great reservoir poured its contents into the sea, the result would be similar to that frightful catastrophe imagined by the Yankee who wished to see Niagara Falls pour into Mount Vesuvius.

The supply from that quarter thus failing, we are forced back upon the rain which descended from the windows of heaven, wherever they may be. It rained forty days and forty nights. Forty days and forty nights! Why forty million days and nights of rain would not have sufficed. The writer was evidently in total ignorance of the laws of hydrology. The rain which falls from the clouds originally comes from the waters of the earth, being absorbed into the atmosphere by the process of evaporation. The utmost quantity of water that can thus be held in suspense throughout the entire atmosphere is very small; in fact, if precipitated, it would only cover the ground to the depth of about five inches. After the first precipitation of rain, the process of evaporation would have to be repeated; that is, for every additional descent of rain a proportionate quantity of water would have to be extracted from the rivers, lakes, and seas below. Now, surely every sane man must perceive that this pretty juggle could not add one single drop to the previously existing amount of water, any more than a man could make himself rich by taking money out of one pocket and putting it into another. The fabled man who is reported to have occupied himself with dipping up water from one side of a boat and emptying it over on the other, hoping thereby to bale the ocean dry, must have been the real author of this story of Noah and his wonderful ark.

Some Christian writers, such as Dr. Pye Smith, Dr. Barry, and Hugh Miller, have contended that the author of the book of Genesis is describing not a universal but a partial deluge; not a flood which submerged the whole earth, but one that merely covered some particular part of the great Central Asian plains. But surely, apart from any consideration pertaining to the very emphatic language of the text, rational men must perceive that the difficulty is not obviated by this explanation, but rather increased. How could the waters ascend in one place to the height of seventeen thousand feet (the height of Mount Ararat) without overflowing the adjacent districts, and, indeed, the whole earth, in

conformity to the law of gravitation? Delitzch is bold enough to assert that the flood of water was ejected with such force from the fountains beneath that it assumed quite naturally a conical shape. But then, even supposing that this explication were anything but sheer silliness, which it is not, how would the learned commentator account for the water retaining its conical shape for months after the force of upheaval had expended itself? These explanations are entirely fanciful and groundless. The language of the narrative is sufficiently explicit "And *all* flesh died that moved upon the earth;" "all in whose nostrils was the breath of life;" "and every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground;" and "Noah *only* remained alive and they that were with him in the ark." Such are the precise unmistakable words of Scripture, which no sophistry can explain away. But even if the contention for a partial deluge could be made good, the fundamental difficulties would still remain. As Colenso observes, the flood, "whether it be regarded as a *universal* or a *partial* deluge, is equally incredible and impossible."

Geology absolutely contradicts the possibility of any such catastrophe as the deluge within the historic period. According to Sir Charles Lyell, no devastating flood could have passed over the forest zone of Ætna during the last twelve thousand years; and the volcanic cones of Auvergne, which enclose in their ashes the remains of extinct animals, and present an outline as perfect as that of Ætna, are deemed older still. Kalisch forcibly presents this aspect of the question: "Geology teaches the impossibility of a universal deluge since the last six thousand years, but does not exclude a partial destruction of the earth's surface within that period. The Biblical text, on the other hand, demands the supposition of a universal deluge, and absolutely excludes a partial flood."

6. What became of all the fish? In such a deluge the rivers and seas must have mingled their waters, and this, in conjunction with the terrific outpour from the windows of heaven, must have made the water brackish, too salt for fresh-water fish, and too fresh for salt-water fish; and consequently the aquatic animals must all have perished, unless, indeed, they were miraculously preserved – a contingency which anyone is free to conjecture, out no one is at liberty to assert, seeing that the inspired writer never even hints such a possibility. Now there is no evidence whatever that Noah took and *fish* with him into the ark; under natural circumstances they must have perished outside; yet the seas and rivers still teem with life. When did the new creation of fish take place?

7. What became of all the vegetation? Every particle of it must have rotted during such a long submergence. But even if mysteriously preserved from natural decay, it must still have been compressed into a mere pulp by the terrific weight of the super-incumbent water. Colenso estimates that the pressure of a column of water 17,000 feet high would be 474 tons upon each square foot of surface – a pressure which nothing could have resisted. Yet, wonderful to relate, just prior to the resting of the ark on Mount Ararat, the dove sent out therefrom returned with an olive leaf in her mouth *just pluckt off*. A fitting climax to this wonderful story.

Finally the story relates how the ark rested on the top of Mount Ararat, whence its inmates descended to the plains below, which were then quite dry. Mount Ararat towers aloft three thousand feet above the region of eternal snow. How the poor animals, aye, even the polar bear, must have shivered! And what a curious sight it must have been to witness their descent from such a height. Often have I speculated on the probable way in which the elephant got down, and after much careful thought I have concluded thus: either he had waxed so fat with being fed so long on miraculous food that he rolled pleasantly down like a ball, with no other injury than a few scratches; or he had become so very, very thin with living simply on expectations, in default of more substantial fare, that he gently floated down by virtue of levity, like a descending feather.

And then what journeys some of the poor animals would have to make; the kangaroo back to Australia, the sloth to South America, the polar bear to the extreme north. How they lived on the road to their ultimate destinations the Lord only knows. There was no food for them; the deluge had destroyed all vegetation for the herbivorous animals, all flesh for the carnivorous. Not even a nibble was left for the sheep.

As for poor Noah, the first thing recorded of him after his watery expedition is that he drank heavily of wine and got into a state of beastly inebriation. And who can wonder that he did so? The poor old man had floated about on oceans of water for more than a year, and probably he was heartily sick of his watery prospect. The astonishing thing is that he did not get water on the brain. It was quite natural that he should swill deep potations of some stronger fluid on the first available opportunity. Surely he had water enough during that twelve months to last a lifetime; enough to justify his never touching the wretched fluid again.

While Noah was dead drunk, his second son, Ham, saw "the nakedness of his father," and reported the fact to his two brethren, who took a garment and, walking backwards so that they might not see, covered the patriarch's nudity. On recovering from his drunken stupor, Noah discovered "what his younger son had done unto him," and proceeded at once to vigorous cursing. Ham was the offender, if there was any offence at all, which is not very clear; but punishment in the Bible is generally vicarious, and we read that the irate patriarch cursed Canaan, the son of Ham, for his father's misdemeanor. Flagitiously unjust as it is, this proceeding thoroughly accords with Jehovah's treatment of Adam's posterity after he and Eve had committed their first sin by eating of the forbidden fruit.

Before Noah got drunk he had received from God the assurance that the world should never more be destroyed by a flood. As a perpetual sign of this covenant the rainbow was set in the heavens. But the rainbow must have been a common sight for centuries before. This phenomenon of refraction is the result of natural causes which operated before the Flood, as well as after. The earth yielded its fruits for human sustenance, and therefore rain must have fallen. If rain fell before the Deluge, as we are bound to conclude, the rainbow must have been then as now. The usual practice of commentators is to explain this portion of the narrative by assuming that the rainbow was visible before the covenant with Noah, but only after the covenant had a special significance. But, as Colenso observes, the writer of the story supposes the rainbow was then first set in the clouds, and is evidently accounting for the *origin* of this beautiful phenomenon, which might well appear *supernatural* to his uninstructed imagination.

Besides the manifold absurdities of this story there are other aspects of it even more startling. What a picture it presents of fiendish cruelty and atrocious vindictiveness! What an appalling exhibition of divine malignity! God, the omnipotent and omniscient ruler of the universe, is represented as harboring and executing the most diabolical intentions. He ruthlessly exterminates all his children except a favored few, and includes in his vengeance the lower animals also, although they were innocent of offence against his laws. Every creature in whose nostrils was the breath of life, with the exception of those persevered in the ark, was drowned, and the earth was turned into a vast slaughter-house. How imagination pictures the terrible scene as the waters rise higher and higher, and the ravening waves speed after their prey! Here some wretched being, baffled and hopeless, drops supinely into the raging flood; there a stronger and stouter heart struggles to the last. Here selfish ones battling for their own preservation; there husbands and wives, parents and children, lovers and maidens, affording mutual aid, or at last, in utter despair, locked in a final embrace and meeting death together. And when the waters subside, what a sickening scene presents itself! Those plains, once decked with verdure, and lovely in the sun and breeze, are covered with the bones of a slaughtered world. How can the Christian dare to justify such awful cruelty? The God of the Pentateuch is not a beneficent universal father, but an almighty fiend.

This story of Noah's Flood is believed still because people never examine what is taught them as the word of God. Every one who analyses the story must pronounce it the most extraordinary amalgam of immorality and absurdity ever palmed off on a credulous world.

EVE AND THE APPLE BIBLE ROMANCES. -3

By G. W. FOOTE.

Christianity is based upon the story of the Fall. In Adam all sinned, as in Christ all must be sayed. Saint Paul gives to this doctrine the high sanction of his name, and we may disregard the puny whipsters of theology, who, without any claim to inspiration, endeavor to explain the Genesaic narrative as an allegory rather than a history. If Adam did not really fall he could not have been cursed for falling, and his posterity could not have become partakers either in a sin which was never committed or in a malediction which was never pronounced. Nor can Original Sin be a true dogma if our first parents did not transmit the germs of iniquity to their children. If Adam did not fall there was no need for Christ to save us; if he did not set God and man at variance there was no need for an atonement; and so the Christian scheme of salvation would be a *fiasco* from beginning to end. This will never do. No Garden of Eden, no Gethsemane! No Fall, no Redemption! No Adam, no Christ!

Mother Eve's curiosity was the motive of the first transgression of God's commandments in the history of the world, and the whole human race was brought under the risk of eternal perdition because of her partiality to fruit. Millions of souls now writhe in hell because, six thousand years ago, she took a bite of an apple. What a tender and beautiful story! God made her to be Adam's helpmeet. She helped him to a slice of apple, and that soon helped them both outside Eden. The sour stuff disagreed with him as it did with her. It has disagreed, with all their posterity. In fact it was endowed with the marvellous power of transmitting spiritual stomach-ache through any number of generations.

How do we know that it was an *apple* and not some other fruit? Why, on the best authority extant after the Holy Scriptures themselves, namely, our auxiliary Bible, "Paradise Lost;" in the tenth book whereof Satan makes the following boast to his infernal peers after his exploit in Eden: —

"Him by fraud I have seduced
From his Creator, and, the more to increase
Your wonder, with an *apple*."

Yet another authority is the profane author of "Don Juan," who, in the first stanza of the tenth canto, says of Newton:

"And this is the sole mortal who could grapple,
Since Adam, with a fall, or with an *apple*."

Milton, being very pious, was probably in the counsel of God. How else could he have given us an authentic version of the long colloquies that were carried on in heaven? Byron, being very profane, was probably in the counsel of Satan. And thus we have the most unimpeachable testimony of two opposite sources to the fact that it was an *apple*, and not a rarer fruit, which overcame the virtue of our first parents, and played the devil with their big family of children.

This apple grew on the Tree of Knowledge, which God planted in the midst of the Garden of Eden, sternly enjoining Adam and Eve not to eat of its fruit under pain of death. Now the poor woman knew nothing of death and could not understand what a dreadful punishment it was; and there was the fruit dangling before her eyes every hour of the day. Is it any wonder that she brooded incessantly on the one thing forbidden, that her woman's curiosity was irresistably piqued by it, and that at last her longing grew so intense that she exclaimed, "Dear me! I can't refrain any longer. Let the consequences be what they will, I must have a bite." God made the woman; he knew her weakness; and he must

have known that the plan he devised to test her obedience was the most certain trap that could be invented. Jehovah played with poor Eve just as a cat plays with a mouse. She had free-will, say the theologians. Yes, and so has the mouse a free run. But the cat knows she can catch it again, and finish it off when she is tired of playing.

Not only did God allow Eve's curiosity to urge her on to sin, he also permitted the serpent, "more subtil than any beast of the field," to supplement its action. This wily creature is popularly supposed to have been animated on the occasion by the Devil himself; although, as we shall explain in another *Romance* entitled "The Bible Devil," the book of Genesis makes not even the remotest allusion to such a personage. If, however, the tempter *was* the Devil, what chance had the poor woman against his seductive wiles? And even if he was only a serpent, he was very "subtil" as we are told, and able to talk like a book, and we know that these creatures have fatal powers of fascination. Surely Mother Eve was heavily handicapped. God might have given her fair play, and left her to fight the battle without furnishing auxiliaries to the strong side.

The serpent, we have said, could converse in human speech. His conversation and his conduct will be dealt with in the *Romance* just referred to. Suffice it here to say that he plainly told the woman that God was a liar. "He," said the tempter, "has said ye shall surely die if ye touch the fruit of this tree. Don't believe it. I tell you, ye shall not surely die." What could poor Eve think? In addition to her native curiosity here was another incentive to disobedience. Which of these two spoke the truth? There was only one way of deciding. She stretched forth her hand, plucked an apple, and began to eat. And immediately, says Milton,

"Earth felt the wound, and nature from her seat,
Sighing through all her works, gave signs of woe
That all was lost."

What a rumpus about a trifle! It reminds us of the story of a Jew who had a sneaking inclination for a certain meat prohibited by his creed. One day the temptation to partake was too strong; he slipped into a place of refreshment and ordered some sausages. The weather happened to be tempestuous, and just as he raised his knife and fork to attack the savory morsel, a violent clap of thunder nearly frightened him out of his senses. Gathering courage, he essayed a second time, but another thunderclap warned him to desist. A third attempt was foiled in the same way. Whereupon he threw down his knife and fork and made for the door, exclaiming "What a dreadful fuss about a little bit of pork."

Eve's transgression, according to the learned Lightfoot, occurred "about *high noone*, the time of eating." The same authority informs us that she and Adam "did lie comfourtlesse, till towards the cool of the day, or *three o'clock afternoon*." However that may be, it is most certain that the first woman speedily got the better of the first man. She told him the apple was nice and he took a bite also. Perhaps he had resolved to share her fortunes good or bad, and objected to be left alone with his menagerie. Lightfoot describes the wife as "the weaker vessell," but a lady friend of ours says that the Devil stormed the citadel first, knowing well that such a poor outpost as Adam could easily be carried afterwards.

Having eaten of the fruit, and thus learned to distinguish between good and evil, Adam and Eve quickly discovered that they were naked. So they "sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons." We are not told who gave them lessons in sewing. Perhaps they acquired the art through intuition. But the necessary implements could not have been gained in that way. Dr. Thomas Burnet, whose mind was greatly exercised by the astounding wonders of the Bible, very pertinently asked "Whence had they a needle, whence a thread, on the first day of their creation?" He, however, could give no answer to the question, nor can we, except we suppose that some of the female angels had attended a "garden party" in Eden and carelessly left their needles and thread behind them. Any reader who is dissatisfied with this explanation must inquire of the nearest parson, who, as he belongs to a

class supposed to know almost everything, and believed to have access to the oracles of God, will doubtless be able to reveal the whole gospel truth on the subject.

A little later, God himself, who is everywhere at once, came down from everywhere to the Garden of Eden, for the purpose of taking a "walk in the cool of the day." He had perhaps just visited the infernal regions to see that everything was ready for the reception of the miserable creatures he meant to damn, or to assure himself that the Devil was really not at home; and was anxious to cool himself before returning to his celestial abode, as well as to purify himself from the sulphurous taint which might else have sent a shudder through all the seraphic hosts. Apparently he was holding a soliloquy, for Adam and Eve "heard his voice." Colenso, however, renders this portion of the Romance differently from our authorised version – "And they heard the sound of Jehovah-Elohim walking in the garden in the breeze of the day." Delitzsch thinks they heard the sound of his footsteps, for God used to visit them in the form of a man! Could the force of folly farther go? Any devout Theist, who candidly thought over this petty fiction, would find its gross anthropomorphism inexpressibly shocking.

Knowing that God was everywhere, Adam and Eve nevertheless "hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden." But they were soon dragged forth to the light. Adam, who seems to have been a silly fellow, explained that he had hidden himself because he was *naked*, as though the Lord had not seen him in that state before. "Naked!" said the Lord, "Who told thee that thou wast naked. Hast thou eaten of that tree, eh?" "O, Lord, yes," replied Adam; "just a little bit; but it wasn't my fault, *she* made me do it, O Lord! O Lord!" Whereupon God, who although he knows everything, even before it happens, was singularly ill-informed on this occasion, turned fiercely upon the woman, asking her what she had done. "Oh, if you please," whimpered poor Eve, "it *was* I who took the first bite; but the serpent beguiled me, and the fault you see is not mine but his. Oh dear! oh dear!" Then the Lord utterly lost his temper. He cursed the serpent, cursed the woman, cursed the man, and even cursed the ground beneath their feet. Everything about at the time came in for a share of the malison. In fact, it was what the Yankees would call a good, all-round, level swear.

The curse of the serpent is a subject we must reserve for our pamphlet on "The Bible Devil," The curse of the woman was that she should bring forth children in pain and sorrow, and that the man should rule over her. With her present physiological condition, woman must always have suffered during conception as she now does; and therefore Delitzsch infers that her structure must have undergone a change, although he cannot say in what respect He dwells also on the "subjection" of woman, which "the religion of Revelation" has made by degrees more endurable; probably forgetting that the Teutonic women of ancient times were regarded with veneration, long before Christianity originated. Besides, the subordination of the female is not peculiar to the human race, but is the general law throughout the animal world.

Adam's curse was less severe. He was doomed to till the ground, and to earn his bread by the sweat of his face. Most of us would rather take part in the great strenuous battle of life, than loll about under the trees in the Garden of Eden, chewing the cud like contemplative cows. What men have had to complain of in all ages is, not that they have to earn their living by labour, but that when the sweat of their faces has been plenteously poured forth the "bread" has too often not accrued to them as the reward of their industry.

Orthodox Christianity avers that all the posterity of Adam and Eve necessarily participate in their curse, and the doctrine of Original Sin is taught from all its pulpits. Only by baptism can the stains of our native guilt be effaced; and thus the unbaptized, even infants, perish everlastingly, and hell, to use the words of a Protestant divine, holds many a babe not a span long. A great Catholic divine says – "Hold thou most firmly, nor do thou in any respect doubt, that infants, whether in their mothers' wombs they begin to live and then die, or when, after their mothers have given birth to them, they pass from this life without the sacrament of holy baptism, will be punished with the everlasting punishment of eternal fire." Horror of horrors! These men call sceptics blasphemers, but they are the

real blasphemers when they attribute to their God such supreme injustice and cruelty. What should we think of a legislator who proposed that the descendants of all thieves should be imprisoned, and the descendants of all murderers hung? We should think that he was bad or mad. Yet this is precisely analogous to the conduct ascribed to God, who should be infinitely wiser than the wisest man and infinitely better than the best.

The crime of our first parents was indeed pregnant with the direst consequences. It not only induced the seeds of original sin, but it also brought death into the world. Milton sings —

"Of man's first disobedience,
And the fruit Of that forbidden tree,
Whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world."

And Saint Paul (Romans v., 12) writes "As by one man sin came into the world, and death by sin."

Now this theory implies that before the Fall the inhabited portion of the world was the scene of perfect peace. Birds lived on seeds and eschewed worms, and the fierce carnivorous animals grazed like oxen. The lion laid down with the lamb. "Waal," said the Yankee, "I don't doubt that, but I rayther guess the lamb was *inside*." The fact is that most of the carnivorous animals could not live on a vegetable drat; and therefore they must either have subsisted on flesh before the Fall, which of course involves *death*, or their natures must have undergone a radical change. The first supposition contradicts scripture, and the second contradicts science.

Geology shows us that in the very earliest times living creatures died from the same causes which kill them now. Many were overwhelmed by floods and volcanoes, or engulfed by earthquakes; many died of old age or disease, for their bones are found distorted or carious, and their limbs twisted with pain; while the greater number were devoured, according to the general law of the struggle for existence. Death ruled universally before the human race made its appearance on the earth, and has absolutely nothing to do with Eve and her apple.

Adam and Eve were warned by God that in the day they ate of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge they should surely die. The serpent declared this to be rank nonsense, and the event proved his veracity. What age Eve attained to the Holy Bible saith not, for it never considers women of sufficient importance to have their longevities chronicled. But Adam lived to the remarkably good old age of nine hundred and thirty years. Like our Charles the Second he took "an unconscionable time a-dying." One of his descendants, the famous Methusaleh, lived thirty-nine years longer; while the more famous Melchizedek is not even dead yet, if any credence is to be placed in the words of holy Saint Paul.

But all these are mere lambs, infants, or chicken, in comparison with the primeval patriarchs of India. Buckle tells us that, according to the Hindoos, common men in ancient times lived to the age of 80,000 years, some dying a little sooner and some a little later. Two of their kings, Yudhishter and Alarka, reigned respectively 27,000 and 66,000 years. Both these were cut off in their prime; for some of the early poets lived to be about half a million; while one king, the most virtuous as well as the most remarkable of all, was two million years old when he began to reign, and after reigning 6,800,000 years, he resigned his empire and lingered on for 100,000 years more. Adam is not in the hunt with that tough old fellow. On the principle that it is as well to be hung for a sheep as a lamb, faithful Christians should swallow him as well as Adam. When the throat of their credulity is once distended they may as well take in everything that comes. What followed the Curse clearly shows that man was not originally created immortal. Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden expressly in order that they might not become so. God "drove them forth" lest they should "take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever." Many orthodox writers, who have to maintain the doctrine of our natural immortality, preserve a discreet silence on this text. Our great Milton,

who has so largely determined the Protestant theology of England, goes right in the face of Scripture when he makes God say of man,

"I at first with two fair gifts
Created him endowed, with happiness
And *immortality*."

The fact is, the Book of Genesis never once alludes to any such thing, nor does it represent man as endowed with any other soul than that "breath of life" given to all animals. It is also certain that the *ancient* Jews were entirely ignorant of the doctrine of a life beyond the grave. The highest promise that Moses is said to have made in the Decalogue was that their "days should be long in the land." The Jews were a business people, and they wanted all promises fulfilled on this side of death.

Nor is there any real *Fall* implied in this story. God himself says that "the man," having eaten of the forbidden fruit, "is become as one of us." That could scarcely be a fall which brought him nearer to God. Bishop South, indeed, in a very eloquent passage of his sermon on "Man Created in God's Image," celebrates the inconceivable perfection of the first man, and concludes by saying that "An Aristotle was but the rubbish of an Adam, and Athens but the rudiments of Paradise." But a candid perusal of Genesis obliges us to dissent from this view, Adam and Eve were a very childish pair. Whatever intellect they possessed they carefully concealed. Not a scintillation of it has reached us. Shakespeare and Newton are an infinite improvement on Adam and Eve. One of the Gnostic sects, who played such havoc with the early Christian Church, utterly rejected the idea of a Fall. "The Ophites," says Didron, "considered the God of the Jews not only to be a most wicked but an unintelligent being... According to their account, Jaldabaoth, the wicked demi-god adored by the Jews under the name of Jehovah, was jealous of man, and wished to prevent the progress of knowledge; but the serpent, the agent of superior wisdom, came to teach man what course he ought to pursue, and by what means he might regain the knowledge of good and evil. The Ophites consequently adored the serpent, and cursed the true God Jehovah."

Before expelling Adam and Eve from Eden, the Lord took pity on their nakedness, and apparently seeing that their skill in needle-work did not go beyond aprons, he "made coats of skins, and clothed them." Jehovah was thus the first tailor, and the prototype of that imperishable class of workmen, of whom it was said that it takes nine of them to make a man. He was also the first butcher and the first tanner, for he must have slain the animals and dressed their skins.

Lest they should return he "placed at the east of the Garden of Eden *Cherubims*

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