

Author: Rev. Joseph Barlow Brooks (1874-1952)

Text type: Prose

Date of composition: 1937

Editions: 1937

Source text:

Brooks, Rev. Joseph Barlow. *Th' Amazin' Stories o' th' Bible (i' th' Lankisher Dialect)*. Stalybridge: Geo. Whittaker & Sons.

e-text [selected material]:

Access and transcription: July 2011

Number of words:

Dialect represented: Lancashire

Produced by Javier Ruano-García

Copyright © 2011– DING, The Salamanca Corpus, Universidad de Salamanca

Brooks, Rev. Joseph Barlow (1874-1952)

Th' Amazin' Stories o' th' Bible

(i' th' Lankisher Dialect) (1937)

[31]

Cain an' Abel, th' Affair i' th' Lentil Fiel't

If ther'd bin anny newspaperpers i' them days, th' front page o' th' "Mesopotamia Herald" 'd 'ave a flarin' yeadline:

Murther Outs. Cain Slays Abel.

It wer th' fust murdther as wi'n anny account on, an' whether it wer one o' th' wust soart, as is done i' cowl blood, er not, awm noan so sartin. Th' deed itsell, aw should be inclin't to think, wer th' result of a sudden brainstorm, to make use of a modthern

expression. Mind yo'! that greed-e'ed monsther 'd bin at 'is devil's wark, an' when th' two on um greet threppin' i' th' felt, Cain lost 'is temper, pick't up a piece o' rock, an' leet fly. "It were 'it-er-miss," Cain said, at th' father, "an' it 'appent to 'it." Wust on it wer, it 'it Abel on a fatal spot,--th' temple, aw darsay.

Once it wer done, Cain seems to 'a' bin rayther callous about it, er 'appen it wer fear 'at run away wi' 'im. Fer when God taxed 'im wi' th' crime, 'e swore 'e knowed nowt about it, an' didn't see why 'e should bi look't on as 'is brother's keeper. Of course, Eve geet it out on 'im, what'd 'appent. Yo' seen, afther Adam an' Eve wer turnt out o' th' Garden o' Eden, isted o' God seemin' like a friend as coes of a neet fer a bit of a confab; er rayther, like a feyther

[32]

as just popped in to see 'is wed childther afore 'e turnt in, an' to talk oer some o' ther day's bits o' thrubbles, an' gie um a bit o' advice like, 'E now seem't to be a lung way off, an' rayther to bi fyert on, ner loved. 'E 'ad to bi bowed an' scrape't to, an' gin presents to keep 'Im in a good temper, so they seem't to think. Adam an' Eve'd live i' yezz an' comfert, but now they'd to sweat an' scrape to get a bare livvin'. An' this God, as'd made it 'arder for um, could make it yezzier for um, too. It wer only 'orse-sense.

Well! it seem't as if Abel'd gotten on th' reet side o' God fro' th' start. 'E wer a rare o' sheep, an' 'e did weel. Eve wer seldom short o' wool to make ther clooas on. An' 'oo could awlus raise some soart of a nice smell o' cookin' fert men when they coom in at neet fer ther supper. Abel seed to it as 'oo generally 'ad some good mutton i' th' panthry. Th' consequence wer, aw daresay, 'at Abel geet monny a good word, an' 'e, no doubt, 'ad a gradely idea of 'is own importance to th' family. An' this, an' o, mun bi remember't, 'at i' that little family circle, Abel's success wi' th' sheep 'd bi considher't due to th' favour o' God, as mich, if not moor, ner to anythin' else.

But Cain's story wer a very different un. 'E digged an' tilled, an' 'e sowed an' planted, fro' mornin' till neet, but ther wer seldom anny moufins in th' mug, er flour, er meighl i' th' pot. Ther wer meight an' ther wer clooas, but ther wer a shortidge o' bread.

Cain took o' th' fust ripe ears o' corn an' wheat, an' th' lentils, an' offert um to God fer a Thank-offerin', but th' smook never seem't to rise above 'is fielts, an' God showed no sign 'at 'E'd smelt er seen it. Awlus th' crops wer thin an' scanty, an' sometimes th' sky wer like brass, an' th' crops fail't o together. Yo' con imagine Cain's thowts an' feelin's when 'e coom whom at neets an' yerd Adam

[33]

grumblin', becose ther wer a shortidge o' moufin. An' it didn't mend matthers, noather, when Eve said, "Theh's no rowm to meither, theh's plenty o' meight an' mutton broth, asn't it?"

One neet, Cain coom whom afore 'is usual time, an' 'e yerd 'is feyther say to 'is mother, "Th' lond's curs't; God myens to keep 'Is word."

"Aye," said 'is mother, "if aw live to be a thousand aw'll never ferget that neet, an' what 'E said, an' th' road 'E said it."

"Aye!" sais 'is feyther, "often i'th' neet, aw 'ave a kind o' neetmare, an' when aw wakken awm sweatin' o'l o'er, an' aw yer 'Im talkin agen, "Curst be th' ground fer thy sake, i' sorrow theh shall eight on it, o th' days o' thi life! Thorns an' thistles shall it bring forth o' th' days o' thi life. Bi th' sweat o' thi brow shalt theh eight bread, till theh dees an' thert buried i' th' ground thisell." Aw shuddther now when aw think on it."

Cain seet 'im down an' said nowt. 'E didn't let on as 'e'd bin 'earkenin'. Afther o! what difference could it make. But it ranklet! Ther seem't no fairness in it. They knowed about this curse. Why then, 'ad 'e bin put to th' lond, an' Abel gin th' sheep-rarin' job? An' why wer ther no curse on that? It seem't as if ther wern't. Yet 'ow could God prefer a killer o' 'elpless sheep, to a mon whose 'onds wer siled only wi' clen dirt. Did Gos like betther to see blood flow, an' to bless a killer, rayther ner to see nice green things spring up an' grow, an' to bless one as thried to 'elp um to grow? It look't like a bit o' favouritism! thowt Cain, bitterly.

[34]

Anny'ow it wer a case o' meight an' gravy fer th' younger son, an' coud p'ratoes fer th' owder un; both as to food an' to praise, so to speighk. Besides, if there wer a curse on th' lond, as th' owd uns said ther wer, why should 'e work 'issell to a shadow, thryin' to do th' impossible, an' then come whom at neets bi natther't at fer not doin' it! 'E wer sick of o th' bag-o-thricks, an' fer two pins!--but then! 'e thowt--what else could 'e do, except levv whom an' go to th' lond o' Nod, as 'e'd talk on! That wer a' idea! Then e'd only 'ave 'issell to slave for;--an' 'appen another! There wer sommat 'at rayther took 'is fancy about them Nodite wimmen. Ther wer some story about th' Sond o' God visitin' um, an' th' childther born o' these mixt weddin's bein' awf angils an' awf 'uman. An' ther wer one thing, 'e'd ne'er bi considther't owt bur a chilt as lung as 'e stopt awhom. So thowt Cain, as 'e went about 'is wark meightherin' an' sulkin', an' 'e ne'er goust as a evil spirit wer in 'im.

One day God coom an' 'ad a talk wi' Cain, an' thried to get 'im into a moor cheerful frame o' mind. 'E said to 'im, "Now, Cain! why arti gettin' so awvish an' glum? Theh con bi sure o' this, if theh does reet, theh mayn't 'elp moor--er betther--corn to grow, but what theh does'll bi thi best, an' that'll plezz me; but if theh does what's wrung, evil'll prow round thi dur-step. Why bi jealous o' Abel? Thert th' owder, an' theh'll bi th' mesther, if theh'll fust remember mesther thisell."

Cain felt shome't o' 'issell fer a time. But 'e soon fo'd into th' same mood agen. An' then th' fatal day coom when 'e met 'is brother Abel i'th' lentil fest. They geet argiein' an' threppin', an' then, accordin' to th' tale Cain tow'd 'is mother, 'e couldn't ston Abel's talk an' fellyin' ways no lunge, an' 'e up wi' a piece o' rock, an' thrut it at 'im. It wer a bad

[35]

day's wark fer Cain, anny'ow; an' fer poor Abel, an' o. But Cain 'ad to live an' face it. Abel, poor lad, wer finish't an' done wi. An' dyeth settles a lot o' thrubbles, fer o on us. Fust an' foremost, ther wer God to bi reckon't wi.

The Salamanca Corpus: *Th' Amazin' Stories o'...* (1937)

“Wheer is thi brother, Abel?! said God. “What ‘as ti done wi’ im? Aw yer ‘im co’in to Mi fro’ th’ ground. Th’ sile’s bin slake’t wi’ thi brother’s blood. I’ th’ past it’s bin skinny wi’ its fruits to thee, but i’ th’ future it’ll bi skinnier; so, theh shall goo off as a wandtherer on th’ face o’ th’ earth, aye, a vagabond an’ a fugitive.” When Cain tumbled to what this myent, a feelin’ o’ freet an’ loneliness coom o’er ‘im like ‘is parents’d felt when God dhrove um out o’ Eden, an’ ‘e cried to God, an’ said: “This punishment, Lord, is moor ner aw con ston. If awm to levv whom fer ever, gie mi some mark to pertect mi, when awm i’ danger fro’ mi enemies!” An’ so, God put a mark on Cain’s for-yed, wheer it could bi plainly seen, as a sign ‘at God’d punish them ‘at laid vilent ‘onds on ‘im. So Cain went out into th’ wide, sthrange world, an’ ‘is descendants--? Who knows but one on um met now bi tellin’ yo’ this owd story!

Cain didn’t really manidge so badly, as aw know on, fer ‘e made thracks fert th’ lond o’ Nod, afther ‘e’d parted wi’ ‘is owd feyther an’ mother. Theer, sure enoof, accordin’ to a very intherestin’ tale aw’ve just bin readin’, ther wer a nice young woman, on th’ road to Nod-lond, lookin’ out for ‘im. ‘Oo wer a bit forrat, as some foak met think, but aw darsay Cain wer missin’ ‘is whom an’ ‘is mother, it bein’ th’ fust time ‘e’d left um. ‘Appen th’ Nodites seed nowt wrung i’ makin’ free wi’ a sthrange young felly. ‘Oo seem’t sthrucc when ‘e said ‘oo wer th’ fust lass ‘e’d ever kiss’t, an’ aw doubt whether ‘oo believed ‘im o together. But wimmen ‘ave

[36]

a way o’ keepin’ these things to thersells. Aw darsay it wer thru e i’ this case ‘owever.

This young woman o’ Nod took Cain to ‘er whom, an’ inthroduced ‘im to th’ family, an’ Cain becoom ‘er ‘usbant. Cain coed ther fust chilt Enoch; an’, later on, when Cain set up a city, ‘e coed it afther th’ lad ‘e wer so proud on. Cain met build a city an’ settle fer a time, but th’ spirit of a rover wer in ‘im, an’ off ‘e would goo on ‘is thravels agen. Nobry knows wher those o’ ‘is blood are to bi fun, an’ wheer not. But one thing’s sartin’ ‘e’s a lot to anser for, judgin’ bi th’ number o’ murdthers as ‘as a ‘appent sin e’ started th’ business.

The Salamanca Corpus: *Th' Amazin' Stories o'...* (1937)

It wer a dastardly affair, look at it 'ow yo' will, to goo an' kill 'is younger brother o that road. Not as awm gooin't press th' pint about it' bein' 'is brother, fer if a mon 'as it in 'im, 'e's just as likely to 'ate 'is brother as annybody else. A mon doesn't choose 'is relations, an' it's yezzier likin' somebody as isn't theer every day beside yo' to vex yo'. At anny rate, if a mon keeps out o' yer road, it's o' no serious consequence, if yo' durnt 'appen to like 'im. But when 'e sleeps i'th' same bed, an' eights off th' same table, an' dips i'th' same deesh, an' is gerrin' th' same parents' favours, er otherwise; then 'e's a real good soart of a brother, if, when tother's gettin' o' th' kisses an' 'awp'nies, 'e's quite 'appy about it, an' go's on thinkin' as 'is brother's th' finest chap i'th' world.

Bur aw mun say, awm a bit sorry for Cain, i'th' spite o' what 'e's browt on us. 'E wer unfortunat in 'is job, an' aw suppose, couldn't 'elp feelin' glum, an' bein' a bit jealous. Bur if 'e'd 'a' bided 'is time, no doubt things 'd a work't out rayther moor satisfacterily. As it 'appen't, 'e set a fashion as 'as bin too often followed, reet down to eawr

[37]

own day, bi them as thinks murdther, ayther single er i' th' lump, to bi a short cut out o' ther 'obbles. When a mon's provin' 'issell a public er a private nuisance, er a world- nuisance, oather, an' wi' lose eawr patience an' say as 'e owt to bi shot, as we're apt to do,--if wi really myen it,--arn't wi arbourin' murdther in eawr 'earts? But now awm preichin'!

[67]

'Ow th' Foak wer Scatthert

Yo'n often wondther't, aw darsay, why wi durn't o talk th' same lingo! Well! aw lippen ther are various explanations, an' 'ere's one fro' th' owd book, as sarves as a soart o' link between Noah's new start an' th' foundin' o' th' Jewish nation.

The Salamanca Corpus: *Th' Amazin' Stories o'...* (1937)

After th' Flood, Noah's childther an' 'is gron-childther, an' 'is great gron-childther,--it gies a regler nominy on um i'th' Bible, wer scatther't o'er th' counthry. They o talk't th' same language, which wer very convenient, as they wandther't fro' place to place. Some on um coom across a likely place fer feedin' ther flocks. It wer a big plain i' th' lond o' Shinar. It wer fine fer sheep-rarin', an' they o did very weel, till they wer betther off ner they could gradely manage. If they'd done weel i' cotton er eighrn-mongry, to-day, they'd 'a' bowt a' expensive wireless set, an' a gramophone, an' a wasteful thranklements. But, of course, there wer no sich things i' them days. So thi put ther yeds together, an' they said: "Wi know what we'll do. Come on, we'll make clay bricks an' put um into th' sun; er betther still, we'll brun um i' a 'ot oven, an' we'll make asphalt isted o' morthar. Then wi con build a gradely buildin', an' tak it up as monny storeys as wi'n a mind. That road wi con build a greight

[68]

citym wi a lot o' sky-scrapers, an' we'll build a tower 'eigher ner o th' other buildins. It'll be a greight londmark reichin' reet up into th' 'eavens, an' o tother buildins 'll clusther round it, an' keep us together so's wi sharn't get scatther't o'er face o' th' earth.

But God knowed as cities wer a poor do i' comparison wi' 'Is green fielts an' meadows, an' clen valleys, an' 'illsides wi' ther tumblin brucks. 'E knowed, too, 'at they'd begin to boss one another, an' th' wakest 'd 'a' to go to th' wall. 'E knowed they'd start o mack o' indur wark,--workin'-prisons wheer th' sun never shows its pratty face, an' wheer it's shut out wi' lime-wesh when it thries to. 'E knowed 'at they'd pollute th' rivers an' th' sthreams so's they'd run through ther cities an' town lookin' like ink, an' smellin' like rotten eggs. So, as, i' them days, God still 'ad 'opes o' 'Is childther, an' 'adn't welly nee gin up thryin' to persuade um, 'E come down to 'ave a look at th' city an' th' tower 'at 'Is childther 'd built. Th' moor 'E seed an' th' less 'E liked it.

“This’ll never do,” ‘E said to th’ ark-angils, when ‘E geet back. “It’s th’ stuffest an’ th’ reechiest place ‘at Awve set Mi e’en on fer a lung time. Th’ Ark wer paradise compared wi’ it. It’s jerrybuilt an’ o. Them stones they use’t to use, waanted skill fer buildin’, an’ if th’ morthar wer clen an’ good, th’ wark wer sound. An’ th’ owd-fashion’t tents didn’t ‘arbour bugs an’ flees; they wer ta down an’ put up too often. Besides, it’s bad fer th’ foak to crowd together i’ yon road. Ther’ll be a ‘ousin’ problum i’ no time! Aw waant My people to spread out oer th’ lond, too; an’ not bi o ‘uddlet together as if ther wer a lond shortage. Aw durn’t waant My lovely earth covert wi’ two er three sozen middens, but to be a place o’ wide-sthrechin’ spaces, wheer thinkers an’ poets an’ philosophers con pondther an’ grow, an’ wheer

[69]

childther con play, an’ young men an’ wimmen con walk an’ dance, an’ wheer wimmen con be at peace an’ con co ther sould ther own, an’ wheer owd foak con dhremm away ther latter days.”

“Well! what dun Yo’ think’ll ‘a’ to bi done about it, Lord?” ax’t Gabriel.

“Awve getten a plan, Gabriel,” said God, “theh con come wi Mi, fer ther’ll be a bit o’ fun if Awm noan mistan. They seem to bi fancyin’ thersell, an’ they’re talkin’ about buildin’ a tower as’ll reich up to ‘eaven. We’ll ‘a’ to scatther um er ther’ll bi no ‘owdin um.”

So th’ ark-angils o went to see what wer up, an’ o as God did wer to jumble up ther talk, so’s t’one thowt t’other wer talkin’ gibberish. Th’ ark-angils ‘ad a good lowf, an’, in fact, it’d a made a pig lowf, fer they o geet eggzasperated at one another. They threw up ther buildin’ jobs, an’ a lot on um clear’t out. Them as stop’t, managed i’ time to scrape together enoo common words to bi able to talk to one another bowt fo’in out, but ther wer a babble, an’ no mistake. An’ ever sin’, whenever th’ foak fro’ th’ foreign parts, as went away, meets, thers just as mich babble as ever. If they’d only o larn to talk Lankisher, th’ thrubble ‘d bi ended.

The Salamanca Corpus: *Th' Amazin' Stories o'...* (1937)

Now, when yo' yer tell o' Babylon, as did at one time, lung afther, become a greight city, yo'll 'appen remember what 'appen't at th' fust when they started to build th' tower o' Babel, at Babylon.

