
GENESIS 4:1 The man knew Eve his wife. She conceived, and gave birth to Cain, and said, "I have gotten a man with the LORD's help."

The birth, trade, and religion of Cain and Abel, Gen 4:1-7. Cain murders his brother Abel, Gen 4:8. God calls him into judgment for it, Gen 4:9, Gen 4:10. He is cursed, Gen 4:11, Gen 4:12. He despairs, Gen 4:15, Gen 4:14. A promise given him of preservation, and a mark set on him to prevent his being killed, Gen 4:15. He departs from God's presence, Gen 4:16. Has a son whom he calls Enoch; and builds a city, which he calls after his name, Gen 4:17. Cain has several children, among whom are Lamech, the first bigamist, Gen 4:18, Gen 4:19. Jabal, who taught the use of tents and feeding cattle, Gen 4:20. Jubal, the inventor of musical instruments, Gen 4:21. Tubal-cain, the inventor of smith-work, Gen 4:22. Strange speech of Lamech to his wives, Gen 4:23, Gen 4:24. Seth born to Adam and Eve in the place of Abel, Gen 4:25. Enoch born, and the worship of God restored, Gen 4:26.

Verse 1

I have gotten a man from the Lord - Cain, קַיִן, signifies acquisition; hence Eve says קָנִיתִי kanithi, I have gotten or acquired a man, אֵת יְהוָה eth Yehovah, the Lord. It is extremely difficult to ascertain the sense in which Eve used these words, which have been as variously translated as understood. Most expositors think that Eve imagined Cain to be the promised seed that should bruise the head of the serpent. This exposition really seems too refined for that period. It is very likely that she meant no more than to acknowledge that it was through God's peculiar blessing that she was enabled to conceive and bring forth a son, and that she had now a well-grounded hope that the race of man should be continued on the earth. Unless she had been under Divine inspiration she could not have called her son (even supposing him to be the promised seed) Jehovah; and that she was not under such an influence her mistake sufficiently proves, for Cain, so far from being the Messiah, was of the wicked one; 1Jn 3:12. We may therefore suppose that אֵת יְהוָה eth Yehovah, The Lord, is an elliptical form of expression for מֵאֵת יְהוָה meeth Yehovah, From The Lord, or through the Divine blessing.

GENESIS 4:2 Again she gave birth, to Cain's brother Abel. Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

Verse 2

And she again bare his brother Abel - Literally, She added to bear (וַתֵּלֶד vattoseph laledeth) his brother. From the very face of this account it appears evident that Cain and Abel were twins. In most cases where a subject of this kind is introduced in the Holy Scriptures, and the successive births of children of the same parents are noted, the acts of conceiving and bringing forth are mentioned in reference to each child; here it is not said that she conceived and brought forth Abel, but simply she added to bring forth Abel his brother; that is, as I understand it, Cain was the first-born, Abel, his twin brother, came next.

Abel was a keeper of sheep - Adam was originally a gardener, Abel a shepherd, and Cain an agriculturist or farmer. These were the three primitive employments, and, I may add, the most rational, and consequently the best calculated to prevent strife and an immoderate love of the world.

GENESIS 4:3 As time passed, Cain brought an offering to the LORD from the fruit of the ground.

Verse 3

In process of time - מִקֵּץ יָמִים mikkets yamim, at the end of days. Some think the anniversary of the creation to be here intended; it is more probable that it means the Sabbath, on which Adam and his family undoubtedly offered oblations to God, as the Divine worship was certainly instituted, and no doubt the Sabbath properly observed in that family. This worship was, in its original institution, very simple. It appears to have consisted of two parts:

1. Thanksgiving to God as the author and dispenser of all the bounties of nature, and oblations indicative of that gratitude.
2. Piacular sacrifices to his justice and holiness, implying a conviction of their own sinfulness, confession of transgression, and faith in the promised Deliverer. If we collate the passage here with the apostle's allusion to it, Heb 11:4, we shall see cause to form this conclusion.

Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering - מִנְחָה minchah, unto the Lord. The word minchah is explained, Lev 2:1, etc., to be an offering of fine flour, with oil and frankincense. It was in general a eucharistic or gratitude offering, and is simply what is implied in the fruits of the ground brought by Cain to the Lord, by which he testified his belief in him as the Lord of the universe, and the dispenser of secular blessings.

GENESIS 4:4 Abel also brought some of the firstborn of his flock and of its fat. The LORD respected Abel and his offering,

Verse 4

Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock - Dr. Kennicott contends that the words he also brought, הֵבִי גַם הוּא hebi gam hu, should be translated, Abel brought it also, i.e. a minchah or gratitude offering; and beside this he brought of the first-born (מִבְּכֹרוֹת mibbechoroth) of his flock, and it was by this alone that he acknowledged himself a sinner, and professed faith in the promised Messiah. To this circumstance the apostle seems evidently to allude, Heb 11:4 : By Faith Abel offered πλειονα θυσαυ, a More or Greater sacrifice; not a more excellent, (for this is no meaning of the word πλειων), which leads us to infer, according to Dr. Kennicott, that Abel, besides his minchah or gratitude offering, brought also θυσαυ, a victim, to be slain for his sins; and this he chose out of the first-born of his flock, which, in the order of God, was a representation of the Lamb of God that was to take away the sin of the world; and what confirms this exposition more is the observation of the apostle: God testifying τοις δωροις, of his Gifts, which certainly shows he brought more than one. According to this interpretation, Cain, the father of Deism, not acknowledging the necessity of a vicarious sacrifice, nor feeling his need of an atonement, according to the dictates of his natural religion, brought a minchah or eucharistic offering to the God of the universe. Abel, not less grateful for the produce of his fields and the increase of his flocks, brought a similar offering, and by adding a sacrifice to it paid a proper regard to the will of God as far as it had then been revealed, acknowledged himself a sinner, and thus, deprecating the Divine displeasure, showed forth the

death of Christ till he came. Thus his offerings were accepted, while those of Cain were rejected; for this, as the apostle says, was done by Faith, and therefore he obtained witness that he was righteous, or a justified person, God testifying with his gifts, the thank-offering and the sin-offering, by accepting them, that faith in the promised seed was the only way in which he could accept the services and offerings of mankind. Dr. Magee, in his Discourses on the Atonement, criticises the opinion of Dr. Kennicott, and contends that there is no ground for the distinction made by the latter on the words he also brought; and shows that though the minchah in general signifies an unbloody offering, yet it is also used to express both kinds, and that the minchah in question is to be understood of the sacrifice then offered by Abel. I do not see that we gain much by this counter-criticism. See Gen 4:7.

GENESIS 4:5 but he didn't respect Cain and his offering. Cain was very angry, and the expression on his face fell.

Verse 5

Unto Cain - As being unconscious of his sinfulness, and consequently unhumbled, and to his offering, as not being accompanied, as Abel's was, with faith and a sacrifice for sin, he had not respect - He could not, consistently with his holiness and justice, approve of the one or receive the other. Of the manner in which God testified his approbation we are not informed; it was probably, as in the case of Elijah, by sending down fire from heaven, and consuming the sacrifice.

Cain was very wroth - That displeasure which should have been turned against his own unhumbled heart was turned against his innocent brother, who, though not more highly privileged than he, made a much better use of the advantages which he shared in common with his ungodly and unnatural brother.

GENESIS 4:6 The LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why has the expression of your face fallen?"

Verse 6

Why art thou wroth? - This was designed as a gracious warning, and a preventive of the meditated crime.

GENESIS 4:7 If you do well, won't it be lifted up? If you don't do well, sin crouches at the door. Its desire is for you, but you are to rule over it."

Verse 7

If thou doest well - That which is right in the sight of God, shalt thou not be accepted? Does God reject any man who serves him in simplicity and godly sincerity? But if thou doest not well, can wrath and indignation against thy righteous brother save thee from the displeasure under which thou art fallen? On the contrary, have recourse to thy Maker for mercy; לפתח חטאת רבץ lappethach

chattath robets, a sin-offering lieth at thy door; an animal proper to be offered as an atonement for sin is now couching at the door of thy fold.

The words **חַטָּאת** chattath, and **חַטָּאת** chattaah, frequently signify sin; but I have observed more than a hundred places in the Old Testament where they are used for sin-offering, and translated **ἁμαρτία** by the Septuagint, which is the term the apostle uses, 2Cor 5:21 : He hath made him to be sin (**ἁμαρτίαν**, A Sin-Offering) for us, who knew no sin. Cain's fault now was his not bringing a sin-offering when his brother brought one, and his neglect and contempt caused his other offering to be rejected. However, God now graciously informs him that, though he had miscarried, his case was not yet desperate, as the means of faith, from the promise, etc., were in his power, and a victim proper for a sin-offering was lying (**רַבֵּץ** robets, a word used to express the lying down of a quadruped) at the door of his fold. How many sinners perish, not because there is not a Savior able and willing to save them, but because they will not use that which is within their power! Of such how true is that word of our Lord, Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life!

Unto thee shall be his desire, etc. - That is, Thou shalt ever have the right of primogeniture, and in all things shall thy brother be subject unto thee. These words are not spoken of sin, as many have understood them, but of Abel's submission to Cain as his superior, and the words are spoken to remove Cain's envy.

GENESIS 4:8 Cain said to Abel, his brother, "Let's go into the field." While they were in the field, Cain rose up against Abel, his brother, and killed him.

Verse 8

Cain talked with Abel his brother - **וַיֹּמַר קַיִן** *vaiyomer Kayin*, and Cain said, etc.; not talked, for this construction the word cannot bear without great violence to analogy and grammatical accuracy. But why should it be thus translated? Because our translators could not find that any thing was spoken on the occasion; and therefore they ventured to intimate that there was a conversation, indefinitely. In the most correct editions of the Hebrew Bible there is a small space left here in the text, and a circular mark which refers to a note in the margin, intimating that there is a hiatus or deficiency in the verse. Now this deficiency is supplied in the principal ancient versions, and in the Samaritan text. In this the supplied words are, Let Us Walk Out Into The Field. The Syriac has, Let us go to the desert. The Vulgate *Egrediamur foras*, Let us walk out. The Septuagint, *Διελθωμεν εις το πεδον*, Let us go out into the field. The two Chaldee Targums have the same reading; so has the Coptic version. This addition is completely lost from every MS. of the Pentateuch now known; and yet it is sufficiently evident from the Samaritan text, the Samaritan version, the Syriac, Septuagint, and Vulgate, that it was in the most authentic copies of the Hebrew before and some time since the Christian era. The words may therefore be safely considered as a part of the sacred text, and with them the whole passage reads clear and consistently: "And Cain said unto Abel his brother, Let us go out into the field: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up," etc. The Jerusalem Targum, and the Targum of Jonathan ben Uzziel, pretend to give us the subject of their conversation: as the piece is curious, I shall insert the substance of it, for the sake of those who may not have access to the originals. "And Cain said unto Hebel his brother, Let us go out into the field; and it came to pass that, when they were in the field, Cain answered and said to Hebel his brother, I thought that the world was created in mercy, but it is not governed according to the merit of good works nor is there any judgment, nor a Judge, nor shall there be any future state in which good

rewards shall be given to the righteous, or punishment executed on the wicked; and now there is respect of persons in judgment. On what account is it that thy sacrifice has been accepted, and mine not received with complacency? And Hebel answered and said, The world was created in mercy, and it is governed according to the fruit of good works; there is a Judge, a future world, and a coming judgment, where good rewards shall be given to the righteous, and the impious punished; and there is no respect of persons in judgment; but because my works were better and more precious than thine, my oblation was received with complacency. And because of these things they contended on the face of the field, and Cain rose up against Hebel his brother, and struck a stone into his forehead, and killed him."

It is here supposed that the first murder committed in the world was the consequence of a religious dispute; however this may have been, millions since have been sacrificed to prejudice, bigotry, and intolerance. Here, certainly, originated the many-headed monster, religious persecution; the spirit of the wicked one in his followers impels them to afflict and destroy all those who are partakers of the Spirit of God. Every persecutor is a legitimate son of the old murderer. This is the first triumph of Satan; it is not merely a death that he has introduced, but a violent one, as the first-fruits of sin. It is not the death of an ordinary person, but of the most holy man then in being; it is not brought about by the providence of God, or by a gradual failure and destruction of the earthly fabric, but by a violent separation of body and soul; it is not done by a common enemy, from whom nothing better could be expected, but by the hand of a brother, and for no other reason but because the object of his envy was more righteous than himself. Alas! how exceeding sinful does sin appear in its first manifestation!

GENESIS 4:9 The LORD said to Cain, "Where is Abel, your brother?"

He said, "I don't know. Am I my brother's keeper?"

GENESIS 4:10 The LORD said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries to me from the ground.

Verse 10

The voice of thy brother's blood - It is probable that Cain, having killed his brother, dug a hole and buried him in the earth, hoping thereby to prevent the murder from being known; and that this is what is designed in the words, Thy brother's blood crieth unto me From The Ground - which hath opened her mouth to receive it from thy hand. Some think that by the voice of thy brother's blood the cries of Abel's widow and children are to be understood, as it is very probable that he was father of a family; indeed his occupation and sacrifices seem to render this probable, and probability is all we can expect on such a subject. God represents these as calling aloud for the punishment of the murderer; and it is evident that Cain expected to fall by the hands of some person who, from his consanguinity, had the right of the avenger of blood; for now that the murder is found out, he expects to suffer death for it. See Gen 4:14.

GENESIS 4:11 Now you are cursed because of the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand.

GENESIS 4:12 From now on, when you till the ground, it won't yield its strength to you. You will be a fugitive and a wanderer in the earth."

Verse 12

A fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be - Thou shalt be expelled from the presence of God, and from thy family connections, and shalt have no fixed secure residence in any place. The Septuagint render this στενων και τρεμων εση, thou shalt be groaning and trembling upon the earth - the horror of thy crime shall ever haunt thee, and thou shalt never have any well-grounded hope that God will remit the punishment thou deservest. No state out of endless perdition can be considered more awful than this.

GENESIS 4:13 Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment is greater than I can bear.

Verse 13

My punishment is greater than I can bear - The margin reads, Mine iniquity is greater than that it may be forgiven. The original words, גדול עוני מנשוא gadol avoni minneso, may be translated, Is my crime too great to be forgiven? words which we may presume he uttered on the verge of black despair. It is most probable that עון avon signifies rather the crime than the punishment; in this sense it is used Lev 26:41, Lev 26:43 1Sam 28:10; 2Kgs 7:9; and נשא nasa signifies to remit or forgive. The marginal reading is, therefore, to be preferred to that in the text.

GENESIS 4:14 Behold, you have driven me out this day from the surface of the ground. I will be hidden from your face, and I will be a fugitive and a wanderer in the earth. Whoever finds me will kill me."

Verse 14

Behold, thou hast driven me out - In Gen 4:11, Gen 4:12, God states two parts of Cain's punishment:

1. The ground was cursed, so that it was not to yield any adequate recompense for his most careful tillage.
2. He was to be a fugitive and a vagabond having no place in which he could dwell with comfort or security.

To these Cain himself adds others.

1. His being hidden from the face of God; which appears to signify his being expelled from that particular place where God had manifested his presence in or contiguous to Paradise, whither our first parents resorted as to an oracle, and where they offered their daily adorations. So in Gen 4:16, it is said, Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and was not permitted any more to associate with the family in acts of religious worship.

2. The continual apprehension of being slain, as all the inhabitants of the earth were at that time of the same family, the parents themselves still alive, and each having a right to kill this murderer of his relative. Add to all this,

3. The terrors of a guilty conscience; his awful apprehension of God's judgments, and of being everlastingly banished from the beatific vision. To this part of the punishment of Cain St. Paul probably alludes, 2Thes 1:9 : Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. The words are so similar that we can scarcely doubt of the allusion.

GENESIS 4:15 The LORD said to him, "Therefore whoever slays Cain, vengeance will be taken on him sevenfold." the LORD appointed a sign for Cain, so that anyone finding him would not strike him.

Verse 15

The Lord set a mark upon Cain - What this mark was, has given rise to a number of frivolously curious conjectures. Dr. Shuckford collects the most remarkable. Some say he was paralytic; this seems to have arisen from the version of the Septuagint, *Στενων καὶ τρεμων εση*, Groaning and trembling shalt thou be. The Targum of Jonathan ben Uzziel says the sign was from the great and precious name, probably one of the letters of the word Yehovah. The author of an Arabic Catena in the Bodleian Library says, "A sword could not pierce him; fire could not burn him; water could not drown him; the air could not blast him; nor could thunder or lightning strike him." The author of Bereshith Rabba, a comment on Genesis, says the mark was a circle of the sun rising upon him. Abravanel says the sign was Abel's dog, which constantly accompanied him. Some of the doctors in the Talmud say that it was the letter *ת* tau marked on his forehead, which signified his contrition, as it is the first letter in the word *תשובה* teshubah, repentance. Rabbi Joseph, wiser than all the rest, says it was a long horn growing out of his forehead!

Dr. Shuckford farther observes that the Hebrew word *אית* oth, which we translate a mark, signifies a sign or token. Thus, Gen 9:13, the bow was to be *לאית* leoth, for a sign or token that the world should not be destroyed; therefore the words, And the Lord set a mark upon Cain, should be translated, And the Lord appointed to Cain a token or sign, to convince him that no person should be permitted to slay him. To have marked him would have been the most likely way to have brought all the evils he dreaded upon him; therefore the Lord gave him some miraculous sign or token that he should not be slain, to the end that he should not despair, but, having time to repent, might return to a gracious God and find mercy. Notwithstanding the allusion which I suppose St. Paul to have made to the punishment of Cain, some think that he did repent and find mercy. I can only say this was possible. Most people who read this account wonder why Cain should dread being killed, when it does not appear to them that there were any inhabitants on the earth at that time besides himself and his parents. To correct this mistake, let it be observed that the death of Abel took place in the one hundred and twenty-eighth or one hundred and twenty-ninth year of the world. Now, "supposing Adam and Eve to have had no other sons than Cain and Abel in the year of the world one hundred and twenty-eight, yet as they had daughters married to these sons, their descendants would make a considerable figure on the earth. Supposing them to have been married in the nineteenth year of the world, they might easily have had each eight children, some males and some females, in the twenty-fifth year. In the fiftieth year there might proceed from them in a direct line sixty-four persons; in the seventy-fourth year there would be five hundred and twelve; in the ninety-

eighth year, four thousand and ninety-six; in the one hundred and twenty-second they would amount to thirty-two thousand seven hundred and sixty-eight: if to these we add the other children descended from Cain and Abel, their children, and their children's children, we shall have, in the aforesaid one hundred and twenty-eight years four hundred and twenty-one thousand one hundred and sixty-four men capable of generation, without reckoning the women either old or young, or such as are under the age of seventeen." See Dodd.

But this calculation may be disputed, because there is no evidence that the antediluvian patriarchs began to have children before they were sixty-five years of age. Now, supposing that Adam at one hundred and thirty years of age had one hundred and thirty children, which is quite possible, and each of these a child at sixty-five years of age, and one in each successive year, the whole, in the one hundred and thirtieth year of the world, would amount to one thousand two hundred and nineteen persons; a number sufficient to found several villages, and to excite the apprehensions under which Cain appeared at this time to labor.

GENESIS 4:16 Cain left the LORD's presence, and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

Verse 16

The land of Nod - As נֹד nod signifies the same as נָד sa , a vagabond, some think this verse should be rendered, And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, from the east of Eden, and dwelt a vagabond on the earth; thus the curse pronounced on him, Gen 4:12, was accomplished.

GENESIS 4:17 Cain knew his wife. She conceived, and gave birth to Enoch. He built a city, and called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch.

Verse 17

She - bare Enoch - As חֲנוּךְ Chanoch signifies instructed, dedicated, or initiated, and especially in sacred things, it may be considered some proof of Cain's repentance, that he appears to have dedicated this son to God, who, in his father's stead, might minister in the sacerdotal office, from which Cain, by his crime, was for ever excluded.

GENESIS 4:18 To Enoch was born Irad. Irad became the father of Mehujael. Mehujael became the father of Methushael. Methushael became the father of Lamech.

GENESIS 4:19 Lamech took two wives: the name of the first one was Adah, and the name of the second one was Zillah.

Verse 19

Lamech took - two wives - He was the first who dared to reverse the order of God by introducing polygamy; and from him it has been retained, practiced, and defended to the present day.

GENESIS 4:20 Adah gave birth to Jabal, who was the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock.

Verse 20

Jabal - was the father - The inventor or teacher, for so the word is understood, 1Sam 10:12. He was the first who invented tent-making, and the breeding and managing of cattle; or he was, in these respects, the most eminent in that time. Though Abel was a shepherd, it is not likely he was such on an extensive scale.

GENESIS 4:21 His brother's name was Jubal, who was the father of all who handle the harp and pipe.

Verse 21

Jubal - the father - i.e. The inventor of musical instruments, such as the כנור kinnor, which we translate harp, and the עוגב ugab, which we render organ; it is very likely that both words are generic, the former including under it all stringed instruments, and the latter, all wind instruments.

GENESIS 4:22 Zillah also gave birth to Tubal Cain, the forger of every cutting instrument of brass and iron. Tubal Cain's sister was Naamah.

Verse 22

Tubal-cain - The first smith on record, who taught how to make warlike instruments and domestic utensils out of brass and iron.

Agricultural instruments must have been in use long before, for Cain was a tiller of the ground, and so was Adam, and they could not have cultivated the ground without spades, hooks, etc. Some of these arts were useless to man while innocent and upright, but after his fall they became necessary. Thus is the saying verified: God made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions. As the power to get wealth is from God, so also is the invention of useful arts.

M. De Lavour, in his Conference de la Fable avec l'Histoire Sainte, supposes that the Greeks and Romans took their smith-god Vulcan from Tubal-cain, the son of Lamech. The probability of this will appear,

1. From the name, which, by the omission of the Tu and turning the b into v, a change frequently made among the Hebrews, Greeks, and Romans, makes Vulcain or Vulcan.
2. From his occupation he was an artificer, a master smith in brass and iron.
3. He thinks this farther probable from the names and sounds in this verse. The melting metals in the fire, and hammering them, bears a near resemblance to the hissing sound of צלה tsillah, the mother of Tubal-cain; and צלל tsalal signifies to tinkle or make a sound like a bell, 1Sam 3:11 2Kgs 21:12.

4. Vulcan is said to have been lame; M. De Lavour thinks that this notion was taken from the noun **אֶלְא** *tsela*, which signifies a halting or lameness.
5. Vulcan had to wife Venus, the goddess of beauty; Naamah, the sister of Tubal-cain, he thinks, may have given rise to this part of the fable, as her name in Hebrew signifies beautiful or gracious.
6. Vulcan is reported to have been jealous of his wife, and to have forged nets in which he took Mars and her, and exposed them to the view of the whole celestial court: this idea he thinks was derived from the literal import of the name Tubal-cain; **תֵּבֵל** *tebel* signifies an incestuous mixture of relatives, Lev 20:12; and **קָנָה** *kana*, to burn with jealousy; from these and concomitant circumstances the case of the detected adultery of Mars and Venus might be easily deduced. He is of opinion that a tradition of this kind might have readily found its way from the Egyptians to the Greeks, as the former had frequent intercourse with the Hebrews.

Of Naamah nothing more is spoken in the Scriptures; but the Targum of Jonathan ben Uzziel makes her the inventress of funeral songs and lamentations. R. S. Jarchi says she was the wife of Noah, and quotes Bereshith Rabba in support of the opinion. Some of the Jewish doctors say her name is recorded in Scripture because she was an upright and chaste woman; but others affirm that the whole world wandered after her, and that of her evil spirits were born into the world. This latter opinion gives some countenance to that of M. De Lavour.

GENESIS 4:23 Lamech said to his wives, "Adah and Zillah, hear my voice. You wives of Lamech, listen to my speech, for I have slain a man for wounding me, a young man for bruising me.

Verse 23

And Lamech said unto his wives - The speech of Lamech to his wives is in hemistichs in the original, and consequently, as nothing of this kind occurs before this time, it is very probably the oldest piece of poetry in the world. The following is, as nearly as possible, a literal translation: "And Lamech said unto his wives,

Adah and Tsillah, hear ye my voice;
 Wives of Lamech, hearken to my speech;
 For I have slain a man for wounding me,
 And a young man for having bruised me.
 If Cain shall be avenged seven-fold,
 Also Lamech seventy and seven."

It is supposed that Lamech had slain a man in his own defense, and that his wives being alarmed lest the kindred of the deceased should seek his life in return, to quiet their fears he makes this speech, in which he endeavors to prove that there was no room for fear on this account; for if the slayer of the wilful murderer, Cain, should suffer a seven-fold punishment, surely he, who should kill Lamech for having slain a man in self-defense, might expect a seventy-seven-fold punishment.

This speech is very dark, and has given rise to a great variety of very strange conjectures. Dr. Shuckford supposes there is an ellipsis of some preceding speech or circumstance which, if known, would cast a light on the subject. In the antediluvian times, the nearest of kin to a murdered person had a right to revenge his death by taking away the life of the murderer. This, as we have already seen, appears to have contributed not a little to Cain's horror, Gen 4:14. Now we may suppose that

the descendants of Cain were in continual alarms, lest some of the other family should attempt to avenge the death of Abel on them, as they were not permitted to do it on Cain; and that in order to dismiss those fears, Lamech, the seventh descendant from Adam, spoke to this effect to his wives: "Why should you render yourselves miserable by such ill-founded fears? We have slain no person; we have not done the least wrong to our brethren of the other family; surely then reason should dictate to you that they have no right to injure us. It is true that Cain, one of our ancestors, killed his brother Abel; but God, willing to pardon his sin, and give him space to repent, threatened to punish those with a seven-fold punishment who should dare to kill him. If this be so, then those who should have the boldness to kill any of us who are innocent, may expect a punishment still more rigorous. For if Cain should be avenged seven-fold on the person who should slay him, surely Lamech or any of his innocent family should be avenged seventy-seven-fold on those who should injure them." The Targums give nearly the same meaning, and it makes a good sense; but who can say it is the true sense? If the words be read interrogatively, as they certainly may, the sense will be much clearer, and some of the difficulties will be removed: "Have I slain a man, that I should be wounded?

Or a young man, that I should be bruised?"

But even this still supposes some previous reason or conversation. I shall not trouble my readers with a ridiculous Jewish fable, followed by St. Jerome, of Lamech having killed Cain by accident, etc.; and after what I have already said, I must leave the passage, I fear, among those which are inscrutable.

GENESIS 4:24 If Cain will be avenged seven times, truly Lamech seventy-seven times."

GENESIS 4:25 Adam knew his wife again. She gave birth to a son, and named him Seth, "for God has given me another child instead of Abel, for Cain killed him."

Verse 25

God - hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel - Eve must have received on this occasion some Divine communication, else how could she have known that this son was appointed in the place of Abel, to continue that holy line by which the Messiah was to come? From this we see that the line of the Messiah was determined from the beginning, and that it was not first fixed in the days of Abraham; for the promise was then only renewed, and that branch of his family designated by which the sacred line was to be continued. And it is worthy of remark, that Seth's posterity alone continued after the flood, when all the other families of the earth were destroyed, Noah being the tenth descendant from Adam through Seth.

Though all these persons are mentioned in the following chapter, I shall produce them here in the order of their succession:

1. Adam;
2. Seth;
3. Enos;
4. Cainan;
5. Mahalaleel;

6. Jared;
7. Enoch;
8. Methuselah;
9. Lamech, (the second);
10. Noah.

In order to keep this line distinct, we find particular care was taken that, where there were two or more sons in a family, the one through whom God particularly designed to bring his Son into the world was, by some especial providence, pointed out. Thus in the family of Adam, Seth was chosen; in the family of Noah, Shem; in the family of Abraham, Isaac; and in that of David, Solomon and Nathan. All these things God watched over by an especial providence from the beginning, that when Jesus Christ should come it might be clearly seen that he came by the promise, through grace, and not by nature.

GENESIS 4:26 A son was also born to Seth, and he named him Enosh. At that time men began to call on the LORD's name.

Verse 26

Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord - The marginal reading is, Then began men to call themselves by the name of the Lord; which words are supposed to signify that in the time of Enos the true followers of God began to distinguish themselves, and to be distinguished by others, by the appellation of sons of God; those of the other branch of Adam's family, among whom the Divine worship was not observed, being distinguished by the name, children of men. It must not be dissembled that many eminent men have contended that הוּחַל *huchal*, which we translate began, should be rendered began profanely, or then profanation began, and from this time they date the origin of idolatry. Most of the Jewish doctors were of this opinion, and Maimonides has discussed it at some length in his Treatise on Idolatry; as this piece is curious, and gives the most probable account of the origin and progress of idolatry, I shall insert it here. "In the days of Enos the sons of Adam erred with great error, and the counsel of the wise men of that age became brutish, and Enos himself was (one) of them that erred; and their error was this: they said, Forasmuch as God hath created these stars and spheres to govern the world, and set them on high, and imparted honor unto them, and they are ministers that minister before him; it is meet that men should laud, and glorify, and give them honor. For this is the will of God, that we magnify and honor whomsoever he magnifieth and honoureth; even as a king would have them honored that stand before him, and this is the honor of the king himself. When this thing was come up into their hearts they began to build temples unto the stars, and to offer sacrifice unto them, and to laud and glorify them with words, and to worship before them, that they might in their evil opinion obtain favor of the Creator; and this was the root of idolatry, etc. And in process of time there stood up false prophets among the sons of Adam, which said that God had commanded and said unto them, Worship such a star, or all the stars, and do sacrifice unto them thus and thus; and build a temple for it, and make an image of it, that all the people, women, and children may worship it. And the false prophet showed them the image which he had feigned out of his own heart, and said it was the image of such a star, which was made known unto him by prophecy. And they began after this manner to make images in temples,

and under trees, and on tops of mountains and hills, and assembled together and worshipped them, etc. And this thing was spread through all the world, to serve images with services different one from another, and to sacrifice unto and worship them. So, in process of time, the glorious and fearful name (of God) was forgotten out of the mouth of all living, and out of their knowledge, and they acknowledged him not.

And there was found no people on the earth that knew aught, save images of wood and stone, and temples of stone, which they had been trained up from their childhood to worship and serve, and to swear by their names. And the wise men that were among them, as the priests and such like, thought there was no God save the stars and spheres, for whose sake and in whose likeness they had made these images; but as for the Rock everlasting, there was no man that acknowledged him or knew him save a few persons in the world, as Enoch, Methuselah, Noah, Sham, and Heber. And in this way did the world walk and converse till that pillar of the world, Abraham our father, was born." Maim. in Mishn, and Ainsworth in loco.

1. We see here the vast importance of worshipping God according to his own mind; no sincerity, no uprightness of intention, can atone for the neglect of positive commands delivered in Divine revelation, when this revelation is known. He who will bring a eucharistic offering instead of a sacrifice, while a sin-offering lieth at the door, as he copies Cain's conduct, may expect to be treated in the same manner. Reader, remember that thou hast an entrance unto the holiest through the veil, that is to say his flesh; and those who come in this way, God will in nowise cast out.
2. We see the horrible nature of envy: its eye is evil merely because God is good; it easily begets hatred; hatred, deep-settled malice; and malice, murder! Watch against the first appearance of this most destructive passion, the prime characteristic of which is to seek the destruction of the object of its malevolence, and finally to ruin its possessor.
3. Be thankful to God that, as weakness increased and wants became multiplied, God enabled man to find out useful inventions, so as to lessen excessive labor, and provide every thing indispensably necessary for the support of life. He who carefully attends to the dictates of honest, sober industry, is never likely to perish for lack of the necessaries of life.
4. As the followers of God at this early period found it indispensably necessary to separate themselves from all those who were irreligious and profane, and to make a public profession of their attachment to the truth, so it should be now. There are still men of profane minds whose spirit and conduct are destructive to godliness; and in reference to such the permanent order of God is, Come out from among them, touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you. He who is not determined to be a Christian at all events, is not far from being an infidel. Those only who confess Christ among men shall be acknowledged before his Father and the angels of God.