

CHAPTER 4

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS 4

In this chapter an account is given of the two eldest children of Adam and Eve, their names and calling, (~~Q001B~~Genesis 4:1,2) and of their different offerings to the Lord, and the different respect had unto them by him, which in Cain issued in wrath and envy, which appeared in his countenance, and were taken notice of by the Lord, and about which he reasoned with him, (~~Q001B~~Genesis 4:3-7) but it had no effect upon him, he murdered his brother, upon which he was examined about him, but denied he knew anything of him where he was, (~~Q001B~~Genesis 4:8,9) he is arraigned, convicted and condemned, sentence passed upon him, and that executed, which he complains of, and is mitigated, or however a protection is granted him, and a mark set on him for his security, (~~Q001B~~Genesis 4:10-15) after which we have an account of his posterity for several generations, their names, and the business of some of them, (~~Q001B~~Genesis 4:16-24) and the chapter is closed with the birth of another son, and of a grandson to Adam and Eve, in whose days was the beginning of social religion.

Ver. 1. *And Adam knew Eve his wife*, etc.] An euphemism, or modest expression of the act of coition. Jarchi interprets it, “had known”, even before he sinned, and was drove out of the garden; and so other Jewish writers, who think he otherwise would not have observed the command, “be fruitful and multiply”: but if Adam had begotten children in a state of innocence, they would have been free from sin, and not tainted with the corruption of nature after contracted; but others more probably think it was some considerable time after; according to Mer Thudiusi, or Theodosius ^{f242}, it was thirty years after he was driven out of paradise:

and she conceived and bare Cain; in the ordinary way and manner, as women ever since have usually done, going the same time with her burden. Whether this name was given to her first born by her, or by her husband, or both, is not said: it seems to have been given by her, from the reason of it after assigned. His name, in Philo Byblius ^{f243}, is Genos, which no doubt was Cain, in Sanchoniatho, whom he translated; and his wife, or the twin

born with him, is said to be Genea, that is, **hnyq**, “Cainah”: the Arabs call her Climiah ^{f244} and the Jewish writers Kalmenah ^{f245}; who are generally of opinion, that with Cain and Abel were born twin sisters, which became their wives.

And said, that is, Eve said upon the birth of her firstborn,

I have gotten a man from the Lord; as a gift and blessing from him, as children are; or by him, by his favour and good will; and through his blessing upon her, causing her to conceive and bear and bring forth a son: some render it, “I have gotten a man, the Lord” ^{f246}; that promised seed that should break the serpents head; by which it would appear, that she took that seed to be a divine person, the true God, even Jehovah, that should become man; though she must have been ignorant of the mystery of his incarnation, or of his taking flesh of a virgin, since she conceived and bare Cain through her husband’s knowledge of her: however, having imbibed this notion, it is no wonder she should call him Cain, a possession or inheritance; since had this been the case, she had got a godly one indeed: but in this she was sadly mistaken, he proved not only to be a mere man, but to be a very bad man: the Targum of Jonathan favours this sense, rendering the words,

“I have gotten a man, the angel of the Lord.”

Ver. 2. *And she again bare his brother Abel*, etc.] Or “added to bare” ^{f247}, not directly or immediately, but perhaps the following year; though some have thought, because no mention is made of her conceiving again, that she brought forth Abel at the same time she did Cain, or that the birth of the one immediately followed upon that of the other: and it is the common opinion of the Jews ^{f248} that with Abel, as with Cain, was born a twin sister, whom the Arabic writers ^{f249} call Lebuda: the name of Abel, or rather Hebel, signifies not “mourning”, as Josephus ^{f250} observes, but “vanity”, Eve not making that account of him as she did of Cain; or perhaps because by this time she became sensible of her mistake in him, or had met with something which convinced her that all earthly enjoyments were vanity; or by a spirit of prophecy foresaw what would befall this her second son, that he should be very early deprived of his life in a violent manner:

and Abel was a keeper of sheep: a calling which he either chose himself, or his father put him to, and gave him; for though he and his brother were born to a large estate, being the heirs of Adam, the lord of the whole earth,

yet they were not brought up in idleness, but in useful and laborious employments:

but Cain was a tiller of the ground: of the same occupation his father was, and he being the first born, was brought up in the same business, and might be a reason why he was put into it.

Ver. 3. *And in process of time it came to pass,* etc.] Or “at the end of days”^{f251}; which some understand of the end of seven days, at the end of the week, or on the seventh day, which they suppose to be the sabbath day, these sons of Adam brought their offerings to the Lord: but this proceeds upon an hypothesis not sufficiently established, that the seventh day sabbath was now appointed to be observed in a religious way; rather, according to Aben Ezra, it was at the end of the year; So “after days” in (^{<07104>}Judges 11:4 *marg) is meant after a year; and which we there render, as here, “in process of time”. This might be after harvest, after the fruits of the earth were gathered in, and so a proper season to bring an offering to the Lord, in gratitude for the plenty of good things they had been favoured with; as in later times, with the Israelites, there was a feast for the ingathering of the fruits of the earth, (^{<02316>}Exodus 23:16). The Targum of Jonathan fixes this time to the fourteenth of Nisan, as if it was the time of the passover, a feast instituted two thousand years after this time, or thereabout; and very stupidly one of the Jewish writers^{f252} observes, that

“the night of the feast of the passover came, and Adam said to his sons, on this night the Israelites will bring the offerings of the passovers, offer ye also before your Creator.”

That Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord; corn, herbs, seeds, etc. the Targum of Jonathan says it was flax seed; so Jarchi makes mention of an “agadah” or exposition, which gives the same sense; and another of their writers^{f253} observes, that Cain brought what was left of his food, or light and trifling things, flax or hemp seed. This he brought either to his father, as some think, being priest in his family; or rather he brought and offered it himself at the place appointed for religious worship, and for sacrifices; so Aben Ezra, he brought it to the place fixed for his oratory. It is highly probable it was at the east of the entrance of the garden of Eden, where the Shechinah, or the divine Majesty, was, and appeared in some remarkable manner.

Ver. 4. *And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock,* etc.] As he was a shepherd, his flock consisted of sheep; and of the firstlings of these, the lambs that were first brought forth, he presented as an offering to the Lord; and which were afterwards frequently used in sacrifice, and were a proper type of Christ, Jehovah's firstborn, the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world, a Lamb without spot and blemish; fitly signified by one for his innocence, harmlessness, and meekness:

and of the fat thereof; which is to be understood either of the fat properly, which in later time was claimed by the Lord as his own, (^{<B2B16>}Leviticus 3:16) or of the fattest of his flock, the best lambs he had; the fattest and plumpest, and which were most free from defects and blemishes; not the torn, nor lame, nor sick, but that which was perfect and without spot; for God is to be served with the best we have. Josephus ^{f254} says it was milk, and the firstlings of his flock; and a word of the same letters, differently pointed, signifies milk; and some learned men, as Grotius and others, have given into this sense, observing it to be a custom with the Egyptians to sacrifice milk to their gods: but the word, as here pointed, is never used for milk; nor were such sacrifices ever used by the people of God; and Abel's sacrifice is called by the apostle **ψυσικα**, a "slain" sacrifice, as Heidegger ^{f255} observes:

and the Lord had respect to Abel, and to his offering; as being what he had designed and appointed to be used for sacrifice in future time, and as being a suitable type and emblem of the Messiah, and his sacrifice; and especially as being offered up by faith, in a view to the sacrifice of Christ, which is of a sweet smelling savour to God, and by which sin only is atoned and satisfied for, (see ^{<S104>}Hebrews 11:4). God looked at his sacrifice with a smiling countenance, took, and expressed delight, well pleasedness, and satisfaction in it; and he first accepted of his person, as considered in Christ his well beloved Son, and then his offering in virtue of his sacrifice: and this respect and acceptance might be signified by some visible sign or token, and particularly by the descent of fire from heaven upon it, as was the token of acceptance in later times, (^{<B2B24>}Leviticus 9:24) and Theodotion here renders it, he "fired" it, or "set" it on "fire"; and Jarchi paraphrases it,

"fire descended and licked up his offering;"

and Aben Ezra,

"and fire descended and reduced the offering of Abel to ashes;"

so Abraham Seba^{f256}.

Ver. 5. *But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect*, etc.] Not because of the matter of it, as some have thought; but because it was not offered in faith and sincerity, but in a formal and hypocritical manner, without any regard to the Messiah and his sacrifice, and without any view to the glory of God: no notice was taken, no approbation was given of it by the above token, or any other; so that it was manifest to Cain himself, that God did not approve of it, or was well pleased with it, as with his brother's:

and Cain was very wroth; with God, to whom he offered it, because he did not accept of it, and with his brother, because he and his sacrifice were preferred to him and his:

and his countenance fell; the briskness and cheerfulness of his countenance went off, and he looked dejected; and instead of lifting up his face towards heaven; he looked with a down look to the earth; he looked churlish, morose, and sullen, ill natured, full of malice and revenge, and as if he was studying which way to vent it; he knit his brows and gnashed his teeth, put on a surly countenance; and there might be seen in his face all the signs, not only of grief and disappointment, but of rage and fury; though^{f257} some interpret it of shame and confusion.

Ver. 6. *And the Lord said unto Cain, why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen?* etc.] Which was said not as being ignorant of his wrath and resentment, but to bring him to a conviction of his sin or sins, which were the cause of God's rejecting his sacrifice, and to repentance and amendment; and to show him that he had no cause to be displeased, either with him or his brother, for the different treatment of him and his offering; since the fault lay in himself, and he had none to blame but his own conduct, which for the future he should take care to regulate according to the divine will, and things would take a different turn.

Ver. 7. *If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?* etc.] That is, either if thou doest thy works well in general, doest good works in a right way and manner, according to life will of God, and directed to his glory, from right principles, and with right views: so all the Targums,

“if thou doest thy works well;”

for it is not merely doing a good work, but doing the good work well, which is acceptable to God; hence that saying,

“that not nouns but adverbs make good works:”

or particularly it may respect sacrifice; if thou doest thine offering well, or rightly offereth, as the Septuagint; or offers not only what is materially good and proper to be offered, but in a right way, in obedience to the divine will, from love to God, and with true devotion to him, in the faith of the promised seed, and with a view to his sacrifice for atonement and acceptance; then thine offering would be well pleasing and acceptable. Some render the latter part of the clause, which is but one word in the original text, “there will be a lifting up” ^{f258}; either of the countenance of the offerer, and so, if Cain had done well, his countenance would not have fallen, but have been lifted up, and cheerful as before; or of sin, which is the pardon of it, and is often expressed by taking and lifting it up, and bearing it away, and so of easing a man of it as of a burden; and in this sense all the Targums take it; which paraphrase it,

“it or thy sin shall be forgiven thee:”

and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door; if thou dost not do good works, nor offer an offering as it should be offered, sin lies at the door of conscience; and as soon as that is awakened and opened, it will enter in and make sad work there, as it afterwards did, (^{<010413>}Genesis 4:13) or it is open and manifest, and will be taken cognizance of, and punishment be inflicted for it; or else the punishment of sin itself is meant, which lies at the door, is at hand, and will soon be executed; and so all the Targums paraphrase it.

“thy sin is reserved to the day of judgment,”

or lies at the door of the grave, reserved to that day, as Jarchi. Some render the word a sin offering, as it sometimes signifies; and then the sense is, that though he had sinned, and had done amiss in the offering he had offered, nevertheless there was a propitiatory sacrifice for sin provided, which was at hand, and would soon be offered; so that he had no need to be dejected, or his countenance to fall; for if he looked to that sacrifice by faith, he would find pardon and acceptance; but the former sense is best:

and unto thee shall be his desire; or “its desire”, as some understand it of sin lying at the door, whose desire was to get in and entice and persuade

him to that which was evil, and prevail and rule over him. The Targum of Jonathan, and that of Jerusalem, paraphrase it of sin, but to another sense,

“sin shall lie at the door of thine heart, but into thine hand I have delivered the power of the evil concupiscence; and to thee shall be its desire, and thou shalt rule over it, whether to be righteous, or to sin:”

but rather it refers to Abel; and the meaning is, that notwithstanding his offering was accepted of God, and not his brother Cain’s, this would not alienate his affections from him, nor cause him to refuse subjection to him; but he should still love him as his brother, and be subject to him as his elder brother, and not seek to get from him the birthright, or think that that belonged to him, being forfeited by his brother’s sin; and therefore Cain had no reason to be angry with his brother, or envious at him, since this would make no manner of alteration in their civil affairs:

and thou shalt rule over him, as thou hast done, being the firstborn.

Ver. 8. *And Cain talked with Abel*, etc.] Or “said”, or “spoke unto” him ^{f259}; either what the Lord God said to him in the foregoing verses, as Aben Ezra; or he spoke to him in a kind and friendly manner, and thereby got him to take a walk in the field with him. The Vulgate Latin version adds, “let us go abroad”; and the Septuagint and Samaritan versions, “let us go into the field”; not to fight a duel, which Abel doubtless would have declined, had that been declared, but to have some friendly conversation; and there being a large pause here in the Hebrew text, the Jerusalem Targum gives us an account of what passed between them when in the field;

“Cain said to Abel his brother, there is no judgment, nor Judge, nor will a good reward be given to the righteous; nor will vengeance be taken of the wicked; neither is the world created in mercy nor governed in mercy; otherwise, why is thine offering received with good will, and mine not?”

Abel answered and said to Cain,

“there is a judgment,” etc.

and so goes on to assert everything Cain denied, and to give a reason why the offering of the one was accepted, and the other rejected: and to the same purpose the Targum of Jonathan:

and it came to pass, when they were in the field; alone and at a distance from their parents, or from any town or city, if any were now built, as some think there were, and out of the sight of any person that might come and interpose and rescue: about a mile from Damascus, in a valley, yet on the side of a hill, are now shown the place, or the house on it, where Cain slew Abel ^{f260}; and so Mr. Maundrel ^{f261} speaks of a high hill near Damascus, reported to be the same they offered their sacrifice on, and Cain slew his brother, and also of another hill at some distance from Damascus, and an ancient structure on it, supposed to be the tomb of Abel:

that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him; in a furious manner assaulted him, without any just provocation, and took away his life, by some instrument or other, perhaps that was used in husbandry, which might be in the field where they were. The Targum of Jonathan is,

“he fixed a stone in his forehead, and slew him;”

and so the Jews say ^{f262} elsewhere: our poet ^{f263} says, he smote him in the breast with a stone, into the midriff or diaphragm: it must be by some means or other, by which his blood was shed; but it is not material to inquire what the instrument was, as Aben Ezra observes; since though there might be swords, yet there were stones and clubs enough, as he takes notice; and there must be even instruments for agriculture, one of which might be taken up, as being at hand, with which the execution might be made. The Jewish writers ^{f264} say Abel was an hundred years old when he was slain; and some of them ^{f265} make Abel to be the first aggressor: they say, that Abel rose up against him, and threw him to the ground, and afterwards Cain rose up and slew him; however this was not likely the case.

Ver. 9. *And the Lord said unto Cain, where is Abel thy brother?* etc.]

Perhaps this was said to him the next time he came to offer, he not being with him: this question is put, not as being ignorant where he was, but in order to bring Cain to a conviction and confession of his sin, to touch his conscience with it, and fill it with remorse for it; and, for the aggravation of it, observes the relation of Abel to him, his brother:

and he said, I know not; which was a downright lie; for he must know where he had left him or laid him: this shows him to be under the influence of Satan, who was a liar, and the father of lies, as well as a murderer from the beginning; and that he was so blinded by him, as to forget whom he was speaking to; that he was the omniscient God, and knew the wickedness he had done, and the falsehood he now delivered, and was capable of confronting him with both, and of inflicting just punishment on him.

[*Am*] *I my brother's keeper?* which was very saucily and impudently spoken: it is not only put by way of interrogation, but of admiration, as Jarchi observes, as wondering at it, that God should put such a question to him, since he knew he had not the charge of his brother, and his brother was at age to take care of himself; and if not, it rather belonged to God and his providence to take care of him, and not to him: so hardened was he in his iniquity, he had stretched out his hand against his brother, and now he stretched it out against God, and ran upon him, even on the thick bosses of his buckler.

Ver. 10. *And he said*, etc.] Not Cain, the last speaker, but the Lord God,

what hast thou done? what an heinous crime hast thou committed! how aggravated is it! I know what thou hast done; thou hast slain thy brother, thine own, thine only brother, a holy, righteous, and good man, who never gave thee any offence, or any just occasion of shedding his innocent blood: this he said as knowing what he had done, and to impress his mind with a sense of the evil, and to bring him to a confession of it, before the sentence was passed, that it might appear to all to be just, and of which there was full proof and evidence, as follows:

the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground; where it was split, and in which it was covered and hid, and where perhaps Cain had buried his body, that it might not be seen, and the murder not discovered; but God saw what was done, and the voice of innocent blood came into his ears, and cried for vengeance at his hands: it is in the original, "the voice of thy brother's bloods"^{f266}, in the plural; which the Jews generally understood of the posterity that would have descended from Abel, had he not been murdered: the Targum of Onkelos is,

"the voice of the blood of the seeds or generations that should come from thy brother;"

(see ^{<1195>}2 Kings 9:26) or it may respect the blood of the seed of the woman, of all the righteous ones that should be slain in like manner. The Jerusalem Targum is,

“the voice of the bloods of the multitude of the righteous that shall spring from Abel thy brother,”

or succeed him; (see ^{<1235>}Matthew 23:35). Jarchi thinks it has reference to the many wounds which Cain gave him, from whence blood sprung; and every wound and every drop of blood, as it were, cried for vengeance on the murderer.

Ver. 11. *And now [art] thou cursed from the earth*, etc.] From receiving benefit by it, and enjoying the fruits of it as before, and from having a settled dwelling in it, as is afterwards explained:

which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand; the blood of his brother, which was shed by his own hand, was received and sucked into the earth, where it was spilt, through the pores of it, and drank up and covered, so as not to be seen; in which it was as it were more humane to Abel, and as it were more ashamed of the crime, and shuddered more, and expressed more horror at it, than Cain.

Ver. 12. *When thou tillest the ground*, etc.] Which was the business he was brought up in and followed, (^{<1002>}Genesis 4:2)

it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; the earth had been cursed for Adam's sin, and was not so fruitful as in its original state; and now it was cursed again for Cain's sin; not the whole earth, but that part which belonged to Cain, and was cultivated by him; and so it must be supposed to be cursed, not only in the spot where he had been settled, but in every other place where he should come and occupy, and which through this additional curse became so barren that it did not yield such good fruits, and such an increase of it as before; it lost its native and vital juice, by which seed cast into it became not so fruitful, and did not increase; but instead of this, though much pains were taken to manure it, and much was sown, yet it brought forth little, at least but little to Cain, whatever it did to others; and therefore it is said, “shall not yield unto thee”; it would not turn much to his account, or yield much profit and increase to him, or bring forth much fruit; (see ^{<883>}Job 31:38)

a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth; being obliged to quit his former habitation, and remove to a place at some distance from the house of his father Adam, which was near the garden of Eden, as Aben Ezra observes; and to wander about from place to place, having no quiet settlement in anyone place: the Septuagint render it “groaning and trembling”; the guilt of his sin lay heavy on his conscience, and filled him with such horror and terror that he was continually sighing and groaning, and was seized with such a tremor that he shook in all his limbs; so the Arabic writers ^{f267} say, that he was trembling and quivering, and had a shaking in his head all the days of his life; and Aben Ezra observes, that there are some that say that the first of these words signifies to moan and lament; but it may be, it was not so much his sin, at least the evil of it, that he lamented, as the mischief that came by it, or the calamities and misfortunes it brought upon him.

Ver. 13. *And Cain said unto the Lord*, etc.] In the anguish of his spirit and the distress of his mind:

my punishment is greater than I can bear; thus complaining of the mercy of God, as if he acted a cruel part, inflicting on him more than he could endure; and arraigning his justice, as if it was more than he deserved, or ought in equity to be laid on him; whereas it was abundantly less than the demerit of his sin, for his punishment was but a temporal one; for, excepting the horrors and terrors of his guilty conscience, it was no other than a heavier curse on the land he tilled, and banishment from his native place, and being a fugitive and wanderer in other countries; and if such a punishment is intolerable, what must the torments of hell be? the worm that never dies? the fire that is never quenched? and the wrath of God, which is a consuming fire, and burns to the lowest hell? some render the words, “my sin is greater than can be forgiven” ^{f268}; as despairing of the mercy of God, having no faith in the promised seed, and in the pardon of sin through his atonement, blood, and sacrifice; or, “is my sin greater than can be forgiven” ^{f269}? is there no forgiveness of it? is it the unpardonable sin? but Cain seems not to be so much concerned about sin, and the pardon of it, as about his temporal punishment for it; wherefore the first sense seems best, and best agrees with what follows.

Ver. 14. *Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth*, etc.] Not from being upon the earth, or had chased him out of the world as a wicked man is at death, but from a quiet settlement in it, and

from society and converse with the inhabitants of it; and especially he was driven from that part of it, where he was born and brought up, and which he had been employed in manuring; where his parents dwelt, and other relations, friends, and acquaintance: and to be banished into a strange country, uninhabited, and at a distance from those he had familiarly lived with, was a sore punishment of him:

and from, thy face shall I be hid; not from his omniscience and omnipresence, for there is no such thing as being hid from the all seeing eye of God, or flying from his presence, which is everywhere; but from his favour and good will, and the outward tokens of it, as well as from the place where his Shechinah or divine Majesty was; and which was the place of public worship, and where good men met and worshipped God, and offered sacrifice to him: and from the place of divine worship and the ordinances of it, and the church of God and communion with it, an hypocrite does not choose to be debarred:

and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; as was threatened him, (see Gill on “^{Q1042}Genesis 4:12”):

and it shall come to pass, that everyone that findeth me shall slay me; that is, some one, the first that should meet him, for he could be slain but by one; so odious he knew he should be to everyone, being under such marks of the divine displeasure, that his life would be in danger by whomsoever he should be found: and this being near an hundred and thirty years after the creation of man, (see ^{Q1025}Genesis 4:25) (^{Q1038}Genesis 5:3) there might in this time be a large number of men on earth; Adam and Eve procreating children immediately after the fall, and very probably many more besides Cain and Abel, and those very fruitful, bringing many at a birth and often, and few or none dying, the increase must be very great; and we read quickly after this of a city being built, (Gen 4:17). Cain seems to be more afraid of a corporeal death than to have any concern about his soul, and the eternal welfare of it, or to be in dread and fear of an eternal death, or wrath to come; though some think the words should be rendered in a prayer ^{f270}, “let it be that anyone that findeth me may kill me”; being weary of life under the horrors of a guilty conscience.

Ver. 15. *And the Lord said unto him*, etc.] In order to satisfy him, and make him easy in this respect, that: he need not fear an immediate or bodily death, which was showing him great clemency and lenity; or in answer to his begging for death, “therefore”, or as some render the word, taking them

for two, “not so”^{f271}; it shall not be that whoever finds thee shall slay thee, thou needest not be afraid of that; nor shall thy request be granted, that thou mightest be slain by the first man that meets thee: it was the will of God, that though Cain deserved to die, yet that he should not die immediately, but live a long miserable life, that it might be a terror to others not to commit the like crime; though rather the particle should be rendered “verily, surely, of a truth”^{f272}; so it will certainly be, it may be depended on:

whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold; seven times more than on Cain; that is, he shall be exceedingly punished; vengeance shall be taken on him in a very visible manner, to a very great degree; the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan are “unto or through seven generations;”

the meaning of which is, that the slayer of Cain should not only be punished in his own person, but in his posterity, even unto seven generations; and not as Jarchi and Aben Ezra interpret it, that God deferred his vengeance on Cain unto seven generations, and at the end of them took vengeance on him by Lamech, one of his own posterity, by whom he is supposed by that Jewish writer to be slain:

and the Lord set a mark upon Cain; about which there is a variety of sentiments^{f273}: some say it was a horn in his forehead: others, a leprosy in his face; others, a wild ghastly look; others, a shaking and trembling in all his limbs; and others, that there was an earthquake wherever he stepped: and others will have it, that the dog which guarded Abel’s flock was given him to accompany him in his travels, by which sign it might be known that he was not to be attacked, or to direct him from taking any dangerous road: some say it was a letter imprinted on his forehead, either taken out of the great and glorious name of God, as the Targum of Jonathan, or out of his own name, as Jarchi; others the mark or sign of the covenant of circumcision^{f274}: but as the word is often used for a sign or miracle, perhaps the better rendering and sense of the words may be, “and the Lord put”, or “gave a sign”^{f275}; that is, he wrought a miracle before him to assure him, that “whoever found him should not kill him”: so that this was not a mark or sign to others, to direct or point out to them that they should not kill him, or to deter them from it; but was a sign or miracle confirming him in this, that no one should kill him; agreeably to which is the note of Aben Ezra,

“it is right in my eyes that God made a sign (or wrought a miracle) for him, until he believed;”

by which he was assured that his life would be secure, go where he would; even that no one should “strike”^{f276} him, as the word is, much less kill him.

Ver. 16. *And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord*, etc.] Either from the place where the Lord was talking with him; or from the place where his glorious Majesty usually resided, where was some visible token of his presence, some stream of light and glory which showed him to be there, and which was at the east of the garden of Eden; from whence Cain was obliged to go, not being suffered to appear any more before God, or among his worshippers: there was a place near Tripoli in Syria, near where Mount Lebanon ends, called *προσωπον του ψευου*, “the face of God”, made mention of by Polybius^{f277}, and Strabo^{f278}: and was near those parts where some place the garden of Eden; and it is possible might have its name from some tradition that this was the place where the face of God was seen, or his presence enjoyed by our first parents after their ejection from Eden, and from whence Cain went forth:

and dwelt in the land of Nod; so called, not before he went there, but from his wandering up and down in it; continuing in no one place in it, as well as his mind was restless and uneasy; Jarchi mentions another reason of its name, that in every place where he went the earth shook under him, and men said, Depart from him, this is he that slew his brother:

on the east of Eden; further east from the place where his father Adam and his other children dwelt; not being allowed to continue any longer with them, or converse with them, after he had been guilty of so horrid a crime.

Ver. 17. *And Cain knew his wife*, etc.] Who this woman was is not certain, nor whether it was his first wife or not; whether his sister, or one that descended from Adam by another of his sons, since this was about the one hundred and thirtieth year of the creation. At first indeed Cain could marry no other than his sister; but whether he married Abel’s twin sister, or his own twin sister, is disputed; the Jews say^{f279}, that Cain’s twin sister was not a beautiful woman, and therefore he said, I will kill my brother and take his wife: on the other hand, the Arabic writers say^{f280}, that Adam would have had Cain married Abel’s twin sister, whom they call Awin; and Abel have married Cain’s twin sister, whom they call Azron; but Cain would

not, because his own sister was the handsomest; and this they take to be the occasion of the quarrel, which issued in the murder of Abel.

And she conceived and bare Enoch; which signifies “trained up”, not in the true religion, and in the ways of God and godliness, as one of this name descending from Seth was, who is said to walk with God; but in the practices of his father Cain, and in a wicked course of life:

and he builded a city: for a settlement on earth, thinking of nothing but this world, and the things of it; or to secure himself from being slain by men; or it may be for his amusement, to divert his thoughts from the melancholy scene always presented to his mind, by being thus employed; and his posterity growing numerous, he took this method to keep them together, and that they might be able to defend themselves from the assaults of others. Some render the words, “he was building a city”^{f281}; as if he did not live to finish it; but it looks as if it was finished by him, by what follows:

and called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch: not after his own name, which was odious and infamous, but after his son’s name, to show his affection to him, and that his name might be continued in ages to come; (see ^{<991>}Psalm 49:11). This was the first city that was built, that we read of. Sir Walter Raleigh conjectures^{f282} that the Henochii or Heniochi of Pliny, Ptolemy, and other writers, took their name from this city of Enoch, or from the country where it stood, when it was repeopled after the flood, since these people were due east from the garden of Eden.

(For Cain to marry his sister or any other close relation was not harmful as it is today. There would be few if any genetic disorders at this time.

However, as time passed, the human race accumulated more and more genetic defects, so by the time of Moses, the laws against incest, as given in (^{<880>}Leviticus 18:1-20:27), were necessary. These laws helped prevent deformed children. Ed.)

Ver. 18. *And unto Enoch was born Irad*, etc.] But of neither of them is any other mention made, either in sacred or profane history; nor is it said how old Enoch was when Irad was born, nor how long he lived after; as is recorded of Adam, Seth, and their posterity:

[and] Irad begat Mehujael, [and] Mehujael begat Methusael; of whom also we have no other account;

[and] Methusael begat Lamech; and it seems for the sake of Lamech that the genealogy of Cain's posterity is described and carried down thus far, some things being to be taken notice of concerning him. The names of the immediate posterity of Genos or Cain, according to Sanchoniatho, and, as Philo Byblius ^{f283} has translated them, were light, fire, and flame; who found out fire by rubbing pieces of wood together, and taught the use of it, from whence they seem to have their names. These begat sons that exceeded others in bulk and height, whose names were given to the mountains they first possessed, and from them were called Cassius, Libanus, Antilibanus, and Brathy; and of them were begotten Memrumus and Hyspuranius, so called by their mothers, women, who, without shame, lay with everyone they could meet with; of these came Agreus and Halieus, the inventors of fishing and hunting; and these seem to answer to the generations from Cain to Lamech; and it is no wonder Moses should take no more notice of such a set of men; which, according to their own historian, deserved but little regard.

Ver. 19. *And Lamech took unto him two wives,* etc.] He was the first we read of that introduced polygamy, contrary to the first institution of marriage, whereby only one man and one woman were to be joined together, and become one flesh, (^(C10024)Genesis 2:24). This evil practice, though it began in the race of wicked Cain, was in later ages followed by some among the people of God, which was connived at because of the hardness of their hearts; otherwise it was not so from the beginning. This was the first instance of it known; Jarchi says it was the way of the generation before the flood to have one wife for procreation of children, and the other for carnal pleasure; the latter drank a cup of sterility, that she might be barren, and was adorned as a bride, and lived deliciously; and the other was used roughly, and mourned like a widow; but by this instance it does not appear, for these both bore children to Lamech.

The name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah; whose daughters they were cannot be said, no doubt of the race of Cain; the name of the one signifies an "ornament", or beauty, and might seem to answer to the account Jarchi gives of the wife for pleasure, if there were any foundation for it; and the other signifies a "shadow", being continually under the shadow of her husband.

Ver. 20. *And Adah bare Jabal,* etc.] According to Hillerus ^{f284}, this name, and Jubal and Tubal, after mentioned, all signify a river; why Lamech

should call all his sons by names signifying the same thing, is not easy to say.

He was the father of such as dwelt in tents, and [of such as have] cattle: not in a proper sense the father of them, though his posterity might succeed him in the same business; but he was the first author and inventor of tents or movable habitations, which could be carried from place to place, for the convenience of pasturage for cattle: he was not the first that had cattle in his possession, or that first fed and kept them, for Abel, the son of Adam, was a keeper of sheep; but he was the first that found out the use of tents, and the pitching of them to abide in at proper places, so long as the pasturage lasted, and then to remove elsewhere; as we find in later times the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob did, and as the Scenitae and Nomades among the Arabs, and who retain the same method of keeping cattle to this day; and so the words may be rendered according to Bochart^{f285} and Noldius^{f286},

“he was the father of such that dwell in tents “with” cattle.”

Heidegger^{f287} thinks this Jabal to be the same with Pales, the god of shepherds^{f288}, to whom the Palilia were sacred with the Heathens; and that from Jabal may be formed “Bal”, leaving out the “jod”, as is sometimes done, and by adding the termination, it will be “Bales”, and by changing the letters of the same organ, “Pales”.

Ver. 21. *And his brother's name was Jubal,* etc.] This was another son of Lamech by Adah, and his name differs only in one letter from his brother's;

he was the father of all such that handle the harp and organ: he was the inventor of instrumental music, both of stringed instruments, such as were touched by the fingers, or struck with a quill, as the “harp”; and of wind instruments, such as were blown, as the “organ”, which seems not to be the same we call so, being a late invention; but however a pleasant instrument, as its name signifies. Jubal is thought by some to be the same with Apollo, to whom with the Greeks the invention of the harp is ascribed; and some have been of opinion, that the jubilee trumpet was so called from Jubal, (~~(Gen 10)~~ Leviticus 25:9). Sanchoniatho^{f289} makes Chrysor or Vulcan, the same with Tubalcain, the brother of Jubal, to exercise himself in eloquence, songs and divination, confounding or mistaking the employment of the two brothers. The Arabs have such a notion of the Cainites being the inventors of music, that they commonly call a singing girl “Cainah”^{f290}; and the

Arabic writers ^{f291} make Jubal to be the first inventor of music, and that the beasts and birds gathered together to hear him; the same that is said of Orpheus.

Ver. 22. *And Zillah, she also bare Tubalcain*, etc.] Thought by many to be the same with Vulcan, his name and business agreeing; for the names are near in sound, Tubalcain may easily pass into Vulcan; and who, with the Heathens, was the god of the smiths, and the maker of Jupiter's thunderbolts, as this was an artificer in iron and brass, as follows: his name is compounded of two words, the latter of which was no doubt put into his name in memory of Cain his great ancestor; the former Josephus ^{f292} reads Thobel, and says of him, that he exceeded all in strength, and had great skill in military affairs:

an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron; he taught men the way of melting metals, and of making armour and weapons of war, and other instruments, for various uses, out of them; and he seems to be the same with the Chrysor of Sanchoniatho; for he says ^{f293} of them (Agreus and Halieus) were begotten two brothers, the inventors of iron, and of working of it: one of these, called Chrysor, is said to be Hephaestus or Vulcan; and Chrysor, as Bochartus ^{f294} seems rightly to conjecture, is **רְוַאֲרִי**, “Choresh-Ur, a worker in fire”; that, by means of fire, melted metals, and cast them into different forms, and for different uses; and one of these words is used in the text of Tubalcain; and so, according to Diodorus Siculus ^{f295}, Vulcan signifies fire, and was not only the inventor of fire, but he says he was the inventor of all works in iron, brass, gold, and silver, and of all other things wrought by fire, and of all other uses of fire, both by artificers and all other men, and therefore he was called by all **πυρ**, “fire”. Clemens of Alexandria ^{f296} ascribes the invention of brass and iron to the Idaeans or priests of Cybele in Cyprus; and so Sophocles in Strabo ^{f297}:

and the sister of Tubalcain was Naamah; whose name signifies “pleasant”, fair and beautiful; and is thought by some to be the Venus of the Heathens; the Arabic writers ^{f298} say she was a most beautiful woman, and found out colours and painting; and by others Minerva; and Josephus ^{f299} says she excelled in the knowledge of divine things; and Minerva is by the Greeks called Nemanoum ^{f300}. The Jews say ^{f301} she was the wife of Noah; and some of them say ^{f302} she was the wife of one Shimron, and the mother of the evil spirit Asmodeus, mentioned in Tobit, and of whom other demons were begotten: the Targuru of Jonathan adds,

“she was the mistress of lamentation and songs;”

but our Bishop Cumberland ^{f303} conjectures, that she was the wife of Ham, was with him in the ark, and after the flood was the means of leading him into idolatry: what led him to this conjecture was, that he observed in Plutarch, that the wife of Cronus, the same with Ham, is by some called Nemaus, which brought Naamah to his mind. Josephus ^{f304} makes the number of children Lamech had by his two wives to be seventy seven.

Ver. 23. *And Lamech said unto his wives, Adah and Zillah,* etc.]

Confessing what he had done, or boasting what he would do should he be attacked; or in order to make his wives easy, who might fear from his fierceness and cruelty; and the murders he had committed, or on account of Abel’s murder, (^(00HS)Genesis 4:15) that either the judgments of God would fall upon him and them, or some man or other would dispatch him and his; wherefore calling them together, he thus bespeaks them,

hear my voice, ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech; this he said in an imperious manner to them, demanding their attention and regard, and as glorying in, instead of being ashamed of his polygamy, and in a blustering way, as neither fearing God nor man; or rather speaking comfortably to them, to remove their fears:

for I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt; which, as some say, were his great-grandfather Cain, and his son Tubalcain: according to a tradition of the Jews ^{f305}, it was after this manner; Cain being old, and blind, and weary, sat in a thicket among the trees to rest himself; when Lamech, who was blind also, and led by Tubalcain hunting, who seeing Cain, and taking him for a wild beast, bid Lamech draw his bow, which he did, and killed him; but coming nearer, and finding it was Cain, was wroth and angry, and slew the young man: the Arabic writers ^{f306} tell the story with a little variation, and

“Lamech being in a wood with one of his sons, and hearing a noise in it, supposing it to be a wild beast, cast a stone, which fell upon Cain, and killed him ignorantly; and the lad that led him said, what hast thou done? thou hast killed Cain; at which being very sorrowful after the manner of penitents, he smote his hands together, and the lad standing before him, he struck his head with both his hands, and killed him unawares; and coming to his wives, Adah and Zillah, said to them, hear my word, he that slew Abel

shall be avenged sevenfold, but Lamech seventy times seven, who killed a man with a cast of a stone, and a young man by clapping of his hands.”

And our version, and others, imply, that he killed both a man, and a young man, or some one person or more, and that he was sorry for it, made confession of it; it was to the wounding and grief of his soul, which does not so well agree with one of the wicked race of Cain: wherefore the words may be rendered, “though I have slain a man”^{f307}, that is nothing to you, you are not accountable for it, nor have any thing to fear coming upon you by reason of that; it is to my own wounding, damage, and hurt, if to any, and not to you. Some versions render it, “I would slay a man”, etc.^{f308} any man, young or old, that should attack me; I fear no man: if any man wounds me, or offers to do me any hurt, I would slay him at once; I doubt not but I should be more than a match for him, be he who he will that shall set upon me, and kill him; though I might receive some slight wound, or some little hurt in the engagement, and therefore you need not be afraid of any man’s hurting me. The Arabic version reads interrogatively, “have I killed a man etc.?” and so some others^{f309}, I have not; with which agree the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan,

“I have not killed a man;”

for which he or his posterity should be punished, as they interpreted it; and therefore his wives had no need to fear any ill should befall him or them, or that the murder of Abel should be avenged on them, this being the seventh generation in which it was to be avenged, (^{<0045>}Genesis 4:15) wherefore it follows,

Ver. 24. *If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold.*] Which if understood of him as confessing and lamenting his sin of murder, the sense is, if Cain was so severely punished for killing one man, of how much sorer punishment am I deserving, and shall have, who have killed two persons, and that after I had seen the punishment of Cain, and yet took no warning by it? or if he that killed Cain, who slew his brother, was to be avenged sevenfold, or to seven generations, then how much more, or longer, shall he be avenged, that shall slay me, who have slain none, or however not designedly; and therefore you may be easy and quiet, your fears, either from God or man, are groundless.

Ver. 25. *And Adam knew his wife again*, etc.] The Targum of Jonathan adds, at the end of a hundred and thirty years after Abel was killed, (see ^{<ORR>}Genesis 5:3) but, according to Bishop Usher, Seth was born the same year, which is most probable.

And she bare a son, and called his name Seth, that is, “put, placed, set”; not with any respect to Cain, who had no settled fixed abode, but wandered about; or to Seth as a foundation of the church and true religion, being a type of Christ the only foundation, though he may be considered in such a light; but the reason of his name follows:

for God, [said she], hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew; that is, another son in his room; and by calling him a “seed”, she may have respect unto the promised seed, whom she once thought Cain was, or however expected him in his line, as being the firstborn; but he proving a wicked man, and having slain his brother Abel, on whom her future hope was placed, has another son given her, and substituted in his room, in whom, and in whose family, the true religion would be preserved, and from whom the Messiah, the promised seed, would spring (see ^{<RRG>}Galatians 3:16).

Ver. 26. *And to Seth, to him also there was born a son*, etc.] When he was an hundred and five years old, (^{<ORR>}Genesis 5:6) and this is mentioned as a further proof and instance of God’s goodness to Adam’s family in this line, that there was a succession in it, where the true worship of God was kept, and from whence the Messiah was to arise, and as a pledge and confirmation of it:

and he called his name Enos; which is generally interpreted a weak, feeble, frail, mortal, miserable man; which Seth being sensible of, and observing the sorrows of human life, and especially an increase of them among good men through the growing corruptions of the age, gave this name to his son; though it may be observed, that the derivation of this name may be from the Arabic word ^{f310}<Arabic> “anas”, to be sociable and familiar; man being a sociable creature, not only in civil but in religious things, and so a reason of the name may be taken from what follows;

then began men to call upon the name of the Lord; not but that Adam and Abel, and all good men, had called upon the name of the Lord, and prayed to him, or worshipped him before this time personally, and in their families; but now the families of good men being larger, and more numerous, they

joined together in social and public worship: or since it may be thought there were public assemblies for religious worship before this time, though it may be they had been neglected, and now were revived with more zeal and vigour; seeing the Cainites incorporating themselves, and joining families together, and building cities, and carrying on their civil and religious affairs among themselves, they also formed themselves into distinct bodies; and not only separated from them, but called themselves by a different name; for so the words may be rendered: “then began men to call themselves”, or “to be called by the name of the Lord”^{f311}; the sons of God, as distinct from the sons of men; which distinction may be observed in (~~Gen~~ Genesis 6:2) and has been retained more or less ever since: some choose to translate the words, “then began men to call in the name of the Lord”^{f312}; that is, to call upon God in the name of the Messiah, the Mediator between God and man; having now, since the birth of Seth, and especially of Enos, clearer notions of the promised seed, and of the use of him, and his name, in their addresses to God; (see ~~John~~ John 14:13, ~~John~~ 14:14 16:23,24). The Jews give a very different sense of these words; the Targum of Onkelos is,

“then in his days the children of men ceased from praying in the name of the Lord;”

and the Targum of Jonathan is,

“this was the age, in the days of which they began to err, and they made themselves idols, and surnamed their idols by the name of the Word of the Lord;”

with which agrees the note of Jarchi,

“then they began to call the names of men, and the names of herbs, by the name of the blessed God, to make idols of them:”

and some of them say, particularly Maimonides^{f313}, that Enos himself erred, and fell into idolatry, and was the first inventor of images, by the mediation of which men prayed to God: but all this seems to be without foundation, and injurious to the character of this antediluvian patriarch; nor does it appear that idolatry obtained in the posterity of Seth, or among the people of God so early; nor is such an account agreeable to the history which Moses is giving of the family of Seth, in opposition to that of Cain; wherefore one or other of the former senses is best.