

Genesis 4:1-26

by John Calvin

The sermon explores the story of Cain and Abel, emphasizing the themes of sin, divine acceptance, and the consequences of disobedience to God.

Scripture: Genesis 4:1-23

Topics: "Sin And Consequences", "Genuine Worship"

Description

John Calvin preaches about the consequences of sin through the story of Cain and Abel, highlighting the importance of genuine worship and obedience to God. Cain's rejection of God's correction and his descent into fear and restlessness serve as a warning against hardening one's heart against God's discipline. The mark placed on Cain symbolizes God's protection and judgment, showing that sin will always have consequences. The narrative of Cain's descendants, including Lamech's polygamy and violence, illustrates the corrupting influence of sin and the need for repentance and obedience to God.

Transcript

1. And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD.
1. Et Adam cognovit Hava uxorem suam: quae concepit, et peperit Cain: et dixit, Acquisivi virum a Jehova.
2. And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.
2. Et addidit parere fratrem ejus Ebel: fuit autem Ebel pastor ovium, et Cain fuit cultor terrae:
3. And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD.
3. Et fuit, a fine dierum adduxit Cain de fructu terrae oblationem Jehovae.
4. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering:
4. Et Ebel etiam ipse adduxit de primogenitis pecudum suarum, et de adipe earum: et respexit Jehova ad Ebel, et ad oblationem ejus:

5. But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.

5. Ad Cain vero et ad oblationem ejus non respexit: iratus est itaque Cain valde, et concidit vultus ejus.

6. And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen?

6. Et dixit Jehova ad Cain, Utquid excanduisti? et utquid concidit vultus tuus?

7. If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.

7. Annon si recte egeris, erit acceptatio? et si non bene egeris, in foribus peccatum cubat: et ad te erit appetitus ejus, et tu dominaberis ei.

8. And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.

8. Et loquutus est Cain ad Ebel fratrem suum: et accidit quum essent in agro, insurrexit Cain contra Ebel fratrem suum, et occidit eum.

9. And the LORD said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?

9. Et dixit Jehova ad Cain, Ubi est Ebel frater tuus? Et ait, nescio: nunquid custos fratris mei sum ego?

10. And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.

10. Et dixit, Quid fecisti? vox sanguinis fratris tui clamat ad me e terra.

11. And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand;

11. nunc itaque maledictus eris e terra, quae aperuit os suum ut exciperet sanguinem fratris tui e manu tua.

12. When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.

12. Quando coles terram, non addet ut det vim suam tibi: vagus et profugus eris in terra.

13. And Cain said unto the LORD, My punishment is greater than I can bear.

13. Et dixit Cain ad Jehovam, Major est punitio mea quam ut feram.

14. Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me.

14. Ecce, ejecisti me hodie a facie terrae, et a facie tua abscondar, eroque vagus et profugus in terra: et erit, ut quicumque invenerit me, occidat me.

15. And the LORD said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the LORD set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him.

15. Et dixit ei Jehova, Propterea quicumque occiderit Cain, septuplum vindicabitur. Et posuit Jehova signum in Cain, ne percuteret eum ullus qui inveniret eum.

16. And Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden.

16. Et egressus est Cain a facie Jehovae, et habitavit in terra Nod ad Orientem Heden.

17. And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived, and bare Enoch: and he builded a city, and called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch.

17. Cognovit autem Cain uxorem suam: quae concepit, et peperit Hanoch: aedificavitque civitatem, et vocavit nomen civitatis nomine filii sui Hanoch.

18. And unto Enoch was born Irad: and Irad begat Mehujael: and Mehujael begat Methusael: and Methusael begat Lamech.

18. Porro natus est ipsi Hanoch Hiram, et Hiram genuit Mehujael, et Mehujael genuit Methusael: et Methusael genuit Lamech.

19. And Lamech took unto him two wives: the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah.

19. Et accepit sibi Lamech duas uxores: nomen unius, Hada, et nomen secundae, Silla.

20. And Adah bare Jabal: he was the father of such as dwell in tents, and of such as have cattle.

20. Et genuit Hada Jabel, ipse fuit pater inhabitantis tentorium, et pecoris.

21. And his brother's name was Jubal: he was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ.

21. Et nomen fratris ejus, Jubal: ipse fuit pater omnis contrectantis citharam et organum.

22. And Zillah, she also bare Tubalcain, an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron: and the sister of Tubalcain was Naamah.

22. Et Silla etiam ipsa peperit Thubal -- Cain, polientem omne opificium aereum et ferreum: et soror Thubal -- Cain, fuit Nahama.

23. And Lamech said unto his wives, Adah and Zillah, Hear my voice; ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech: for I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt.

23. Et dixit Lamech uxoribus suis Hada et Silla, Audite vocem meam uxores Lamech, auscultate sermonem meum, Quoniam virum occidero in vulnere meo, et adolescentem in livore meo.

24. If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold.

24. Quia septuplo vindicabitur Cain, et Lamech septuagies septies.

25. And Adam knew his wife again; and she bare a son, and called his name Seth: For God, said she, hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew.

25. Cognovit autem Adam rursus uxorem suam: quae peperit filium, et vocavit nomen ejus Seth, Quia posuit mihi, inquit, Deus semen alterum pro Abel: quia occidit eum Cain.

26. And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the LORD.

26. Et ipsi Seth etiam natus est filius, et vocavit nomen ejus Enos: tunc coeptum est invocari nomen Domini.

1. And Adam knew his wife Eve . Moses now begins to describe the propagation of mankind; in which history it is important to notice that this benediction of God, "Increase and multiply," was not abolished by sin; and not only so, but that the heart of Adam was divinely confirmed so that he did not shrink with horror from the production of offspring. And as Adam recognised, in the very commencement of having offspring, the truly paternal moderation of God's anger, so was he afterwards compelled to taste the bitter fruits of his own sin, when Cain slew Abel. But let us follow the narration of Moses. 222 Although Moses does not state that Cain and Abel were twins it yet seems to me probable that they were so; for, after he has said that Eve, by her first conception, brought forth her firstborn, he soon after subjoins that she also bore another; and thus, while commemorating a double birth, he speaks only of one conception. 223 Let those who think differently enjoy their own opinion; to me, however it appears accordant with reason, when the world had to be replenished with inhabitants, that not only Cain and Abel should have been brought forth at one births but many also afterwards, both males and females.

I have gotten a man . The word which Moses uses signifies both to acquire and to possess ; and it is of little consequence to the present context which of the two you adopt. It is more important to inquire why she says that she has received, אֶת־יְהוָה (eth Yehovah .) Some expound it, 'with the Lord;' that is, 'by the kindness, or by the favor, of the Lord;' as if Eve would refer the accepted blessing of offspring to the Lord, as it is said in Ps 127:3, "The fruit of the womb is the gift of the Lord." A second interpretation comes to the same point, 'I have possessed a man from the Lord;' and the version of Jerome is of equal force, 'Through the Lord.' 224 These three readings, I say, tend to this point, that Eve gives thanks to God for having begun to raise up a posterity through her, though she was deserving of perpetual barrenness, as well as of utter destruction. Others, with greater subtlety, expound the words, 'I have gotten the man of the Lord;' as if Eve understood that she already possessed that conqueror of the serpent, who had been divinely promised to her. Hence they celebrate the faith of Eve, because she embraced, by faith, the promise concerning the bruising of the head of the devil through her seed; only they think that she was mistaken in the person or the individual, seeing that she would restrict to Cain what had been promised concerning Christ. To me, however, this seems to be the genuine sense, that while Eve congratulates herself on the birth of a son, she offers him to God, as the first-fruits of his race. Therefore, I think it ought to be translated, 'I have obtained a man from the Lord', which approaches more nearly the Hebrew phrase. Moreover, she calls a newborn infant a man, because she saw the human race renewed, which both she and her husband had ruined by their own fault. 225

2. And she again bare his brother Abel 226 It is well known whence the name of Cain is deduced, and for what reason it was given to him. For his mother said, אֶת־יְהוָה (kaniti .) I have gotten a man; and therefore she called his name Cain. 227 The same explanation is not given with respect to Abel. 228 The

opinion of some, that he was so called by his mother out of contempt, as if he would prove superfluous and almost useless, is perfectly absurd; for she remembered the end to which her fruitfulness would lead; nor had she forgotten the benediction, "Increase and multiply." We should (in my judgment) more correctly infer that whereas Eve had testified, in the name given to her firstborn, the joy which suddenly burst upon her, and celebrated the grace of God; she afterwards, in her other offspring, returned to the recollection of the miseries of the human race. And certainly, though the new blessing of God was an occasion for no common joy; yet, on the other hand, she could not look upon a posterity devoted to so many and great evils, of which she had herself been the cause, without the most bitter grief. Therefore, she wished that a monument of her sorrow should exist in the name she gave her second son; and she would, at the same time, hold up a common mirror, by which she might admonish her whole progeny of the vanity of man. That some censure the judgment of Eve as absurd, because she regarded her just and holy sons as worthy to be rejected in comparison with her other wicked and abandoned son, is what I do not approve. For Eve had reason why she should congratulate herself in her firstborn; and no blame attaches to her for having proposed, in her second son, a memorial to herself and to all others, of their own vanity, to induce them to exercise themselves in diligent reflection on their own evils.

And Abel was a keeper of sheep . Whether both the brothers had married wives, and each had a separate home, Moses does not relate. This therefore, remains to us in uncertainty, although it is probable that Cain was married before he slew his brother; since Moses soon after adds, that he knew his wife, and begot children: and no mention is there made of his marriage. Both followed a kind of life in itself holy and laudable. For the cultivation of the earth was commanded by God; and the labor of feeding sheep was not less honorable than useful; in short, the whole of rustic life was innocent and simple, and most of all accommodated to the true order of nature.

This, therefore, is to be maintained in the first place, that both exercised themselves in labors approved by God, and necessary to the common use of human life. Whence it is inferred, that they had been well instructed by their father. The rite of sacrificing more fully confirms this; because it proves that they had been accustomed to the worship of God. The life of Cain, therefore, was, in appearance, very well regulated; inasmuch as he cultivated the duties of piety towards God, and sought a maintenance for himself and his, by honest and just labor, as became a provident and sober father of a family.

Moreover, it will be here proper to recall to memory what we have before said, that the first men, though they had been deprived of the sacrament of divine love, when they were prohibited from the tree of life, had yet been only so deprived of it, that a hope of salvation was still left to them, of which they had the signs in sacrifices. For we must remember, that the custom of sacrificing was not rashly devised by them, but was divinely delivered to them. For since the Apostle refers the dignity of Abel's accepted sacrifice to faith , it follows, first, that he had not offered it without the command of God, (Heb 11:4.)

Secondly, it has been true from the beginning, of the world, that obedience is better than any sacrifices, (1Sa 15:22,) and is the parent of all virtues. Hence it also follows that man had been taught by God what was pleasing to Him. thirdly, since God has been always like himself, we may not say that he was ever delighted with mere carnal and external worship. Yet he deemed those sacrifices of the first age acceptable. It follows, therefore, further, that they had been spiritually offered to him: that is, that the holy fathers did not mock him with empty ceremonies, but comprehended something more sublime and secret; which they could not have done without divine instruction. 229 For it is interior truth alone 230 which, in the external signs, distinguishes the genuine and rational worship of God from that which is gross and superstitious.

And, certainly, they could not sincerely devote their mind to the worship of God, unless they had been assured of his benevolence; because voluntary reverence springs from a sense of, and confidence in, his goodness; but, on the other hand, whosoever regards God hostile to himself, is compelled to flee from him with very fear and horror. We see then that God, when he takes away the tree of life, in which he had first given the pledge of his grace, proves and declares himself to be propitious to man by other means.

Should anyone object, that all nations have had their own sacrifices, and that in these there was no pure and solid religion, the solution is ready: namely, that mention is here made of such sacrifices as are lawful and approved by God; of which nothing but an adulterated imitation afterwards descended to the Gentiles. For although nothing but the word ■■■■ (minchah , 231) is here placed, which properly signifies a gift , and therefore is extended generally to every kind of oblation; yet we may infer, for two reasons, that the command respecting sacrifice was given to the fathers from the beginning; first, for the purpose of making the exercise of piety common to all, seeing they professed themselves to be the property of God, and esteemed all they possessed as received from him; and, secondly, for the purpose of admonishing them of the necessity of some expiation in order to their reconciliation with God.

When each offers something of his property, there is a solemn giving of thanks, as if he would testify by his present act that he owes to God whatever he possesses. But the sacrifice of cattle and the effusion of blood contains something further, namely, that the offerer should have death before his eyes; and should, nevertheless, believe in God as propitious to him. Concerning the sacrifices of Adam no mention is made.

4. And the Lord had respect unto Abel , etc . God is said to have respect unto the man to whom he vouchsafes his favor. We must, however, notice the order here observed by Moses; for he does not simply state that the worship which Abel had paid was pleasing to God, but he begins with the person of the offerer; by which he signifies, that God will regard no works with favor except those the doer of which is already previously accepted and approved by him. And no wonder; for man sees things which are apparent, but God looks into the heart, (1Sa 16:7;) therefore, he estimates works no otherwise than as they proceed from the fountain of the heart.

Whence also it happens, that he not only rejects but abhors the sacrifices of the wicked, however splendid they may appear in the eyes of men. For if he, who is polluted in his soul, by his mere touch contaminates, with his own impurities, things otherwise pure and clean, how can that but be impure which proceeds from himself? When God repudiates the feigned righteousness in which the Jews were glorying, he objects, through his Prophet, that their hands were "full of blood," (Isa 1:15.)

For the same reason Haggai contends against the hypocrites. The external appearance, therefore, of works, which may delude our too carnal eyes, vanishes in the presence of God. Nor were even the heathens ignorant of this; whose poets, when they speak with a sober and well-regulated mind of the worship of God, require both a clean heart and pure hands. Hence, even among all nations, is to be traced the solemn rite of washing before sacrifices. Now seeing that in another place, the Spirit testifies, by the mouth of Peter, that 'hearts are purified by faith,' (Ac 15:9;) and seeing that the purity of the holy patriarchs was of the very same kind, the apostle does not in vain infer, that the offering of Abel was, by faith, more excellent than that of Cain.

Therefore, in the first place, we must hold, that all works done before faith, whatever splendor of righteousness may appear in them, were nothing but mere sins, being defiled from their roots, and were offensive to the Lord, whom nothing can please without inward purity of heart. I wish they who imagine

that men, by their own motion of freewill, are rendered meet to receive the grace of God, would reflect on this. Certainly, no controversy would then remain on the question, whether God justifies men gratuitously, and that by faith?

For this must be received as a settled point, that, in the judgment of God, no respect is had to works until man is received into favor. Another point appears equally certain; since the whole human race is hateful to God, there is no other way of reconciliation to divine favor than through faith. Moreover, since faith is a gratuitous gift of God, and a special illumination of the Spirit, then it is easy to infer, that we are prevented 232 by his mere grace, just as if he had raised us from the dead.

In which sense also Peter says, that it is God who purifies the hearts by faith. For there would be no agreement of the fact with the statement, unless God had so formed faith in the hearts of men that it might be truly deemed his gift. It may now be seen in what way purity is the effect of faith. It is a vapid and trifling philosophy, to adduce this as the cause of purity, that men are not induced to seek God as their rewarder except by faith. They who speak thus entirely bury the grace of God, which his Spirit chiefly commends.

Others also speak coldly, who teach that we are purified by faiths only on account of the gift of regenerations in order that we may be accepted of God. For not only do they omit half the truth, but build without a foundation; since, on account of the curse on the human race, it became necessary that gratuitous reconciliation should precede. Again, since God never so regenerates his people in this world, that they can worship him perfectly; no work of man can possibly be acceptable without expiation.

And to this point the ceremony of legal washing belongs, in order that men may learn, that as often as they wish to draw near unto God, purity must be sought elsewhere. Wherefore God will then at length have respect to our obedience, when he looks upon us in Christ.

5. But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect . It is not to be doubted, that Cain conducted himself as hypocrites are accustomed to do; namely, that he wished to appease God, as one discharging a debt, by external sacrifices, without the least intention of dedicating himself to God. But this is true worship, to offer ourselves as spiritual sacrifices to God. When God sees such hypocrisy, combined with gross and manifest mockery of himself; it is not surprising that he hates it, and is unable to bear it; whence also it follows, that he rejects with contempt the works of those who withdraw themselves from him. For it is his will, first to have us devoted to himself; he then seeks our works in testimony of our obedience to him, but only in the second place. It is to be remarked, that all the figments by which men mock both God and themselves are the fruits of unbelief: To this is added pride, because unbelievers, despising the Mediator's grace, throw themselves fearlessly into the presence of God. The Jews foolishly imagine that the oblations of Cain were unacceptable, because he defrauded God of the full ears of corn, and meanly offered him only barren or half-filled ears. Deeper and more hidden was the evil; namely that impurity of heart of which I have been speaking; just as, on the other hand, the strong scent of burning fat could not conciliate the divine favor to the sacrifices of Abel; but, being pervaded by the good odour of faith, they had a sweet-smelling savor.

And Cain was very wroth . In this place it is asked, whence Cain understood that his brother's oblations were preferred to his? The Hebrews, according to their manner, report to divinations and imagine that the sacrifice of Abel was consumed by celestial fire; but, since we ought not to allow ourselves so great a license as to invent miracles, for which we have no testimony of Scripture, let Jewish fables be dismissed. 233 It is, indeed, more probable, that Cain formed the judgement which Moses records, from the events

which followed. He saw that it was better with his brother than with himself; thence he inferred, that God was pleased with his brother, and displeased with himself. We know also, that to hypocrites nothing seems of greater value, nothing is more to their heart's content, than earthly blessing. moreover, in the person of Cain is portrayed to us the likeness of a wicked man, who yet desires to be esteemed just, and even arrogates to himself the first place among saints. Such persons truly, by external works, strenuously labor to deserve well at the hands of God; but, retaining a heart inwrapped in deceit, they present to him nothing but a mask; so that, in their labourious and anxious religious worship, there is nothing sincere, nothing but mere pretense. When they afterwards see that they gain no advantage, they betray the venom of their minds; for they not only complain against God, but break forth in manifest fury, so that, if they were able, they would gladly tear him down from his heavenly throne. Such is the innate pride of all hypocrites, that, by the very appearance of obedience, they would hold God as under obligation to them; because they cannot escape from his authority, they try to sooth him with blandishments, as they would a child; in the meantime, while they count much of their fictitious trifles, they think that God does them great wrong if he does not applaud them; but when he pronounces their offerings frivolous and of no value in his sight, they first begin to murmur, and then to rage. Their impiety alone hinders God from being reconciled unto them; but they wish to bargain with God on their own terms. When this is denied, they burn with furious indignation, which, though conceived against God, they cast forth upon his children. Thus, when Cain was angry with God, his fury was poured forth on his unoffending brother. When Moses says, "his countenance fell," (the word countenance is in Hebrew put in the plural number for the singular,) he means, that not only was he seized with a sudden vehement anger, but that, from a lingering sadness, he cherished a feeling so malignant that he was wasting with envy.

6. And the Lord said unto Cain . God now proceeds against Cain himself, and cites him to His tribunal, that the wretched man may understand that his rage can profit him nothing. He wishes honor to be given him for his sacrifices; but because he does not obtain it, he is furiously angry. Meanwhile, he does not consider that through his own fault he had failed to gain his wish; for had he but been conscious of his inward evil, he would have ceased to expostulate with God, and to rage against his guiltless brother. Moses does not state in what manner God spoke. Whether a vision was presented to him, or he heard an oracle from heaven, or was admonished by secret inspiration, he certainly felt himself bound by a divine judgment. To apply this to the person of Adam, as being the prophet and interpreter of God in censuring his son, is constrained and even frigid. I understand what it is which good men, not less pious than learned, propose, when they sport with such fancies. Their intention is to honor the external ministry of the word, and to cut off the occasion which Satan takes to insinuate his illusions under the color of revelation. 234 Truly I confess, nothing is more useful than that pious minds should be retained, under the order of preaching, in obedience to the Scripture, that they may not seek the mind of God in erratic speculations. But we may observe, that the word of God was delivered from the beginning by oracles, in order that afterwards, when administered by the hands of men, it might receive the greater reverence. I also acknowledge that the office of teaching was enjoined upon Adam, and do not doubt that he diligently admonished his children: yet they who think that God only spoke through his ministers, too violently restrict the words of Moses. Let us rather conclude, that, before the heavenly teaching was committed to public records, God often made known his will by extraordinary methods, and that here was the foundation which supported reverence for the word; while the doctrine delivered through the hands of men was like the edifice itself. Certainly, though I should be silent, all men would acknowledge how greatly such an imagination as that to which we refer, abates the force of the divine reprimand. Therefore, as the voice of God had previously so sounded in the ears of Adam, that he certainly perceived God to speak; so is it also now directed to Cain.

7. If thou does well . In these words God reproves Cain for having been unjustly angry, inasmuch as the blame of the whole evil lay with himself. For foolish indeed was his complaint and indignation at the rejection of sacrifices, the defects of which he had taken no care to amend. Thus all wicked men, after they have been long and vehemently enraged against God, are at length so convicted by the Divine judgment, that they vainly desire to transfer to others the cause of the evil.

The Greek interpreters recede, in this place, far from the genuine meaning of Moses. Since, in that age, there were none of those marks or points which the Hebrews use instead of vowels, it was more easy, in consequence of the affinity of words to each other, to strike into an extraneous sense. I however, as any one, moderately versed in the Hebrew language, will easily judge of their error, I will not pause to refute it. 235 Yet even those who are skilled in the Hebrew tongue differ not a little among themselves, although only respecting a single word; for the Greeks change the whole sentence.

Among those who agree concerning the context and the substance of the address, there is a difference respecting the word ■■■■ (seait ,) which is truly in the imperative mood, but ought to be resolved into a noun substantive. Yet this is not the real difficulty; but, since the verb ■■■■ (nasa , 236) signifies sometimes to exalt , sometimes to take away or remit, sometimes to offer , and sometimes to accept , interpreters vary among themselves, as each adopts this or the other meaning.

Some of the Hebrew Doctors refer it to the countenance of Cain, as if God promised that he would lift it up though now cast down with sorrow. Other of the Hebrews apply it to the remission of sins; as if it had been said, 'Do well, and thou shalt obtain pardon'. But because they imagine a satisfaction, which derogates from free pardon, they dissent widely from the meaning of Moses. A third exposition approaches more nearly to the truth, that exaltation is to be taken for honor, in this way, 'There is no need to envy thy brother's honor, because, if thou conductest thyself rightly, God will also raise thee to the same degree of honor; though he now, offended by thy sins, has condemned thee to ignominy.'

But even this does not meet my approbation. Others refine more philosophically, and say, that Cain would find God propitious and would be assisted by his grace, if he should by faith bring purity of heart with his outward sacrifices. These I leave to enjoy their own opinion, but I fear they aim at what has little solidity. Jerome translates the word, 'Thou shalt receive;' understanding that God promises a reward to that pure and lawful worship which he requires. Having recited the opinions of others, let me now offer what appears to me more suitable.

In the first place, the word ■■■■ means the same thing as acceptance , and stands opposed to rejection . Secondly, since the discourse has respect to the matter in hand, 237 I explain the saying as referring to sacrifices, namely, that God will accept them when rightly offered. They who are skilled in the Hebrew language know that here is nothing forced, or remote from the genuine signification of the word. Now the very order of things leads us to the same point: namely, that God pronounces those sacrifices repudiated and rejected, as being of no value, which are offered improperly; but that the oblation will be accepted, as pleasant and of good odour, if it be pure and legitimate.

We now perceive how unjustly Cain was angry that his sacrifices were not honored seeing that God was ready to receive them with outstretched hands, provided they ceased to be faulty. At the same time, however; what I before said must be recalled to memory, that the chief point of well-doing is, for pious persons, relying on Christ the Mediator, and on the gratuitous reconciliation procured by him, to endeavor to worship God sincerely and without dissimulation. Therefore, these two things are joined together by a

mutual connection: that the faithful, as often as they enter into the presence of God, are commended by the grace of Christ alone, their sins being blotted out; and yet that they bring thither true purity of heart.

And if thou does not well . On the other hand, God pronounces a dreadful sentence against Cain, if he harden his mill in wickedness and indulge himself in his crime; for the address is very emphatical, because God not only repels his unjust complaint, but shows that Cain could have no greater adversary than that sin of his which he inwardly cherished. He so binds the impious man, by a few concise words, that he can find no refuge, as if he had said, 'Thy obstinacy shall not profit thee; for, though thou shouldst have nothing to do with me, thy sin shall give thee no rest, but shall drive thee on, pursue thee, and urge thee, and never suffer thee to escape.' Hence it follows, that he not only raged in vain and to no profit; but was held guilty by his own inward conviction, even though no one should accuse him; for the expression, 'Sin lieth at the door', relates to the interior judgement of the conscience, which presses upon the man convinced of his sin, and besieges him on every side. Although the impious may imagine that God slumbers in heaven, and may strive, as far as possible, to repel the fear of his judgment; yet sin will be perpetually drawing them back, though reluctant and fugitives, to that tribunal from which they endeavor to retire. The declarations even of heathens testify that they were not ignorant of this truth; for it is not to be doubted that, when they say, 'Conscience is like a thousand witnesses,' they compare it to a most cruel executioner. There is no torment more grievous or severe than that which is hence perceived; moreover, God himself extorts confessions of this kind. Juvenal says: --

"Heaven's high revenge on human crimes behold;

Though earthly verdicts may be bought and sold,

His judge the sinner in his bosom bears,

And conscience racks him with tormenting cares. 238

But the expression of Moses has peculiar energy. Sin is said to lie, but it is at the door; for the sinner is not immediately tormented with the fear of judgment; but, gathering around him whatever delights he is able, in order to deceive himself; he walks as in free space, and even revels as in pleasant meadows; when, however, he comes to the door, there he meets with sin, keeping constant guard; and then conscience, which before thought itself at liberty, is arrested, and receives, double punishment for the delay. 239

And unto thee shall be his desire . Nearly all commentators refer this to sin, and think that, by this admonition, those depraved hosts are restrained which solicit and impel the mind of man. Therefore, according to their view, the meaning will be of this kind, 'If sin rises against thee to subdue thee, why dost thou indulge it, and not rather labor to restrain and control it? For it is thy part to subdue and bring into obedience those affections in thy flesh which thou perceivest to be opposed to the will of God, and rebellious against him.' But I suppose that Moses means something entirely different. I omit to notice that to the Hebrew word for sin is affixed the mark of the feminine gender, but that here two masculine relative pronouns are used. Certainly Moses does not treat particularly of the sin itself which was committed, but of the guilt which is contracted from it, and of the consequent condemnation. How, then, do these words suit, 'Unto thee shall be his desire?' 240 There will, however be no need for long refutation when I shall produce the genuine meaning of the expression. It rather seems to be a reproof, by which God charges the impious man with ingratitude, because he held in contempt the honor of primogeniture. The greater are the divine benefits with which any one of us is adorned, the more does he betray his impiety unless he endeavors earnestly to serve the Author of grace to whom he is under obligation. When Abel was

regarded as his brother's inferior, he was, nevertheless, a diligent worshipper of God. But the firstborn worshipped God negligently and perfunctorily, though he had, by the Divine kindness, arrived at so high a dignity; and, therefore, God enlarges upon his sin, because he had not at least imitated his brother, whom he ought to have surpassed as far in piety as he did in the degree of honor. Moreover, this form of speech is common among the Hebrews, that the desire of the inferior should be towards him to whose will he is subject; thus Moses speaks of the woman, (Ge 3:16,) that her desire should be to her husband. They, however, childishly trifle, who distort this passage to prove the freedom of the will; for if we grant that Cain was admonished of his duty in order that he might apply himself to the subjugation of sin, yet no inherent power of man is to be hence inferred; because it is certain that only by the grace of the Holy Spirit can the affections of the flesh be so mortified that they shall not prevail. Nor, truly, must we conclude, that as often as God commands anything we shall have strength to perform it, but rather we must hold fast the saying of Augustine, 'Give what thou commandest, and command what thou wilt.'

8. And Cain talked with Abel his brother . Some understand this conversation to have been general; as if Cain, perfidiously dissembling his anger, spoke in a fraternal manner. Jerome relates the language used, 'Come, let us go without.' 241 In my opinion the speech is elliptical, and something is to be understood, yet what it is remains uncertain. Nevertheless, I am not dissatisfied with the explanation, that Moses concisely reprehends the wicked perfidy of the hypocrite, who, by speaking familiarly, presented the appearance of fraternal concord, until the opportunity of perpetrating the horrid murder should be afforded. And by this example we are taught that hypocrites are never to be more dreaded than when they stoop to converse under the pretext of friendship; because when they are not permitted to injure by open violence as much as they please, suddenly they assume a feigned appearance of peace. But it is by no means to be expected that they who are as savage beasts towards God, should sincerely cultivate the confidence of friendship with men. Yet let the reader consider whether Moses did not rather mean, that although Cain was rebuked by God, he, nevertheless, contended with his brother, and thus this saying of his would depend on what had preceded. I certainly rather incline to the opinion that he did not keep his malignant feelings within his own breast, but that he broke forth in accusation against his brother, and angrily declared to him the cause of his dejection.

When they were in the field . Hence we gather that although Cain had complained of his brother at home, he had yet so covered the diabolical fury with which he burned, that Abel suspected nothing worse; for he deferred vengeance to a suitable time. Moreover, this single deed of guilt clearly shows whither Satan will hurry men, when they harden their mind in wickedness, so that in the end, their obstinacy is worthy of the utmost extremes of punishment.

9. Where is Abel ? They who suppose that the father made this inquiry of Cain respecting his son Abel, enervate the whole force of the instruction which Moses here intended to deliver; namely, that God, both by secret inspiration, and by some extraordinary method, cited the parricide 242 to his tribunal, as if he had thundered from heaven. For, what I have before said must be firmly maintained that, as God now speaks until us through the Scriptures, so he formerly manifested himself to the Fathers through oracles; and also in the same manner, revealed his judgements to the reprobate sons of the saints.

So the angel spoke to Agar in the wood, after she had fallen away from the Church, 243 as we shall see in the eighth verse of the sixteenth chapter: Ge 16:8. It is indeed possible that God may have interrogated Cain by the silent examinations of his conscience; and that he, in return, may have answered, inwardly fretting, and murmuring. We must, however, conclude, that he was examined, not barely by the external voice of man, but by a Divine voice, so as to make him feel that he had to deal directly with God.

As often, then as the secret compunctions of conscience invite us to reflect upon our sins, let us remember that God himself is speaking, with us. For that interior sense by which we are convicted of sin is the peculiar judgement-seat of God, where he exercises his jurisdiction. Let those, therefore, whose consciences accuse them, beware lest, after the example of Cain, they confirm themselves in obstinacy. For this is truly to kick against God, and to resist his Spirit; when we repel those thoughts, which are nothing else than incentives to repentance.

But it is a fault too common, to add at length to former sins such perverseness, that he who is compelled, whether he will or not, to feel sin in his mind, shall yet refuse to yield to God. Hence it appears how great is the depravity of the human mind; since, when convicted and condemned by our own conscience, we still do not cease either to mock, or to rage against our Judge. Prodigious was the stupor of Cain, who, having committed a crime so great, ferociously rejected the reproof of God, from whose hand he was nevertheless unable to escape.

But the same thing daily happens to all the wicked; every one of whom desires to be deemed ingenious in catching at excuses. For the human heart is so entangled in winding labyrinths, that it is easy for the wicked to add obstinate contempt of God to their crimes; not because their contumacy is sufficiently firm to withstand the judgment of God, (for, although they hide themselves in the deep recesses of which I have spoken, they are, nevertheless, always secretly burned, as with a hot iron,) but because, by a blind obstinacy they render themselves callous.

Hence, the force of the Divine judgment is clearly perceived; for it so pierces into the iron hearts of the wicked, that they are inwardly compelled to be their own judges; nor does it suffer them so to obliterate the sense of guilt which it has extorted, as not to leave the trace or scar of the searing. Cain, in denying that he was the keeper of his brother's life, although, with ferocious rebellion, he attempts violently to repel the judgment of God, yet thinks to escape by this cavil, that he was not required to give an account of his murdered brother, because he had received no express command to take care of him.

10. What hast thou done ? The voice of thy brother's blood Moses shows that Cain gained nothing by his tergiversation. God first inquired where his brother was; he now more closely urges him, in order to extort an unwilling confession of his guilt; for in no racks or tortures of any kind is there so much force to constrain evildoers, as there was efficacy in the thunder of the Divine voice to cast down Cain in confusion to the ground. For God no longer asks whether he had done it; but, pronouncing in a single word that he was the doer of it, he aggravates the atrocity of the crime. We learn, then, in the person of one man, what an unhappy issue of their cause awaits those, who desire to extricate themselves by contending against God. For He, the Searcher of hearts, has no need of a long, circuitous course of investigation; but, with one word, so fulminates against those whom he accuses, as to be sufficient, and more than sufficient, for their condemnation. Advocates place the first kind of defense in the denial of the fact; where the fact cannot be denied, they have recourse to the qualifying circumstances of the case. 244 Cain is driven from both these defenses; for God both pronounces him guilty of the slaughter, and, at the same time, declares the heinousness of the crime. And we are warned by his example, that pretexts and subterfuges are heaped together in vain, when sinners are cited to the tribunal of God.

The voice of thy brother's blood crieth . God first shows that he is cognizant of the deeds of men, though no one should complain of or accuse them; secondly that he holds the life of man too dear, to allow innocent blood to be shed with impunity; thirdly, that he cares for the pious not only while they live, but even after death. However earthly judges may sleep, unless an accuser appeals to them; yet even when

he who is injured is silent the injuries themselves are alone sufficient to arouse God to inflict punishment. This is a wonderfully sweet consolation to good men, who are unjustly harassed, when they hear that their own sufferings, which they silently endure, go into the presence of God of their own accord, to demand vengeance. Abel was speechless when his throat was being cut, or in whatever other manner he was losing his life; but after death the voice of his blood was more vehement than any eloquence of the orator. Thus oppression and silence do not hinder God from judging, or the cause which the world supposes to be buried. This consolation affords us most abundant reason for patience when we learn that we shall lose nothing of our right, if we bear injuries with moderation and equanimity; and that God will be so much the more ready to vindicate us, the more modestly we submit ourselves to endure all things; because the placid silence of the soul raises effectual cries, which fill heaven and earth. Nor does this doctrine apply merely to the state of the present life, to teach us that among the innumerable dangers by which we are surrounded, we shall be safe under the guardianship of God; but it elevates us by the hope of a better life; because we must conclude that those for whom God cares shall survive after death. And, on the other hand, this consideration should strike terror into the wicked and violent, that God declares, that he undertakes the causes deserted by human patronage, not in consequence of any foreign impulse, but from his own nature; and that he will be the sure avenger of crimes, although the injured make no complaint. Murderers indeed often exult, as if they had evaded punishment; but at length God will show that innocent blood has not been mute, and that he has not said in vain, 'the death of the saints is precious in his eyes,' (Ps 115:17.) Therefore, as this doctrine brings relief to the faithful, lest they should be too anxious concerning their life, over which they learn that God continually watches; so does it vehemently thunder against the ungodly who do not scruple wickedly to injure and to destroy those whom God has undertaken to preserve.

11. And now art thou cursed from the earth . Cain, having been convicted of the crime, judgment is now pronounced against him. And first, God constitutes the earth the minister of his vengeance, as having been polluted by the impious and horrible parricide: as if he had said, 'Thou didst just now deny to me the murder which thou hast committed, but the senseless earth itself will demand thy punishment.' He does this, however, to aggravate the enormity of the crime, as if a kind of contagion flowed from it even to the earth, for which the execution of punishment was required. The imagination of some, that cruelty is here ascribed to the earth, as if God compared it to a wild beast, which had drunk up the blood of Abel, is far from the true meaning. Clemency is rather, in my judgment, by personification, 245 imputed to it; because, in abhorrence of the pollution, it had opened its mouth to cover the blood which had been shed by a brother's hand. Most detestable is the cruelty of this man, who does not shrink from pouring forth his neighbor's blood, of which the bosom of the earth becomes the receptacle. Yet we must not here imagine any miracle, as if the blood had been absorbed by any unusual opening of the earth; but the speech is figurative, signifying that there was more humanity in the earth than in man himself. Moreover, they who think that, because Cain is now cursed in stronger words than Adam had previously been, God had dealt more gently with the first man, from a design to spare the human race; have some color for their opinion. Adam heard the words, "Cursed is the ground for thy sake:" but now the shaft of divine vengeance vibrates against, and transfixes the person of Cain. The opinion of others, that temporal punishment is intended, because it is said, Thou art cursed from the "earth," rather than from "heaven," lest the posterity of Cain, being cut off from the hope of salvation, should rush the more boldly on their own damnation, seems to me not sufficiently confirmed. I rather interpret the passage thus: Judgment was committed to the earth, in order that Cain might understand that his judge had not to be summoned from a distance; that there was no need for an angel to descend from heaven, since the earth voluntarily offered itself as the avenger.

12. When thou tillest the ground . This verse is the exposition of the former; for it expresses more clearly what is meant by being cursed from the earth, namely, that the earth defrauds its cultivators of the fruit of their toil. Should any one object that this punishment had before been alike inflicted on all mortals, in the person of Adam; my answer is, I have no doubt that something of the benediction which had hitherto remained, was now further withdrawn with respect to the murderer, in order that he might privately feel the very earth to be hostile to him. For although, generally, God causes his sun daily to rise upon the good and the evil, (Mt 5:45,) yet, in the meantime, (as often as he sees good,) he punished the sins, sometimes of a whole nation, and sometimes of certain men, with rain and hail, and clouds, so far, at least, as is useful to give determinate proof of future judgment; and also for the purpose of admonishing the world, by such examples, that nothing can succeed when God is angry with and opposed to them. Moreover in the first murder, God designed to exhibit a singular example of malediction, the memory of which should remain in all ages.

A fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be 246 Another punishment is now also inflicted; namely, that he never could be safe, to whatever place he might come. Moses uses two words, little differing from each other, except that the former is derived from **נָדַד** noa , which is to wander , the other from **נָדַד** nadad , which signifies to flee . The distinction which some make, that **נָדַד** na is he who never has a settled habitations but **נָדַד** nad , he who knows not which way he ought to turn; as it is defective in proof, is with me of no weight. The genuine sense then of the words is, that wherever Cain might come, he should be unsettled and a fugitive ; as robbers are wont to be, who have no quiet and secure resting-place; for the face of every man strikes terror into them; and, on the other hand, they have a horror of solitude. But this seems to some by no means a suitable punishment for a murderer, since it is rather the destined condition of the sons of God; for they, more than all others, feel themselves to be strangers in the world. And Paul complains that both he and his companions are without a certain dwelling-place, (1Co 4:11 247) To which I answer, that Cain was not only condemned to personal exile, but was also subjected to still more severe punishment; namely, that he should find no region of the earth where he would not be of a restless and fearful mind; for as a good conscience is properly called 'a brazen walls' so neither a hundred walls, nor as many fortresses, can free the wicked from disquietude. The faithful are strangers upon the earth, yet, nevertheless, they enjoy a tranquil temporary abode. Often, constrained by necessity, they wander from place to place, but wheresoever the tempest bears them, they carry with them a sedate mind; till finally by perpetual change of place, they so run their course, and pass through the world, that they are everywhere sustained by the supporting hand of God. Such security is denied to the wicked, whom all creatures threaten; and should even all creatures favor them, still the mind itself is so turbulent that it does not suffer them to rest. In this manner, Cain, even if he had not changed his place, could not have shaken off the trepidation which God had fixed in his mind; nor did the fact, that he was the first man who built a city, prevent him from being always restless even in his own nest.

13. My punishment is greater , etc . Nearly all commentators agree that this is the language of desperation; because Cain, confounded by the judgment of God, had no remaining hope of pardon. And this, indeed, is true, that the reprobate are never conscious of their evils, till a ruin, from which they cannot escape, overtakes them; yea, truly, when the sinner, obstinate to the last, mocks the patience of God, this is the due reward of his late repentance that he feels a horrible torment for which there is no remedy, -- if, truly, that blind and astonished dread of punishments which is without any hatred of sin, or any desire to return to God, can be called repentance; -- so even Judas confesses his sin, but, overwhelmed with fear, flies as far as possible from the presence of God.

And it is certainly true, that the reprobates have no medium; as long as any relaxation is allowed them, they slumber securely; but when the anger of God presses upon them, they are broken rather than corrected. Therefore their fear stuns them, so that they can think of nothing but of hell and eternal destruction. However, I doubt not, that the words have another meaning. For I rather take the term ■■■■ aoon in its proper signification; and the word ■■■■ nasa , I interpret by the word to bear .

'A greater punishment (he says) is imposed upon me than I can bear.' In this manner, Cain, although he does not excuse his sin, having been driven from every shift; yet complains of the intolerable severity of his judgement. So also the devils, although they feel that they are justly tormented, yet do not cease to rage against God their judge, and to charge him with cruelty. And immediately follows the explanation of these words: 'Behold, thou hast driven me from the face of the earth, and I am hidden from thy face.' 248 In which expression he openly expostulates with God, that he is treated more hardly than is just, no clemency or moderation being shown him.

For it is precisely as if he had said, 'If a safe habitation is denied me in the world, and thou dost not deign to care for me, what dost thou leave me? Would it not be better to die at once than to be constantly exposed to a thousand deaths?' Whence we infer, that the reprobate, however clearly they may be convicted, make no end of storming; insomuch that through their impatience and fury, they seize on occasions of contest; as if they were able to excite enmity against God on account of the severity of their own sufferings.

This passage also clearly teaches what was the nature of that wandering condition, or exile, which Moses had just mentioned; namely, that no corner of the earth should be left him by God, in which he might quietly repose. For, being excluded from the common rights of mankind, so as to be no more reckoned among the legitimate inhabitants of the earth, he declares that he is cast out from the face of the earth, and therefore shall become a fugitive, because the earth will deny him a habitation; hence it would be necessary, that he should occupy as a robber, what he did not possess by right.

To be 'hidden from the face of God,' is to be not regarded by God, or not protected by his guardian care. This confession also, which God extorted from the impious murderer, is a proof that there is no peace for men, unless they acquiesce in the providence of God, and are persuaded that their lives are the object of his care; it is also a proof, that they can only quietly enjoy any of God's benefits so long as they regard themselves as placed in the world, on this condition, that they pass their lives under his government. How wretched then is the instability of the wicked, who know that not a foot of earth is granted to them by God!

14. Every one that findeth me . Since he is no longer covered by the protection of God, he concludes that he shall be exposed to injury and violence from all men. And he reasons justly; for the hand of God alone marvelously preserves us amid so many dangers. And they have spoken prudently who have said, not only that our life hangs on a thread, but also that we have been received into this fleeting life, out of the womb, from a hundred deaths. Cain, however, in this place, not only considers himself as deprived of God's protection, but also supposes all creatures to be divinely armed to take vengeance of his impious murder. This is the reason why he so greatly fears for his life from any one who may meet him; for as man is a social animal, and all naturally desire mutual intercourse, this is certainly to be regarded as a portentous fact, that the meeting with any man was formidable to the murderer.

15. Therefore , whosoever slayeth Cain . They who think that it was Cain's wish to perish immediately by one death, in order that he might not be agitated by continual dangers, and that the prolongation of his life

was granted him only as a punishment, have no reason, that I can see, for thus speaking. But far more absurd is the manner in which many of the Jews mutilate this sentence. First, they imagine, in this clause, the use of the figure ■ποσι■πησις, according to which something not expressed is understood; then they begin a new sentence, 'He shall be punished sevenfold,' which they refer to Cain. Still, however, they do not agree together about the sense. Some trifle respecting Lamech, as we shall soon declare. Others expound the passage of the deluge, which happened in the seventh generation. But that is frivolous, since the latter was not a private punishment of one family only, but a common punishment of the human race. But this sentence ought to be read continuously, thus, 'Whosoever killeth Cain, shall on this account, be punished sevenfold.' And the causal particle ■■■■ (lekon,) indicates that God would take care to prevent any one from easily breaking in upon him to destroy him; not because God would institute a privilege in favor of the murderer, or would hearken to his prayers but because he would consult for posterity, in order to the preservation of human life. The order of nature had been awfully violated; what might be expected to happen in future, when the wickedness and audacity of man should increase, unless the fury of others had been restrained by a violent hand? For we know what pestilent and deadly poison Satan presents to us in evil examples, if a remedy be not speedily applied. Therefore, the Lord declares, if any will imitate Cain, not only shall they have no excuse in his example, but shall be more grievously tormented; because they ought, in his person, to perceive how detestable is their wickedness in the sight of God. Wherefore, they are greatly deceived who suppose that the anger of God is mitigated when men can plead custom as an excuse for sinning; whereas it is from that cause the more inflamed.

And the Lord set a mark . I have lately said, that nothing was granted to Cain for the sake of favoring him; but for the sake of opposing, in future, cruelty and unjust violence. And therefore, Moses now says, that a mark was set upon Cain, which should strike terror into all; because they might see, as in a mirror the tremendous judgment of God against bloody men. As Scripture does not describe what kind of mark it was, commentators have conjectured, that his body became tremulous. It may suffice for us, that there was some visible token which should repress in the spectators the desire and the audacity to inflict injury.

16. And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord . Cain is said to have departed from the presence of God, because, whereas he had hitherto lived in the earth as in an abode belonging to God, now, like an exile removed far from God's sight, he wanders beyond the limits of His protection. Or certainly, (which is not less probable,) Moses represents him as having stood at the bar of judgment till he was condemned: but now, when God ceased to speak with him, being freed from the sense of His presence, he hastens elsewhere and seeks a new habitation, where he may escape the eyes of God. The land of Nod 249 without doubt obtained its name from its inhabitant. From its being situated on the eastern side of Paradise, we may infer the truth of what was before stated, that a certain place, distinguished by its pleasantness and rich abundance of fruits, had been given to Adam for a habitation; for, of necessity, that place must be limited, which has opposite aspects towards the various regions of the world.

17. And Cain knew his wife . From the context we may gather that Cain, before he slew his brother, had married a wife; otherwise Moses would now have related something respecting his marriage; because it would be a fact worthy to be recorded, that any one of his sisters could be found, who would not shrink with horror from committing herself into the hand of one whom she knew to be defiled with a brother's blood; and while a free choice was still given her, should rather choose spontaneously to follow an exile and a fugitive, than to remain in her father's family. Moreover, he relates it as a prodigy that Cain, having shaken off the terror he had mentioned, should have thought of having children: 250 for it is remarkable, that he who imagined himself to have as many enemies as there were men in the world, did not rather

hide himself in some remote solitude. It is also contrary to nature, that he being astounded with fear; and feeling that God was opposed to him, could enjoy any pleasure. Indeed, it seems to me doubtful, whether he had previously had any children; for there would be nothing absurd in saying, that reference is here made especially to those who were born after the crime was committed, as to a detestable seed who would fully participate in the sanguinary disposition, and the savage manners of their father. This, however, is without controversy, that many persons, as well males as females, are omitted in this narrative; it being the design of Moses only to follow one line of his progeny, until he should come to Lamech. The house of Cain, therefore, was more populous than Moses states; but because of the memorable history of Lamech, which he is about to subjoin, he only adverts to one line of descendents, and passes over the rest in silence.

He built a city . This, at first sight, seems very contrary, both to the judgment of God, and to the preceding sentence. For Adam and the rest of his family, to whom God had assigned a fixed station, are passing their lives in hovels, or even under the open heaven, and seek their precarious lodging under trees; but the exile Cain, whom God had commanded to rove as a fugitive, not content with a private house, builds himself a city. It is, however, probable, that the man, oppressed by an accusing conscience, and not thinking himself safe within the walls of his own house, had contrived a new kind of defense: for Adam and the rest live dispersed through the fields for no other reason, than that they are less afraid. Wherefore, it is a sign of an agitated and guilty mind, that Cain thought of building a city for the purpose of separating himself from the rest of men; yet that pride was mixed with his diffidence and anxiety, appears, from his having called the city after his son. Thus different affections often contend with each other in the hearts of the wicked. Fear, the fruit of his iniquity, drives him within the walls of a city, that he may fortify himself in a manner before unknown; and, on the other hand, supercilious vanity breaks forth. Certainly he ought rather to have chosen that his name should be buried for ever; for how could his memory be transmitted, except to beheld in execration? Yet, ambition impels him to erect a monument to his race in the name of his city. What shall we here say, but that he had hardened himself against punishment, for the purpose of holding out, in inflated obstinacy, against God? Moreover although it is lawful to defend our lives by the fortifications of cities and of fortresses, yet the first origin of them is to be noted, because it is always profitable for us to behold our faults in their very remedies. When captious men sneeringly inquire, whence Cain had brought his architects and workmen to build his city, and whence he sent for citizens to inhabit it? I, in return, ask of them, what authority they have for believing that the city was constructed of squared stones, and with great skill, and at much expense, and that the building of it was a work of long continuance? For nothing further can be gathered from the words of Moses, than that Cain surrounded himself and his posterity with walls formed of the rudest materials: and as it respects the inhabitants; that in that commencement of the fecundity of mankind, his offspring would have grown to so great a number when it had reached his children of the fourth generation, that it might easily form the body of one city.

19. And Lamech took unto him two wives . We have here the origin of polygamy in a perverse and degenerate race; and the first author of it, a cruel man, destitute of all humanity. Whether he had been impelled by an immoderate desire of augmenting his own family, as proud and ambitious men are wont t

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