

MARTIN LUTHER

COMMENTARY ON
GENESIS, VOL. 2:
LUTHER ON SIN AND
THE FLOOD

Martin Luther
Commentary on Genesis, Vol.
2: Luther on Sin and the Flood

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Commentary on Genesis, Vol. 2: Luther on Sin and the Flood:*

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Martin Luther

Commentary on Genesis, Vol. 2: Luther on Sin and the Flood

DEDICATION

*To all interested in studying the Christian
Missionary problems of "the last
times" of the modern world, this
volume is dedicated.*

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FOREWORD

The first volumes of the "American Luther" we selected for publication were his best commentaries, then eight volumes of his Gospel and Epistle sermons and one volume of his best catechetical writings. These rich evangelical works introduced us to the real Luther, not the polemical, but the Gospel Luther. They contain the leaven of the faith, life and spirit of Protestantism. We now return to his spiritual commentaries on the Bible which are the foundation of all his writings. The more one reads Luther the greater he becomes as a student of the One Book.

Contents of This Volume

This, the second volume of Luther's great commentary on Genesis, appears now in English for the first time.

It covers chapters four to nine inclusive of Genesis. The subjects discussed are: Cain's murder, his punishment, Cain's sons, Seth and his sons, the wickedness of the old world, the ark, Noah's obedience, the universal destruction, the salvation of Noah's family, his sacrifice, his blessing, the rainbow covenant, Noah's fall, Ham cursed and Shem and Japheth blessed. These great themes are discussed by Moses and Luther. They have vital relations to problems pertaining to the end of the modern world. Our hope and prayer are that God may use this volume to make the book of Genesis and the whole Old Testament a greater spiritual blessing to the Church and that it may serve the servants of God in these latter days in calling people to repentance, faith and prayer like Noah and Luther did.

In his "Dear Genesis" Luther proved that the free Evangelical religion he taught was not new, but as old as the first book of the Bible, and that it does not consist in outward forms, organizations and pomp, but in true faith in Christ in our hearts and lives. Genesis contains the only historic records accessible of the first 2364 years of the 4004 years before Christ. It is worthy of study in our day as it was in the days of the Reformation.

Acknowledgments

Luther advised no one should translate alone and he practiced what he taught. We have followed his rule and example. Pastor C. B. Gohdes of Baltimore translated chapter six and President Schaller of Milwaukee Theological Seminary, chapters five, seven, eight and nine.

Inaccuracies may be due to the revision and editing, and not to the translators, for every good translation must be fluent and idiomatic, to secure which is the most difficult task. Pastor Gohdes also rendered valuable help in the final revision of parts. The translation of the analyses is by the undersigned.

The few last pages of the first edition of volume one we revised and reprint in this volume in order to make the pages of each volume of our edition to correspond with the German and Latin volumes of the Erlangen edition. The paragraphs are numbered and the analyses given according to the old Walch edition.

Luther and World-Evangelization

In translating Luther into practical English in practical America, and in this age that is growing more and more practical, we need to be reminded that this work is for practical use and purposes. Luther was radical along Bible lines in applying the truth personally and to the world.

It is a year since the last volume of the "American Luther" appeared. The delay was caused by an effort to raise the work to a higher standard and by the publication of a book on "The True Place of Germans and Scandinavians in the Evangelization of the World", not a revision of, but a new companion volume to "Lutherans In All Lands" that appeared seventeen years ago. By comparing these two books one has the best evidence of the marvelous progress of God's Kingdom in recent years, and the growing world-significance of Luther's evangelistic writings. Evangelization at home and abroad is the popular religious theme today in the German fatherland and in the whole Protestant world. The word "world" is becoming so common its full meaning is not appreciated. When world-evangelization is discussed, it is too often from the standpoint of the nation discussing it. Each nation is so active in its own work that it fails to appreciate what others are doing. For example how little the world missionary conferences in English lands have to say of the German and Scandinavian missions and the Reformed

Churches of the Lutheran work. Hence the fruits of Luther's evangelical writings are underestimated by the English people. It is opportune to translate not only Luther but also the best fruits of those writings in various languages during the past 400 years, especially since the memorable date of 1917 is soon to be celebrated by universal Protestantism. Luther in all languages and Lutherans in all lands go together. We ought to consider most carefully the great Reformer in his relation to the modern world and modern world-evangelization. The known world in his day was not so large. He had, however, a clear view of it all in his writings, which is due to his faithful study of the Scriptures. The Bible gave him a knowledge of the world, including all lands and all times. His commentary of eleven volumes on Genesis illustrates this. The first volume on Genesis treats of the first part of the ancient world; the second volume, the one before us, treats of the second part and end of the old world. This Luther would have us apply to the last times of the modern world.

Luther Educational and Devotional

Here, as everywhere in his catechisms, sermons and commentaries, Luther is unique among religious authors in that he is both educational and devotional, appealing equally to head and heart. He is "religiously helpful and intellectually profitable," covering every phase of religious, moral and social conditions, and touching every interest of humanity. "His words went to

the mark like bullets and left marks like bullets." Being beyond criticism they have a unique place to fill in the literature and libraries of the world.

Although the cry, "Read Luther!" has been raised here in the new world the multitudes of the English people are not rushing for his writings, as the Germans did when they first appeared in the old world, under conditions similar to what they are in America at present. If asked what made the German people what they are, the answer is, these writings, so universally circulated and read. If the Anglo-Saxons appreciated their educational and devotional value the 35,000 copies circulated the last seven years would easily, as a professor suggested, be increased to a hundred thousand copies.

Nations Helping Nations

The world-consciousness is growing, so is the national consciousness. Both are characteristic of our times. Perhaps never did the national spirit develop as in recent years. The great powers, instead of dividing China, witness the national spirit growing everywhere—in Japan, China, India, Africa, South America, Norway, Sweden, as well as in Germany, England, Russia and the United States. This is a good sign, for the world-family is composed of nations, and each nation has at least one talent not to be crushed, but with which to serve all the others. One serves the world when he serves his nation. Luther's words,

"I live for my countrymen", illustrates this. It is not the nations that have the largest armies and navies that are the greatest blessing to the world, but the nations that work out the best Christian civilization for the world to imitate and send over the earth the best farmers to show other nations and tribes how to cultivate the earth, the best teachers, preachers and authors to train the people, the best medical skill to relieve human suffering, the best mechanics and servants, the greatest philanthropists, the best Christians. In educational, industrial, medical and charitable mission work the nations dominated by Luther's writings stand high. Nations, like individuals, are the greatest which serve others best; not the nations which have the most territory, but nations which do the greatest service for the whole human family. The students missionary movement develops men, and the laymen's missionary movement raises money. Both are needed, but men must be trained to do their work in the best way and the money be used to bring the best results. Hence nations should help and study one another most carefully with this in view. Luther and his writings in the evangelization of Europe ought not to be overlooked in the evangelization of other continents. By helping abroad the home does not suffer. Among American Lutherans the Norwegians prove this, for they have done the most for the heathen and have the best home mission work.

Transition and Translation or Transition and Revolution

While we are translating Luther for all Anglo-Saxons, we do not overlook the fact that Luther's disciples, Germans and Scandinavians, are themselves being translated, or are in a state of transition. The translation of a people and of their literature or spirit clearly presents a double problem, both sides of which demand at once the most careful work. The translation of both the people and their literature should run parallel and in the same, and not in an opposite, direction. Germans and Scandinavians have always, and do still, make the fatal blunder of translating from English into their own languages, instead of from their languages into English. They thus cross one another's path never to meet again. Their children and grandchildren, however, find it easier to translate into English, their mother tongue; but, alas, they have little interest in doing it. They make the mistake in thinking their old thoughts and classics are not needed in the new language. Their motto seems to be, "new literature for the new language", when to the English public, if not to themselves, the old writings would be the newest. It is marvelous how wide-awake preachers are misled.

Best Literature is Translations

People who are prejudiced against translations, forget that the Bible and our best literature are translations of the classics of the world's leading languages. Translations should be welcomed by a people who themselves are in a state of translation, especially if the translations are from their mother tongue into the language they are learning. What endless friction and confusion would be avoided, if people and their life and literature were translated at the same time. As we have said, a transition of a people without a translation of their literature is no transition, but a revolution. To this various church bodies witness. During the transition of language the best literature for the children to read is the translations of the classics of the language of the parents. There may be better literature, but not for these particular children, if the unity of the family life is to be perpetuated. Hence it becomes a vital concern that both children and parents understand that the best literature for them is such translations. But where are the German or Scandinavian teachers and preachers who are enthusing over putting this thought deep into the family life of their congregations.

A Lesson from Luther and Wesley in America

What unwisdom even to attempt to build up the Lutheran Christian life in free, aggressive Protestant Anglo-Saxon civilization without Luther's writings in good Anglo-Saxon! Muhlenberg (b. 1711; d. 1787) and Wesley (b. 1703; d. 1791) came to America about the same time. Wesley returned home in 1738 after a stay of two years in the south. Muhlenberg spent his ministerial life of 45 years (1742-1787) in America, in the Keystone state, in and near Philadelphia, the metropolis of the new world. When the two Palatinate Germans from Limerick County, Ireland, Philip Embury and Barbara Heck, a lay-preacher and a godly woman, held the first Methodist service in America, in 1766, in New York City, the Lutheran faith had been planted here by the Dutch since 1657 in the same city, by the Swedes on the Delaware since 1639, (Torkillus), by the Germans since 1708 (Kocherthal); Muhlenberg had arrived in Philadelphia in 1742, built churches the following year in Philadelphia and "The Trappe", and organized the Synod of Pennsylvania among its 60,000 Lutherans in 1748. All these Lutherans to some extent learned, preached and confirmed in English. Muhlenberg was naturalized in 1754 as a subject of Great Britain. This and his stay in England gave an Anglican turn to his German pietism. When we became a free people in

1776, the Methodists had only 20 preachers and 3418 members in America and less than 76,000 followers in Europe from which to receive immigrant members, while the Lutherans were strong here and in Europe. Today American Methodists report 60,737 churches, and the Lutherans 13,533. Why did Wesley's followers become the dominating religious force in America? Not because Wesley and his writings were greater than Luther and his writings. Methodists did not bear Wesley's name, but they did have his spirit and writings. Even to the present day every Methodist preacher must pass an examination in Wesley's writings before ordination. Where were Luther's spirit and writings among his early American followers?

Language is no more a barrier to Luther's spirit than to Wesley's. Methodism forged its way from English into German, Norwegian, Danish and Swedish and among Indians, Mexicans and Negros. People, regardless of language, color or condition, could not help but learn what real spiritual Methodism is. It was preached and sung in such simple, plain Anglo-Saxon, and in good translations, that it could not be misunderstood nor misrepresented. Wesley's simple evangelical message was abroad in the land in the hearts of the people. But the evangelical voice of Luther, the prince of translators, was hardly heard and even today the English world has no clear popular view of what spiritual Evangelical Lutheranism is. Often when they speak of it, they seem to think it is the opposite of what it is. Germans, Scandinavians and all know the spiritual side of Methodism,

but the English world does not know the spiritual side of Lutheranism, and it never will until Luther's spiritual writings are translated into readable English and circulated broadcast over the land, and the hearts of the people come into direct and close touch with the heart of the great Reformer himself.

The English world knows the statistics, the numerical strength of Lutherans. That needs no apology. But what does need a defense among Americans is the spirituality of the Lutherans. That is developed by the translations into the plainest vernacular of God's Word and Luther's evangelical sermons and commentaries. These are the best literature for young Germans and Scandinavians. Although translations, and not perfect, they are the best for them. The Bible first; Luther's spiritual writings second, not first nor third. Have not Lutherans in America been following the disciples of Luther instead of Luther; while Methodists have followed Wesley and not Wesley's disciples. The Dutch, Swedish and German Lutherans in the east, all learned English. We say it was a transition, but was it not a revolution? Their history stands forth as beacon lights of warning to the polyglot Lutherans migrating to the ends of earth and learning all languages. They will no more keep up their faith with one language than the English nation will keep up their trade by refusing to learn other languages. Strange it is that nations can learn and use other languages in one line and not in another—the English in church work and not in trade; the Germans in trade, but not in church work.

It is said there are 30 million people in the United States with some German blood in their veins. Two thirds of these, or 20 millions, may be said to have some Lutheran mixture in their makeup, but only one and a half million of these 20 millions are communicant members of English and German Lutheran churches. What people in America can show a worse religious record? Yet the tenders of the sheep and lambs are afraid to feed them in the only way they can be fed. Verily whatever you sow, that shall you also reap. Lift up your eyes, behold the harvest! Can you not discern the signs of the times?

It is no wonder that the United States Census of 1890, the latest reliable statistics on the subject, gave the number of Lutheran communicants using only English in this English land at 198,907; General Synod 143,764; United Synod South 37,457; General Council 14,297; Ohio Synod 287; Missouri Synod 1,192—after 150 years of work. Our good German and Scandinavian parents, in the light of these figures, need not fear losing many members to purely English churches. "Reading Luther" in German, Swedish, Norwegian and English will bring better results to old and young than if read only in one language. The Church of the Reformation is not one-tongued, but many-tongued.

English Luther in German and Scandinavian Churches

April 12th, 1910, became a memorable date in the Northwest by the introduction of the Scandinavian languages into all the high schools of Minneapolis. German and Scandinavian taxpayers are gradually becoming more interested in having their children learn the language of their mothers in the public schools. This will prove to be a great blessing to children and home, society and state. The Church however will blunder, if she thinks there will now be no need of circulating English literature in German and Scandinavian congregations. Translating Luther and teaching German and Scandinavian are two ways of doing the same thing, for language is not an end, but a means to an end. Many young people are being confirmed in English and they often attend services in foreign languages. Many know more of the language than of the matter preached. When weak in the language they understand better what is preached if they are familiar with the thought. The reason many do not appreciate a sermon with the Luther ring is because they are familiar with neither the language nor the thought. Hence the need of our young people becoming familiar with Luther's sermons and commentaries in English. One understands better in a strange language what he is familiar with. This familiar knowledge would help to bridge the chasm between Lutheran parents and children.

Ask parents and they will tell about the "Old Luther Readers," in their native land and tongue. All admit that if the young people are not interested to read Luther in English, they will never read him. All who do will the better understand sermons in German and Scandinavian. The universal reading of the English Luther, on the part of the young people, will therefore help, and not harm, the German and Scandinavian congregations. Luther's teachings thoroughly understood in a living way will bind the young to their Christian convictions, as much as the knowledge of a language binds them to that language. The passive interest therefore, on the part of German and Scandinavian pastors and congregations in circulating the English Luther, as far as their young people are concerned, should give way to active interest, for the sake of their own work in the future. It is important to learn your mother's language. You may do that and forget her faith—Better retain the faith than the language.

J. N. Lenker.

*The Fiftieth Day (Pentecost), 1910.
Minneapolis, Minn.*

COMMENTARY ON GENESIS

CHAPTER IV

IV. HOW CAIN MURDERED HIS BROTHER AND WAS REQUIRED TO GIVE AN ACCOUNT, AND HOW HE CONDUCTED HIMSELF

A. How Cain Murdered His Brother

V. 8a. *And Cain told (talked with) Abel his brother.*

107. Our translation adds that Cain said: "Let us go out doors." But this is one of the comments of the rabbins, whose relative claim to credit I have fully shown on a previous occasion. Lyra, following the invention of Eben Ezra, relates that Cain told his brother how severely he had been rebuked of the Lord. But who would believe statements for which there is no authority in the Scriptures? We hold therefore to an explanation which has the warrant of the Scriptures, namely that Cain, finding himself

rejected of God, indulged his anger, and added to his former sins contempt of his parents and of the Word, thinking within himself: "The promised seed of the woman belongs to me as the first-born. But my brother, Abel, that contemptible, good-for-nothing fellow, is evidently preferred to me by divine authority, manifest in the fire consuming his sacrifice. What shall I do, therefore? I will dissemble my wrath until an opportunity of taking vengeance shall occur."

108. Therefore the words, "Cain told Abel his brother," I understand to mean that Cain, dissembling his anger, conducted himself toward Abel as a brother, and spoke to him and conversed with him, as if he bore with good nature the sentence pronounced upon him by God. In this manner also Saul simulated an attitude of kindness toward David. "I know well," said Saul, "that thou shalt surely be king," 1 Sam 24, 20; and yet he was all the while planning to prevent this by killing David. Just so Cain now conversed with Abel his brother, and said: I see that thou art chosen of the Lord; I envy thee not this divine blessing, etc. This is just the manner of hypocrites. They pretend friendship until an opportunity of doing the harm they intend presents itself.

109. That such is the true sense of the passage, all the circumstances clearly show. For if Adam and Eve could have gathered the least suspicion of the intended murder, think you not that they would either have restrained Cain or removed Abel, and placed the latter out of danger? But as Cain had altered his countenance and his deportment toward his brother, and had

talked with him in a brotherly manner, they thought all was safe, and the son bowed to and acquiesced in the admonition of his father. The appearance deceived Abel also, who, if he had feared anything like murder from his brother, would doubtless have fled from him, as Jacob fled from Esau when he feared his brother's wrath. What, therefore, could possibly have come into the mind of Jerome when he believed the rabbins, who say Cain was expostulating with his brother?

110. Accordingly, Cain is the image and picture of all hypocrites and murderers, who kill under the show of godliness. Cain, possessed by Satan, hides his wrath, waiting the opportunity to slay his brother Abel; meanwhile he converses with him, as a brother beloved, that he might the sooner lay his hands upon him unawares.

111. This passage, therefore, is intended for our instruction in the ways of murderers and hypocrites. Still Cain talks in a brotherly manner with his brother, and, on the other hand, Abel still trusts Cain as a brother should trust a brother; and thus he is murdered, and the pious parents meanwhile are deceived.

Just so the pope and the bishops of our day talk and confer much concerning the peace and concord of the Church. But he is most assuredly deceived who does not understand that the exact opposite is planned. For true is that word of the Psalm, "The workers of iniquity speak peace with their neighbors, but mischief is in their hearts," Ps 28, 3. For it is the nature of hypocrites that they are good in appearance, speak kindly to you,

pretend to be humble, patient and charitable, give alms, etc.; and yet, all the while they plan slaughter in their hearts.

112. Let us learn, then, to know a Cain and especially to beware when he speaks kindly, and as brother to brother. For it is in this way that our adversaries, the bishops and the pope, talk with us in our day, while they pretend a desire for concord, and seek to bring about doctrinal harmony. In reality, if an opportunity of seizing us and executing their rage upon us should present itself, you would soon hear them speak in a very different tone. Truly, "there is death in the pot," 2 Kings 4, 40; and under the best and sweetest words there lies concealed a deadly poison.

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

113. Here you see the deceptive character of those alluring words. Cain had been admonished by his father with divine authority to guard against sin in the future, and to expect pardon for that of the past. But Cain despises the twofold admonition, and indulges his sin, as all the wicked do. For true is the saying of Solomon, "When the wicked cometh, there cometh also contempt, and with ignominy cometh reproach," Prov 18, 3.

114. Our ministry at the present day deserves no blame. We teach, we exhort, we entreat, we rebuke, we turn ourselves every way, that we may recall the multitude from security to the fear of God. But the world, like an untamed beast, still goes on and follows not the Word, but its own lusts, which it tries to smooth over by a show of uprightness. The prophets and the

apostles stand before us as examples, and our own experience is instructive, also. Our adversaries, so often warned and convicted, know they are doing wrong, and yet they do not lay aside their murderous hate.

115. Learn, then, what a hypocrite is; namely, one who lays claim to the worship of God and to charity, and yet, at the same time, destroys the worship of God and slaughters his brother. And all this semblance of good-will is only intended to bring about better opportunities of doing harm. For, if Abel had foreseen the implacable wrath and the truly diabolical anger, he would have saved himself by flight. But as Cain betrayed no such anger, uttered a friendly greeting and manifested his usual courtesy, Abel perished before he felt any fear.

116. There is no doubt that Abel, when he saw his brother rising up against him, entreated and implored him not to pollute himself with this awful sin. However, a mind beset by Satan pays no regard to entreaties, nor heeds uplifted hands, but as a father's admonition had been disregarded, so now the brother is spurned as he pleads upon his knees.

117. Light is cast here upon the bondage to Satan by which our nature, entangled in sins, is oppressed. Hence Paul's expression, "children of wrath," Eph 2, 3, and the declaration that such are taken captive by Satan unto his will, 2 Tim 2, 26. For when we are mere men; that is, when we apprehend not the blessed seed by faith, we are all like Cain, and nothing is wanting but an opportunity. For nature, destitute of the Holy Spirit, is impelled

by that same evil spirit which impelled wicked Cain. If, however, there were in any one those ample powers, or that free will, by which a man might defend himself against the assaults of Satan, these gifts would most assuredly have existed in Cain, to whom belonged the birthright and the promise of the blessed seed. But in that very same condition are all men! Unless nature be helped by the Spirit of God, it cannot maintain itself. Why, then, do we absurdly boast of free-will? Now follows another remarkable passage.

B. How Cain Had to Give an Account, and His Conduct

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

118. Good God! into what depth of sin does our miserable nature fall when driven onward by the devil. Murder had been committed on a brother, and perhaps murdered Abel lay for days unburied. Thereupon, as Cain returned to his parents at the accustomed time, and Abel returned not with him, the anxious parents asked him: Cain, thou art here, but where is Abel? Thou hast returned home, but Abel has not returned. The flock is without their shepherd. Tell us therefore, where thy brother is. Upon this, Cain, becoming abusive, makes answer to his parents, by no means with due reverence, "I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?"

119. But it happened to Cain as to all the wicked, that by excusing himself he accused himself, according to the words of Christ, "Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant," Luke 19, 22. Also the heathen had a striking proverb among them, "A liar ought to have a good memory." Such was the judgment of heathen men, though they knew nothing of the judgment of God and of conscience, and had nothing to guide their judgment but their experience in civil affairs. And true it is that liars run much risk of being discovered and unmasked. Hence the Germans have the proverb, "A lie is a very fruitful thing." For one lie begets seven other lies, which become necessary to uphold the first lie. And yet it is impossible, after all, to prevent conscience from arousing and betraying itself at times, if not in words, then in gestures. This is proved by numberless examples. I will cite only one example here:

120. In Thuringia there is a small town in the district of Orla, called Neustadt. In this town a harlot had murdered her infant, to which she had secretly given birth, and had thrown it, after the murder, into a neighboring fishpond. Accidentally the little piece of linen in which she had wrapped the infant, brought the horrid deed to light. The case was brought before the magistrate; and as the simple men of the place knew no better means of investigating the crime, they called all the young women of the town into the town hall and closely examined them, one by one. The face and the testimony of each one of these proclaimed her innocent. But when they came to her who was the real perpetrator

of the deed, she did not wait for questions to be put to her, but immediately declared aloud that she was not the guilty person. The contrast she presented to the others in making such haste to defend herself, confirmed the suspicion of the magistrates. At once she was seized by the constables and put to death.

Indeed, instances are innumerable and of daily occurrence which show that people, in their eagerness to defend themselves, accuse themselves. Sin may, indeed, lie asleep, but that word which we have just heard, is true. It lies at the door.

121. Just so in the present case. Cain thinks he has made an effectual excuse for himself by saying that he is not his brother's keeper. But does he not confess by the very word "brother" which he takes upon his lips that he ought to be his keeper? Is not that equal to accusing himself, and will not the fact that Abel is nowhere in evidence arouse the suspicion in the minds of his parents that he has been murdered? Just so also Adam excuses himself in paradise, and lays all the blame on Eve. But this excuse of Cain is far more stupid; for while he excuses his sin he doubles it, whereas the frank confession of sin finds mercy and appeases wrath.

122. It is recorded in the history of St. Martin, that when he absolved certain notorious sinners, he was rebuked by Satan for doing so. St. Martin is said to have replied, "Why, I would absolve even thee, if thou wouldst say from thy heart, I repent of having sinned against the Son of God, and I pray for pardon." But the devil never does this. For he persists in committing sin

and defending the same.

123. All liars and hypocrites imitate Cain their father, by either denying their sin or excusing it. Hence they cannot find pardon for their sins. And we see the same in domestic life. By the defense of wrong-doing, anger is increased. For whenever the wife, or the children, or the servants, have done wrong, and deny or excuse their wrong-doing, the father of the family is the more moved to wrath; whereas, on the other hand, confession secures pardon or a lighter punishment. But it is the nature of hypocrites to excuse and palliate their sin or to deny it altogether and under the show of religion, to slay the innocent.

124. But here let us survey the order in which sins follow each other and increase. First of all Cain sins by presumption and unbelief when, priding himself on the privilege of his birthright, he takes it for granted that he shall be accepted of God on the ground of his own merit. Upon this pride and self-glorification immediately follow envy and hatred of his brother, whom he sees preferred to himself by an unmistakable sign from heaven. Upon this envy and hatred follow hypocrisy and lying. Though he designs to murder his brother, he accosts him in a friendly manner and thereby throws him off his guard. Hypocrisy is followed by murder. Murder is followed by the excusing of his sin. And the last stage is despair, which is the fall from heaven to hell.

125. Although Adam and Eve in paradise did not deny their sin, yet their confession was lukewarm, and the sin was shifted

from the one to the other. Adam laid it on Eve, and Eve on the serpent. But Cain went even farther, for he not only did not confess the murder he had committed, but disclaimed responsibility for his brother. And did not this at once prove his mind to be hostile against his brother? Therefore, though Adam and Eve made only a half-hearted confession, they had some claim to pardon, and in consequence were punished with less severity. But Cain, because he resolutely denied his sin, was rejected, and fell into despair.

And the same judgment awaits all the sons of Cain, popes, cardinals, and bishops, who, although they plan murder against us day and night, say likewise, "I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?"

126. There was a common proverb of old, "What is it to the Romans that the Greeks die?" So we think that our dangers and calamities only belong to ourselves. But how does this principle agree with the commandment of God? For his will is that we should all live together, and be to each other as brethren. Cain, therefore, by this very saying of his, heavily accuses himself when he makes the excuse that the custody of his brother was no affair of his. Whereas, if he had said to his father, "Alas, I have slain Abel, my brother. I repent of the deed I have done. Return upon me what punishment thou wilt," there might have been room for a remedy; but as he denied his sin, and, contrary to the will of God, disclaimed responsibility for his brother altogether, there was no place left for mercy or favor.

127. Moreover, Moses took special pains in the preparation of this account, that it might serve as a witness against all hypocrites, and as a chronicle containing a graphic description of their character and of the ire to which they are aroused by Satan against God, his Word and his Church. It was not enough for this murderer that he had killed his brother, contrary to the command of God, but he added the further sin that he became filled with indignation and rage when God inquired of him concerning his brother. I say, "when God inquired of him," because, although it was Adam who spoke these words to his son Cain, yet he spoke them by the authority of God and by the Holy Spirit. In view of so great a sin, was it not quite gentle to inquire, "Where is Abel thy brother?" And yet, to this word, which contained nothing severe, the hypocrite and murderer is ferocious and proud enough to reply, "I know not." And he is indignant that he should be called to an account concerning the matter at all. For the reply of Cain is the language of one who resists and hates God.

128. But to this sin Cain adds one still worse. Justly under indictment for murder, he presently becomes the accuser of God, and expostulates with him: "Am I my brother's keeper?" He prefaces his reply with no such expression of reverence or honor as is due both to God and to his father. He did not say, "Lord, I know not." He did not say, "My Father, didst thou make me the keeper of my brother?" Such expressions as these would have indicated a feeling of reverence toward God or toward his parent. But he answers with pride as if he himself were the Lord,

and plainly manifests that he felt indignation at being called to account by him who had the perfect right to do so.

129. This is a true picture of all hypocrites. Living in manifest sins, they grow insolent and proud, aiming all the while to appear righteous. They will not yield even to God himself and his Word when upbraided by them. Nay, they set themselves against God, contend with him, and excuse their sin. Thus David says, that God is judged of men, but that at length he clears and justifies himself, and prevails, Ps 51, 4. Such is the insolence of the hypocrites Moses has here endeavored to paint.

130. But what success has Cain with his attempt? This, that his powerful effort to excuse himself becomes a forcible self-accusation. Christ says, "Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant," Lk 19, 22. Now, this servant wished to appear without guilt, saying: "I knew thee that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou didst not sow; and I was afraid, and hid thy talent," Mt 25, 24-25. Could he have brought a stronger accusation against himself, in view of the fact that Christ immediately turns his words against him? Thereby Christ evidences the wisdom of the Holy Spirit.

131. Such illustrations help us to learn not to contend with God. On the contrary when you feel in your conscience that you are guilty, take heed with all your soul that you strive neither with God nor with men by defending or excusing your sin. Rather do this: When you see God point his spear at you, flee not from him; but, on the contrary, flee to him with a humble confession of your

sin, and with prayer for his pardon. Then God will draw back his spear and spare you. But when, by the denial and excuse of your sin, you flee farther and farther from him, God will pursue you at close range with still greater determination, and bring you to bay. Nothing, therefore, is better or safer than to come with the confession of guilt. Thus it comes to pass that God's victory becomes our victory through him.

132. But Cain and hypocrites in general do not this. God points his spear at them, but they never humble themselves before him nor pray to him for pardon. Nay, they rather point their spear at God, just as Cain did on this occasion. Cain does not say, "Lord, I confess I have killed my brother; forgive me." On the contrary, though being the accused, he himself accuses God by replying, "Am I my brother's keeper?" And what did he effect with his pride? His reply was certainly equal to the confession that he cared naught for the divine law, which says, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," Lev 19, 18. And again, "Do not unto another that which you would not have another do unto you," Mt 7, 12. This law was not first written in the Decalog; it was inscribed in the minds of all men. Cain acts directly against this law, and shows that he not only cares nothing for it, but absolutely despises it.

133. In this manner, Cain represents a man who is not merely wicked, but who occupies such a height of wickedness as to combine hypocrisy with bloodshed, and yet is so eager to maintain the appearance of sanctity that he rather accuses God

than concedes the justice of the accusation against himself. And this is what all hypocrites do. They blaspheme God and crucify his Son, and yet wish to appear righteous. For after their sins of murder, blasphemy and the like their whole aim is to seek means whereby to excuse and palliate the same. But the result always is that they betray themselves and are condemned out of their own mouths.

134. While Cain makes an effort to clear himself, he exhibits the foulest stains. He thinks he made a most plausible excuse when he said, "Am I my brother's keeper?" But this very excuse becomes his most shameful accusation. The maxim of Hilary, that wickedness and stupidity always go hand in hand, finds unvarying application. If Cain had been as wise as he was wicked, he would have excused himself in quite a different manner. Now, under the operation of the divine rule that wickedness and stupidity are running mates, he becomes his own accuser. The same principle operates in favor of the truth, and makes her defense against all adversaries easy. Just as Cain betrayed by word and mien his indifference and hate toward his brother, so all adversaries of the truth betray their wickedness, the one in this way, the other in that.

135. Facts of importance and apt for instruction are, therefore, here set before us. And their general import is that God does not permit hypocrites to remain hidden for any length of time, but compels them to betray themselves just when they make shrewd efforts to hide their hypocrisy and crime.

136. Moses does not exhibit in his narrative the verbose diction characteristic of pagan literature, where we often find one and the same argument embellished and polished by a variety of colors. We find by experience that no human power of description can do justice to inward emotions. In consequence, verbosity, as a rule, comes short of expressing emotion. Moses employs the opposite method, and clothes a great variety of arguments in scant phraseology.

137. Above the historian used the expression, "when they were in the field." Thereby Moses indicates that the murderer Cain had watched his opportunity to attack his brother when both were alone. All the circumstances plainly show that Abel was not idle at the time; for he was in the field, where he had to do the things his father committed to him. From Moses' statement we may infer that Abel's parents felt absolutely no fear of danger. For, although at the outset they had feared that the wrath of Cain would eventually break out into still greater sin, Cain, by his gentleness and pretended affection, prevented all suspicion of evil on the part of his parents. For had there been the least trace of apprehension, they certainly would not have permitted Abel to go from their presence alone. They would have sent his sisters with him as companions; for he no doubt had some. Or his parents themselves would have prevented by their presence and authority the perpetration of so great a crime. As already stated, also the mind of Abel was perfectly free from suspicion. For, had he suspected the least evil at the hand of his brother,

he would doubtless have sought safety by flight. But after he had heard that Cain bore the judgment of God with composure, and did not envy the brother his honor, he pursued his work in the field with a feeling of security.

138. What orator could do justice to the scene which Moses depicts in one word: "Cain rose up against his brother?" Many descriptions of cruelty are to be found on every hand, but could any be painted as more atrocious and execrable than is the case here? "He rose up against his brother," Moses writes. It is as if he had said, Cain rose up against Abel, the only brother he had, with whom he had been brought up and with whom he had lived to that day. But not only the relationship Cain utterly forgot; he forgot their common parents also. The greatness of the grief he would cause his parents by such a grave crime, never entered his mind. He did not think that Abel was a brother, from whom he had never received any offense whatever. For Cain knew that the honor of having offered the more acceptable sacrifice, proceeded not from any desire or ambition in Abel, but from God himself. Nor did Cain consider that he, who had hitherto stood in the highest favor with his parents, would lose that favor altogether and would fall under their deepest displeasure as a result of his crime.

139. It is recorded in history of an artist who painted the scene of Iphigenia's sacrifice, that when he had given to the countenance of each of the spectators present its appropriate expression of grief and pain, he found himself unable to portray

the vastness of the father's grief, who was present also, and hence painted his head draped.

140. Such is the method, I think, Moses employs in this passage, when he uses the verb *yakam*, "Rose up against." What tragical pictures would the eloquence of a Cicero or a Livy have drawn in an attempt to portray, through the medium of their oratory, the wrath of the one brother, and the dread, the cries, the prayers, the tears, the uplifted hands, and all the horrors of the other! But not even in that way can justice be done to the subject. Moses, therefore, pursues the right course, when he portrays, by a mere outline, things too great for utterance. Such brevity tends to enlist the reader's undivided attention to a subject which the vain adornment of many words disfigures and mars, like paint applied to natural beauty.

141. This is true also of the additional statement, "He slew him." Occasionally we see men start a quarrel and commit murder for a trivial cause, but no such ordinary murder is described here. Murderers of this kind immediately afterward are filled with distress; they grieve for the deeds they have done and acknowledge them to be delusions of the devil by which he blinded their minds. Cain felt no distress; he expressed no grief, but denied the deed he had done.

142. This satanic and insatiable hatred in hypocrites is described by Christ in the words, "When they kill you, they will think that they do God service," Jn 16, 2. So the priests and the kings filled Jerusalem with the blood of the prophets and gloried

in what they did as a great achievement; for they considered this as proof of their zeal for the Law and the house of God.

143. And the fury of popes and bishops in our day is just the same. They are not satisfied with having excommunicated us again and again, and with having shed our blood, but they wish to blot out our memory from the land of the living, according to the description in the Psalm, "Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof," Ps 137, 7. Such hatred is not human but satanic. For all human hatred becomes mellow in time; at all events, it will cease after it has avenged our injury and gratified its passion. But the hatred of these Pharisees assumes constantly larger dimensions, especially since it is smoothed over by a show of piety.

144. Cain, therefore, is the father of all those murderers who slaughter the saints, and whose wrath knows no end so long as there remains one of them, as is proved in the case of Christ himself. As for Cain, there is no doubt of his having hoped that by putting Abel to death he should keep the honor of his birthright. Thus, the ungodly always think that their cruelty will profit them in some way. But when they find that their hope is vain they fall into despair.

145. Now, when the fact of this shameful murder was made known to the parents, what do we think must have been the sad scenes resulting? What lamentations? What sighs and groans? But I dwell not on these things; they are for the man with the gifts of eloquence and imagination to describe. It was certainly a marvel that both parents were not struck lifeless with grief.

The calamity was rendered the greater by the fact that their first-born, who had aroused so large hopes concerning himself, was the perpetrator of this horrible murder.

146. If, therefore, Adam and Eve had not been helped from above, they could never have been equal to this disaster in their home; for there is nothing like it in all the world. Adam and Eve were without that consolation which we may have in sudden and unexpected calamities, namely, that like evils have befallen others and have not come upon us alone. Our first parents had only two sons, though I believe that they had daughters also; and therefore they lacked such instances of grief in the human family as we have before our eyes.

147. Who can doubt, moreover, that Satan by this new species of temptation increased greatly the grief of our first parents? They no doubt thought, Behold, this is all our sin. We, in paradise, wished to become like God; but by our sin we have become like the devil. This is the case also with our son. We loved only this son, and made everything of him! Our other son, Abel, was righteous before us, above this son; but of his righteousness we made nothing! This elder son we hoped would be he who should crush the serpent's head; but behold, he himself is crushed by the serpent! Nay, he himself has become like the serpent, for he is now a murderer. And whence is this? Is it not because he was born of us, and because we, through our sin, are what we are? Therefore it is to our flesh; therefore it is to our sin, that this calamity must be traced.

148. It is very probable, accordingly, and the events of the series of years which followed strengthen this probability, that the sorrowing parents, shaken to the core by their calamity, abstained for a long time from connubial intercourse. For it appears that when Cain committed this murder he was about thirty years of age. During this period some daughters were born unto Adam. In view of the subsequent statements, verse 17, that "Cain knew his wife," he no doubt married a sister. Moreover, since Cain himself says in verse 14, "It shall come to pass that everyone that findeth me shall slay me", and as it is further said in verse 15, "The Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him"—it appears most probable from all these circumstances that Adam had many children besides Cain and Abel, but these two only are mentioned, on account of their important and memorable history, and because these two were their first and most remarkable children. It is my full belief that the marriage of our first parents was most fruitful during the first thirty years of their union. Somewhere Calmana and Dibora are mentioned as daughters of Adam, but I know not whether the authors are worthy of credence. Inasmuch, therefore, as the birth of Seth is recorded as having taken place a long time after this murder, it seems to me very probable that the parents, distressed beyond measure at this monstrous crime in the bosom of their family, refrained for a long time from procreation. While Moses does not touch upon all these things, he intimates enough to arouse in the reader a desire to dwell upon the noteworthy events

which the absence of detailed information permits us to survey only from a distance.

149. But I return to the text before us. Cain is an evil and wicked man, and yet, in the eyes of his parents, he is a divine possession and gift. Abel, on the contrary, is in the eyes of his parents nothing; but in the eyes of God he is truly a righteous man; an appellation with which also Christ honors him when he calls him "righteous Abel"! Mt 23, 35. This divine judgment concerning Abel, Cain could not endure, and, therefore, he thought that by murder not only the hatred against his brother could be satisfied, but also his birthright be retained. But he was far from thinking that was sin; as the first-born he thought he had exercised his right. He killed Abel, not with a sword, as I think, but with a club or a stone, for I hold that there were as yet no iron weapons.

150. After the murder, Cain remained unconcerned, for he thought the deed could be concealed by hiding the body, which he buried, or perhaps cast into a river, thinking that thus it would surely remain undiscovered by his parents.

When Abel, however, had been from home a longer time than had been his habit, the Holy Spirit prompted Adam to inquire of Cain concerning Abel, saying, "Where is Abel thy brother?" The above-mentioned utterance of Adam, "If not, sin lieth at the door," was a prophecy which now began to come true. Cain thought he had laid his sin to rest, and all would thus remain hidden. And true it was that his sin did lie at rest, but it lay at

rest "at the door." And who opens the door? None other than the Lord himself! He arouses the sleeping sin! He brings the hidden sin to light!

151. The same thing must come to pass with all sinners. For, unless by repentance you first come to God, and yourself confess your sin to God, God will surely come to you, to disclose your sin. For God cannot endure that any one should deny his sin. To this fact the psalmist testifies: "When I kept silence, my bones wasted away through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me; my moisture was changed as with the drouth of summer." Ps 32, 3-4. For, although sin has its sleep and its security, yet that sleep is "at the door"; it cannot long last, and the sin cannot remain hidden.

152. When Moses introduces Jehovah as speaking, I understand him to mean, as above, that it was Adam who spoke by the Holy Spirit in the place of God, whom he represented in his relation as father. The expression of the Holy Spirit, therefore, is intended to set forth the high authority of parents; when children dutifully hear and obey these, they hear and obey God. And I believe Adam knew by the revelation of the Holy Spirit that Abel had been slain by his brother; for his words intimate the commission of murder at a time when Cain still dissembled as to what he had done.

V. HOW CAIN WAS PUNISHED FOR HIS MURDER

A. Cain's Punishment in General

153. If Eve overheard these words, what think you must have been the state of her mind! Her grief must have been beyond all description. But the calamity was brought home to Adam with even greater force. As he was the father, it fell to him to rebuke his son and to excommunicate him for his sin. Since, according to the ninth chapter, the law concerning the death-penalty for murderers was not promulgated until afterward when the patriarchs beheld murder becoming alarmingly frequent, Adam did not put Cain to death, but safeguarded his life in obedience to the prompting and direction of the Holy Spirit; still, it is a fact not to be gainsaid that the punishment ordained for him and all his posterity was anything but light. For in addition to that curse upon his body he suffered excommunication from his family, separation from the sight of his parents and from the society of his brothers and sisters, who remained with their parents, or in the fellowship of the Church.

154. Now, Adam could not have done all this, nor could Eve have heard it without indescribable anguish. For a father is a father, and a son is a son. Gladly would Adam have spared his son

and retained him at home, as we now sometimes see murderers become reconciled to the brothers of their victims. But in this case no place was left for reconciliation. Cain is bidden at once to be a fugitive upon the face of the earth. The pain of the parents was doubled in consequence. They see one of their sons slain, and the other excommunicated by the judgment of God and cut off forever from the fellowship of his brethren.

155. Moreover, when we here speak of excommunication from the Church, it stands to reason that not our houses of worship, built in magnificent style and ample proportions out of hewn stone, are meant. The sanctuary, or church, of Adam was a certain tree, or a certain little hill under the open heaven, where they assembled to hear the Word of God and to offer their sacrifices, for which purpose they had erected altars. And when they offered their sacrifices and heard the Word, God was present, as we see from the experience of Abel.

Also elsewhere in the sacred story, mention is made of such altars under the open heaven, and of sacrifices made upon them. And, if we should come together at this day under the open sky to bend our knees, to preach, to give thanks, and to bless each other, a custom would be inaugurated altogether beneficial.

156. It was from a temple of this kind and from such a church, not a conspicuous and magnificent church at a particular place, that Cain was cast out. He was thus doubly punished; first, by a corporal penalty, because the earth was accursed to him, and secondly, by a spiritual penalty, because by excommunication,

he was cast out from the temple and the church of God as from another paradise.

157. Lawyers also have drawn upon this passage, and quite properly brought out the fact that Jehovah first investigated the matter and then passed sentence. Their application is, that no one should be pronounced guilty until his case has been tried; until he has been called to the bar, proved guilty and convicted. This, according to a previous statement, was also done with Adam: "The Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him. Where art thou?" Gen 3, 9. And further on: "I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know," Gen 11, 5; 18, 21.

158. However, dismissing the matter in its bearings upon public life, let us view its more attractive theological features. The element of doctrine and of hope is found in the fact that Jehovah inquires concerning the dead Abel. Clearly there is pointed out to us here the truth of the resurrection of the dead. God declared himself to be the God of Abel, although now dead, and he inquired for the dead, for Abel. Upon this passage we may establish the incontrovertible principle that, if there were no one to care for us after this life, Abel would not have been inquired for after he was slain. But God inquires after Abel, even when he had been taken from this life; he has no desire to forget him; he retains the remembrance of him; he asks: "Where is he?" God, therefore, we see, is the God of the dead. My meaning is that

even the dead, as we here see, still live in the memory of God, and have a God who cares for them, and saves them in another life beyond and different from this corporal life in which saints suffer affliction.

159. This passage, therefore, is most worthy of our attention. We see that God cared for Abel, even when dead; and that on account of the dead Abel, he excommunicated Cain, and visited him, the living, with destruction in spite of his being the first-born. A towering fact this, that Abel, though dead, was living and canonized in another life more effectually and truly than those whom the pope ever canonized! The death of Abel was indeed horrible; he did not suffer death without excruciating torment nor without many tears. Yet it was a blessed death, for now he lives a more blessed life than he did before. This bodily life of ours is lived in sin, and is ever in danger of death. But that other life is eternal and perfectly free from trials and troubles, both of the body and of the soul.

160. No! God inquires not after the sheep and the oxen that are slain, but he does inquire after the men who are slain. Accordingly men possess the hope of a resurrection. They have a God who brings them back from the death of the body unto eternal life, a God who inquires after their blood as a most precious thing. The Psalmist says: "Precious in the sight of Jehovah is the death of his saints," Ps 116, 15.

161. This is the glory of the human race, obtained for it by the seed of the woman which bruised the serpent's head. The case

of Abel is the first instance of such promise made to Adam and Eve, and God showed by the same that the serpent did not harm Abel, although it caused his murder. This was indeed an instance of the serpent's "bruising the heel" of the woman's seed. But in the very attempt to bite, its own head was crushed. For God, in answer to Abel's faith in the promised seed, required the blood of the dead, and proved himself thereby to be his God still. This is all proved by what follows.

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

162. Cain's sin hath hitherto lain at the door. And the preceding circumstances plainly show how hard he struggled to keep his sin asleep. For being interrogated by his father concerning his brother Abel and his whereabouts, he disclaimed knowledge of the matter, thus adding to murder lying. This answer of Cain is sufficient evidence that the above words were spoken by Adam in his own person, and not by God in his divine Majesty. For Cain believed that the deed was hidden from his father, as he was a mere man, while he could not have thought this of the divine Majesty. Therefore, had God spoken to him in his own person, he would have returned a different answer. But, as he thought himself dealing with a human being only, Cain denied his deed altogether, saying: "I know not. How numerous are the perils by which a man may perish. He may have been destroyed by wild beasts; he may have been drowned in some river; or he may have lost his life by some other death."

163. Thus Cain thought that his father would think of any other cause of death than the perpetration of murder. But Cain could not deceive the Holy Spirit in Adam. Adam therefore, as God's representative, arraigns him with the words, "What hast thou done?" As if he had said "Why dost thou persist in denying the deed; be assured thou canst not deceive God, who hath revealed to me all. Thou thinkest the blood of thy brother is hidden by the earth. But it is not so absorbed and concealed thereby as to prevent the blood crying aloud unto God." That meant to awaken the sin lying at the door, and to drag it forth.

164. The text before us, then, provides much consolation against the enemies and murderers of the Church; for it teaches us that our afflictions and sufferings and the shedding of our blood fill heaven and earth with their cries. I believe, therefore, that Cain was so overwhelmed and confounded by these words of his father that, as if thunderstruck, he knew not what to say or what to do. No doubt his thoughts were, "If my father Adam knows about the murder which I have committed, how can I any longer doubt that it is known unto God, unto the angels, and unto heaven and earth? Whither can I flee? Which way can I turn, wretched man that I am?"

165. Such is the state of murderers to this day. They are so harassed with the stings of conscience, after the crime of murder has been committed, that they are always in a state of alarm. It seems to them that heaven and earth have put on a changed aspect toward them, and they know not whither to flee. A case in point

is Orestes pursued by the furies, as described by the poets. A horrible thing is the cry of spilled blood and an evil conscience.

166. The same is true of all other atrocious sins. Those who commit them, experience the same distresses of mind when remorse lays hold of them. The whole creation seems changed toward them, and even when they speak to persons with whom they have been familiar, and when they hear the answers they make, the very sound of their voice appears to them altogether changed and their countenances seem to wear an altered aspect. Whichever way they turn their eyes, all things are clothed, as it were, in gloom and horror. So grim and fierce a monster is a guilty conscience! And, unless such sinners are succored from above, they must put an end to their existence because of their anguish and intolerable pain.

167. Again Moses' customary conciseness is in evidence, which, however, is more effective than an excess of words. In the first place, he personifies a lifeless object when he attributes to blood a voice filling with its cries heaven and the earth. How can that voice be small or weak which, rising from earth, is heard by God in heaven? Abel, therefore, who when alive was patient under injuries and gentle and placid of spirit, now, when dead and buried in the earth, can not brook the wrong inflicted. He who before dared not murmur against his brother, now fairly shrieks, and so completely enlists God in his cause that he descends from heaven, to charge the murderer with his crime. Moses, accordingly, here uses the more pregnant term. He does not say,

"The voice of thy brother's blood speaketh unto me from the ground," but, "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me." It is a cry like the shout of heralds when they raise their voices to assemble men together.

168. These things are written, as I have observed, to convince us that our God is merciful, that he loves his saints, takes them into his special care, and demands an account for them; while, on the other hand, he is angry with the murderers of his saints, hates them and designs their punishment. Of this consolation we stand in decided need. When oppressed by our enemies and murderers, we are apt to conclude that our God has forgotten and lost interest in us. We think that if God cared for us, he would not permit such things to come upon us. Likewise, Abel might have reasoned: God surely cares nothing for me; for if he did, he would not suffer me thus to be murdered by my brother.

169. But only look at what follows! Does not God safeguard the interests of Abel better than he could possibly have done himself? How could Abel have inflicted on his brother such vengeance as God does, now that Abel is dead? How could he, if alive, execute such judgment on his brother as God here executes? Now the blood of Abel cries aloud, who, while alive, was of a most retiring disposition. Now Abel accuses his brother before God of being a murderer; when alive he would bear all the injuries of his brother in silence. For who was it that disclosed the murder committed by Cain? Was it not, as the text here tells us, the blood of Abel, fairly deafening with its constant cries the

ears of God and men?

170. These things, I say, are all full of consolation; especially for us who now suffer persecution from the popes and wicked princes on account of our doctrine. They have practiced against us the utmost cruelty and have vented their rage against godly men, not in Germany only, but also in other parts of Europe. And all this sin is disregarded by the papacy, as if it were nothing but a joke. Nay, the Papists really consider it to be a service toward God, Jn 16, 2. All this sin, therefore, as yet "lieth at the door." But it shall become manifest in due time. The blood of Leonard Kaiser, which was shed in Bavaria, is not silent. Nor is the blood of Henry of Zutphen, which was shed in Dietmar; nor that of our brother Anthony, of England, who was cruelly and without a hearing slain by his English countrymen. I could mention a thousand others who, although their names are not so prominent, were yet fellow-sufferers with confessors and martyrs. The blood of all these, I say, will not be silent; in due time it will cause God to descend from heaven and execute such judgment in the earth as the enemies of the Gospel will not be able to bear.

171. Let us not think, therefore, that God does not heed the shedding of our blood! Let us not imagine for a moment that God does not regard our afflictions! No! he collects all our tears, and puts them into his bottle, Ps 56, 8. The cry of the blood of all the godly penetrates the clouds and the heavens to the very throne of God, and entreats him to avenge the blood of the righteous, Ps 79, 10.

172. As these things are written for our consolation, so are they written for the terror of our adversaries. For what think you can be more horrible for our tyrants to hear than that the blood of the slain continually cries aloud and accuses them before God? God is indeed long-suffering, especially now toward the end of the world; and therefore sin lies the longer "at the door," and vengeance does not immediately follow. But it is surely true that God is most grievously offended with all this sin, and that he will never suffer it to pass unpunished.

173. Such judgment of God on Cain, however, I do not believe to have been executed on the first day, but some time afterward. For it is God's nature to be long-suffering, inasmuch as he waits for the sinner to turn. But he does not, on that account, fail to punish him. For he is the righteous judge both of the living and of the dead, as we confess in our Christian Faith. Such judgment God exercised in the very beginning of the world with reference to these two brothers. He judged and condemned the living murderer, and justified murdered Abel. He excommunicated Cain and drove him into such agonies of soul that the space of the whole creation seemed too narrow to contain him. From the moment Cain saw that God would be the avenger of his brother's blood, he felt nowhere safe. To Abel, on the other hand, God gave for enjoyment the full width of earth and heaven.

174. Why, then, should we ever doubt that God ponders and numbers in his heart the afflictions of his people, and that he measures our tears and inscribes them on adamantine tablets?

And this inscription the enemies of the Church shall never be able to erase by any device whatever except by repentance. Manasseh was a terrible tyrant and a most inhuman persecutor of the godly. And his banishment and captivity would never have sufficed to blot out these sins. But when he acknowledged his sin and repented in truth, then the Lord showed him mercy.

So Paul had, and so the pope and the bishops have now, only one way left them: to acknowledge their sin and to supplicate the forgiveness of God. If they will not do this, God in his wrath will surely require at their hands the blood of the godly. Let no one doubt this!

175. Abel is dead, but Cain is still alive. But, good God, what a wretched life is that which he lives! He might wish never to have been born, as he hears that he is excommunicated and must look for death and retribution at any moment. And in due time this will be the lot of our adversaries and of the oppressors of the Church.

B. Cain's Punishment In Detail

V. 11. *And now cursed art thou from the ground, which hath opened its mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand;*

176. We have heard, so far, of the disclosure of Cain's sin through the voice of Abel's blood, of his conviction by Adam his father, and of the decision rendered with reference to the two brothers, namely, that the one should be canonized, or

declared a saint—the first fruits, as it were, of the blessed seed; but that the other, the first-born, should be condemned and excommunicated, as shall presently be shown. Now Moses mentions the penalties to be visited upon such fratricide.

177. First of all, we should mark as particularly worthy of note the discrimination exercised by the Holy Spirit. Previously, when the penalty for his sin was inflicted upon Adam, a curse was placed not upon the person of Adam, but only upon the earth; and even this curse was not absolute but qualified. The expression is this: "Cursed is the ground for thy sake"; and in the eighth chapter of the Romans, verse twenty, we read: "The creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly." The fact is, that the earth, inasmuch as it bore guilty man, became involved in the curse as his instrument, just as also the sword, gold, and other objects, are cursed for the reason that men make them the instruments of their sin. With fine reasoning the Holy Spirit discriminates between the earth and Adam. He diverts the curse to the earth, but saves the person.

178. But in this instance the Holy Spirit speaks of Cain. He curses the person of Cain. And why is this? Is it because the sin of Cain, as a murderer, was greater than the sin of Adam and Eve? Not so. But because Adam was the root from whose flesh and loins Christ, that blessed seed, should be born. It is this seed, therefore, that was spared. For the sake of this seed, the fruit of the loins of Adam, the curse is transferred from the person of Adam to the earth. Thus, Adam bears the curse of the earth, but

his person is not cursed; from his posterity Christ was to be born.

179. Cain, however, since he fell by his sin, must suffer the curse being inflicted upon his person. He hears it said to him, "Cursed art thou," that we might understand he was cut off from the glory of the promised seed, and condemned never to have in his posterity that seed through which the blessing should come. Thus Cain was cast out from the stupendous glory of the promised seed. Abel was slain; therefore there could be no posterity from him. But Adam was ordained to serve God by further procreation. In Adam alone, therefore, after Cain's rejection, the hope of the blessed seed rested until Seth was born unto him.

180. The words spoken to Cain, "Cursed art thou," are few, but nevertheless entitled to a great deal of attention, in that they are equal to the declaration: Thou art not the one from whom the blessed seed is hoped for. With this word Cain stands cast out and cut off like a branch from the root, unable longer to hope for the distinction around which he had circled. It is a fact, that Cain craved the distinction of passing on the blessing; but the more closely he encircled it the more elusive it became. Such is the lot of all evildoers: their failure is commensurate with their efforts to succeed.

181. From this occurrence originate the two churches which are at war with each other: the one of Adam and the righteous, which has the hope and promise of the blessed seed; the other of Cain, which has forfeited this hope and promise through sin,

without ever being able to regain it. For in the flood Cain's whole posterity became extinct, so that there has been no prophet, no saint, no prince of the true Church who could trace his lineage back to Cain. All that was denied Cain and withdrawn from him, when he was told: "Cursed art thou."

182. We find added, however, the words, "from the ground." These words qualify the fearful wrath. For, if God had said, "from the heavens," he would have deprived his posterity forever of the hope of salvation. As it is, the words, "from the ground," convey, indeed, the menacing decision that the promise of the seed has been forfeited, but the possibility is left that descendants of Cain as individuals, prompted by the Holy Spirit, may join themselves to Adam and find salvation.

This, in after ages, really came to pass. While it is true the promise of the blessed seed was a distinction confined to the Jews, according to the statement in Psalm 147, 20: "He hath not dealt so with any nation," the Gentiles, nevertheless, retained the privilege of beggars, so to speak. It was in this manner that the Gentiles, through divine mercy, obtained the same blessing the Jews possessed on the ground of the divine faithfulness and promise.

183. In like manner, all rule in the Church was absolutely denied also to the Moabites and Amorites; and yet many private individuals among them embraced the religion of the Jews. Thus, every right in the Church was taken away from Cain and his posterity absolutely, yet permission was left them to beg, as it

were, for grace. That was not taken from them. Cain, because of his sin, was cast out from the right of sitting at the family table of Adam. But the right was left him to gather up, doglike, the crumbs that fell from his father's table, Mt 15, 26-27. This is signified by the Hebrew expression *min haadama*, "From the ground."

184. I make these observations because there is a great probability that many of the posterity of Cain joined themselves to the holy patriarchs. But their privileges were not those of an obligatory service toward them on the part of the Church, but mere toleration of them as individuals who had lost the promise that the blessed seed was to spring from their flesh and blood. To forfeit the promise was no trifle; still, even that curse was so mitigated as to secure for them the privilege of beggars, so that heaven was not absolutely denied them, provided they allied themselves with the true Church.

185. But this is what Cain, no doubt, strove to hinder in various ways. He set up new forms of worship and invented numerous ceremonies, that thereby he might also appear to be the Church. Those, however, who departed from him and joined the true Church, were saved, although they were compelled to surrender the distinction that Christ was to be born from their flesh and blood. But let us now return to the text.

186. Moses here uses a very striking personification. He represents the earth as a dreaded beast when he speaks of her as having opened her mouth and swallowed the innocent blood of

Abel. But why does he treat the earth so ruthlessly since all this was done without her will? Yes, being a creature of God which is good, did not all transpire in opposition to her will and in spite of her struggle against it, according to Paul's teaching: "The earth was made subject to vanity, not willingly," Rom 8, 20. My reply is: The object was to impress Adam and all his posterity, so that they might live in the fear of God and beware of murder. The words of Adam have this import "Behold the earth hath opened her mouth and swallowed the blood of thy brother; but she ought to have swallowed thee, the murderer. The earth is indeed a good creature, and is good to the good and godly; but to the wicked she is full of pitfalls." It is for the purpose of inspiring murderers with fear and dread that these terrifying words were spoken. Nor is there any doubt that Cain, after hearing the words from an angry father, was overwhelmed with terror and confusion, not knowing whither to turn. The expression, "which hath opened its mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand," is, indeed, terrifying, but it portrays the turpitude of the fratricidal deed better than any picture.

V. 12a. *When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee its strength.*

187. The Lord said above to Adam, "Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee." But the words spoken to Cain are different. As if he had said, "Thou hast watered and fertilized the earth, not with healthful and quickening rain, but with thy brother's blood. Therefore the earth shall be to thee less

productive than to others. For the blood thou hast shed shall hinder the strength and the fruitfulness of the earth." This material curse is the second part of the punishment. The earth, although alike cultivated by Adam and Cain, should be more fruitful to Adam than to Cain and yield its return to the former for his labors. But to the labors of Cain it should not yield such returns, though by nature desirous to give in proportion to its fruitfulness and strength, because it was hindered by the blood spilled by Cain.

188. Here we must offer a remark of a grammatical nature. In the present passage Moses terms the earth *haadama*. In the passage following, "A fugitive and a wanderer shalt thou be in the earth" he uses the term *arez*. Now *adama* signifies, according to grammatical interpreters, that part of the earth which is cultivated, where trees grow and other fruits of the earth adapted for food. But *arez* signifies the whole earth, whether cultivated or uncultivated. This curse, therefore, properly has reference to the part of the earth cultivated for food. And the curse implies that where one ear of wheat brings forth three hundred grains for Adam, it should bring forth scarcely ten grains for Cain the murderer; and this for the purpose that Cain might behold on every side God's hatred and punishment of the shedding of blood.

V. 12b. *A fugitive and a wanderer (vagabond) shalt thou be in the earth.*

189. This is a third punishment resting on murderers to our

day. For, unless they find reconciliation, they have nowhere a fixed abode or a secure dwelling-place.

We find here, in the original, two words, *No Vanod*, signifying vagabond and fugitive. The distinction I make between them is, that *No* designates the uncertainty of one's dwelling-place. An illustration is furnished by the Jews, who have no established habitation, but fear every hour lest they be compelled to wander forth. *Nod*, on the other hand, signifies the uncertainty of finding the dwelling-place sought; with the uncertainty of a present permanent dwelling-place there is linked the uncertainty of a goal to strive for when the present uncertain dwelling-place must be abandoned. Thus, the punishment contains two features, the insecurity of the present dwelling-place and a lack of knowledge whither to turn when thrust forth from the insecure abode of the present. In this sense the term is used in Psalm 109, 10: "Let his children be continually *vagabonds*." That means, Nowhere shall they find a certain abode; if they are in Greece this year, they shall migrate to Italy the next, and so from place to place.

190. Just such is evidently the miserable state of the Jews at the present day. They can fix their dwelling-place nowhere permanently. And to such evil God adds this other in the case of Cain, that when he should be driven from one place of abode he should not know where to turn, and thus should live suspended, as it were, between heaven and earth, not knowing where to abide nor where to look for a permanent place of refuge.

191. In this manner the sin of Cain was visited with a threefold

punishment. In the first place he was deprived of all spiritual or churchly glory; for the promise that the blessed seed was to be born from his posterity, was taken from him. In the second place, the earth was cursed, which is a punishment affecting his home life. The third punishment affects his relations to the community, in that he must be a vagabond without a fixed abode anywhere.

192. Notwithstanding, an open door of return into the Church is left, but without a covenant. For, as has been explained, in the event that any one of Cain's posterity should ally himself with the true Church and the holy fathers, he was saved. Thus the Home is left, but without a blessing; and the State is left so that he may found a city and dwell there, but for how long, is uncertain. Without exaggeration, therefore, he may be likened to a beggar in Church, Home and State.

193. This punishment is mitigated by the prohibition to slay him forthwith after the commission of the murderous deed, a law providing for the punishment of murderers which was reserved for a later day. Cain was saved that he might be an example for others, to teach them to fear God and to beware of murder. So much about the sin, arraignment, and punishment of Cain.

194. But there are some who reply that, the godly, likewise sometimes endure these same curses, while the wicked, on the contrary, are free from them. Thus, Paul says that he also "wandered about and had no certain dwelling-place," 1 Cor 4, 11. Such is even our condition to-day, who are teachers in the churches. We have no certain dwelling-place; either we are

driven into banishment or we expect banishment any hour. Such was the lot also of Christ, the apostles, the prophets, and the patriarchs.

195. Concerning Jacob the Scriptures say "The elder shall serve the younger," Gen 25, 23. But does not Jacob become a servant when we see him, from fear of his brother, haste away into exile? Does he not, on his return home, supplicate his brother and fall on his knees before him? Is not Isaac also seen to be a most miserable beggar? Gen 26, 1-35. Abraham, his father, goes into exile among the Gentiles and possesses not in all the world a place to set his foot, as Stephen says, Acts 7, 1-5. On the other hand, Ishmael was a king, and had the princes of the land of Midian as his offspring before Israel entered into the land of promise, Gen 25, 16. Thus, as we shall see a little later, Cain first built the city of Enoch, and, furthermore, became the ancestor of shepherds, workers in metals, and musicians. All this appears to prove that it is a mistake to attribute to Cain and his posterity a curse. The curse seems to rest with weight upon the true Church, while the wicked appear to thrive and flourish.

196. These things are often a stumbling-block, not to the world only, but even to the saints, as the Psalms in many places testify. And the prophets, also, are frequently found to grow indignant, as does Jeremiah, when they see the wicked possess freedom as it were from the evils of life, while they are oppressed and afflicted in various ways. Men may therefore inquire, Where is the curse of the wicked? Where is the blessing of the godly?

Is not the converse the truth? Cain is a vagabond and settled nowhere; and yet Cain is the first man that builds a city and has a certain place to dwell in. But we will answer this argument more fully hereafter. We will now proceed with the text of Moses.

VI. CAIN'S CONDUCT UPON BEING PUNISHED

V. 13. *And Cain said unto Jehovah, My punishment (iniquity) is greater than I can bear (than can be remitted).*

197. Here Moses seems to have fixed a cross for the grammarians and the rabbins; for they crucify this passage in various ways. Lyra recites the opinions of some who see in this passage an affirmation, considering it to mean that in his despair Cain claimed his sin to be greater than could be pardoned. This is our rendering. Augustine likewise retained this view of the passage, for he says, "Thou liest, Cain; for the mercy of God is greater than the misery of all the sinners."

198. The rabbins, however, expound the passage as a denial in the form of a question, as if he had said, "Is my iniquity greater than can be remitted?" But if this rendering be the true one, Cain not only does not acknowledge his sin, but excuses it and, in addition, insults God for laying upon him a punishment greater than he deserves. In this way the rabbins almost everywhere corrupt the sense of the Scriptures. Consequently I begin to hate them, and I admonish all who read them, to do so with

careful discrimination. Although they did possess the knowledge of some things by tradition from the fathers, they corrupted them in various ways; and therefore they often deceived by those corruptions even Jerome himself. Nor did the poets of old so fill the world with their fables as the wicked Jews did the Scriptures with their absurd opinions. A great task, therefore, is incumbent upon us in endeavoring to keep the text free from their comments.

199. The occasion for all this error is the fact that some men are competent to deal only with grammatical questions, but not with the subject matter itself; that is, they are not theologians at the same time. The inevitable result is mistakes and the crucifixion of themselves as well as of the Scriptures. For how can any one explain what he does not understand? Now the subject matter in the present passage is that Cain is accused in his own conscience. And no one, not only no wicked man, but not even the devil himself, can endure this judgment; as James witnesses, "The devils also believe and tremble before God," Jas 2, 19. Peter also says, "Whereas angels which are greater in power and might cannot endure that judgment which the Lord will exercise upon blasphemers," 2 Pet 2, 11. So also Manasseh in his prayer, verses 4 and 5, confesses that all men tremble before the face of the Lord's anger.

200. All this is sufficient evidence that Cain, when arraigned by God, did not have courage to withstand and to argue with him. For God is an almighty adversary; the first assault he makes is

upon the heart itself when he takes the conscience into his grasp. Of this the rabbins know nothing, nor can they understand it; in consequence they speak of this arraignment as if it took place before men, where the truth is either denied or facts are smoothed over. This is impossible when God arraigns men; as Christ says in Matthew 12, 37, "By thy words thou shalt be justified and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

201. Cain thus acknowledges his sin, although it is not so much the sin he grieves over as the penalty inflicted. The statement, then, is to be understood in the affirmative, and it reveals the horrors of despair.

A further proof of Cain's despair is, that he does not utter one word of reverence. He never mentions the name of God or of his father. His conscience is so confused and so overwhelmed with terror and despair that he is not able to think of any hope of pardon. The Epistle to the Hebrews gives the same description of Esau when it states that he "for one mess of meat, sold his own birthright. For ye know that even when he afterward desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected; for he found no place for change of mind, though he sought it diligently with tears," Heb 12, 16-17. Thus in the present instance, Cain feels his punishment, but he grieves more for his punishment than for his sin. And all persons, when in despair, do the same.

202. The two original words of this passage, *minneso* and *avon*, are a pair of crosses for grammarians. Jerome translates this clause, "My iniquity is greater than can be pardoned."

Sanctes, the grammarian of Pagnum, a man of no mean erudition and evidently a diligent scholar, renders the passage, "My punishment is greater than I can bear." But by such a rendering we shall make a martyr of Cain and a sinner of Abel. Concerning the word *nasa*, I have before observed that when it is applied to sin it signifies, to lift sin up, or off, or on high; that is, to take it out of the way. Similarly the figure has found currency among us: the remission of sins, or to remit sin. In the Thirty-second Psalm, verse one, we find the expression, *Aschre Nesu Pascha*. This, literally translated, would make: Being blessed through the removal of crime, or sin. We make it: Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, or taken away. The same is found in Isaiah 33, 24, The people that dwell therein shall be *Nesu Avon*, that means, relieved from sin—shall be the people whose sin is forgiven.

203. The other original term, *avoni*, grammarians derive from the verb *anah*, which signifies "to be afflicted," as in Zechariah 9, 9: "Behold thy king cometh unto thee lowly (or afflicted)." Our translation renders it "meek." Likewise in Psalms 132, 1: "Jehovah, remember for David all his affliction." From the same root is derived the expression, "low estate," or "lowliness," used by the Virgin Mary in her song, Lk 1, 48. This fact induces Sanctes to render it "punishment."

But here *avoni* signifies "iniquity" or "sin," as it does also in many other passages of the Holy Scriptures, which appears more plainly from the verb "remit," which stands connected with it.

204. Hence it is that grammarians, who are nothing but such and know nothing of the divine things, find their crosses in all such passages, and crucify, not only the Scriptures, but themselves and their hearers as well. In the interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, the sense is first to be determined; and when that appears in all respects consistent with itself, then the grammatical features are to receive attention. The rabbins, however, take the opposite course, and hence it grieves me that divines and the holy fathers so frequently follow them.

V. 14. *Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the ground; and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer in the earth; and it will come to pass, that whosoever findeth me will slay me.*

205. From these words it appears that the sentence on Cain was pronounced through the mouth of Adam. Cain acknowledges that he is driven first from Home and State, and then also from the Church. Of the difference between the words *adamah* and *erez* we spoke above. We showed that *erez* signifies the earth generally, while the word *adamah* means the cultivated part of the earth. The meaning therefore is: I am now compelled to flee from thy presence and from that part of the earth which I have cultivated. The whole world indeed lies before me, but I must be a fugitive and a vagabond upon the earth; that is, I shall have no certain dwelling place. In the same way fugitive murderers among us are punished with exile. These words, accordingly, cast additional light upon the utterance of

Adam, "Cursed art thou from the ground." They refer to Cain's banishment. This part of Cain's punishment therefore is a civil punishment, and by it he is shut out from civic association.

206. But that which Cain next adds, "From thy face shall I be hid," is an ecclesiastical punishment and true excommunication. For, as the priesthood and the kingdom rested with Adam, and Cain on account of his sin was excommunicated from Adam, he was thereby also deprived of the glory both of priesthood and kingdom. But why Adam adopted this punishment is explained by the words, "When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee its strength;" as if he had said, Thou art cursed and thy labors are cursed also. Therefore if thou shalt remain with us upon earth it cannot be but that both thyself and we likewise must perish with hunger. For thou hast stained the earth with thy brother's blood, and wherever thou art, thou must bear about the blood of thy brother, and even the earth itself shall exact her penalties.

207. A similar sentence we find pronounced in 1 Kings 2, 29-33, where Solomon gives commandment to Benaiah, son of Jehoiada, saying, "Fall upon Joab, that thou mayest take away the blood, which Joab shed without cause, from me and from my father's house. And Jehovah will return his blood upon his own head. But unto David, and unto his seed, and unto his house, and unto his throne, shall there be peace for ever from Jehovah." As much as to say, If Joab suffer not this punishment of his unjust murder, the whole kingdom must suffer that punishment and be

shaken by wars. The meaning of Adam then, in this passage is, If thou shalt remain on the earth with us, God will bring punishment upon us for thy sake, in that the earth shall not yield us her fruit.

208. But now let us reply to the question raised above. It was said to Cain, "A fugitive and wanderer shalt thou be in the earth." And yet, Cain was the first man who builds a city, and his posterity so increased from that time that they debauched and oppressed the Church of God, and so utterly overthrew it as not to leave more than eight persons of the posterity of Seth. All of the remainder of mankind, which perished in the flood, had followed Cain, as the text plainly declares when it affirms that the sons of God, when they came unto the daughters of men, begat giants and mighty men, which were of old, men of renown, Gen 6, 4. Therefore, since Cain had so great a posterity, and he built the first city, how can it be true, men ask, that he was a fugitive and wanderer upon earth?

209. We will reply in accordance with what is written. The illustrations from the New Testament above mentioned, Paul, the apostles, Christ, and the prophets, assuredly belong to quite a different category. When Adam here says to Cain, "A fugitive and a wanderer shalt thou be in the earth," he speaks these words to him to send him away, without further precept. He does not say to him, "Go to the east;" he does not say, "Go to the south;" he does not mention any place to which he should go. He gives him no command what to do; but simply casts him out. Whither he goes and what he does, is no concern of his. He adds no promise

of protection, he does not say: God shall take care of thee; God shall protect thee. On the contrary; as the whole sky is free to the bird, which is at liberty to fly whither it pleases, but is without a place where it may be secure from the attacks of other birds, so Adam turns Cain away. The latter feels this. Hence his rejoinder: "It shall come to pass that every one that findeth me, shall slay me."

210. The condition of Adam was different and better. Adam had sinned, and by his sin he had sunk into death. But when he was driven out of paradise, God assigned him a particular task—that he should till the earth in a particular place. God also clothed him with a covering of skins. This, as we said, was a sign that God would take care of him and protect him. And, last but not least, a glorious promise was made to the woman concerning the seed which should bruise the serpent's head. Nothing like this was left to Cain. He was sent away absolutely without assignment of any particular place or task. No command was given him nor was any promise made him. He was like a bird aimlessly roving beneath the wide heavens. This is what it means to be a vagabond and wanderer.

211. Unsettled and aimless, likewise, are all who lack God's Word and command, wherein person and place receive adequate direction. Such were we under the papacy. Worship, works, exercises—all these were present; but all these existed and found acceptance without a divine command. A trying condition was that and Cainlike—to be deprived of the Word; not to know what

to believe, what to hope, what to suffer, but to undertake and to perform everything at haphazard. What monk is there who could affirm that he did anything right? Everything was man's tradition and man's teaching, without the Word. Amid these we wandered, being driven to and fro, and like Cain, uncertain what verdict God would pass, whether we should merit love or hate. Such was, in those days, our instruction.

Unsettled and aimless like this was Cain's whole posterity. They had neither promise nor command from God, and lacked all definite guidance for life and for death. Hence, if any of them came to the knowledge of Christ, and allied themselves with the true Church, it was not by reason of a promise but through sheer compassion.

212. Seth, however, who was born subsequently, had, together with his posterity, a definite promise, a definite abode and a definite mode of worship; on the other hand, Cain was aimless. He founded a city, it is true, but he did not know how long he should dwell in it, not having a divine promise. Whatever we possess without a promise is of uncertain duration; at any amount Satan may disturb it or take it. However, when we go into the fray equipped with God's command and promise, the devil fights in vain; God's command insures strength and safety. Therefore, although Cain was lord of the whole world and possessed all the treasures of the world, still, lacking the promise of God's help and the protection of his angels, and having nothing to lean upon but man's counsels, he was in every respect aimless and unsettled.

This he himself admits when he further says:

V. 14b. *And it shall come to pass that every one that findeth me shall slay me.*

213. This result was quite to be expected. Having neither God nor his father to look to for succor, having forfeited his rights both as priest and as ruler, he saw the possibility before him that any one found him, might slay him, for he was outlawed, body and soul. Notwithstanding, God conferred upon the nefarious murderer a twofold blessing. He had forfeited Church and dominion, but life and progeny were left. God promised him to protect his existence, and also gave him a wife. Two blessings these by no means to be despised; and when he heard the first part of his sentence pronounced by his father, they were more than he had a right even to hope for. They were valuable for the additional reason that opportunity and time for repentance were granted, though, in the absence of a clear promise, there was neither covenant nor commission. In the same manner, we found our way under the papacy to uncovenanted mercy (*fortuita gratia*), if I may use this expression, for no promise was previously given that the truth was to be revealed in our lifetime, and the Antichrist to become manifest. The reason to which these blessings are attributable, is consideration for the elect. It is quite credible that many of Cain's offspring were saved, namely, those who joined the true Church. Likewise, at a later day, provision was made among the Jews for proselytes and Gentiles.

214. While a stern law existed according to which the

Moabites and Ammonites were not admitted to the religious services, Ammonites and Moabites were saved, such as came to the kings of Judah to serve under them. Also Ruth, the mother and ancestress of our Saviour, was a Moabite. This is what I call uncovenanted mercy, no previous promise having rendered it certain.

215. Also Naaman, and the king of Nineveh, and Nebuchadnezzar, and Evilmerodach, and others from among the Gentiles, were saved by such uncovenanted mercy; for, unlike the Jews, they had no promise of Christ. In the same way, bodily safety is vouchsafed to Cain, and a wife with offspring, for the sake of the elect to be saved by uncovenanted mercy. For, although what we said of the Moabites is true of all his posterity, that it was to live under a curse, it is true, notwithstanding, that some of the patriarchs took their wives from the same.

V. 15a. *And Jehovah said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold.*

216. Jerome, in his Epistle to Damascus, contends that Cain had begged of the Lord that he might be slain, an opinion into which he rushes full sail, as it were, entertaining no doubt whatever concerning its truth. Lyra follows Jerome, and resolutely affirms that the context requires this interpretation. But this error of theirs should be laid at the door of the rabbins from whom they received it. The true sense of the passage is rather that everyone was prohibited from killing Cain. Judgment is pronounced here by God, and when he spares Cain's life and

in addition permits him afterward to marry, it is done to stay its execution.

217. Moreover, how is it likely that an ungodly person asks death at the very time when God exercises judgment? Death is the very punishment of sin; therefore he flees and dreads death as the greatest part of his penalty. Away, therefore, with such vagaries of the rabbins! With these also Lyra's suggestion may safely be classed that the text ought to be divided and made to mean, Whoever shall kill Cain, shall surely meet with severe punishment. And when it is further stated, He shall be punished sevenfold, they would explain it as meaning that in the seventh degree—in the seventh generation—the punishment is to be inflicted.

218. Such vagaries are worthy of the rabbins after having cast away the light of the New Testament. However, they impose a double labor upon us, inasmuch as we are compelled to defend the text and to clear it of such corruptions, and to correct their absurd comments. If I quote them occasionally, it is to avoid the suspicion of proudly despising them, or of failing to read, and to give sufficient consideration to, their writings. While we read them intelligently, we do so with critical discrimination, and we do not permit them to obscure Christ, and to corrupt the Word of God.

219. The Lord, accordingly, does not in this passage at all alter the sentence upon Cain whereby he had been doomed to a curse on earth, but merely vouchsafes to him this uncovenanted mercy

for the sake of the elect that are to be saved from that curse as from a mass of dregs. That is the reason he said Cain should not be killed, as he feared.

There is, then, no necessity for doing violence to this text as Rabbi Solomon does, who, after the words "whosoever slayeth Cain," puts a stop; making it to be a hiatus or (ellipsis), as we find in that noted line in Virgil (Aeneas, 135)—

Quos ego—sed motos praestat componere fluctus

Whom I—but now, be calm, ye boist'rous waves

And then the expression, "shall be punished sevenfold," the rabbi refers to Cain himself, who was punished in his seventh generation. For Cain begat Enoch, and Enoch begat Irad, and Irad begat Mehujael, and Mehujael begat Methusael, and Methusael begat Lamech.

220. And the Jews' absurd comment upon that passage (verse 23, below), is that Lamech, when he was old, and his eyes dim, was taken by his son Tubal-Cain into a wood to hunt wild beasts, and that, when there shooting at a wild beast, Lamech accidentally shot Cain, who in his wanderings had concealed himself in the wood. Such interpretations are only fables, unworthy a place or notice in our schools. Moreover, they militate against the very

truth of the text. For if Cain was really designed of God to be killed in the seventh generation, and if that time was thus fixed for his death, he was not "a fugitive and a vagabond upon earth."

221. We condemn, therefore, this interpretation of Rabbi Solomon, on the ground of critical discrimination, because it militates directly against that sentence which God had before pronounced; and God is not man, that he should change his mind, 1 Kings 15, 29-30. This rule should be strictly observed in all interpretation of the Holy Scripture, that the rendering of one passage must not subsequently conflict with that of another. And when the rabbins, moreover, say that the deluge was the particular punishment of Lamech's sin in thus killing Cain, Lyra refutes them. He very truly affirms that the deluge was the common punishment of the whole world of wicked men. We leave, therefore, all these Jewish absurdities and hold fast the true meaning of the text before us, that, when Cain feared lest he should be slain by any one who should find him, the Lord prevented him from being thus slain, and denounced on such murderer a punishment sevenfold greater than that of Cain.

222. And, though Lyra argues and inquires how it could be that he who should slay Cain could deserve a sevenfold greater vengeance than Cain deserved, who slew his own brother, of what profit is it to us to inquire into the counsel of God in such matters as these, especially when it is certain that God permitted his mercy to stray to Cain in the form of promises and blessings under the Law, if I may so express myself, thus securing his

safety.

223. There are two kinds of promises, or a twofold promise, as we have often explained. There are the legal promises, if I may so call them, which depend, as it were, upon our own works, such as the following: "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land," Is 1, 19. Again, I am God, showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments, Ex 20, 6. And also above, in this case of Cain, "If thou doest well, shall not thy countenance be lifted up?" Gen 4, 7. And these legal promises have for the most part their corresponding threats attached to them.

But the other kind of promises are promises of grace, and with them no threats are joined. Such are the following: "Jehovah thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken," Deut 18, 15. Again, "I will put my law in their inward parts, in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people," Jer 31, 33. And again, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman," Gen 3, 15. Now, these promises depend not in any way upon our works, but absolutely and only upon the goodness and grace of God, because he was pleased to make those promises and to do what he thus promised. Just in the same way we have the promise of Baptism, of the Lord's Supper, and of the Keys, etc., in which God sets before us his good will and his mercy and his works.

224. Now, God gave no promise of the latter kind to Cain.

He only said to him, Whosoever shall slay thee shall be punished sevenfold. But Adam had such a promise of grace made to him. And Cain, because he was the first-born, ought to have received that promise as an inheritance from his parents. That promise was the large and blessed promise of eternal glory, because by it the seed was promised which should bruise the serpent's head, and this without any work or merit of man. For that promise had no condition attached to it, such as, If thou shalt offer thy sacrifices, if thou shalt do good, etc.

225. If, therefore, you compare this promise of grace with the words God spake to Cain, the latter are as a mere crust held out to a beggar. For even Cain's life is not promised him absolutely. Nothing more is said than a threat pronounced against those who should slay him. God does not say positively, No man shall slay thee. He does not say, I will so overrule all others that no one shall slay thee. Had the words been thus spoken, Cain might have returned into the presence of God and of his parents. But a command only is given to men that they slay not Cain. If, therefore, the words spoken to Cain be at all considered as a promise, it is that kind of promise which, as we have before said, depends on the works and will of man. And yet, even such promise is by no means to be despised, for these legal promises often embrace most important things.

226. Thus, Augustine observes that God gave to the Romans their empire on account of their noble virtues. And in the same manner we find, even to this day, that the blessings of those

nations which keep from murder, adultery, theft, etc., are greater than those of other nations in which these evils prevail. And yet, even governments which, as far as mere reason can succeed, are especially well established, possess nothing beyond these temporal promises.

227. The Church, however, possesses the promises of grace, even the eternal promises. And although Cain was left utterly destitute of these promises, yet it was a great favor that the temporal mercies were left him: that he was not immediately killed, that a wife was given him, that children were born unto him, that he built a city, that he cultivated the earth, that he fed his cattle and had possessions, and that he was not utterly ejected from the society and fellowship of men. For God could not only have deprived Cain of all these blessings, but he could have added pestilence, epilepsy, apoplexy, the stone, the gout, and any other disease. And yet there are men disposed curiously to argue in what manner God could possibly have multiplied the curse of Cain sevenfold on himself or on any other.

As God above deprives Cain of all the divine blessings, both spiritual—or those pertaining to the Church—and civil, so here he mitigates that sentence by commanding that no one shall slay Cain. But God does not promise at the same time that all men shall surely obey his command. Therefore Cain, even possessing this promise in reference to his body, is still a fugitive and a wanderer. And it might be that if he continued in his wickedness, he was liable to be slain at any moment; whereas, if he did

well, he might live a long time. But nothing is promised him with certainty, for although these corporal or legal promises are great and important, yet they are positively uncertain and uncovenanted.

228. Whether, therefore, Cain was killed or not, I cannot with any certainty say, for the Scriptures afford no plain information upon that point. This one thing, however, evidently can be proved from the present text, that Cain had no certain promise of the preservation of his life; but God left him to a life of uncertainty, doubt and restless wandering, and did no more than protect the life of Cain by a command and a threat which might restrain the wicked from killing him, on account of the certain awful punishment which would follow such destruction of the murderer. But a promise that he should not be murdered was withheld. We know, moreover, what is the nature of the law, or a legal command, and that there are always very few who obey it. Therefore, although it is not recorded at what time, in what place, or by whom, Cain was slain, yet it is most probable that he was killed. The Scriptures however make no mention of it, even as they are quite silent also concerning the number of the years of Cain, and say nothing about the day of his birth or the day of his death. He perished, together with his whole generation; to use a popular proverb, "without cross, candle, or God." A few only of his generation are excepted, who were saved by the uncovenanted mercy of God.

229. The question is here usually asked, To what persons

could the words of Cain possibly apply, when he says, "Everyone that findeth me shall slay me," when it is evident that besides Adam and Eve and their few daughters, no human beings were in existence. I would at once reply that they bear witness to the fact that we see the wicked "flee when no man pursueth," as the Scriptures say; for they imagine to themselves various perils where none really exist. Just so we see it to be the case with murderers at the present day, who are filled with fears where all is safe, who can remain quiet nowhere, and who imagine death to be present everywhere.

230. However, when it follows in the command of God, "Yea, verily, whosoever slayeth Cain shall be punished sevenfold," these words cannot be referred exclusively to the fears of Cain, for Cain had sisters, and perhaps he greatly dreaded that sister whom he had married, lest she should take vengeance on him for the murder of her brother. Moreover, Cain had perhaps a vague apprehension of a long life, and he saw that many more sons might be born of Adam. He feared, therefore, the whole posterity to Adam. And it greatly increased these fears that God had left him nothing more than his stray mercy. I do not think that Cain feared the beasts at all, or dreaded being slain by them; for what had the sevenfold vengeance threatened upon murderers to do with beasts?

V. 15b. *And Jehovah appointed a sign for (set a mark upon) Cain, lest any finding him should smite him (slay him).*

231. What this mark was is not to be found in the Holy

Scriptures. Therefore commentators have entertained various opinions. Nearly all, however, have come to this one conclusion—they have inferred that there was apparent in Cain a great tremor of his head and of all his limbs. They suppose that, as a physical cause of his trembling, God had changed, or disarranged, or mutilated some particular organ in his body, but left the body whole as it was first created, merely adding a visible outward mark, such as the trembling. This conjecture of the fathers contains much probability, but it cannot be proved by any testimony of the Scriptures. The mark might have been of another kind. For instance, we observe in nearly all murderers an immediate change in the eyes. The eyes wear an appearance of sullen ferocity, and lose that softness and innocence peculiar to them by nature.

232. But whatever this mark was, it was certainly a most horrible punishment; for Cain was compelled to bear it during his whole life as God's penalty for the awful murder which he had committed. Rendered conspicuous by this degrading mark, hateful and abominable in the eyes of all, Cain was sent away—banished from his home by his parents. And although the life he asked of God was granted him, yet it was a life of ignominy, branded with an infamous mark of homicide; not only that he himself might be perpetually reminded of the sin he had committed, to his own confusion, but also that others might be deterred from the crime of committing murder. Nor could this mark be effaced by repentance. Cain was compelled to bear

about this sign of the wrath of God upon him as a punishment in addition to his banishment, the curse, and all the other penalties.

233. It is worthy of observation that the original verb used above is *harag*, which signifies "to kill." But the verb here found is *nakah*, which means "to strike." God, therefore, here gives to Cain security, not only from death, but also from the danger of death. This security, however, as we have observed, is a legal security only; for it merely commands that no one shall slay Cain, threatening a sevenfold punishment upon the person who should do so. But God does not promise that all men will obey his command. It was far better for Cain, however, to have this legal promise made him, than to be without any promise at all.

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

234. This also is a very remarkable text, and it is a wonder that the fancy of the rabbins did not run riot here as usual. Moses leaves it to the thoughtful reader to reflect how miserable and how full of tears this departure of Cain from his father's house must have been. His godly parents had already lost their son Abel; and now, at the command of God, the other son departs from them into banishment, loaded with the divine curses, on account of his sin—the very son whom his parents had hoped to be the only heir of the promise, and whom they therefore had devotedly loved from his cradle. Adam and Eve, nevertheless, obey the command of God, and in conformity therewith they cast out their son.

235. Accordingly, this passage rightly praises obedience to God, or the fear of God. Adam and Eve had, indeed, learned by their own experience in paradise that it was no light sin to depart from the command of God; therefore they thought: Behold, our sin in paradise has been punished with death, and with an infinite number of other calamities into which we have been thrown since we were driven out of paradise. And now that our son has committed so atrocious a sin, it behooves us not to resist the will of God and his righteous judgment, however bitter we feel them to be.

236. The story of the woman of Tekoah is well known, whom Joab instructed to intercede for the banished Absalom. She pleads as an argument before the king, that as she had lost one son, it would be wicked in the extreme to deprive her of the other also. Also Rebecca said to Jacob, her younger son, after she had perceived the wrath of Esau against his brother: "Why should I be bereaved of you both in one day?" Gen 27, 45. Adam and Eve overcame this same pain in their bosoms, and thus mortified their paternal and maternal affections. For not only did they feel it to be their duty to obey the will of God, but they had also learned wisdom from former obedience. They had been driven out of paradise for their sin of disobedience. They feared, therefore, that if they now retained their son with them, contrary to the will of God, they should be cast out of the earth altogether.

237. This part of the history of Adam and Eve, therefore, is a beautiful lesson in obedience to God, and a striking exhortation

to fear God. This is also Paul's principal object in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, nearly all of which is written against the self-confidence of the human heart. For, although God is merciful, yet men are not therefore to sin; he is merciful to those only who fear and obey him.

238. As it was bitter in the extreme for the parents to lose their son, this departure from his home was, I have no doubt, most bitter also to Cain himself. For he was compelled to leave, not only the common home, his dear parents and their protection, but his hereditary right of primogeniture, the prerogative of the kingdom and of the priesthood, and the communion of the Church.

Hence it is that we have the expression in the text, that Cain "went out from the presence of Jehovah." We have above shown what the Scriptures term "the face of Jehovah," namely, all those things and means by which Jehovah makes himself known to us. Thus the face of Jehovah, under the Old Testament, was the pillar of fire, the cloud, the mercy-seat, etc. Under the New Testament, the face of Jehovah is baptism, the Lord's Supper, the ministry of the Word, etc. For by these things, as by visible signs, the Lord makes himself known to us, and shows that he is with us, that he cares for us and favors us.

239. It was from this place, therefore, in which God declared that he was always present, and in which Adam resided as high priest, and as lord of the earth, that Cain "went out;" and he came into another place, where there was no "face of God,"

where there was no visible sign of his presence by which he could derive the consolation that God was present with his favor. He had no sign whatever, save those signs which are common to all creatures, even to the beasts, namely, the uses of sun and moon, of day and night, of water, air, etc. But these are not signs of that immutable grace of God contained in the promise of the blessed seed. They are only the signs of God's temporal blessings and of his good will to all his creatures.

240. Miserable, therefore, was that going out of Cain indeed. It was a departure full of tears. He was compelled to leave forever his home and his parents, who now gave to him, a solitary man and a "vagabond," their daughter as his wife, to live with him as his companion; but they knew not what would become either of their son or of their daughter. In consequence of losing three children at one time their grief is so much greater. No other explanation suggests itself for the subsequent statement "Cain knew his wife."

241. Where, then, did Cain live with his wife? Moses answers, "in the land of Nod," a name derived from its vagabond and unsettled inhabitant. And where was this land situated? Beyond paradise, toward the east, a place indeed most remarkable. Cain came into a certain place toward the east, but when he came there, he was insecure and unprotected, for it was the land of Nod, where he could not set foot with certainty, because "the face of God" was not there. For this "face" he had left with his parents, who lived where they had paradise on their side, or toward the

west. When Cain fled from his home he went toward the east. So the posterity of Cain was separated from the posterity of Adam, having paradise as a place of division between them. The passage, moreover, proves that paradise remained undestroyed after Adam was driven out of it. In all probability it was finally destroyed by the deluge.

242. This text greatly favors the opinion of those who believe that Adam was created in the region of Damascus, and that, after he was driven out of paradise for his sin, he lived in Palestine; and hence it was in the midst of the original paradise that Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Jericho stood, in which places Jesus Christ and his servant John chiefly dwelt. Although the present aspect of those places does not altogether bear out that conclusion, the devastations of the mighty deluge were such as to change fountains, rivers and mountains; and it is quite possible that on the site which was afterward Calvary, the place of Christ's sacrifice for the world's sin, there stood the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the same spot being marked by the death and ruin wrought by Satan and by the life and salvation wrought by Christ.

243. It is not without a particular purpose, therefore, that Daniel uses the striking expression: "The end thereof (of the sanctuary, the sacrifice and the oblation) shall be with a flood," Dan 9, 26. As if he had said, The first paradise was laid waste and utterly destroyed by the mighty deluge, and the other, future paradise, in which redemption is to be wrought, shall be

destroyed by the Romanists as by a flood.

244. We may carry the analogy further by stating that as Babel was the cause of the destruction of the Jewish people, so this disaster had its beginning with Cain and his offspring, who settled in that part of the earth where, at a later day, Babylon was founded. These are my thoughts and views, derived partly from the fathers. Though they may not be true, they are yet probable, and have nothing ungodly in them. And there can be no doubt that Noah, after the flood, saw the face of the whole earth altogether changed from what it was before that awful visitation of the wrath of God. Mountains were torn asunder, fountains were made to break forth and the courses of the rivers themselves were wholly altered and diverted into other channels, by the mighty force of the overwhelming waters.

VII. THE GENERATIONS OF CAIN AND THE GENERATIONS OF THE GODLY

A. The Posterity of Cain in General

V. 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.

245. It is worthy of admiration that Moses describes the generation of the sons of Cain before the generation of the sons

of God. But all this is done according to the fixed counsel of God. For the children of this world have in this life and in this their generation the advantage of the children of God (Lk 16, 8) with reference to the first promise. The spiritual seed of the woman indeed possess the spiritual blessing, but the seed of the serpent arrogate to themselves the corporal, or temporal, blessing, and they bruise the heel of the blessed seed. In this respect the temporal has precedence over the spiritual.

246. But a great difference comes to the surface at a later day. Although Moses records the history of the posterity of Cain before the posterity of the righteous, yet we afterwards see that the latter are more especially the care of the Holy Spirit. He does not confine himself to a bare registration of their names, but he carefully numbers their years, makes mention of their death, and not only chronicles their own doings, as he chronicles in this passage those of the sons of Cain, but also the transactions and the conversations which Jehovah had with them, the promises he made, the help rendered in danger, and the blessings vouchsafed.

247. None of these things are recorded of the wicked posterity of Cain. When Moses has said that Cain begat a son named Enoch, and that he built a city to which he gave the name of his son, calling it Enoch, the sacred historian immediately cuts off the memory of Cain altogether and, as it were, buries him forever with these few short words of record. He seems to entertain no further care or concern for either his life or his death. He merely records temporal blessings—that he begat a son and that he built

a city. For as the gift of reproduction was not taken away from the murderer Cain, neither was the gift of dominion taken from him. But he lost all the rich blessings of the earth because it had drunk the blood of his brother, as we have shown above.

248. The Holy Spirit records these things in order that we may see that there was, from the very beginning, two churches: one the church of the sons of Satan and of the flesh, which often makes sudden and great increase; and the other the church of the sons of God, which is usually weak and makes slow progress. Although the Scriptures do not relate how these two churches lived together in the beginning, yet, as it was declared by God to Satan, "I will put enmity between thy seed and her seed," it is certain that the church of Cain was ever hostile to the Church of Adam. And the present text fully shows that the sons of men so increased and prevailed that they almost completely perverted and destroyed the Church of the sons of God. For in the great flood, only eight souls of them were saved; all the rest of the human race perished in the waters on account of their sin.

249. And this is a calamity of the true Church, common to all ages: as soon as she begins to increase, she is compelled to oppose with all her might Satan and the ungodly. She is at length tired out by the wickedness of her enemy, and is then either obliged to yield to her enraged foe, overcome by the cross and its afflictions, or she sinks under the seductions of pleasures and riches. So it was with the posterity of Adam. Broken down, at length, under so long a war with the sons of men, they yielded, being reduced

at last to eight souls only, who were saved. Ungodliness having so far prevailed, and the godly losing ground, the Lord at length interposes and saves the few righteous remaining; but all the rest, both the seduced and the seducers, he punishes, including them in the same judgment. And we hope and believe the Lord will do the same in the judgment at the last day.

250. Many questions arise here. Some inquire respecting the circumstances connected with the wife of Cain: at what time the murder was committed; whether Cain murdered his brother before he was a husband, or after he was married. And the Jews, moreover, say that Eve brought forth twins at every birth, a male and a female; and they assert that Cain married his sister Calmana, and Abel his sister Debora. Whether these things be true or not I cannot affirm. I know not. But they are not vital to the interests of the Church, and there is nothing certain known concerning them. This one thing is certain, that Cain had a sister for his wife. But whether or no he had her as his wife when he committed the murder, cannot with certainty be proven. However, the text before us greatly tends to the conclusion that Cain was married when he committed the murder of his brother; for it intimates that the inheritance was divided between the two brothers when it affirms that the care of the cattle was committed by the father to Abel and the tilling of the ground to Cain. I, therefore, am inclined to believe that both of the brothers were married.

251. This conclusion is favored also by the statement made

above, that Cain and Abel "in the process of time" brought their offerings. This has been explained in the following manner: At the end of the year, the two newly married husbands brought as offerings the new fruits which God had given them in this first year of their marriage; Cain brought the first fruits of the earth, and Abel the first fruits of his flock. And the time was probably the autumn of the year, the time when the fruits of the earth are gathered, the same season in which the Jews afterwards held the feast of expiation. Moses, in his Levitical law, seems carefully to have noted and collected the ancestral patterns, and to have reduced them to a code. When, therefore, the new husbands came to render their thanks to God for his blessings and to offer their gifts, and Abel's offering was accepted of God and not the offering of Cain, Cain's heart was immediately filled by Satan with hatred of his brother; and upon this hatred afterwards followed the horrible murder. This is the opinion of the Jews, which I thus relate because it does not appear to be at all far from the truth. But, as I have often said, the interpretations of the Jews are to be read with critical discrimination, so that in their teachings, we may retain the things consistent with the truth, but condemn and refute all fictions of their own making.

252. If Cain was not married when he slew his brother, it is still more wonderful that after such a wicked deed he obtained a wife at all; and certainly that damsel was worthy the highest praise who married such a man. For how could the maiden rejoice in a marriage with her brother who was a murderer,

accursed and excommunicated? She, on her part, no doubt supplicated her father, and expostulated with him and asked how he could give her, an innocent one, in marriage to a man thus accursed, and force her into banishment with him. Nay, the very example of her brother's murder must have naturally filled her with terror, lest the crime which her husband committed on his brother he might also dare to commit on her, his sister and his wife.

253. In bringing about this marriage, Adam obviously had to exercise marvelous eloquence. It was for him to convince his daughter that the father's command was not to be disobeyed, and that while Cain, curse-ridden, would have to bear the penalty of his sin, God would still preserve and bless her, the innocent one.

Nor do I entertain the least doubt that God conferred many personal blessings upon Cain, down the whole line of his posterity, for the sake of his wife, who, from motives of faith toward God and of obedience toward her parents, had married her murderous brother.

As Christ was the minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to establish the certainty of the promise made unto the Jewish fathers; and as, in the absence of a promise, he was the minister of the Gentiles, because of the mercy of God, (Rom 15, 8-9), so the like uncovenanted mercy was shown also to the posterity of Cain. These two opinions have been expressed concerning the marriage of Cain, but which is the truth I know not. If Cain was married after he committed the murder, his wife

is most certainly worthy of all praise and of all fame, who could thus yield to the authority of her parents, and suffer herself to be joined in marriage with an accursed murderer.

254. To myself, the first opinion appears to be much nearer the truth, that he murdered his brother after his marriage with his sister; because we have so clear a testimony in the text concerning the division of the inheritance. And in that case, the necessity lay on the wife to follow her husband. As wife and husband are one body and one flesh, Adam had no desire to separate them; moreover, the wife is bound to bear her part of the calamities of her husband. Just in the same manner as the posterity of Cain enjoyed a part of those blessings which were bestowed of God upon the innocent wife, Pharaoh, king of Egypt, was saved in the time of Joseph, and the King of Nineveh was saved in the time of his calamity, although neither of them belonged to the people of God. And so I also believe that some were saved out of the posterity of Cain, although Cain himself had utterly lost the promise concerning the blessed seed.

B. THE POSTERITY OF CAIN IN DETAIL

255. As regards the names of Cain's offspring, I believe that, in common with those of the holy patriarchs, they indicate not an absence of purpose or a random selection, but a definite purpose and a prophecy. Thus "Adam" signifies a man of, or taken out of, the red earth. "Eve" signifies the mother of life, or

of the living. "Cain" signifies possession. "Abel" signifies vanity. And we find that also among the Gentiles many names have such a significance; not seldom names are found which are truly prophetic. "Enoch" is a prophetic name, expressive of hope in the future as a relief to Cain's mind, or rather to his wife's, for it was the latter who called the son she bore Enoch, from the Hebrew *Hanach*, which signifies, "she dedicated," or "she devoted."

256. This is a word frequently used by Moses. As when he says, "What man is there that hath built a new house, and hath not dedicated it? let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man dedicate it," Deut 20, 5. The verb in this passage, which signifies originally to dedicate, here signifies to possess, or to enjoy; and when this possession or enjoyment begins, it is attended with happy signs and auspicious invocations. So when the wife of Cain brought forth her first son, she said to her husband, Enoch; that is, "Dedicate him, devote him:" for the verb is in the imperative mood. As if Cain had said himself, May this our beginning be happy and prosperous. My father Adam cursed me on account of my sin. I am cast out of his sight. I live alone in the world. The earth does not yield me her strength; she would be more fruitful to me, had I not thus sinned. And yet God now shows me uncovenanted mercy in giving me this son. It is a good and happy beginning.

As in the generation of Cain the corporal blessings begin with Enoch, so it is another Enoch in the generation of the righteous under whom religion and spiritual blessings begin to flourish.

257. That which is added by Moses concerning the city Cain thus built belongs to history. But I have before observed that Cain, when separated from the true church and driven into banishment, hated the true church. When, therefore, Cain thus first built a city, that very act tended to show that he not only disregarded and hated the true Church, but wished also to oppose and oppress it. For he reflects thus: Behold I am cast out by my father and I am cursed by him, but my marriage is not a barren one; therefore I have in this the hope of a great posterity. What, therefore, is it to me that I am driven by my father from beneath his roof? I will build a city, in which I will gather a church for myself. Farewell, therefore, to my father and his church. I regard them not.

258. Accordingly, it is not through fear, or for defense, that Cain "built a city," but from the sure hope of prosperity and success, and from pride and the lust of dominion. For he had no need whatever to fear his father and mother, who at the divine command had thrust him out to go into some foreign land. Nor had he any more ground of fear from their children than from themselves. But Cain was inflated with pride through this uncovenanted mercy of God, as I have termed it; and, as the world ever does, he sought by means of his "city" an opportunity of emerging from his present state into future greatness. The sons of God, on the contrary, are only anxious about another city, "which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God," as we have it described in the Epistles to the Hebrews 11, 10.

V. 18a. *And unto Enoch was born Irad.*

259. What opinion to form concerning this name, I really know not, for its origin is very obscure; and yet I believe the name is not accidental but prophetic. In the book of Joshua we have a city called Ai; and this same term is used elsewhere as an appellative. Now, the proper name Ai signifies, "a heap," as a heap of fallen buildings. And if with this name you compound the verb *Irad*, the word thus compounded will signify increase. Although the posterity of Cain, on account of their excommunication, were at that time like a great heap of ruins, it was his prayer that they might not altogether perish, but be preserved and greatly increased by means of this son Irad. If anyone can offer a better interpretation, I will by no means despise it; for on obscure points like the present, conjecture is quite allowable.

V. 18b. *And Irad begat Mehujael.*

260. This name is formed from the verb *mahah*, which signifies "to destroy," and from *jaal*, "he began," or "he attempted or dared." Accordingly this name signifies that the posterity of Cain should now enter upon so mighty an increase as to dare to set itself in array against the true Church and to despise it and persecute it; so mightily should it prevail by its wealth, wisdom, glory and numbers. These, indeed, are for the most part the influences through which the true Church is always overcome by the world and the false church.

V. 18c. *And Mehujael begat Methushael.*

261. *Meth* signifies "death," and *schaal* means "to ask," or "to demand." Hence we have the name Saul; that is, demanded. This name indicates a spirit haughtier than any of the others. I understand it to signify that Methushael threatens that he will avenge his parents, who are dead, whom the other church—that is the true Church—has punished with excommunication and exile.

V. 18d. *And Methushael begat Lamech.*

262. Hitherto the Cainites seem to have insulted the true Church with impunity and to have triumphed over them. But the name "Lamech" signifies that God, at the time in which Lamech was born, inflicted on the posterity of Cain their due punishment. The name Lamech is derived from the verb *makak*, which signifies to humble, to diminish, to suppress. Or, it may be understood actively, to mean that in the time of Lamech the posterity of Cain so greatly increased that the true Church was quite overwhelmed by them.

263. Such was the posterity of Cain; men, no doubt, renowned for their wisdom and greatness. And I also believe that some of them were saved by the uncovenanted mercy of God, as I have above explained. But far the greater part of them most bitterly hated and persecuted the true Church. They could not brook inferiority to the sons of Adam, the true Church; therefore they set up their own forms of worship, and introduced many other new things for the sake of suppressing the church of Adam. And because the false church was thus kept separate from the

true Church, I believe that Cain married to each other his sons and daughters. Accordingly, about the time of Lamech, Cain's posterity began to multiply exceedingly. And it is for this reason, I believe, that Moses here terminates the list.

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

264. Here again a twofold question arises. In the first place divines dispute whether Lamech married these two wives on account of lustful passion or for some other cause. My belief is that polygamy was not entered into for the sake of lust, but with the object of increasing his family, and from the lust of dominion, and especially so if, as his name imports, the Lord at that time had been punishing the Cainites, or the posterity of Cain, by pestilence, or by some other calamity. In this case, Lamech probably thought by such expedient to retrieve his greatness. Thus barbarous nations retain polygamy to strengthen and establish both home and State.

265. As regards the names of these two wives, the name of one is Adah; that is, adorned, or, having chains on the neck. *Adi* signifies a neat, or elegant woman, and *adah*, the verb, signifies to adorn, or, to put on. And perhaps this name was given to her, not only because she was the mistress of the house, elegantly adorned or clothed, but because she was also beautiful. The name of the other wife, Zillah, signifies, his shade.

V. 20. *And Adah bare Jabal; he was the father of such as dwell in tents and have cattle.*

266. The name Jabal is derived from the verb *jabal*, which signifies to bring forward, or to produce.

V. 21. *And his brother's name was Jubal; he was the father of all such as handle the harp and pipe.*

267. And the name Jubal has the same origin and signification, for it means produced, or introduced. Both these names, therefore, contain a wish or prayer of Lamech concerning the increase of his family. The posterity of Cain always entertained the object and expectation of surpassing in numbers. And, no doubt, the Cainites held up this temporal blessing in the face of the true Church as an evident proof that they were not cast off by God, but were the very people of God.

V. 22. *And Zillah, she also bare Tubal-cain, the forger of every cutting instrument of (an artificer in every workmanship of) brass and iron; and the sister of Tubal-cain was Naamah.*

268. Tubal-cain signifies, produce property. So the Romans gave such names as "Valerius" (from valeo), and "Augustus" (from augeo). And Naamah received her name from her sweetness, or beauty. This posterity of Cain increased infinitely; hence Moses breaks off at this point.

269. Now, when he not only chronicles names but makes mention also of the deeds and labors of each one, the Jewish explanation is to be rejected that the offspring of Cain was compelled to follow other occupations because the earth was cursed, and hence gained their livelihood, one as a shepherd, another as a worker in brass, and another as a musician, obtaining

grain and the other fruits of the earth from the offspring of Adam. But if the Cainites had been so severely pressed by hunger, they would have forgotten the harp, organ and other instruments of music in their extremity; for the enjoyment of music is not characteristic of the hungry and thirsty.

270. Their invention of music and their efforts in the discovery of other arts is proof that they had the necessaries of life in abundance. The reason, therefore, that the descendants of Cain turned to these pursuits and were not contented with the simple food the earth produced, like the descendants of Adam, was that they wished to rule, and aimed at the high praise and glory of being men of talent. I believe, however, that some of them passed over to the true Church and followed the religion of Adam.

271. And such as Moses here describes the generation of the wicked, or the false church, to be, from the beginning down to the mighty flood of waters, so we find it ever, and such it will remain until the final flood of fire. "The sons of this world are for their own generation wiser than the sons of the light," Lk 16, 8. Therefore it is that they ever advance and increase, and commend themselves and their own, and thus acquire riches, dignities and power; while the true Church, on the other hand, always lies prostrate, despised, oppressed, excommunicated.

Vs. 23-24. *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 for wounding me, and a young man for bruising me. If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and*

sevenfold.

272. Thus far Moses has given us a history of the generation of the children of this world, and having brought down the list to the time of Lamech and his wives and children, he buries them, as it were, altogether in silence, leaving them without any promise, either of the life which is to come or of the life that now is. For except that uncovenanted blessing of offspring and of food, the Cainites possessed nothing whatever. Yet they so increased in power and in multitude that they filled the whole world, and at length overturned and ravaged to such an extent the righteous nation of the children of God which possessed the promise of the future and eternal life, and sunk them into so deep a hell of wickedness, that eight men only remained to be saved when the flood came upon the whole world of the ungodly. And though there is no doubt that some of the generation of Cain were saved both before the flood and in the flood, yet the Scriptures do not mention them, to the end that we might the more fear God and walk according to his Word. But hard as the diamond are those human hearts which fail to be moved by such an example as the flood, than which nothing more dreadful is to be found in the whole chain of time.

273. Moses, therefore, having buried in silence the entire generation of Cain, records only one unimportant fact respecting Lamech, but what the real import of that fact is, Moses does not explain. I know not that any other passage in the Holy Scriptures has been so diversely interpreted, and so rent and wrested, as

this text. For ignorance at least, if eloquence is not, is fruitful of surmises, errors and fables. I will mention some of the vulgar views upon the passage now before us.

274. The Jews compose the fable that Lamech, when he had grown old and was blind, was led by a youth into the woods to hunt wild beasts, not for the sake of their flesh but for their skins; circumstances which are altogether absurd, and at once prove the whole fable to be a lie. And they hold that Cain was there, concealed among the bushes, and in that solitude he not only exercised repentance but sought security for his life. The young man who directed the spear for Lamech, thinking he saw a wild beast in a certain thicket, told Lamech to hurl his spear, and Lamech hurled his spear and, contrary to all thought, pierced Cain. And they add that after Lamech had been made conscious of the murder he had committed, he immediately speared the youth himself, who also died under the wound he received. It was thus, say the Jews, that the "man" and the "young man" were slain by Lamech. But such absurdities as these are utterly unworthy of refutation. Indeed, Moses himself completely refutes them; he records the fact that Cain, far from fleeing into solitude and concealment, "built a city," which implies that he governed a State and thereby established for himself a kind of kingdom. Moreover, the ages of Cain and Lamech would not accord with this explanation, for it is not at all probable Cain lived to the time Lamech became old and blind.

275. There is still another Jewish invention. After Lamech had

killed Cain, his wives would no longer live with him, through fear of the punishment they foreboded would come upon him, and therefore Lamech, to comfort himself and to induce his wives to live with him, prophesied that whosoever should kill him would assuredly be punished "seventy and sevenfold." The Jews invent like absurdities also concerning the sons of Lamech, whom they say he taught to fabricate arms for the destruction of men. Other commentators, again, will have it that the sense of this text is to be taken negatively, thus: If I had killed a man, as Cain killed his brother, I should have been worthy of your reprobation.

276. My interpretation, accordingly, is that the words, "If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold," etc., are not to be taken for the Word of God. For that generation did not have the Word; how, then, could Lamech be believed to have been a prophet? Thus, even such a man as Jerome produces the vagary that, inasmuch as, according to Luke, seventy-seven generations can be counted between Adam and Christ, it was after this space of time that Lamech's sin was taken away by Christ. If such vaporings are legitimate, anything can be proved from the Scriptures. Jerome even forgets that Lamech represented the seventh generation from Adam! The word under consideration then, is not to be placed upon the same level with the former, spoken to Cain; for that was the Word of God. It is, on the contrary, the word of a wicked murderer; not true, but an audacious fiction, based upon that spoken by Adam to Cain. But why does he deliver his discourse not before his church but at home, and only before his

wives?

277. It is probable that the good and pious women were greatly alarmed on account of the murder committed by their husband. The wicked murderer, therefore, to appear equally safe with Cain, endeavored in this way to reassure his wives concerning his safety from death. This is what the wicked church is accustomed to do; it prophesies out of its own head. But all such prophecies are vain. This one thing, however, we can gather from the present text, that Lamech did not utter the contents of his prophecy from the Word of God, but out of his own brain.

278. In respect to Cain, I do not think that he was killed by Lamech, but that he died long before the time of Lamech. And as there were continual animosities between the Cainite church and the Church of Adam—for the Cainites could not brook their being treated as outside of the true communion—my opinion is, that Lamech killed some eminent man and some distinguished youth of the generation of the righteous, just as Cain, his father, had killed Abel. And I believe that, having committed such murders, he wished to protect himself from being killed by uttering the words of the text, after the manner of the protection vouchsafed by God to his father Cain. For Lamech was no doubt a man of very great abilities and the chief man in his day and State. He had also strengthened his cause by a novel venture, for he was the first man who married two wives. And he harassed the Church of the godly in various ways, as men are wont to do who combine talent with malice. Therefore he

furnished his men with arms, riches, and pleasures, that he might overcome the true Church on every side, which alone held the holy faith, the pure Word, and the pure worship of God. To all else he paid little attention.

279. It is very probable that the patriarch Adam died about this time, this being the first patriarchal death; and there is no doubt that Lamech seized this opportunity of transferring the whole government of the world at that time to himself, that he might have all things under his own rule. This is the manner in which the world acts to this day. The Church of God, therefore, placed as it were in the midst, is oppressed on either side; by tyrants and blood-thirsty men on the one hand, and by those who are devoted to the concerns and pleasures of this world on the other. As tyrants use violence and the sword to destroy the Church, so the latter entice her by their allurements.

280. Hence it is that Moses makes a special point of recording that the blood-thirsty seed of the Cainites gave themselves up to pleasures and to other worldly pursuits. And hence it is, also, that Christ expressly shows that much blood was shed even before the flood, by testifying "that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of Abel the righteous unto the blood of Zachariah son of Barachiah, whom ye slew between the sanctuary and the altar," Mt 23, 35. Moses testifies subsequently (Gen 6, 1-13), that the earth before the flood was filled with iniquities; and he is not speaking of the iniquities and violent deeds of thieves and adulterers, but

describes particularly the tyranny of the Cainite church, which pursued with all the violence of the sword the holy posterity of Adam. And it is for this same reason that the sacred historian describes the descendants of Cain by the name "giants." These are the reasons which lead me to conclude that Lamech followed in the footsteps of his father Cain and slew some distinguished man of the holy patriarchs and his son.

281. It was certainly an evidence of the greatest tyranny in Lamech, that, when he had been discovered by his wives, he did not grieve for what he had done, but held in contempt the punishment which he had just cause to dread. As if he had said: I have killed a man 'tis true, but what is that to you? The wound of that belongs to me; I shall be wounded for it, not you. I have indeed killed a young man, but it is to my own hurt. I shall be punished for it, not you. What utterances could evince more contempt than these in the face of open sins?

These are my thoughts on the passage now before us. The text shows that the Cainites were tyrannical men, proud of their success, and given to pleasure; and the very words of Lamech prove him to be a proud man, not grieving at all for the murder he had committed, but glorying in it as in a righteous cause. The Cainite church always excuses that tyranny which it exercises over the godly, as Christ says: "Whosoever killeth you shall think that he offereth service unto God," Jn 16, 2. This is expressed in the additional words of Lamech:

V. 24. *If Cain shall he avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy*

and sevenfold.

282. Here Lamech sets himself above his father Cain, making it appear that he had a more righteous cause for the murder he had committed, and fortifying himself against those inclined to avenge the murders perpetrated by him. For the words of the text are not the words of the Lord, as we have said, but the words of Lamech himself. Just so the pope fortifies himself by violence, tyranny, threats and anathemas, to make himself secure against avengers, for he has the conscience of a Cain and a Lamech. Let him, says the pope, who shall do anything contrary to these my decrees know that he shall incur the indignation of St. Peter and St. Paul.

283. Lamech, therefore, is an example of this world, and Moses points to him to show what kind of a heart, will and wisdom the world has. Just as if he had said in reference to Lamech: Such are the actions of the seed of the serpent and such are the children of this world. They gather riches, follow their pleasures, increase their power, and then abuse all these things by their tyranny, making use of them against the true Church, the members of which they persecute and slay. And yet in the midst of all these mighty sins, they fear not, but are proud and secure, boasting and saying, "What can the righteous do?" (Ps 11, 3): "Our lips are our own: who is lord over us?" (Ps 12, 4): "He (the wicked) saith in his heart: God hath forgotten, he hideth his face, he will never see it," (Ps 10, 11): and other like sentiments.

284. That such is the meaning of the passage in question the

facts recorded prove, though the words of the text do not so clearly express that meaning. The true Church has ever Satan as its great enemy, and he drives the Cainites into fury, disguised as devotion, against their brethren, the Abels; as Christ also says, affirming that the devil was a murderer from the beginning, Jn 8, 44. It is declared throughout the Scriptures concerning the true Church, that the wicked are ever shedding its blood. The various passages in the Psalms speak the same things, "Precious shall their blood be in his sight," Ps 72, 14. Again, "Precious in the sight of Jehovah is the death of his saints" Ps 116, 15. And again, "For thy sake are we killed all the day long" Ps 44, 22.

285. As, therefore, the Church of God has at all times, and in all ages, given her blood to be shed by the wicked and by false brethren, so also, in that first age of the world she had to suffer from her enemies, whom the Scriptures call "giants," and affirm that those "giants" filled the earth with "violence." Among these giants was also this Lamech now before us, who was one perhaps like Pope Julius II or Clement VII who although they exercised cruelty in the highest degree, yet wished to be called and appear as most holy saints. Just so Lamech here wishes to make it appear that he had a most righteous cause for the murder he had committed, and therefore he threatened greater vengeance on the man who should kill him than God himself had threatened on the person who should slay his father, the murderer Cain.

286. In this manner, the Church was vexed with the cross

and with persecutions from the very beginning of the world until God, compelled by the wickedness of man, destroyed the whole world by the flood. Just so, also, when the measure of Pharaoh's malice was full he was drowned with all his host in the Red Sea. Just so, again, when the measure of the malice of the Gentile nations was full they were all uprooted and destroyed by Moses and Joshua. In the same manner afterwards when the Jews raged against the Gospel they were so utterly destroyed that not one stone was left upon another in Jerusalem. Other instances are the Babylonians, the Medes, the Persians, the Grecians, and the Romans.

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