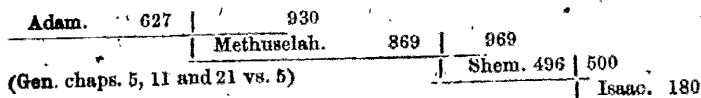


The following diagram illustrates the ease with which verbal accounts might have been transmitted by tradition. The length of the lines indicates the age. Adam was 627 years old when Methuselah was born; M. 869 when Shem was born; and Isaac was four years old when S. died.



NOTES AND EXPLANATIONS.

When Cain was born his mother exclaimed "I have gotten a man from the Lord," a fitting word to fall from the lips of her who first pressed a babe to her bosom. Other meanings than the obvious one have been given to the words. The R. V. reads "I have gotten a man with the help of the Lord," a pathetic hint of the sufferings she had just endured, and a reminder to all her daughters of the source from which strength to bear such trials comes. Others translate the words "I have gotten the man, Jehovah," and understand her to refer to the promised Messiah, whom she believed even now to have come. But it is unlikely that she would have been left to make such an awful blunder as to think that Cain was Christ; and besides, this would indicate a fuller knowledge of the constitution of the Redeemer's person than we have any evidence was possessed at an early stage of human history.

In the name ("breath" "vanity") and brief career of Abel we have a truth embalmed which it was most needful should be early impressed upon the human consciousness, and which finds its noblest expression in the XC Psalm. Eden was a home, but the world is not, nor shall the heart of man repose itself again until it rests in the bosom of God in a new Paradise under the shade of the Tree of Life.

LESSON PLAN. I. Sacrifice. vs. 3-5. II. Sin. vs. 6-8. III. Suffering. vs. 9-13.

I. SACRIFICE. 3. In process of time—lit. "at the end of days." The word implies a considerable lapse of time. In 1 Kings 17: 7 the same expression is rendered "after a while" (see margin), and in 2 Chr. 21: 19 it means two years. There may have been a united festal service of all the family of Adam on the occasion on which this occurred and in that case Cain would have felt publicly humiliated, and all the more deeply since he was the eldest son. **Offering**—the same word is used of Abel's sacrifice, so that we cannot emphasize the special sense which it afterwards bore of "a bloodless offering." The divine displeasure does not seem to have been directed so much against the gift as against the spirit in which it was presented. Cain's offering was one of those afterwards commanded. (Ex. 23: 19; Neh. 10: 35, 36;) and was in itself appropriate. **4-5. Firstlings**—Ex. 13: 12; 34: 19; Lev. 27: 26; Num. 18: 15; Prov. 3: 9. **The fat thereof**—Either, the fat of the victim was consumed on the altar, or he offered the fatest and best in addition to the firstlings, according as we understand "thereof" to refer to "flock" or "firstlings." **The LORD had respect**—This may have been shown by fire from heaven as in 1 Kings 18: 38. See Lev. 9: 24; Judges 6: 21; 1 Chr. 21: 26; 2 Chr. 7: 1. The reason is given in Heb. 11: 14. The worshipper's state of heart makes all the difference. Compare what is said of Israel's offerings in Isa. 1: 11-18; Hos. 8: 13; Amos. 5: 21, 22, 26. **Very wrath**—lit. "it burned with Cain exceedingly." His pent up wrath showed itself in sullen, lowering looks. There is no humble penitence, self-examination, or prayer for instruction and pardon.

II. SIN. 6-7. In wonderful condescension, God reasons with him. He is the same forbearing and merciful God still, Isa. 1: 18; 43: 26; Ezek. 33: 11; 2 Pet. 3: 9. **Accepted**—lit. "is there not lifting up," either (1) of the guilt, i. e. the burden of sin removed, or (2) of the sacrifice i. e. it is accepted with God, or (3) of the dejected countenance. Acceptable service must spring from right motives and dispositions; but if these are unworthy or evil, "sin lieth at the door" crouching like a wild beast eager to devour its prey. "But thou shouldst rule over it," master the evil. (Rom. 6: 12; 8: 3; 13: 21; Col. 3: 5; Jas. 4: 7; 1: 14, 15). The majority of commentators find the essential difference between the sacrifice of Cain and that of Abel to lie in the absence of bloodshedding in the former thus revealing on Cain's part a wilful rejection of the divinity