## OTHER READINGS \* 165

ping with what God had ther. -Philo, *Biblical Antiquities* 2:1

e land in which Cain was , Commentary on Genesis 3:11

his life. — Cave of Treasures (E) 5:31

mbling that ultimately led to

quivering and he said to r a bird there." *Paleya* (Tikhonravov, p. 24)

amech.")

the theme of his repentance t, Adam, was said to tremble ("By the trembling of your d Eve"). See further Bowker,

Cain suffering seven punishs in the Hebrew text as well as achus, 23–27.

significance of Gen. 4:15 (and t for seven generations. In this difficult in its present form:

Cain . . . punishment will — Targum Ongelos Gen. 4:15

he former; it seems to belong s somehow suspended, while course possible to divide the st an incomplete threat about d part a decree about Cain's his text actually represents a ponse into two parts not after

that is, *lo ken*] with any l be exacted from him in

lākēn ("therefore") might work here, kills [will be punished.] As for Cain Such an understanding is found in the Peshitta and consequently in Ephraem's explanation "It will not be as you say concerning the killers who come after you" (*Commentary on Genesis*). A similar explanation is found even without the "Not so!":

"And the Lord said to him: "**Therefore**, anyone who kills . . .": R. Nehemiah said: Cain's case was different from that of [other] murderers. Cain killed and had no one to learn from: henceforth, anyone who kills will be killed. — *Genesis Rabba* 22:12

See on these Maori, The Peshitta Version, 249–250.

That Cain's punishment was deferred seemed to support the idea that God had somehow forgiven him. This motif emerged most directly from Gen. 4:15. For, as was seen earlier, Cain's words could be taken as meaning "My sin is too great to forgive," in which case God's response (whether the "Not so!" [ $l\bar{o}$ '  $k\bar{e}n$ ] of the Septuagint, Theodotion, Symmachus, Peshitta, and Vulgate, or even the "Therefore" of the traditional Hebrew text, *Samaritan Pentateuch*, Aquila, Onqelos, and so on) seemed to be intended to gainsay Cain's assertion: your sin is *indeed* forgivable! The motif of Cain's pardon is present even in Philo's writings, where Cain is otherwise altogether blameworthy and shows no sign of penitence:

[God] offers him [Cain] an **amnesty**, imposing a benevolent and kindly law concerning the first [crime?] on all judges—not that they may not destroy evil men, but that by hesitating a little and showing patience, they may cleave to mercy rather than cruelty . . . Not very long after the **forgiving of Cain**, it [Scripture] introduces the fact that Enoch repented, informing us that forgiveness is wont to produce repentance.

-Philo, Questions and Answers in Genesis 1:76, 82

**The Sign Was a Letter:** God gave Cain some sort of sign in Gen. 4:15. But what ras it? The word for "sign" came to mean, in later Hebrew, a letter of the alphabet; not surprisingly, a number of interpreters concluded that God had put some letter reletters in Cain's body (sometimes, specifically, his forehead). Others explained that a supernatural sign was given to proclaim Cain's repentance to all, or that Cain ras given a fearsome mark on his body—often, a pair of horns—to ward off potential attackers or given a dog to *signal* their arrival. See *Genesis Rabba* 22:12; dso, Aptowitzer, *Kain und Abel in der Agada;* Melinkoff, *The Sign of Cain;* Shinan, on Targum Pseudo-Jonathan to Gen. 4:15," 148–150; Kugel, *In Potiphar's House,* 159–172. Note that another text speaks of a "mark" (on the forehead) for the wicked, as well as a contrary mark for the righteous:

For God's mark is on the righteous for salvation . . . [but] those who act lawlessly shall not escape the Lord's judgment.

They shall be overtaken by those experienced in war, for on their forehead is the mark of destruction.

— Psalms of Solomon 15:6–9