

CHAPTER IV
Cain and Abel
Gen. 4:1-26

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The narrative of Cain and Abel is impressive for two reasons. It reveals the evolution of sin and its consequences and it commences the series of allegories, running throughout the Bible, of the two brothers, symbols of the natural and spiritual man. Sin after it possesses us, like fire, is difficult to confine and it carries us along the broad road to destruction, gaining speed by its own momentum. Jealousy may not seem a great sin but it leads to hatred and murder, and not even natural affection can stay its ravages. Yet gleaming through it like sunlight through a crevice we see the restraining care of God, seeking to save us ere we yield to passion, and He is merciful to us when we turn to Him and ask for His aid.

This story gives us vivid pictures of wrong-doing and its consequences. It gives us warning that the wrong-doer is on the road to Nowhere but it lingers to tell us that the right road leads to peace and joy. In all of the other brother-stories, the elder brother is made to serve the younger, for natural man must be subordinate to spiritual man.

The moral of this allegory is to impress upon us the fact that there is a Way but this is not it. Scientists tell us that in the center of every cell there is a microscopic nucleus called Chromatin. Take this out, the cell behaves automatically for a time and then dies. Symbol of man with the Spirit unrecognized; fugitives and wanderers on the face of the earth, no meaning to life, no purpose, no destination.

Eve called her first-born Cain (acquired). The Hebrews attached great importance to names. They were usually descriptive of some characteristic in the thing or person on whom they were bestowed. Cain is a tiller of the ground but Abel is a keeper of sheep. Sheep is the symbol of obedience, while "tiller of the ground" is the symbol of the curse for disobedience. Cain brings the first fruits of the ground, and Abel the firstlings of his flock as an offering unto the Lord. The Lord has respect for Abel and his offering, but for Cain and his offering there is no respect.

Cain's gifts are "acquired" while those of Abel (a son) are the result of inheritance. God never accepts from us anything that he has not given us. Acquisitions all come from the "material realm" and are unknown and therefore unacceptable to Spirit. Cain is wroth when God does not accept his offering. The Lord asks Cain: "Why art thou wroth? If thou doest well shalt thou not be accepted? And if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. **BUT THOU SHOULDST HAVE RULED OVER IT.**"

Then Cain rose up and slew his brother Abel. Do we not slay the SON every time we think the mortal of us, to be real and desire to have our wilful way in life? The murder

of Abel is the stifling of one's own individuality. One who can "come forth from among them and be separate" is the one who rights himself with the universal order of things, and is stronger than he was before "As a man is stronger who is standing upon his feet than the one who is standing upon his head."

The mark is upon us, every one of us, the brand of Cain, sensuous, weak, mediocre, or the mark of the Spirit, vital, individual, strong. The only sin is the dominion of evil and this is rebellion against the laws of our spiritual nature. The only true happiness is to be conscious of the Spirit and to keep it in the ascendancy. He alone can be said to possess It whom It wholly possesses. There is really no difference in degrees, even the smallest action opposed to the Spirit stamps us as in opposition to it.

When we are not conscious of the Son, we must be conscious only of the Cain. Then God is always demanding of us, "Where is Abel, thy brother?" To care for the spiritual first is the only possible way to care for the physical. We are our brother's keeper and God demands our brother's blood of us and will not hold us guiltless if we slay him. "The voice thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground!" Indeed an outraged God sees the Spirit in man always and hears its cry for self-expression no matter how many fathoms deep we have buried it. Cursed are we while this blood lies on the ground; everything that we do proves a failure, we are uneasy, restless and unhappy.

Only the Spirit knows the way, and if It has not the right of way in us then the ground cannot yield its strength to us. A fugitive and a vagabond are we in the earth, wandering to and fro, aimless, meaningless, hopeless. Do we not feel life a burden, the life that under the Spirit is so free, spontaneous, glorious? Again the punishment for sin is banishment from the presence of God, and the greatest blessedness is the visible presence of the Spiritual Reality.

No one can take from us our misery, we cannot be slain and end it all. There are no secret sins, no violation of our spiritual nature, but are branded upon us. No soul can meet a critical, condemnatory judgment, if it is deserved, and not shrink back upon itself, just as no one can receive commendation, if true, but his soul reaches up to it as the flowers creep out to greet the spring sunshine.

Trust your own individuality, trust your own thought, trust your ability to receive from Spirit what Spirit has to give you. Trust your own judgment and "Trust in thine own untried capacity, as thou wouldst trust in God Himself." "All the capacity one has is God's; there is but one Mind and Power. Be genuine; what matter how little you offer so it be genuine and true. One true original thought and act evolved from your own Spiritual insight and experience and you are born out of the Cain class of mortal mediocrity, into the originality of Spiritual Reality, and have made an offering that God respects."