

thou doest well is there not acceptance?" This may have pointed to the character of the sacrifice, but more probably it is an allusion to the upright character of Abel as contrasted with the sinfulness of Cain.

2. The ground-work from which Abel's character of acceptance sprang is given in Hebrews ii. 4, "By faith Abel offered."

Abel drew near to God with genuine worship, and he was living out in his daily life his desire to be near God. If there had been a God-given command telling men to approach God through sacrifice and a revelation to them that in some way sacrifices pointed forward to the promised Deliverer, then Abel's faith and consequent acceptance is very clear, but without Scriptural warrant we cannot tell that this had been revealed. Cain's anger rose, we are told, and his face was turned against his brother. Then God reasoned with him; whether through conscience or personally we do not know. It had been his own choice; he had chosen to do ill; therefore, the consequences of ill followed, and sin crouched at his door.

This expression "sin lieth or croucheth at the door" is very forcibly explained by Maclaren in his *Expositions*. He points out that the force of the expression is that each sin we commit, becomes as it were, instinct with life. It lies waiting for us; it crouches at our door. It tries to tempt or drive us to further sin. In other words, the conclusion of the verse means that a sin once committed, we instinctively turn towards it instead of against it, and that that instinct has to be conquered and kept down throughout our after life. But, if sin hovers around the threshold of our heart, Christ also stands without at the door and knocks.

The Effect upon Cain.

Cain's heart which had risen in rebellion against God rejected this reasoning of God with him. He let the sin crouch at his door and lead him on to further sin. Jealousy and anger were in his heart, and they grew with the rapid growth peculiar to them. "Jealousy is cruel as the grave; the coals thereof are coals of fire." Cant. viii. 6.