

In the opening chapters of the Book of Genesis we read that God had no regard for Cain's offering, but accepted the offering of his brother Abel. Moses describes the narrative in this way:

In the course of time Cain brought to the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground, and Abel for his part brought of the firstlings of his flock, their fat portions. And the Lord had regard for Abel and his offering, but for Cain and his offering he had no regard.

(Genesis 4:3-6)

There have been many interpretations put forward to explain this piece of Scripture. The most popular is that God commanded Adam after the Fall to slay an animal and offer the whole or parts of its body by fire. This was intended to remind Adam and his offspring of three important truths – the punishment sinners deserve, including death and destruction of the physical body, the wrath of God, symbolized by burning fire, and a prefigure of the sufferings of Christ, the Promised Seed!

Therefore, Cain's offering was rejected not because it was bad in itself, but because there was a wrong spirit behind it! He devised his own way to worship God and in total arrogance and pride ignored the Divine Way established. The writer of Hebrews appears to make this clear. We are told:

By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain's. Through this he received

approval as righteous, God himself giving approval to his gifts, he died, but through his faith he still speaks.

(Hebrews 11:4-5)