

our unconscious influence we weaken the resistance to sin in others because our soul has been drawn towards sin. We no longer instinctively shrink from it, and we lower our own spiritual standard, as well as that of others with whom we come in contact.

2. *Suffering entailed.*—Those nearest us, those whom we love best, not only suffer a loss of moral strength through our sin, but they also share the punishment which inevitably follows. In this case Adam sinned as well as Eve, but whether he had done so or not, the consequences of Eve's transgression fell in measure upon him. The saddest part of our sin is that however much we may wish to we cannot bear its weight alone. Its shadow falls on those nearest to us, and on those whom we love best.

3. *The Separation from God.*—The effect of sin on the relationship between our souls and God is marvellously portrayed here. It is not that God withdrew from Adam and Eve, but that Adam, with the cloud of sin upon him, could not approach God as before. He said himself that shame was born within him. He had yielded to his lower nature, and in consequence his lower nature had taken the pre-eminence. His impulse was to hide from God, to get rid of thoughts of Him, "He that sinneth walketh in darkness."

4. *Selfishness.*—Sin ever leads to more sin, to hard thoughts of God, to hard thoughts of man, and to intense selfishness. Adam first throws the blame upon God, "the woman whom *Thou* gavest," then upon Eve. His one thought is to shield himself at all costs.

The Blight upon the Garden of Eden.

A definite punishment now falls upon tempter and tempted alike. The punishment of the serpent is connected with the mystery of evil in the world. Evil, as it is in its essence, can never turn to good, and, therefore it is to be perpetually at war with humanity until its power is crushed. Sin will make a culminating effort, "will bruise his heel," will dare to crucify the Son of God, but in that effort will receive its death blow. "Thou shalt bruise his head."