

the same place and you can at first cross from one to the other, but ere long they diverge in opposite directions, after which it is very difficult to regain the old path. Under these circumstances it is well that we should have strong convictions about the importance of immediate refusal of sin. It seems a very little thing to yield to the first temptation, for then we cannot see that it is the beginning of sorrows. "The steps by which the occasional criminal develops into the habitual criminal are slow and subtle. This is one of the tragedies of life. The circles of crime extend from heaven to the very murky depths of hell, and yet they are not far from any one of us." Let us avoid the beginnings.

I heard thy voice and was afraid, v. 10. The revulsion of feeling that follows upon doing wrong. The tree and the garden and all things looked very different after the fall; for the innocent heart was lost forever. A beauty had faded from the world. Increased knowledge in this case meant increased sorrow. (Eccl. 1:18.) This torture of conscience is one of the worst of all forms of

punishment; and surely many would be kept back from the deeds of wrong, did they only know that they were selling their most happy moments for nought. It is at least one factor in the favor of Adam and Eve that they were conscious of the wrong. To sin and not be ashamed is worst of all.

The woman gave me . . . the serpent beguiled me, vs. 12, 13. The excuse of sin. We are all prone to shift the responsibility of our faults upon others. Some will plead the circumstances which were too strong to resist. Others will plead their own weakness. But the very circumstances that give us the opportunity of doing wrong are also our opportunity of succeeding. Temptation tests our character, and man is always free to resist circumstances if he will.

It shall bruise thy head, v. 15. The beginning of redemption. God will not be overpowered by sin, but conceives a way to save rebellious man, and from this chapter onward until Jesus came, there is the gradual revelation of the divine love that seeks to save the world.

POINTS AND PARAGRAPHS

The devil understands the use of the thin end of the wedge. v. 1.

To dally with temptation is eventually to be overcome by it. v. 2.

Satan bids high for men's souls. He will even give God the lie. v. 4.

Genesis does not explain the origin of evil; it tells us of the beginning of it amongst men.

Sin loves company. v. 6.

A swift transition. v. 7.

Our Maker is the last to forsake us. v. 9.

Neither Adam nor Eve figures well under God's questions. Sin is very apt to breed cowardice. vs. 12, 13.

The rain follows the lightning flash; and so God's mercy upon His wrath. vs. 14, 15.

"When a young man consulted John Newton touching the origin of evil, that divine replied that "he was more anxious to get

sin out of the world than to know how it came into the world."

"God does His part most surely: and Satan too does his part: we alone are unconcerned. Heaven and hell are at war for us and against us, yet we trifle and let life go on at random. Heaven and hell are before us as our own future abode, one or other of them: yet our interest moves us no more the God way. We treat sin, not as an enemy to be feared, but as a misfortune and a weakness: we do not pity and shun sinful men, but we enter into their path so far as to keep company with them; and next, being tempted to copy them, we fall almost without an effort."—Newman.

The great issues of life are being carried out in silence and in such an hour as we think not the tempter comes. In the cathedral at Orvieto, there is a picture that illustrates this. "It represents the appearance and the triumphs of Antichrist. And Anti-