

ruled in this by God, so that should man fall the unconscious instrument of his malice might fittingly symbolize his deceitful and loathsome character. The serpent, moving sinuously, entering noiselessly, slaying by a subtle and incurable poison introduced into the system of its victim, or crushing in a deadly embrace, exercising a mysterious fascination upon the creatures it would devour, beautiful in appearance but slimy and disgusting to the touch, is more fitly adapted than any other living thing to represent the arch-enemy of mankind. Compare Rev. 12: 9; 20: 2; 2 Cor. 2: 11; 11: 3; John 8: 44; 2 Cor. 4: 4; Eph. 2: 2; Rom. 16: 20; Matt. 13: 19, 39; 1 Thess. 3: 5; 2 Thess. 2: 9, 10; Matt. 10: 16. **Beast of the field**—neither a domesticated animal nor one of the smaller sorts (Murphy). **He said**—The vocal organs of the serpent are not adapted to produce articulate sounds, but Satan causes the sounds to proceed as from the mouth of the reptile. Eve manifests no surprise at hearing a "dumb" creature speak, probably she did not know that the power of doing this was confined to man. Compare the story of Balaam's ass (Num. 22: 28-30); the cases of demoniacal possession in the gospels, especially Matt. 8: 30-32, and notice the supernatural control of animals in 1 Kings 14: 24-28; 17: 4; Jonah 1: 17; 2: 10. **Unto the woman**—(1 Tim. 2: 12-15; 1 Pet. 3: 7). We have here but a fragment of the conversation. Satan cunningly pretends to be surprised at the restriction laid upon our first parents and in this way suggests to Eve the thought that it is arbitrary and unreasonable. "Is it even so that God hath said, Ye shall not eat of every tree in the garden?" Can it be possible that you are forbidden any one whatever? (Gesenius). **2-3.** At this patronizing assumption of superior knowledge, Eve is somewhat abashed, and in her answers exaggerates the prohibition, shewing already that she secretly agrees with him that it is too strict. Compare her statement of the permission with ch. 2: 17. (Matt. 6: 13). **The tree in the midst of the garden**—"The tree of the knowledge of good and evil." (ch. 2: 17): It was a "probation tree." What species it belonged to is of no consequence. It derived its name from the fact that man's conduct in regard to it determined his permanent moral standing. "The knowledge of good and evil" is ripe maturity of moral character (Dods), children have it not (Deut. 1: 39); extreme old age has lost it (2 Sam. 19: 35); it comes with growth (Isa. 7: 16; Heb. 5: 14); Solomon prayed for it as essential to a king (1 Kings 3: 9); angels possess it in perfection (2 Sam. 4: 15); it is one of the attributes of God (Gen. 3: 5, 22). Moral character cannot come as an innate endowment, or as a gift bestowed. It must be the result of willing choice of the good and refusal of the evil. This tree represents a frequent experience of men. Any object, indifferent in itself, or even commendable, gained by improper means, misused, or enjoyed to excess, becomes a source of moral death. **Least ye die**—It is not necessary to suppose that the fruit was poisonous, or even unwholesome—it was one of the things declared "very good." Spiritual death is here meant, for (1) death is stated to be the result of disobedience, not of the nature of the tree (Rom. 5: 12, 14-17), (2) mortality derives all its terrors from the spiritual death which it represents (Rom. 5: 18-21; 1 Cor. 15: 56); (3) the narrative of the fall treats of man's spiritual relations, his earthly condition depends on these; and (4) our first parents did not die when they ate of the forbidden fruit. The word suggests immediate death (ch. 2: 17; margin "dying thou shalt die"), this was true spiritually, not physically. Liability to physical death follows as a consequence of spiritual death and becomes its sign. What special act of providence did God exercise towards man in the estate wherein he was created? **4-5.** A bold insinuation of unworthy motives on the part of God to listen to this was sin, and Eve had already fallen in heart before she touched the fruit. **Your eyes shall be opened**—Your knowledge will be as much greater than it is now, as your present attainments surpass those of a blind person. (Acts 26: 18; Eph. 1: 18). He promises that they shall be competent to decide for themselves independently of the divine wisdom and law. Satan shews a keen insight into human nature. What youth does not chafe at submission to the directions of older persons, and long for emancipation from irksome but wise restraints. **As gods**—R. V. "as God."

II. THE FALL. **6.** Notice the steps in Eve's downfall. Lurking discontent; distrust of God; dallying with evil; making excuses for sin; the sinful act; leading others astray. No doubt the tree was beautiful but it was forbidden. The wisdom to be gained by eating was the sad experience of sin, not what the "father of lies" wished her to believe: Jas. 1: 15; Job 31: 7; Ecc. 11: 9; 1 Ju. 2: 16; Jas. 4: 7. What is sin? **Gave also unto her husband**—His sin was the greater because more deliberate (1 Tim. 2: 14) and in spite of clearer knowledge and stronger will. (Rom. 5: 12-19). Did all mankind fall in Adam's first transgression? **7. Their eyes were opened**—They knew good and evil as the devil knows them (Murphy), had they withstood the temptation they would have known them as God and the holy angels know them. They looked out on life from a new standpoint. They realized now what sin meant. Their newborn