

deadly work, we may probably never fully know. *Hast thou eaten of the tree?* All pretext of ignorance is now removed. The guilt of the offence is shown in the violation of God's command. Before the questions of God, man stands self-condemned. *The woman whom thou gavest to be with me.* Adam blames another, not himself; and, doing so, casts reflection also upon God Himself as the giver to him of his temptress. Adam has fallen far.

V. 13. *And the Lord God said unto the woman.* Each must render a personal account. (Rom. 14 : 12.) *The serpent beguiled me.* She, too, blames another.

Vs. 14, 15. *The Lord God said unto the ser-*

pent, Cursed art thou. No question is asked now, because the source of evil has been reached. A curse is pronounced upon both the archtempter and his instrument. The serpent is to be degraded. *I will put enmity between thee and the woman.* Men hate serpents and serpents hate men. In one year in India, 16,777 died from serpent bites. There is to be antagonism, too, between Satan and man. *It shall bruise thy head.* The coming representative of the race shall triumph over Satan. *Thou shalt bruise his heel;* a prophecy of Gethsemane and of the crucifixion. This is the gospel in Eden, redemption by sacrifice, a sunbeam of mercy in the darkness of judgment, to prevent despair.

APPLICATION

The tragedy of sin opens. The chapter tells

"Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world, and all our
woe."

Now the serpent was more subtil, v. 1. The external exciting cause of sin. The serpent is sly and creeps in when no one is looking, as we know from the stories of the cobra in India, which enters mysteriously and at night works its havoc. Thus also is it with sin, which is subtle enough to creep into our hearts when we are not looking. The serpent fascinates, holding by its charm the fluttering bird which cannot fly away. Sin is also powerful because it fascinates. There is a charm about the promise which it makes, that catches the unwary. Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Under this suggestive teaching we have therefore a warning of the ability of a foe who is able to use all the arts of persuasion. How we should watch and pray lest we enter into temptation! (Matt. 26:41.)

Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? An insinuating question, meant to suggest doubt and to stimulate curiosity; as when Satan said to Jesus: "If thou be the son of God." (Matt. 4:6.) Not seldom does the temptation come to ask if it is really God who tells us not to do certain things, and thus we are tempted to argue

about a course of action till at last we persuade ourselves that it is not very wrong after all, and that it cannot be against God's commandment. It is not well to reopen our moral decisions. This is often one of the ways in which the enemy is seeking for our soul.

The serpent said, Ye shall not surely die, v. 4. The untruthfulness of sin. It is not afraid to tell a lie, and it rests upon its falsehoods for power. Satan is "the father of lies." Sin says that we shall enjoy the pleasure and not reap any death if we do its bidding. Its boldness in false assertion is appalling.

And when the woman saw . . . she took . . . and did eat, v. 6. The evolution of evil. There are three stages: looked, took, did eat. This verse is the fateful one. The trust in God's goodness and words is shaken, and the longing after self-satisfaction grows strong. The dread glance does the work. Eve could have refused, had she only refused to look, but after she looked the battle was practically lost. It is the beginning always that is hard, and it is hard at first to do wrong. This is the cause why we are told to shun the appearance of evil. "Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not into the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away." (Prov. 4:14, 15.) The two roads of right and wrong start from