

DAILY BIBLE ILLUSTRATIONS

by

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Second Week -- Tuesday

ADAM IN EDEN

"Yahweh God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed" (Genesis 2:8).

The sacred narrative informs us that the newly created man was placed in a garden in the eastern part of a land called Eden. It was a most pleasant place. Here, probably, all that was sublime and gentle in the scenery of the whole earth was exhibited, and all that could delight the uncorrupted tastes of the new man together with all that could excite the anxious inquiries of his mind were spread out before him. He had labor to employ his attention without wearying him, and he had time and leisure for his highest pursuits of knowing God, his will, and his works. There was no disharmony in nature to pain his soul. The birds sang sweetly to him as he walked, worked, or rested, and the beasts frolicked playfully around their master.

Adam was endowed with a rational and immortal spirit. He was holy, and therefore happy. He enjoyed sensible communication with God, and probably with angels. What a state of blessedness was this! To men imbued with the spirit of the fall, to whom the excitement of conflict and conquest are necessary and who will not be happy unless they can "ride in the whirlwind and direct the storm," the paradise of Eden may seem insipid and the loss of it no great privation. But to those whom the discord of men is hateful, who faint beneath the cares of life, who are cut off from sun and air by the necessities of daily toil, or who groan under the burden of their sins, the repose and rest and happiness of Eden--glorified by the presence of God!--appears beyond all measure inviting. Well might they cry, "Oh, Adam, what have you done to lose such a fair heritage for your children!"

There has been much curiosity regarding the condition of Adam's knowledge. All accounts necessarily assign to him the utmost physical perfection of man's nature, but in the view of some he was merely a naked savage who had to acquire all things by experience. It was an old theory that knowledge, intelligence, and the arts of civilization were progressively acquired in the first ages, and it was therefore necessary that the progenitor of the race should be in a state of ignorance. On the other hand, there are those who urge that Adam, instructed of God, must have been possessed of all the knowledge of which the mind of man is capable. Thus he was deeply skilled in all the sciences and arts of civilization.

That both extremes are wrong we have no doubt. Adam was not a child at his creation; he was a man in the vigor of physical and mental life. There is no need of placing any limit to his powers of thought, reasoning, and imagination. He was taught of God and not left to gather by slow experience all that he wanted to know. If Adam could talk at all, and we know that he could, language must have been supernaturally imparted to him. From the same source he must have derived the knowledge of the properties of objects and beings around him. He had the employment assigned of keeping and dressing the garden, and this involved the knowledge of the many operations and properties of plants. That Adam was endowed with the knowledge of the common and more conspicuous qualities of animals is evident from his being able to give them appropriate names. This was probably suggested to him with the force of an intuitive perception at the moment his attention was directed to the species.

However, it does not seem at all necessary to think that Adam was endowed with any other knowledge than was suited to the condition in which he was placed and needful to the full enjoyment of its advantages. There seems no reason to believe that he was educated in all sciences and skilled in all art; and there are some who make him greater than all his sons in astronomy, zoology, botany, and chemistry. We believe that Adam was given as much as the happiness of his condition required.

Yet there is one aspect of Adam in Eden of which we have no conception, namely, that he had no past. All *our* past, so fruitful in teaching and experience, so laden with vast stores of accumulated facts and knowledge, so rich in the memories of young joys and parental tenderness--all this was a blank to him. This alone must have made a serious difference between his state and our own. It is a difference so great that it is scarcely possible for us to realize all the mysteries of his existence. But it is a difference that we simply point out, for we know that the first of men was, even in this respect, not under any disadvantage, for he had no need of antecedents. God was all to him--his past, his present, his future.