

# Lecture 1 — The First Young Man — Conquered

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*Genesis 1 - 3.*

## **'Young Men of Scripture.'**

### **Nine addresses to young men.**

by W. T. P. Wolston, M.D.,

*1911. Seventh Edition. Twenty-second Thousand.*

### **Preface to Seventh Edition.**

Six large editions of this little volume having been exhausted, another is called for, which differs in no respect from its predecessors.

During the past sixteen years, since it first appeared, many cases of happy conversion to the Lord amongst young men, through its pages, have from time to time come to the ears of the author, for which unfeigned thanks are given to God.

The Book is again sent forth with prayerful desire that its pages may continue to be blessed of God to lead young men to decide for Christ as their Saviour, and to help them to yield themselves absolutely to His blessed service.

W. T. P. W.

Edinburgh, 9th January 1911.

### **Preface to First Edition.**

The contents of this little volume consist of a series of addresses to students, and young men generally, delivered in the Operetta House, Edinburgh, during November and December last. Taken down in shorthand, they were revised and published weekly as delivered, and are now, at the desire of many, issued in a permanent form.

They in no wise pretend to be a biographical account of the characters which form their basis. These are only pegs on which to hang some homely truths for young men; and if they be

the means of turning any such to know, follow, and serve the Saviour, the author's end will be gained, and God's heart gladdened.

May He who once said to a young man, "Come, take up the cross, and follow me," graciously deign to use these pages to win many a youthful heart for Himself.

W. T. P. W.

46 Charlotte Square,

Edinburgh, 1st *March* 1894.

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## **The First Young Man — Conquered**

### **Lecture 1.**

It is just three thousand years ago since a very important question was put by a king — "Where withal shall a young man cleanse his way?" and God's Spirit undoubtedly led to the answer — "By taking heed thereto, according to thy word" (Ps. 119: 9). Now, my friends, that witness is true, and if you want your way cleansed, and if you want to be a happy man — a real man of God, a being worthy of the name of man in this world — the secret of this is by taking heed to God's Word. I hold it in my hand. I know men scoff at it. I know we live in an infidel, an unbelieving age, but I desire to commence this series of meetings with young men, with the confession, made in all possible simplicity, that I believe this to be God's Word — a revelation from God to us of what He is, and of all that you and I need for our guidance in time, and

likewise a blessed guide into eternity. From the bottom of my heart, I believe the Bible to be the Word of God. I accept it as such from cover to cover. I make these remarks because I know the tendency of the age is to doubt, and it is very striking that when a young man gets to be a doubter he thinks himself rather a fine fellow. That is a strange thing to say, yet none the less true, but you may depend upon it that a young man, who is a simple and reverent believer in revelation, is infinitely happier and holier than a man who is in doubt of God's Word.

Tonight, then, we will look at what God tells us of the creation of the first man. Him I am bold to call "The First Young Man," because the man spoken of in these scriptures I have read to you tonight comes on the scene fresh and new — a brand new man. I believe God's record, not man's theory of the way man came into the world. I know perfectly well we are told nowadays — for men are coming to wondrous conclusions — that man is only developed protoplasm, or — could only a "missing link" be discovered — the direct descendant of an ape; in plain language, a pretty well-grown monkey, with his tail worn off by sitting on it. We are told to believe that insensate folly as to our origin. I believe it to be a downright lie of the devil, from top to bottom of the whole theory. I believe God gives us here the account of the origin of man, and what is more, it gives us all that is necessary for us to know about the origin of man. Perfectly well am I acquainted with the fact that men are busily engaged today in trying to dig up relics of what they are pleased to call "prehistoric man," but when I read in Scripture of "the first man Adam" (1 Cor. 15: 45), I believe that God speaks about the first man that ever existed, and that He has spoken the truth regarding his origin is certain.

You and I may be certain that we have got before our eyes tonight the history of the first man the world ever saw. I quite admit that man's ruin. I quite admit that world is ruined too. But if man be ruined, and the scene through which he passes is ruined likewise through his sin, the resources of God are not ruined, and what He can do for ruined man opens out before us in the moment of that ruin. You will find in Scripture that there are but two men. There is the first man, and the last. The first man is Adam, and the second — the last Adam — the Lord Jesus.

Let us look at that which Scripture tells us of the history of the first man, the place in which he appears, and glance for a moment at his surroundings. I like to see a young man in his surroundings, and if I can do so, I can form a fairly good opinion of what he is. "Noscitur a sociis," said an ancient. "A man is known by his companions." He is known by his company. We look tonight at the surroundings of this first young man — at that with which God surrounded him; and the opening chapters of Genesis present these very naturally and simply. Now we are told very frequently that the Scriptures and geology cannot be reconciled, and that science is now-a-days so far advanced that we are to believe the geologists and not the Scriptures. With your leave I mean to believe Scripture, and if the geologist does not agree with Scripture, then I am not going to follow him. I have nothing to say against his facts, but with his conclusions I am at issue. He demands illimitable spaces of time for the deposition of the various strata of the crust of the earth. I admit them. But look at your Bible, does it say that God did all His creatorial work in six days? It says nothing of the sort. The opening lines of God's revelation are — "*In the beginning* God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen. 1: 1). You will say, When was the beginning? Well, you were not there, and I was not there, so we cannot fix it; but go back as far as you like, and you will find only the Creator was there. Man was not there, and man knows nothing about it. What took place God reveals. Between the first and second verses of Genesis 1

there is, without doubt, a period as illimitable as the most unbelieving and insatiable geologist would like. If he says he must have millions, or even billions of trillions of years, he is welcome to them. You will find space for them between the first and second verses of Genesis 1. The first statement of God is that He created the heavens and the earth, and the next statement says nothing about the heavens. It speaks of the earth alone, just because man was to be put upon it. The second verse deals only with the earth, "And *the earth* was without form and void," — if you will, a shapeless mass. You turn and say, So God made earth a shapeless mass? No; He did not. You reply, The first of Genesis says so. No, it does not. It says, "And the earth *was* without form, and void." If you have read your Bible carefully — and if you have never done that, I pray you from this night to begin — you will have come across a verse in the 45th chapter of the book of Isaiah, which tells you that God did not make the earth a shapeless mass. I will read it to you. "Thus saith the Lord," — this is the true prophet — call to attention; and albeit learned nineteenth-century critics tell us that Isaiah was a rhapsodical and old-fashioned writer, not to be believed, I do believe him for all that, — I believe what he wrote. "Thus saith the Lord" — and the Lord never tells any lies, which cannot be said of man — "that *created* the heavens, God himself that *formed* the earth, and made it; he hath established it, he created it (in the beginning) *not in vain* (the same word as is translated, "without form and void" in Gen. 1: 2); he *formed* it (during the six days) to be *inhabited*: I am the Lord, and there is none else" (Isa. 45: 18).

How beautiful Scripture is! If you have had difficulties and doubts about Genesis 1, the Spirit of God, through the prophet, says God did not create the earth "without form, and void." You may turn to me and say, How did it become so? I cannot tell you, but that was not the way God created the earth. The second verse describes the condition in which it was found, when He put His hand to it to put it into shape, so that He might put man upon it. That part of His work took Him six days, but creation as such was "in the beginning." Concerning it we are absolutely clear, for "through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear" (Heb. 11: 3). How the earth became without form, or why, Scripture does not tell us; and where Scripture does not speak, I think you and I ought not to venture an opinion.

Now our friend the geologist has demanded uncountable millions of years for the deposition of the earth's crust, and pointed out the order in which these varied strata were deposited. All he wants Scripture concedes him space for, in the interval we have observed. But he goes on and says that the surface of the earth has certainly undergone — if I remember rightly — about nine-and-twenty marked and manifest upheavals. In fact, the whole crust of the earth has been repeatedly burst up, and there may have been those nine-and-twenty upheavals. What have all these irruptions produced? Granite was formed at the bottom; it is up at the top now, and you are building houses with it. The coal which you are now getting was clearly formed very much farther down than where it is now found, and had it not been for these upheavals, which rendered the earth "without form, and void," it would never have been within reach of the miner's pickaxe and shovel now. In the infinite wisdom of God, He arranged and produced these things for the carrying out of His own purpose; and thus the earth was in a truly suited condition for the Lord to shape, or "form," as Isaiah says, when the moment arrived for Him to put man upon it.

When that moment comes, Scripture speaks of days, — "and the evening and the morning were the first day." I believe these days were days of twenty-four hours. How simple and perfect

is God's tale of creation! He first of all created, in the beginning, the heavens and the earth; and secondly, at a date which we can measure, reformed and fashioned the earth, and then put man on it. He did not create the world in six days, nor does Scripture say so. Careless readers have done that. A joiner might fashion a table, but he could not create the material. The creation of the wood and the making of the table are totally different things.

If we now glance at the six days, we see that first of all God brings in Light. That is what you all want. You must get light. Every man needs it, and it is a wonderful moment in a man's history when God says to him, "Let there be light." Has it ever come in your history? Has God said about your darkened soul, "Let there be light"? Well, light came. The second day He discloses heaven. That, I think, is very nice, — He did that before He touched the earth. Earth was not designed to be man's eternal resting-place, but heaven may be yours and mine through the precious blood of Jesus. The seas are next divided from each other; and the vegetable kingdom comes into existence on the third day. The sun, moon, and stars — the powers that were to rule on earth — were next seen, on the fourth day; and on the fifth day you get a part of the animal kingdom — fish and fowl — created by the simple fiat of God. On the sixth day, another side of the animal kingdom — the beasts of the field — come into notice, as we hear God say, in the 24th verse, "Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle and creeping thing." On the sixth day we get God's statement about man's genesis. And now, if you have any doubts about your origin, will you listen to God for a moment? — "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let him have dominion over the fish, of the sea," etc. It is man as a race that is meant here, as we read, "in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." God (Elohim) goes into solemn counsel over man's creation. Elohim is the plural of Eloah, "The Supreme." It is Deity — God in the absolute! God, as God, goes into solemn counsel, and says, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." These terms are quite different. An image gives the idea of representation; likeness gives the idea of moral quality. "Let us make man in our image." He was to represent God on the earth, and rule over the earth. That was the point in the words, "let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth" (ver. 26).

The result of this six days' work was that God declared everything He did was good. Now observe that when He makes man and puts him upon the earth, in the last verse of the first chapter, He says, "And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good." Like a workman, He contemplates the work of His hands, and the heavens declare His glory. The former works are good, but when the finest of all, man, in the image of God, and in the likeness of God, is created, He pronounces His estimate of him as very good. The first three verses of chapter 2 belong to chapter 1, and they tell us that God rested. For six days He laboured, and then He rested.

In the seventh verse we are told, "And the Lord God (Jehovah-Elohim) formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." There is an immense scope of truth in these words, but time fails me to go much into detail. You see, however at once, that man's body was formed from the dust of the earth. The apostle Paul, in the fifteenth of 1st Corinthians — though in your Bibles it is not translated exactly as it might be — speaks of man "as earthy." That is scarcely it. "The first man out of the

earth was made of dust" is the correct rendering. This was the truth revealed in Genesis 2; and hence the language used by the Spirit of God in 1 Corinthians 15: 47, "The first man is out of the earth, made of dust" Observe that is exactly what God does here. He took up the dust and formed man's body; and what came next? He "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Here you have the truth as to the origin of man. It is wonderful, just because it is divine. He is the handiwork of God, and his life comes from God. He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and he became a living soul. I think that is far better than merely being the developed descendant of an ape. If you give up the record of God in the second chapter of Genesis as to the origin of man, you will have to give up Christ also. Mark what the Holy Ghost says concerning Him — as a man. In Luke's Gospel (Luke 3.) His genealogy is traced back to Seth, "who was the son of Adam, who was the son of God." Man sprang from God, and got his life from God. He is the direct offspring of God, as the apostle Paul says, in addressing the Athenians, "For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring" (Acts 17: 28).

Man's start in the world then was divinely perfect, not developmental. Into his nostrils had God Himself breathed "the breath of life, and man became a living soul." Immortality is dependent on that, and the reason why you are an immortal soul is because man is the direct offspring of God. You have in your bosom — every one of you — immortality, and you must exist as long as God exists. Immortality and eternal life do not carry the same thought. The former every man possesses, the latter only they who are Christ's, for He is it, and to have the Son of God is to have life (1 John 5: 12). In Scripture immortality means eternal existence or being, and man — the daring scepticism of these days notwithstanding — yes, every young man here tonight possesses eternal existence. Where he will spend that existence is another thing. We read of eternal life, and of eternal judgment. These are the two — the only two — bournes of man. You will have an eternal existence. Where will you spend it? That is a matter for yourself. I know where I shall spend my eternity — with the Saviour, who in grace and love died for me. You have immortality, and you cannot crush it out. Annihilation is a lie of the devil, and crass folly to boot. You cannot destroy anything on earth. You may alter the shape of matter, but you cannot annihilate it. You might burn that table, but its constituent elements remain — weight for weight — in the form of carbon, water, salts, and gases. So is it with man. His form may be changed, but *he* remains. No! you have an immortal soul. It has sprung from God, and the salvation of that soul is a very serious and important question for you and for me.

We will now go a little further with the Scripture, and see what became of the man who thus so divinely and gloriously starts on his way. The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden, we are told. Eden means "delight." It is called Paradise in the Greek translation — the Septuagint. We have heard of "Paradise Lost" and "Paradise Regained," but Scripture does not speak of the latter; once lost man's Paradise is never regained, but God in grace, opens a heavenly Paradise. In Eden were two trees, "the tree of life," — sovereign grace in Christ, — and "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" — responsibility in man, a test of his obedience.

In this garden God placed man to enjoy His bounty, His goodness, and, above all, Himself. He was lord of all he surveyed. He was in relationship with God, and was monarch of all creation. All that he saw was good, but there was one reservation by his Creator, who therein exercised His authority. "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the

garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2: 16, 17). You have here man put into responsibility, and his responsibility was merely obedience in respect of that tree, and that tree only. I do not know what tree it was. Scripture does not say. It was the one test of obedience and responsibility before God. See then how God works to make everything blessed and happy for man. He was in happy relationship with God on the one hand, enjoying Him; and in relationship with creation on the other, ruling over it. Observe this, — and I think it is very interesting, — while he was *inferior* to God and could not reach up to Him, he was *superior* to the animals, and they could not reach up to him. Hence he was alone, his affections, his heart as a man, were not satisfied; and therefore God introduces another relationship, that of *equality*. The woman is brought in, and that really makes the man complete. God brings the woman to this man, and the way in which the Lord introduces her is very striking. Adam falls into a deep sleep, and as he sleeps God takes a rib, and of that rib he frames the woman. A beautiful and striking type that is of the Lord Jesus going into death, that out of His death there might come life to those who had it not. I have no doubt you have a beautiful figure of Christ and the Church in this incident of the taking of the rib.

Now, in Genesis 3, whom do we find intruding into this scene of absolute delight? Everything is lovely and pleasant, and over all is man set with his wife. It goes without saying, that if Satan could spoil this he would do so, and the third chapter introduces the enemy coming in the form of a tempter. He does not come up and say, I am your enemy; I am the foe of God and the deceiver of man — though both are true. The devil never presents himself openly to you or me. He comes to the woman, and speaks about God's word. He recognised that he was powerless unless he could deceive. "Yea," he said, "hath God said ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, *neither shall ye touch it*, lest ye die." The point was, she went beyond Scripture, for so far as we read God had said nothing about "not touching" the tree; and when we go beyond Scripture we are sure to get into danger. Satan boldly says, "Ye shall not surely die." And what is the next thing? Beguiled by smooth words, Eve took the fruit. "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat." The forbidden thing is just what we desire. You and I know what temptation is. The devil never shows himself as devil. The wrong was done, and, beguiled as the woman was, she gave to her husband. He took the fruit, and thus by man sin entered into the world.

In a moment of weakness the woman listened to the lie of the enemy, and Adam, with his eyes open and not deceived, followed her into the path of sin. Alas, "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. 5: 12). Sin is lawlessness, man doing his own will. Terrible fall for man; immense victory for Satan! What are the consequences? They are far-reaching and eternal. The pair knew good, without the power of doing it; and they knew evil, without the power of being able to withstand it. That is conscience. It is the knowledge of good and evil. There is not a man that does wrong but knows he does it. You have a conscience, and your conscience tells you when you do wrong. Thank God for conscience! I quite admit you may drug it, gag it, sear it or make it callous, from not heeding it and the hardening effect of sin, and then conscience refuses to act. There is not a

living soul, however, whatever he be, or whoever he be, but when he does wrong knows it Adam sinned, and knew it. You sin, and know it

But, note, a man's sin ever carries consequences, and "the wages of sin is death." The first young man followed a woman in sin, and many a man here has followed woman into evil. Who can deny it? Ah, my friend, you have the stamp of death on you, and judgment is yet to come. "Thou shalt surely die," God had said. "Ye shall not surely die," said Satan. Who spoke the truth? But there is more than that. The eye was opened, and they knew they were naked. They went behind the trees of the garden when the Lord came down to speak and commune with the man. Yes, this young man puts the trees of the garden between himself and God. And God says, "Where art thou?" Oh what a question! He had sinned. He has a conscience, and he seeks to get away from God. He knew Him enough to fear and shun Him. Pitiably knowledge! He puts creation between himself and God. And what do you put between yourself and God? Your work, your comforts, your lusts, your business — everything. But mark, God says to every young man now, "Where art thou?" And, sinner, unless you have been converted and turned to the Lord, and have secured pardon through the blood of the Lord Jesus, the solemn query is still put. Young man, where art thou? Are you near God, or still hiding from Him? How serious is the question.

And what is Adam's answer to the Lord's question? "I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid." Sin makes a man afraid. I recollect what led to the conversion of a young man in this city. He was working by the side of a godly old carpenter, who had taken a deep interest in him. "William," he said one day, "when you get home tonight, will you go into your room, take a Bible, and just open the Bible at the third chapter of John? Then go down on your knees, and just say, 'There is no one in this room but God and me.'" The young man cried out, "I would not do that for the world." He was afraid to be alone with God. So are you, my unsaved friends. You are afraid of you don't know what. Conscience makes cowards of us all: sin makes a man afraid. Adam wanted to keep God at a distance. What folly! The Lord comes to him, and his reason is given. "I was afraid, because I was naked." He had garments of fig leaves, had he not? Yes, but it is all very well for a man to cover himself, and cover up his life, and history, and condition, as long as he is at a distance from God, but the moment he hears the voice of God, and by the conscience has been brought to see God, that moment he knows he is a ruined, naked, and guilty sinner. Every man has to feel that he is a sinner, and to learn whence redemption comes. But the Lord asks him further, and Adam lays the blame of his own sin on his wife, or, worse still, on God. "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." We like to blame other people. The woman that God gave him for an helpmeet, I grant led him wrong, but he ought not to have been led wrong. He should have kept her straight, for he was at her side. Have you been led wrong? Don't you blame the woman or anybody else! Blame your own heart. Self-judgment is ever right.

How sad and sudden the effect of sin! Adam puts the blame on God, and says in effect, "I should not have got into this mess but for her." Ah! what a paltry coward the sinner away from God is. The Lord then turns to the woman, and she puts the blame on the serpent. "The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat." Quite true! Throw the fault, if you can, off your own shoulder. You will never be able to hide it from God, and you cannot get away from the judgment of God, unless you get hidden in the merits of the wonderful death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

God then addresses the serpent, and brings a judgment upon it: "The seed of the woman" — beautiful promise! — "shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." There would yet come into this same scene another man, the Saviour, the seed of the woman who first sinned. God's plan of redemption comes out to view in the moment of man's first sin. Man's need is met by God's resources; and in the moment we lose the earthly paradise, God says, I will open heaven to you — I will yet bring you to another, a better paradise. The antithesis of this scene is found in Luke 23, where the dying thief is assured of paradise. "Thou shalt bruise his heel." That refers to the cross and death of the Lord Jesus, who died for our sins that He might bring us to God now, and to His Paradise for ever.

Having pronounced their judgment, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return," God clothes the pair with "coats of skins," that could only be obtained as the result of the victim's death. Man's ruin can only be met by death, and I do not doubt, in the clothing of this sad and guilty pair, you have a beautiful type of the atoning death of the Lord Jesus.

I must have Christ for my covering and clothing. There is all the difference in the world between the "apron" that man made, and the "coats of skins" which the Lord God made, and put on them. In Adam's apron God did not put a single stitch. That is man's effort to reform himself, his self-improvement, and his own works. All your efforts and mine are valueless; we are as naked after as before. The coat that God made was His own work, and man had put no stitch in it. It is salvation by sovereign grace. If you are ever to be saved at all, it will only be by God. He brings that coat to Adam to hide his nakedness; and I can quite understand why the apostle Paul says, when looking to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven, "If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked" (2 Cor. 5: 3). He, so to speak, says, "Do not be like Adam." He was found "naked," when he thought himself clothed. Too many will be like him by-and-by. Raised from the dead, being clothed — that is, having the body — they will be naked before God. They have not Christ as their covering before God.

The end of the first chapter of man's history is sadly solemn. And the Lord God said: "Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever, therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. *So he drove out the man:* and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life" (Gen. 3: 22-24). Satan proved too much for man at the beginning. He conquered him utterly by guile and deceit. Such was it with the first young man, and so has it been with all his descendants. Ruined, wretched, afraid of God, blaming his wife — knowing good, but unable to do it — knowing evil, and unable henceforth to abstain from it — under sentence of death — the practical slave of Satan, whom he credited rather than God — he is driven out of Eden into a wilderness! In this mercy was apparent. To have eaten the tree of life, and perpetuated an existence of misery on earth, would have been his crowning sorrow. God forbade that, as he "drove out the man." But ere driven out, faith, which counts on God, would seem to have sprung up in his heart, for Adam called his wife's name Eve, "because she was the mother of all living." At the moment all were under the sentence of death; but God's word as to the woman's seed caused faith and hope to spring up, I cannot but believe.

One remark alone remains to be made. If the head of the race be fallen, are not all his family? If he needed redemption, do not all his posterity? If he, when sinless, was conquered by Satan, what son of his, born in sin, is a match for him? And if in the moment of his first misery and anguish, Adam clutched at the Word of God, should not every young man follow in his footsteps in that respect? Surely. So again would I inquire, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word."