

# THE PRESBYTERIAN AND REFORMED REVIEW

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## I.

### ORIGIN AND COMPOSITION OF GENESIS.

#### HISTORY OF THE CRITICISM TO THE RISE OF THE GRAFIAN HYPOTHESIS.

**T**HE first book of the Bible, perhaps equally with the last, deserves the title of Revelation. The revelation of the past alone furnishes the key to that of the future. Genesis is second to no book of the Old Testament in its announcement of great truths. These truths are confessedly fundamental; hence the book itself is fundamental. During the last century and a half critics have been busy with it, as with other books of the Bible. They have started concerning it many questions which perhaps will long await an answer. At the same time, continuous and brilliant discoveries in the sphere of Biblical science are quickening the hope that the fascinating problem of the origin of Genesis in history is approaching a solution.

The true point of view in investigating the subject should be the scientific. By this we do not mean that, for the time, we should lay aside our faith in Christ or denude ourselves of every prepossession. Clearly that would be impossible, were it desirable. We simply mean that we should make an honest, and, as far as the circumstances will permit, a thorough study of the facts involved, and let the facts determine the conclusions reached. This might seem, perhaps, an unnecessary statement or at least a matter best assumed and left unsaid. Under some conditions this would be true; but so many assumptions enter into the critic's work, and the result is such a variety of types of criticism, that it has become customary

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THAYER SHEDD, D.D., LL.D.

THE Rev. Dr. James McCosh died at Princeton on the evening of Friday, November 16, 1894; and the Rev. Dr. W. G. T. Shedd died in New York City on the morning of Saturday, November 17, 1894. Thus nearly together passed into their reward two of the greatest Presbyterians of our generation. Each had been given a message to deliver, and had delivered it. Each had had committed to him a charge to keep, and had kept it. Each had been called upon to champion the cause of truth against serious odds, and had not shunned the task. "They never sold the truth to serve the hour." Doubtless no one accomplishes all he fain would do. Of all alike it must in some sense be said that "the great design unfinished lies, their lives are incomplete," and their circles are perfected only in the life beyond the grave. But above most men, it was given to these to finish their work. They lay down to sleep at last, full alike of days, of honors and of service.

Both were many-sided men, of varied gifts. Both served their generation and earned its gratitude and admiration by performances in very diverse spheres of activity. But the highest claim of each to perennial remembrance will doubtless be found to rest upon the contribution he has made to the defense and exposition of fundamental truth, philosophical or theological. Dr. McCosh was a devoted pastor, a preacher of simplicity and power, an impressive teacher, a college president great in all the qualities requisite to success in that complicated sphere, a writer of a strikingly attractive English style: but he was above all things a great religious philosopher. Dr. Shedd was a noble preacher, an admirable teacher of an unusually wide range of subjects, a man of letters, an accomplished scholar, a philosophic thinker: but above all he was a great theologian. Both men had the clearness of vision to discern reality in philosophy or religion: both had the courage, on discerning it, to grasp and to hold it for themselves and for us. They have embalmed not their memories only, but their teaching also, for us in a somewhat voluminous literary product to which we shall increasingly feel our debt.

The present writer had the happiness of a personal acquaintance with both these great men. He entered Princeton College as a student in the autumn in which Dr. McCosh took charge of its administration, and sat at his feet in the class-room for three stimulating years, which have left their permanent impression on all his thinking. The admiration which began then, has been deepened by the intercourse of more mature years. His acquaintance with Dr. Shedd was of later date and less close. But it was quite long and close enough to leave memories which will not lightly be yielded. On the establishment of *THE PRESBYTERIAN AND REFORMED REVIEW* both Dr. McCosh and Dr. Shedd gave it their fullest sympathy and encouragement and prom-

ised it their active coöperation. Engrossment in other employments and the increasing infirmities of age curtailed their actual contributions to its pages. Dr. McCosh contributed a single paper to its first volume—a characteristic paper on *Recent Works on Kant* (Vol. i, pp. 425–440). The opening article of the first number of the REVIEW was a paper by Dr. Shedd on *The Meaning and Value of the Doctrine of Decrees* (Vol. i, pp. 1–25). Subsequently he contributed papers on *What is Animal Life?* (Vol. i, pp. 443–447), *The Materialistic Physics Unmathematical* (Vol. ii, pp. 323–326), *Notes on Current Topics* (Vol. iii, pp. 312–322), and *How were the Four Gospels Composed?* (Vol. iv, pp. 461–469). But the services of neither of them to this REVIEW can be measured by their contributions to its pages. In particular, Dr. Shedd has not only furthered its interests in every way possible, but has honored it from the beginning by serving as one of its Board of Editors.

There is therefore a peculiar fitness special to this REVIEW, which comes to the aid of the general interest which attaches to the careers of two men of such light and leading, to enforce upon us the acceptable duty of laying before our readers a measurably full account of the lives of these two great men and a well-considered estimate of their services to mankind and to truth. We have pleasure in announcing that this task has been kindly undertaken for the REVIEW, in the case of Dr. McCosh by President Francis L. Patton, and in the case of Dr. Shedd by Prof. John DeWitt. We shall present these papers to our readers in our April number. Meanwhile, we content ourselves with laying our little garland of gratitude and love upon the graves of these masters of thought. There is a realm of truth, and these men set themselves for its defense; and it is in part due to them that we still possess it as our heritage. We can never estimate the greatness of this possession; but at least

“ We have a voice, with which to pay the debt  
Of boundless love and reverence and regret  
To those great men who fought, and kept it ours :—  
And keep it ours, O God ! ”

PRINCETON, N. J.

BENJAMIN B. WARFIELD.