



James Woodruff

DR. JAMES WOODROW

AS SEEN BY HIS FRIENDS.

CHARACTER SKETCHES

BY

HIS FORMER PUPILS, COLLEAGUES, AND ASSOCIATES.

COLLECTED AND EDITED BY HIS DAUGHTER,

MARION W. WOODROW.

PART I.

PRINTED BY THE R. L. BRYAN COMPANY.
COLUMBIA, S. C.
1909.

- A Series of Articles appearing in the *Central Presbyterian*,
Nov. 13, 20, and 27, 1907, written by the Rev. Dr. A.
M. Fraser, Staunton, Va. 33
- Dr. Fraser, the son of the late Judge T. B. Fraser, of Sumter, S. C.,
was born in Sumter June 14, 1856; was prepared for college
by Mr. Thomas P. McQueen, who taught in Sumter for forty
years; graduated at Davidson College in 1876, and at Columbia
Theological Seminary in 1880; was licensed by the Presbytery
of Harmony in 1879, and ordained and installed as pastor of
Mt. Horeb church, in the Presbytery of West Lexington, Ky.,
in 1881. He married Miss Octavia Blanding, a daughter of
Col. J. D. Blanding, of Sumter, in 1881. In 1893 he became
pastor of the First church, of Staunton, Va., which church he
is still serving.
- Dr. Woodrow and the "Silence of Scripture." An article
(with additions) published in the *Central Presby-*
terian, written by the Rev. Dr. E. M. Green, of
Danville, Ky. 47
- Dr. Green was born in Darlington, S. C., Sept. 10, 1838; was
prepared for college in the Rev. J. W. Baker's School at
LaFayette, Ga.; graduated at Oglethorpe University in 1859,
and at Columbia Theological Seminary in 1863; married Miss
Emily Howe, daughter of the Rev. Dr. George Howe, June 24,
1863; commissioned chaplain in the Confederate Army, Dec.
15, 1863; ordained in 1864; became pastor of the church at
Washington, Ga., 1866; had charge of the *Southern Presby-*
terian during Dr. Woodrow's absence in Europe, 1872 to 1874;
became pastor of the church at Washington, N. C., 1874, and
of the First church in Danville, Ky., in 1877, of which he is
still the pastor. He was Moderator of the Synod of Kentucky
in 1883, and of the General Assembly in 1898. At various
times he was a Director of Columbia Theological Seminary,
a Curator of Central University, and of the Louisville Theo-
logical Seminary, which latter position he still holds. He was
intimately associated with Dr. Woodrow from the time he
entered Oglethorpe University as a student.
- An Account adapted from those appearing in *Phi Gamma*
Delta, 1898, and the *Garnet and Black*, 1899. 52
- Personal Reminiscences, by the Rev. Dr. Thomas H. Law. 56
- Dr. Law was born in Hartsville, S. C.; graduated at the South
Carolina Military Academy in 1859, and at Columbia Theo-
logical Seminary in 1862; was pastor of Florence and
Lynchburg churches, at that time in Harmony Presbytery;

Dr. Woodrow and the "Silence of Scripture."

AN ARTICLE, WITH ADDITIONS, WHICH APPEARED IN THE
CENTRAL PRESBYTERIAN.

BY THE REV. DR. E. M. GREEN.

It was often said during the Evolution controversy that Dr. Woodrow would never be understood or appreciated while he lived. Personal feeling and prejudice entered so largely into the discussions and influenced so powerfully the judgment of many, that time had to be allowed for these to pass away. Dr. Woodrow is now dead. Time has produced the effect that was anticipated. Asperities have been softened, animosities have been forgotten, prejudices have died out, and those who knew and admired and loved him can now speak without awakening antagonism, and will be listened to when they tell what manner of man he was, and what his real opinions and teachings. Such splendid tributes to his memory as that which Dr. Flinn has given, and such temperate and judicious articles as those Dr. Fraser has recently been giving through the columns of *The Central Presbyterian*, ought to do much to place his life and character and teachings in their true light before the Church and the world.

Those who are familiar with the controversy referred to will bear witness that Dr. Woodrow's purpose throughout the whole discussion was not to establish any hypothesis of evolution—as to this he was indifferent—but it was to prove the *silence of Scripture* respecting the mode of the creation of Adam's body. This he regarded as vital. But why did he make so much of this? Why did he think it so important to establish the fact that on this point the Scriptures are silent? As this was the subject of many conversations between us, I can give the matter as it lay in his own mind. He was intimately associated with the scientists of his day. Many of these eminent men, whose names were known over the civilised world, he counted as his personal friends; he knew and loved them; he respected them as earnest searchers after truth, and, as a Christian, he felt deep concern that they should

believe as he did in divine revelation. But many of them rejected the Bible because of the false interpretations put on its teachings. In regard to the creation they were told that the earth and all that is therein, together with the heavens above, were made of nothing, in the space of six natural days, and only about six thousand years ago. They reasoned that the Church ought to know what the Bible teaches. The ministers of the word are, many of them, scholars of acknowledged learning and ability, who make a special study of Scripture, and are experts in its interpretation. Hence they accepted as authoritative these statements of theirs as to its teachings. But this account of the creation being inconsistent with the facts established beyond doubt by their studies and investigations, they naturally discredited the whole Bible, which thus began in palpable error. The Church has at last learned that the error was hers, and that the Bible does not say what it was supposed to say. Scientific men are satisfied with the present accepted interpretation of the Mosaic account of creation; but much harm was done by the mistaken view of what the Bible really taught.

And now, in regard to the formation of man's body: why should we try to commit the Bible to a certain mode of creation, when as to the mode it is silent? In doing so, do we not oppose a needless difficulty in the way of those who have been led to think differently from ourselves? The silence of Scripture is sometimes as significant as its speech; and to make the Bible say what it does not say, may be to make infidels. Where it is silent we should be silent, and it certainly is silent as to the *mode* of the creation of Adam's body. The Lord formed it of the dust of the ground, but by what process or in what length of time we are not told. We may be right in thinking that it was formed "directly" from the dust, but the Bible does not say so, and others have the same right to their opinions in the matter that we have. Nor does it much matter *how* Adam's body was made out of the dust; he was not *man* till God breathed into him the breath of life, and he became a living soul.

Dr. Woodrow's object was not to interpret the Bible according to the teachings of science. His sole purpose was to find

the true meaning of Scripture, knowing that there would be no conflict between this and a true interpretation of the facts of science; and this would remove the great difficulty in the way of his many friends among the students of science accepting the truth of that divine revelation which he believed with all his soul.

His famous reply to Dr. Dabney's "Assault on Physical Science," published in the *Southern Presbyterian Review* of July, 1873, was printed in pamphlet form and widely distributed among his friends in Europe and America. At that time the business management of the *Review* and of the *Southern Presbyterian*, of which he was proprietor, was in my hands, and we were intimately associated. Taking me into his confidence, he read me numerous letters from various parts of the world, written in German, French, and other languages (which he translated for my benefit), from eminent scientists, expressing their indebtedness to him for his luminous exposition of the relations between Revelation and Natural Science. And when the address on Evolution was published, which became the subject of controversy, nothing gratified him so much as the assurances he received from many of its having helped them to clearer views of the truth and stronger faith in the word of God. One of these was a pronounced infidel, who had been active in assailing the Bible from the scientific point of view, but who surrendered his opposition and became a believer in divine revelation; and another, a judge of the Supreme Court of South Carolina, whose difficulties had all been removed by reading the address, and who, consequently, became a believer and a Christian.

Dr. Fraser refers to Prof. Woodrow's fearless independence of mind in favoring the hypothesis of the formation of Adam's body by process of evolution, yet not admitting the formation of Eve's body by a similar process, because the Bible account of her creation would not allow him to do so. This was a seeming inconsistency for which he has been much criticised. But he was first loyal to Scripture, and, secondly, loyal to science as he understood it. In private conversation he gave me this illustration: Had he been in Galilee in the early days of Christ's ministry and been asked in respect to two

glasses of wine on the table before him, whence they originated, his reply would have been that the wine in both glasses had been made in the usual method from the juice of the grape. If the reply had been, "No, *this* glass of wine is some of that which was made by Jesus last night, at the marriage in Cana," then he would have said, "If you certainly know that to be a fact, I will admit that this glass was so made; but as to the other glass, I must believe that it was made by the usual method, unless you can assure me to the contrary." The Scriptures tell us that Eve was formed from the body of Adam. That is authoritative, and settles the matter as to her body. But as the Scriptures are silent respecting the mode by which Adam's body was formed, we must believe that it was by the usual process of development which we see in everything else. This was his manner of reasoning. It was probably not satisfactory to his fellow-scientists, nor any more so to his fellow-religionists; but he thought for himself, and took all the consequences.

The General Assembly of 1888 gave its judgment that "Adam's body was directly fashioned by Almighty God of the dust of the ground," and this ended the controversy. Had the word "directly," for which no proof text was cited, been omitted, the decision would have been concurred in unanimously. That the Creator formed man of the dust of the ground, the Scriptures plainly enough declare. If the scientists can discover the *mode* by which it was done, they are free to do so.

Dr. Woodrow was profoundly loyal to the Sacred Scriptures, and he accepted every word of the Bible, from beginning to end, as the inspired word of God. I have often heard him say that to his mind nothing was so fully and satisfactorily proven as the truth of the Holy Scriptures, and that he could not for a moment accept anything as true which contradicted the divine word. If science, philosophy, or human reason declared anything contrary to Scripture, it proved that they and not the Scriptures were in error.

The love of truth was ingrained into the very fibre of his character, and he could tolerate nothing that was not perfectly genuine and true. When the present writer was a student in

college, riding one day with the young professor near a large public building then in course of construction, some remark was made as to its beauty and magnificence. His reply was that he could not altogether admire it, for while it was an imposing structure it was a practical lie. Explaining his meaning, he said that it was built of brick, as all knew, yet it was stuccoed and marked in squares to imitate brown stone. The building would have been more pleasing to him if the plain brick had shown.

This was an index to his mind and character.

When his address on Evolution was published and a storm of criticism had been aroused, a friend suggested that as Evolution was a hypothesis only, and could neither be proven nor disproven, he might have stated the theory without positively committing himself to it, and so escaped censure. His answer was that he had been asked to give his views, and he could not do otherwise than honestly give his views. He knew nothing of the art of evasion. He had always the courage of his convictions, and accepted the responsibility of his opinions. After the storm had passed and the trouble was all over, he said that the Evolution controversy had been a costly one to the Church and to himself personally, but that it was worth all it had cost, that it had been educational, the ministry of the Church had been lifted to broader and more intelligent views, and it was impossible that such a controversy should ever again occur in our Church.