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divine truth is always presented through the human organ, and is thus, so to say, colored by the individuality of the inspired agent by whom it is enunciated. Further, it is impossible to close our eyes to the fact that its enunciations are sometimes relative rather than absolute; they are adapted to the circumstances of particular ages, they may even be limited by the spiritual capacity of the particular writer, or in the case of his being an historian, by the materials or sources of information which he had at his disposal. The revelation of the Old Testament is avowedly progressive: the teaching in its earlier parts may naturally therefore be expected to be imperfect as compared with that which is given in its later parts, or which is to be found in the New Testament. We cannot take at random a passage from the inspired volume, and say, without qualification or comparison with other passages, that it is absolute truth, or the pure word of God, or an infallible guide to conduct or character. Neither Scripture itself, nor the judgment of the Church, authorizes us to affirm that every statement, or even every book, stands upon the same moral or religious plane, or is in the same measure the expression of the divine mind; the influences of time and place, of circumstances and situation, of scope and aim, of temper and opportunity, must all be taken into account, before we can rightly judge of the precise sense in which parts of Scripture are to be regarded as the word of God. Does not the expression "Word of God," as a term descriptive of the entire Bible, sometimes give rise to misunderstanding? It is at least worthy of consideration whether the *record* of a revelation, though legitimately termed "inspired," is itself legitimately regarded as identical with the "Word of God." Nothing is more destructive of the just claims of Christianity than a false theory of inspiration. Let us, while we adhere firmly to the *fact* of inspiration, refrain from defining, and especially from limiting, the range or mode of its operation, until we have familiarized ourselves, as well as may be, with the varied contents, and with the often remarkable relations subsisting between the different parts of the volume which we term inspired. When we have done this, it will hardly fail but that our conception of its scope will be broadened and enlarged.

The matter of the inspiration of the Bible is receiving the attention of the Christian Church to-day as never before. The time seems to have come for a deliberate definition of this doctrine. The scrutiny and scholarship brought to bear upon it cannot be any too minute or thorough; nor can true Christian breadth and wisdom be spared. The consensus of opinion will ultimately decide the problem, and to this end we are receiving candid expressions of their views from scholars everywhere. Let all of them receive dispassionate, large-minded consideration. To this important study Dr. Driver's article brings material assistance.

Composition of the Pentateuch.*—It is a mistake to suppose that those who do not agree with the advocates of the current analysis of the Pentateuch reject altogether the theory that original ancient documents may, to some extent, lie at the basis of the so-called "Mosaic" books. On the contrary, they regard it as not only possible, but highly probable. It is reasonable to suppose that before Moses' day the matter contained in the earlier chapters of the Bible had become more or less fixed in a written form; and it is also a tolerably safe conclusion from the literary phenomena of the books, especially of the introduction to Genesis. Enough is now known of the language of the Semitic peoples to make it no rash hypothesis that Abraham, when he entered Canaan, brought

* By Prof. E. C. Bissell, D. D., in *Christian Union*, Dec. 26, 1891.

with him written as well as oral accounts of the antediluvian and immediately subsequent history. For my own part, I feel at present considerable confidence in the theory that at least Genesis 1 was an original document in Moses' time—which is not, however, saying it was not, first of all, a revelation. As for the legislative portions, conservative critics agree with the analysts that there are three codes, while analysts agree with the conservatives that the *representation* given in the Hexateuch of the legislative activity of Moses involves the essential unity of the Torah (i. e., the whole body of Pentateuchal laws and history). Conservative critics believe that this representation is honestly meant, and admitting the claim that the mass of the laws was given by direct revelation, they do not find the same difficulty in adjusting them to so early an age as that of Moses, as do those who believe that, for the most part, among the Hebrews as among other peoples, the principle of natural evolution controlled. It is nowhere stated in the Bible that every specific law of the Pentateuch arose *de novo* in the time of Moses. Israel cannot have been wholly without laws of its own while in Egypt. The terse, laconic form of the first code (Ex. 21–23) favors the view that in principle it had been to some extent previously observed; and there is documentary confirmation of this (Ex. 18 : 16, 20; Deut. 4 : 5). The two other codes, that which respects the Tabernacle and its worship (Ex.-Num.) and that of Deuteronomy, have wholly different objects before them; the one is for the priests, and is technical in character; the other is in the form of a popular address, given near the close of Moses' life, meant especially for the people, and touches upon the first and second only where emphasis was called for, or where changed circumstances required a modification of form. It is by no means surprising that the Mosaic laws needed changing when we consider the mighty crisis through which the people were passing when they were given, and especially the trying forty years of the wilderness sojourn. Meanwhile it is to be noticed that there is, at the same time, something unchanging in them: the ethical and spiritual element.

There is frequently a tendency to exaggerate the dimensions of the gulf which separates two classes of critics. Sometimes there has to be exaggeration, or the gulf would collapse. While the division between analysts and conservatives on this problem is a material one, it is not so great or so important as many have been led to suppose. It is a generous step toward peace when one of the standard-bearers, as Dr. Bissell is, states just how much he can admit, and the exact points where he feels dissent to be necessary. Such a stage has been reached in the Johannean discussion; it may be hoped that it is approaching in the discussion of the Hexateuch.