

Forty years ago Dr. Briggs of Union Seminary said that Jesus was not obliged to correct all the errors of His contemporaries. It was no part of His work to correct erroneous ideas on questions of authorship. We agree with that. It was not necessary that He correct all false ideas of authorship. What we do say is that He could easily have avoided these statements. We do not believe that Jesus ever made statements which conveyed a false impression. If He knew all things He could easily avoid such statements and if He had known that Moses was not the author of the Pentateuch He could easily have quoted from these books without mentioning Moses' name and still without offending the Jews. But Jesus Christ Himself said, "If I have told you earthly things and ye believed not, how shall ye believe when I tell you of heavenly things." He stressed His relationship to truth, "To this end was I born and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." When He refers to matters of science or matters of history, we can expect that whatever He says will be true, and so it is certainly impossible to believe that Jesus simply accommodated Himself to the views of the people of the time on matters that were non-essential. He certainly would not accommodate to their views on a matter of such importance as this.

This is the very foundation of the Old Testament. These five books are the beginning. They are its constitution. It is therefore a matter of vital importance not to have false ideas about them. God inspired the writers and kept them from error. He might very well have chosen, as in the case of some other books, to leave us in ignorance as to who wrote them.

There are three positions about the attitude of Christ that have been taken. The first is the position which I hold to be the only reasonable one: He knew the facts and the references He made show that He indeed considered it to the work of Moses.

The second attitude is the attitude which Briggs expresses, that Jesus was not interested in matters of authorship and therefore did not enter into them. The answer to that idea is that it is simply not a fact. His phraseology shows that He did enter into it. He could have sidestepped it. (I do not believe He would have sidestepped in matters as