

LECTURE ONE

was at most the redactor of a new and improved edition of source J.

Although the attitude of these savants, in comparison to the exegetical school from which they emanated, appears daring, yet the method of their investigation still resembles the conventional approach, and their contributions are of limited originality. In their view, too, the basis of the doctrine of sources remains firmly established. Even a scholar like Yehezkel Kaufman, who stands outside this school of interpretation and successfully opposes a given portion of its concepts, as he does in his valuable studies on the history of the Israelite religion, still accepts the fundamental principle of the customary division of the text according to sources, and bases his views thereon. Permit me to mention that since 1926 I gave expression to my unqualified opposition to the *entire* doctrine in a series of essays that I published from that year onward, and particularly in a comprehensive work on the Book of Genesis, which appeared in 1934 as one of the publications of the State University of Florence.

As an indication of the spirit prevailing today, it is of interest to mention the fact that in the German periodical referred to above, eleven years after the publication of the astringent remarks of the previous editor against those who refused to accept the documentary hypothesis and its conclusions, there appeared a critique of my aforementioned book from the pen of the new editor Prof. Hempel, in which he wrote, after some kindly expressions of tribute, which I do not wish to quote here, that in his opinion the treatise 'makes an invaluable contribution to the efforts of Biblical scholarship to solve the question of the origin of the Book of Genesis'. These words clearly show that the possibility of a different solution of the problem from that hitherto accepted by exegetes is recognized even by those who still uphold the conventional interpretation, and stand at the head of the school from which it emanated.

It is worth giving earnest consideration, therefore, to the question of the soundness of the theory that till recently was dominant. To this end it will be necessary, of course, to examine the foundations on which it rests in order to see if, and to what extent, they are strong and valid. I shall undertake this investigation in the succeeding lectures. Today I wish only to make a few prefatory observations concerning the history of the problem and the attempts