

#### LECTURE FOUR

several scholars that in using this argument we are constantly reasoning in a circle, founding our conclusions on the very thing we set out to prove, is not justified, or at least is not always justified.

All this is true in general principle. But when we consider the matter more closely, we see that in reality it is not quite so simple as it appears on the surface. With regard to point one, it is essential, if we wish to avoid hasty and erroneous deductions, that we should first prove that the differences cited actually constitute a linguistic change, that is, to revert to the previous example, we must establish that the *Hiph'il 'hōlīdh'* and the *Qal 'yālādh'* belong to two distinct linguistic schools, and that it is impossible for them to be used together. Concerning the second argument, it is not only necessary that we should furnish the proof we mentioned in regard to the first point, but we must also eschew three things: (a) we must not rely upon the differences in language in order to determine the origin of the sections, which we shall subsequently use to decide the linguistic characteristics of the sources, for in that case we shall indeed fall into the snare of reasoning in a circle; (b) nor emend the texts in order to make them conform to our theory; (c) nor consider words and forms mechanically, as though they were divorced from their context and the latter could have no bearing on their use. As we shall soon see, the exponents of the documentary hypothesis were not always careful to avoid all these pitfalls.

But it is not my intention to dwell any longer on questions of general principle. The best way to elucidate the subject is to study the passages in detail without any bias whatsoever, and to determine the exact value of the relevant words and forms. This is the task to which I dedicated the second part of *La Question*, mentioned earlier, and I intend to recapitulate this work with you today.

It is obvious that we shall not be able to traverse all the ground that I covered at length in that volume. There will not be sufficient time for this, nor is it necessary for the purpose of these lectures. I shall be content to put before you, with extreme brevity, a few examples that will clearly demonstrate my method and the general conclusions to which it leads; whoever wishes to study the subject further and more deeply can consult my book direct. I shall choose the illustrative passages from among those that are considered even