

Thus we see that during the period when the divisive approach was regnant many different views were advanced of the date of origin of the different parts of the Pentateuch, all of them based on the assumption that the parts were put together with little modification, and that it is possible for us to disentangle them. The movement was extended to the entire Old Testament. There is not one of its books which some critic has not tried to divide up into many various sources. The whole approach has been carried to a wild extreme. A most interesting instance is the Commentary on the Psalms in the International Critical Commentary. Its author, Professor C. A. Briggs, was a man of great erudition, who carried on many useful studies. Some of his results are of real value. When it came to the Psalms, however, he applied the divisive method to such a point that there is hardly a Psalm which he does not feel competent to divide up into two or three different sources, making emendations here and changes there, putting two words from a verse into one alleged source, and three words into another altogether. It is a most interesting example of human ingenuity, but of little value for giving us evidence as to the actual origin and meaning of the Psalms.

In the early part of the Nineteenth Century this approach was by no means confined to the Old Testament. To a modern student, the attitude of many of the students of ancient literature in those days is hard to understand. It was common to take almost any ancient writing and divide it into documents which were alleged to have been combined by a series of redactors.

Today no one would think of applying such a method to a newly discovered ancient document. No one would take the Enuma Elish epic, or the Gilgamesh epic, or one of the Ugariti poems, and purely on the basis of internal evidence attempt to divide it into three or four