

either to add anything to them, or to take anything from them, or to alter anything in them. But it is instinctive in all Jews at once from their very birth to regard them as commands of God, and to abide by them, and, if need be, willingly to die for them."

Thus Josephus declared that the general attitude of Judaism in his time was to believe that the Old Testament was entirely true, and entirely a divine book. This attitude was taken over by the Christian Church. Until about two hundred years ago, it was almost unanimously held among professing Christians that the Old Testament, as well as the New, was a book which was given by divine origination and which possessed divine authority. Naturally there was sometimes a tendency for this view to hinder investigation of certain of its aspects and sometimes it was thought to lead to attaching an extreme importance to individual words or letters such as no sane view of inspiration would warrant. However, it was the characteristic view of both Judaism and Christianity until about two centuries ago.

During the past two centuries, there have been three distinct approaches to the Old Testament. The first of these was fairly common until about 1870; the second is distinctive of the years from around 1870 until about 1920; the third has been prominent during the last forty years. No one of these periods is at all rigid. They express general differences of attitude rather than sudden changes.

The first period I shall for the present call the divisive period. Its distinctive approach may be said to have begun with Jean Astruc, a French physician, who wrote his book in 1753. In this book he attempted to show that Genesis was made up of two main sources interwoven together,