

order to see how slim a foundation the theory rests upon, let us note certain vital facts.

We have hundreds of manuscript copies of the first five books of the Bible, all of which present them in the form in which we have them today. Not even one ancient copy of J, E, D, or P as a separate and continuous unit has ever been found.

No record that has come down to us from ancient times contains any mention of these documents. There is no ancient reference to the writing of any such document or to such process of combining them as the theory assumes. There is no evidence that any such process actually occurred.

The theory is almost the lone survivor of a method of 19th century literary study that has otherwise been almost completely discarded, except in the field of Biblical criticism. A century ago it was a common practice to develop theories of this type regarding almost any ancient or medieval document. Most such theories have today been abandoned and are viewed merely as literary curiosities. It is only in the field of Biblical study that this 19th century attitude has been retained.

During the 19th century various German scholars presented widely differing theories regarding the origins of the first five books of the Bible. Not one of these theories gained complete ascendancy until 1878, when a particular theory, strikingly different from most of the views previously held, was advanced by Julius Wellhausen. This new theory was publicized throughout the English-speaking world by S. R. Driver and other followers of Wellhausen. Even though a century has passed, in the course of which no new evidence for the theory has been discovered, it is today being widely taught in almost the identical form in which it was then presented.

A great part of the reason for the acceptance of the multidocument theory advanced by Professor Wellhausen in 1878 was the fact that he based it upon his skillful presentation of a particular idea of the development of Israelite religion. This idea, however, has now been almost universally discarded. Few scholars today hold to a theory of Hebrew religious development that is even approximately similar to that which Wellhausen based his idea of the sources of the Pentateuch; and yet Wellhausen's method of dividing these alleged sources, and his view of the order of their composition (although based upon a theory of