

Such is the theory that is held and propagated today in practically the same form as when it was first presented, nearly ninety years ago. In the intervening time no new facts have been discovered in its favor, and many of the theoretical grounds on which it was originally advanced have been now almost completely abandoned. Yet the theory continues to be presented as established history, and is even being taught in the high schools of some of our states.

Since this is the case, it is important for every churchgoer and every Bible student to know just what the facts are about this theory which has been variously called "the Source Theory," "the Multidocumentary Theory," or "the Graf-Wellhausen Theory." In order to see how slim a foundation the theory rests upon, let us note certain vital facts:

1. 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.
2. No record that has come down to us from ancient times contains any mention of these documents as having ever existed. There is no ancient reference to the writing of any such document or to such a process of combining them as the theory assumes. There is no evidence that any such process actually occurred.
3. 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 mediaeval document. Most such theories have today been abandoned, and are viewed as merely literary curiosities. It is only in the field of Biblical study that this 19th-century attitude has been retained.