

the later civilization of classical Greece. Many hints in the Homeric epics were thus shown to be actual fact, and not merely conjectures or poetic imaginings of various minstrels. The attitude of extreme skepticism which had so much to do with the development of the Pentateuchal criticism is now merely an interesting historical episode of the last century, except in relation to its fruit in the development of the multi-documentary theory of the Pentateuch, and also in its application to various other parts of the Bible.

While this tendency to extreme skepticism has largely disappeared, there are still remnants of it in the Biblical field, one of which was strikingly illustrated in an article in Harper's Magazine for August 1966 by an English scholar, J. M. Allegro. In this article Professor Allegro points out certain similarities between ideas or events in the New Testament and inferences which he draws from the Dead Sea Scrolls--many of which inferences, incidentally, are denied by most other students of the Scrolls. After pointing to these alleged similarities Allegro asks the question about the New Testament: "How far are these stories on the surface representative of real history?" and continues with the following sweeping denial of the facts about Christ recorded in the Gospels: "Is it conceivable that such amazingly intricate literary compositions, woven from so many strands of text and tradition, can also be authentic descriptions of actual events of the first century? My own answer is no. Nevertheless some core of history probably exists in the stories of Jesus and his followers, and we might reasonably seek it in the history of the Essene movement and its leader, the so-called Teacher of Righteousness."