

Far different was the attitude taken by the British scholars who introduced his views into Great Britain while declaring their own personal loyalty to the New Testament and to the supernatural teachings of Scripture and thus gaining a hearing for the Wellhausen theory that the Christian people of Britain and America might otherwise have refused to give it. Three facts about the Wellhausen theory deserve our special attention.

1) The theory leaves no room for divine revelation. Wellhausen claimed that by rearranging the materials in the Pentateuch he could show how the religion of Israel had developed from very primitive ideas into more abstract beliefs and how simple acts of worship had been changed into a highly involved system of ritual.

2) Wellhausen explicitly declared that we can learn nothing from the Pentateuch about the history of the times of the Patriarchs, but only about ideas, customs and rituals that came into being many centuries later. He said: "Certainly there is here no possibility of gaining historical knowledge of the patriarchs, but only of the time when the stories about them arose among the Israelite people; the inner and outer features of this later age are here unintentionally projected into remote antiquity... Abraham is certainly not the name of a people, as are Isaac and Lot; he is in any case rather indistinct; of course he is not to be considered as a historical person; he might rather be thought of as a free creation of unconscious art. He was probably the youngest figure in this group and was not put before his son Isaac until a comparatively late period."