

4. During the 19th century various German scholars presented widely differing theories regarding the origin of the first five books of the Bible. No 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 nearly 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.

5. 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 upon 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 development no longer held), are still being presented as established fact.

6. An essential feature of the theory, as taught by Professor Wellhausen, was his claim that the various documents--all of them written, according to the theory, long after the time of the patriarchs--present only the thought patterns and ideas of the various periods in which they are alleged to have been written, and tell us nothing about the actual time of the patriarchs. In the light of archaeological discoveries it is now recognized that this attitude is no longer tenable. Therefore most ^{of the} recent presentations of the theory assert that a great part of the material in each of the documents was transmitted orally for many centuries before being incorporated in written form, and that even the latest of the documents contains much material that is really early. Thus an important basis of the Wellhausen idea has really been abandoned by its present promoters.