

system agreed upon in its major positions by all critical scholars. It is true that during the first fifth of this century most of the various scholarly presentations of the higher criticism agreed very closely. But this unanimity has been completely shattered. To understand this we should briefly examine the history of the criticism of the Pentateuch.

p. 8
Starting at about A.D. 1800 various theories of the division of the Pentateuch into alleged sources were presented by a number of scholars in Germany and other countries. For some time one theory after another of the alleged origin of various parts of the Pentateuch came into favor. By 1878 the so-called supplement hypothesis was held by most of the believers in source criticism. Then Julius Wellhausen, a brilliant German scholar who possessed unusual ability to write in a very clear style, wrote his "Prolegomena to the History of Israel" in which he presented a theory that completely reversed the previous ideas of the nature and sources of the Pentateuch. The theory that he advanced was so startlingly different from previous views that it was called a Copernican revolution. It claimed to show the evolution of the Israelite religion from very primitive ideas to a very complicated system of ritual.

At that time evolution was sweeping much of the scholarly world and Wellhausen's theory appealed greatly to the younger scholars though most of the older scholars continued to hold the supplement theory to the end of their lives. Wellhausen's ideas were introduced into