

And Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age (J^2), at the set time of which God had spoken to him (P C)."

The narrative of P C continues down to the end of ver. 5, when it is taken up by the Elohist, to whom ver. 6 belongs. Ver. 7 is the work of J^2 , and then the Elohist narrative continues to the end of the chapter, with the exception of the concluding words, "And Abimelech rose up, and Phicol, the captain of his host, and they returned into the land of the Philistines. And Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beer-sheba, and called there on the name of Jehovah, the everlasting God. And Abraham sojourned in the land of the Philistines many days."

This specimen of the results of the new criticism will hardly inspire much confidence in England. It is given to the world without a shadow of proof beyond a casual reference to the works of Kuenen, Wellhausen, Budde, and Dillmann, who are, it must be remembered, by no means in agreement among themselves. When, therefore, we are asked to accept the hypothesis of documents of various ages, combined by a post-exilic redactor, on the ground of the general agreement of critics, we are at least entitled to ask, What is this general agreement worth, and how is it attained? Fifty years ago there was a general agreement among German critics of the Tübingen school that the Epistle to the Romans was a combination into one of five or six separate epistles written by various hands, and that the fourth Gospel was a Gentile fabrication of the latter half of the second century. Where is this general agreement now? What guarantee have we that similar and yet more startling results of Old Testament criticism are one whit more trustworthy, or that they are anything beyond the vague and random conclusions of a school in which assertion takes the place of argument, and history is replaced by flights of imagination? Is the theory based on linguistic considerations? We turn to Wellhausen, and we find the whole question of linguistic analysis dismissed by him in six pages, containing nothing which the extremest stretch of courtesy could be termed an argument.¹ We pass on to

¹ *History of Israel*, pp. 385-391.