

that there were shrines in Palestine to which people would come and leave gifts, and then that stories had gradually arisen about the reason for the shrine's existence. One story might say that this is the place where Jacob slept on his way to Haran. Another would say it was where Abraham had camped. Thus, as time would go on, these stories would get into various forms. The J writer heard some of these stories and put them together. Later on the E writer heard the same stories in a different form and put them in his book. It sounds like two different sets of stories, but actually there was only one, but told in a different way.

That sort of thing could have happened. The question is, did it happen? According to the critical theory there would be no actual historicity at all.

One time a few years ago I was talking with a young fellow who was professor of Old Testament in McCormick Theological Seminary. He had been studying archaeology and had swung in a more conservative direction from his previous teachings. With us at the dinner table was a man who is now a teacher in Princeton Seminary. The man from McCormick told how his archaeological study had affected him. He said, "I am beginning to reach the point where I really think there was an Abraham," and the man who is now teaching in Princeton was terribly shocked at such a reaction.

That was several years ago. I do not know whether he moved further in a conservative direction or further back in liberal fashion since that time.

Some of the founders of the critical theory did not think such men as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had really lived, and thought that these stories had sprung up around these shrines and then had been put together. Such an attitude is not essential to the Wellhausen theory, but was held by some of its founders. Yet, if divine activity is excluded, it might be hard to decide whether these stories grew up around shrines, as many of the critics would think, or whether they rested to some extent on historical facts, as some of them more recently are coming to hold. From either view these stories might have