

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

---

A table of contents for *Bibliotheca Sacra* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_bib-sacra\\_01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bib-sacra_01.php)

## ARTICLE VI.

## ESSAYS IN PENTATEUCHAL CRITICISM.

BY HAROLD M. WIENER, M.A., LL.B., BARRISTER-AT-LAW,  
LINCOLN'S INN, LONDON.

## I.

It is often said by supporters of the higher critical hypothesis at present current in many theological schools that the dominant theories are based on the cumulative effect of a vast body of evidence adduced from many different lines of inquiry, and that, if modern scholarship be worth anything at all, the views of the Wellhausen school must be held to be established beyond all possibility of doubt. These contentions are not entirely baseless, although the truth is very far removed from the meaning of those who maintain them. It is the fact that the higher critics have purported to conduct many different inquiries; but it is also the fact that they rarely succeed in making an accurate statement on any subject that has a bearing on their main hypothesis. Indeed, if accuracy, care, thoroughness, impartiality, be essential elements in scholarship—and we apprehend that we shall find much support for the opinion that they are—these men are not scholars. Let there be no mistake as to our meaning. Nothing is further from our thoughts than to suggest that these writers have any consciousness of their own deficiencies. On the contrary, they are all of them sincerely impressed with the (supposed) excellence of the work done by themselves and their friends. They honestly believe that they are careful, accurate, impartial

Vol. LXV. No. 259. 6

scholars, and that those who differ from them are either blinded by theological prejudice, or else unacquainted with the facts, or otherwise incapacitated from forming a sound judgment. As they regard their own laborious achievements, they are filled with honorable pride and admiration, and, believing themselves to be great scholars, they naturally fail to realize that any other view is possible.

Nevertheless, as already stated, we have been led to form a very different estimate of these men and their work. While recognizing the transparent sincerity that inspires most of them, we have found on occasions when we have tested their work that an overwhelming majority of their statements on relevant matters of fact were untrue,<sup>1</sup> and to our mind the vast body of evidence adduced only supplies cumulative proof of the incompetence of those who advance it.

It is, of course, singularly easy to bring these divergent opinions to the test. If we be right in holding that an overwhelming majority of the relevant statements made by the critics are untrue, there can be no difficulty (given the necessary time) in bringing home to them such a body of false allegations on matters of fact as shall suffice to convince any impartial observer of their incompetence. We have on many previous occasions dealt with numbers of their allegations in this way. It is the object of these essays to investigate a further batch of their assertions—primarily those respecting the main difficulties alleged in regard to the narrative of the last four books of the Pentateuch—and the analysis which is based on those assertions. To this end we propose to use a book, commonly called the Oxford Hexateuch,<sup>2</sup> which better than

<sup>1</sup>For an account of some of the causes of this phenomenon, see the *Princeton Theological Review*, October, 1907, pp. 610 ff.

<sup>2</sup>The Hexateuch according to the Revised Version. Arranged in its Constituent Documents by Members of the Society of Histor-

any other English work represents the position of the Wellhausen school in regard to the Pentateuch, and to deal with the various topics raised in its notes on the narrative sections of the last four books. We shall omit small and unimportant points, and questions which relate to textual criticism rather than higher criticism (so far as these two can be sundered), and we shall supplement that work with other books, especially the volume on Numbers contributed to the International Critical Commentary by Dr. George Buchanan Gray and the commentary on Deuteronomy in the same series from the pen of Dr. Samuel Rolles Driver. The arrangement of the subjects will be dictated solely by convenience. It is not practicable to adhere closely to the order of the commentary, as a single difficulty often affects a group of passages scattered over the Pentateuch, and in some cases other calls on our time make it expedient to defer some of the more laborious investigations for the present; but we hope to deal with every really important allegation as to discrepancies in the narrative of the last four books of the Pentateuch before closing these essays.

To make the inquiry intelligible to those who are not acquainted with the higher critical case, a bald outline of their theory must be given. There were in existence at some time during the Hebrew monarchy two documents denoted respectively by the symbols J and E. Each of these documents must be conceived as the work of a school of prophetic writers rather than as the product of individual effort. A redactor (R<sup>Je</sup>) combined these documents into a single work called JE, *Ideal Theology*, Oxford. Edited . . . by J. Estlin Carpenter and G. Harford-Battersby. 2 vols. London, New York, and Bombay: Longmans, Green & Co. 1900. Mr. Carpenter writes the Introduction and Notes. A second edition of the Introduction (but without the text) has appeared under the name of "The Composition of the Hexateuch" (1902), and will be referred to where necessary.

which cannot always be resolved into its component elements. In doing so he selected portions now of one document and now of another, rejecting whatever was unnecessary for his purpose, and sometimes writing or rewriting a section himself. Later on, the bulk of Deuteronomy was produced by a prophetic school (D). This was combined with JE, yielding JED, and a Deuteronomic redactor (R<sup>d</sup>) gave sundry touches to the extant portions of JE. These constitute the total of the prophetic contributions to the Pentateuch. They extend from the early monarchy till the reign of Josiah or later. Side by side with these is a priestly document (P), which is itself composite. The bulk of it is of exilic or post-exilic origin; but it includes the remains of an earlier code, the Law of Holiness, known as H or P<sup>h</sup>. A redactor writing in the spirit of the priestly school (R<sup>p</sup>) combined JED with P into (substantially) the present Pentateuch, giving some incidental touches to the earlier documents. Each of these main documents J, E, D, and P, being itself the work of a school, is composite, and should be separated into different strata.

In examining this theory, so far as it rests on alleged discrepancies in the narrative of the first four books, we start with Mr. Carpenter's note at the beginning of Exodus; but, for the reasons already given, we postpone the consideration of the questions raised by the revelation of the Name of God and the numbers of the Israelites. In all our quotations from the various writers to be quoted we substitute "the LORD" for their transliterations of the Tetragrammaton, a free use of which is regarded with disfavor by Jewish writers.

#### EGYPT OR GOSHEN?

"According to J [writes Mr. Carpenter on Exodus] Gen xlv 10 xlv 28 xlv 27a Israel is settled in Goshen, and this view is found

in viii 22 ix 26. . . . But in E Gen xlvi 18 [xlv 18?] and P Gen xlvii 11 the Israelites settle in Egypt. There they are accordingly found in close proximity with Egyptian neighbors, from whom they can ask for valuables iii 22 xi 2, or from whose houses they must carefully distinguish their own that the Lord may pass over them xii 13. They are near enough to the capital for the king to communicate with the Hebrew midwives." (Oxford Hexateuch, vol. II. p. 80.)

It has already been pointed out in the BIBLIOTHECA SACRA for January, 1907 (p. 12), that J, which places the Israelites in Goshen, regards them as being in sufficiently "close proximity with Egyptian neighbours" to be in danger of stoning (Ex. viii. 26). "Clearly if the Israelites in Goshen were near enough to the Egyptians to be aptly described as being 'before their eyes' and in danger of stoning, they were near enough to borrow jewels when occasion arose. The critics seem wholly unable to realize that the residence of the Israelites in Goshen does not necessarily exclude the presence of Egyptians in that district." It is, however, right also to examine the passages in J, on which Mr. Carpenter relies, in order to see how this supposed contradiction has been created. In Genesis xlv. 10 he prints without comment "and thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen, *and thou shalt be near unto me,*" etc.; and in xlvii. 27a ("and Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the land of Goshen") he is compelled to treat "in the land of Egypt" as a "harmonizing addition" by a priestly redactor, for no reason save that this is the only method by which a contradiction can be manufactured.

Having thus taken a narrative, which regards the Israelites as being settled in the land of Egypt in the land of Goshen, and manufactured a contradiction by garbling Genesis xlvii. 27 and disregarding Genesis xlv. 10 and Exodus viii. 26, Mr. Carpenter is naturally in the position of being able to use this factitious contradiction for the purposes of the analysis. Ac-

cordingly, when he comes to Exodus iii. 21-22, he tears these verses from their context and assigns them to E, because "these instructions must obviously belong to the narrator who regards the Israelites as settled, not apart in the land of Goshen, but among the Egyptians themselves."<sup>1</sup>

Again, in his note on vii. 8, in dealing with the narrative of the plagues, he writes: "J has already located the Israelites in the land of Goshen Gen xlv 10 and they are accordingly represented as residing there in viii 22 ix 26; they are consequently unaffected by the flies or the hail. On the other hand, in x 21-23 they are living in the midst of the people in Egypt itself, and their immunity from the oppression of the darkness is secured by the appearance of light in their dwellings. This latter view of their intermingling with the Egyptians lies at the basis of the instructions in iii 21 f and their sequel xi 2 f, and the passages founded on it must be assigned to E." The statement in x. 21-23 is that "there was a thick

<sup>1</sup> It is worth noting Mr. Carpenter's method of dealing with iii. 19 f. Having got rid of 21 f. on the ground stated above, he writes: "These verses do not seem in their present form to belong either to J or to E. Not to J because (1) they interrupt the connexion between iii 16-18 and iv 1, and (2) they contain distinct literary marks of E, 'give you leave' and the peculiar infinitive 'to go' [Heb.]. Yet on the other hand the phrase 'by a mighty hand' does not belong to E, but tends to appear in passages kindred with D: for 'wonders' cp xxxiv 10. The passage seems to have been amplified from E by RJe" [*ad. loc.*, p. 84]. That these verses should appear out of place when their proper sequel is removed is of course inevitable. It results not from any impropriety in the narrative, but from Mr. Carpenter's own proceedings. As to his "literary marks," it is interesting to turn up the references in his lists of words. Of "give you leave" it is alleged that it occurs five times in E, once in J in a passage assigned to a priestly redactor, once here, where it is given to RJe, and twice in D. As to "by a mighty hand," the list of words contains five references to JE, five to D, and one to a Deuteronomic redactor in Joshua iv. 24. It will occur to most people to wonder that this sort of argument can be gravely put forward and considered by men who claim to be scholars.

darkness in all the land of Egypt . . . but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings." There is here no suggestion that these dwellings were anywhere but "in the land of Egypt, in the land of Goshen." Once more this misconception makes its appearance. In the note on xii. 21 we read, "In 21-27 there are traces of different hands blended into one editorial complex. The opening and closing formulæ seem to belong to J . . . though it may be questioned how far the implication that the Israelites were mixed up with the Egyptians can be ascribed to the original J, who places them apart in Goshen." If Mr. Carpenter could only have realized that "in Goshen" does not necessarily mean "apart in Goshen" either in Hebrew or in English, he might have been spared much embarrassment.

#### THE STORY OF MOSES.

The next charge is as follows:—

"The story of Moses further shows some interesting variations. In ii 15 f he dwells in the land of Midian, and in 16, 21 marries the daughter of the priest of Midian and has one son 21 f cp iv 19 f. When he returns to Egypt his wife and son accompany him iv 20. In iii 1, however, his father in law is named Jethro cp iv 18, and Moses leads the flock to the mountain of God, identified as Horeb cp 'this mountain' 12. On his return to Egypt his wife remains behind, and when Jethro brings her to her husband she has two sons xviii 5 f; later on she is described as a Cushite Num xii 1." (Vol. II. p. 80.)

There are here four distinct charges: (1) in one document (J) the father-in-law of Moses is the priest of Midian, in another (E) he is Jethro; (2) in J Moses has one son, in E two; (3) in J he is accompanied to Egypt by his wife and son, in E they remain with Jethro; (4) in Numbers Moses has a wife who is a Cushite.

We begin with the first charge. The father-in-law is named "Jethro, the priest of Midian," in the following passages of



E: Ex. iii. 1 and xviii. 1. He is named "Jethro" in the following passages of J: Ex. xviii. 9, 10; also in xviii. 2 (R<sup>h</sup>), to be considered presently. He is called "the priest of Midian" *once and once only* in J, viz. ii. 16.

On this, Mr. Carpenter proceeds as follows: When E speaks of "Jethro, the priest of Midian," he simply assigns the words "priest of Midian" to the laborious gentleman who combined J with E. His only reason for doing so is expressed in the note on iii. 1b. "Some critics think that according to E the father-in-law of Moses was not himself priest. If so, these words must be regarded as a harmonistic addition." Similarly with "Jethro" in J. It is of course nowhere suggested that there is a scintilla of evidence to justify these proceedings. Such testimony as exists of ancient variants is wholly opposed to Mr. Carpenter's theory, for in iii. 1 (E) the Lusianic recension of the Septuagint omits not "the priest of Midian" but "Jethro." But it suits Mr. Carpenter to attribute certain words to convenient redactors; and accordingly he does so, and thereby manufactures discrepancies. So out of the three places in all where "priest of Midian" occurs in the Pentateuch, two go to the harmonist. As to the alleged mental processes of "some critics" adduced as a justification for these proceedings, it will become increasingly clear as this inquiry proceeds what weight should be attributed to them.

Our second "interesting variation" concerns the sons of Moses. It is perfectly true that the narrative in Exodus ii. only relates the birth of the first son, but it by no means follows from this that Moses never had another. In point of fact J proceeds to state (iv. 20) that "Moses took his wife and his *sons*," and Mr. Carpenter only gets out of this by altering the plural into the singular, of course charging one of the indispensable redactors with having changed the text.

His reasons are as follows: "J has only related the birth of one son in ii 22, and 25 implies that there was no second. The plural seems to be an editorial reference to xviii 2-4." But if we turn to the note on xviii. 2 we find that the analysis there is justified by the assertion that "in J Moses had but one son, on his return to Egypt, when his wife accompanied him in iv 20, 25." The only real foundation for all this is the expression "her son" in iv. 25. From this Mr. Carpenter infers that Zipporah had only one son. But he forgets that, on his own showing, iv. 24-26 is incomplete. He himself believes that it comes from a source more ancient than J. In that case it cannot be taken to prove that J itself knew only of one son. For ourselves we think that there is some ground for holding the narrative contained in these verses incomplete in its present form. Something has perhaps dropped out of the text, and consequently no inference should be drawn from it. If that view be adopted, or if Mr. Carpenter's inference from the expression "her son" occurring in a narrative which he himself regards as fragmentary be rejected, the whole case falls to the ground.

Before proceeding with the other variations charged, it is desirable to deal with the only substantial point that is alleged on the analysis of chapter xviii. Mr. Carpenter states it thus: "In 5 f Jethro arrives and converses with Moses, yet in 7 Moses sets out to meet him" (note on xviii. 2). It is curious how the critics who are always quick to note any variation in the Samaritan or the Versions that can in their opinion be twisted into the service of their hypothesis ignore those valuable aids when they tend to show that the analysis is based on textual corruption. In this instance the Samaritan, Septuagint, Syriac, all read הנה "behold," in verse 6, for the Massoretic אני "I." The editors of Exodus in Kittel's

"Biblia Hebraica" aptly compare Genesis xlvi. 2, where the R. V. (Mr. Carpenter agreeing) renders the Hebrew "and one told Jacob and said, Behold, thy son Joseph cometh unto thee." On that analogy Exodus xviii. 6 would mean "and one [or, according to another possible pointing to the Hebrew, "they"] said unto Moses, Behold, thy father-in-law Jethro cometh," etc. We think this text manifestly superior to the present reading of the Hebrew, and it will be observed how much the narrative gains in continuity if this change be adopted. Another illustration of precisely the same error is afforded by Genesis xii. 11, where the Septuagint appears to have had a Hebrew text reading "I," for the correct Massoretic "behold." It should be added that in xviii. 6, the Septuagint appears to be based on a Hebrew text, which, like Genesis xlvi. 2, read, "And one told Moses and said."

We turn now to the statement that in E on the return of Moses his wife remains behind. This is pure fiction. There is not a word in the passages attributed to E that in any wise supports the assertion. Nevertheless, Mr. Carpenter, having once got it into his head, does not fail to repeat it in his note on xviii. 2, saying, "E, on the other hand, represented Moses as leaving his family under his father in law's care." This is as untrue as the allegation that J placed the Israelites *apart* in Goshen. With the correction of the text in xviii. 6 the whole of that chapter forms an intelligible and continuous narrative, and the statements in 2 ff. that Moses had sent his wife and sons away and that they were subsequently brought to him entirely fit in with all that has gone before. It is not impossible that the original text of iv. 26 told how Zipporah (not the angel) left Moses after calling him a bridegroom of blood.

As to the Cushite wife, nobody knows whether this refers

to a second wife or whether she is identical with Zipporah,<sup>1</sup> recent discoveries having given ground for supposing that there was a Cush in North Arabia; and Mr. Carpenter does not make any serious attempt to rely on this point for the purposes of his analysis.

To sum up: all the alleged variations on which Mr. Carpenter places any reliance are factitious with the possible exception of the inference he draws from the phrase "her son" in iv. 25 in a passage which he himself regards as an incomplete fragment; but we have found that in a kindred chapter there is good reason for supposing that a slight corruption of the text is responsible for a seeming inconsistency in the narrative.

#### MOSES AND AARON OR MOSES?

Mr. Carpenter's next charge is extremely obscure:—

"In the interviews with Pharaoh one set of demands is urged by Moses alone in the name of 'the Lord God of the Hebrews' iii 18 v 3 vii 16 ix 1 f, 13 x 3; and Moses asks leave to go three days' journey into the wilderness to sacrifice to the Lord iii 18 v 3 viii 27, or serve him vii 16 viii 1, 20 ix 1, 13 x 3, etc. Another formula is found in iii 12, 'serve Elohim upon this mountain,' while in the name of 'the Lord God of Israel' Moses requires the release of Israel that they may hold a feast to him in the wilderness v 1. A third demand is made by Aaron vii 2-7." (Vol. II. p. 80.)

While Mr. Carpenter's grievances are not at all clear, the same cannot be said of his misrepresentations. First, it is not true that "Moses alone" urges one set of demands in v. 3, etc. (J) or that "Moses" (as contrasted apparently with Moses and Aaron) requires the release in v. 1 (E). In v. 1 (E) Mr. Carpenter prints "Moses and Aaron came." In v. 3 (J) he prints "And *they* said, The God of the Hebrews hath met with *us*" (whom?). In v. 4 (E) he again prints "Wherefore do *ye, Moses and Aaron*, loose the people," etc. In v

<sup>1</sup> As will subsequently appear in our discussion of the position of the Tent of Meeting, we think this hypothesis very plausible.

20 (J) he suddenly remembers himself and assigns "*and Aaron*" to the convenient redactor, but he forgets to alter "unto *them*" in the very next verse. In viii. 8, 12, 25; ix. 27 (all J) the redactor is called in, but Mr. Carpenter overlooks the plural in ix. 27 and 28. In x. 3 (J) "And Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh, and said" goes to a harmonist, and in 8 (J) the redactor is dragged in to account for "and Aaron," as also in 16 (J); but Mr. Carpenter cannot be expected to remember that in 8 (J) "unto them" is also plural, and that in 11 (J) "*they*" were driven from Pharaoh's presence. Once more in xii. 31 (J) "and Aaron" is swept away by the usual method, but "both ye and the children of Israel" is suffered to remain. Lastly in Joshua xxiv. 5 E is made to say, "And I sent Moses and Aaron." The statement that "a third demand is made by Aaron" (vii. 2-7) is also untrue, inasmuch as the passage cited shows Moses and Aaron coöperating, Aaron being his brother's mouthpiece. Further it is not true that a *third* demand is made by Aaron. No fresh information is given as to this demand. It is only the same demand as before. Nor are there two other demands, for there is no difference between asking to go into the wilderness to hold a feast and asking to go into the wilderness and sacrifice. There are abundant instances of sacrificial feasts. As to "the LORD the God of Israel," this is one of Mr. Carpenter's factitious "literary marks." It is used *once*, and once only, in v. 1, and draws from Pharaoh the speech "Who is the LORD, . . . I know not the LORD." Whereupon the explanation is given, "The God of the Hebrews hath met with us," etc. Mr. Carpenter is impressed with the phrase "serve *Elohim*" in iii. 12: does he really imagine that "*Elohim* of the Hebrews" could be used in speaking to Moses or any Hebrew?

At this point it will probably be convenient to deal with the note on iv. 13, which connects with Mr. Carpenter's allegations about Moses and Aaron. It begins as follows:—

“In 13–16 it is not apparent in what way the anger of the LORD expresses itself against the reluctance of Moses. It is believed, therefore, that this is really a later insertion to prepare for the introduction of Aaron, for whom a place had to be found in the story. The want of uniformity in his appearances, the curious alternation between plural and singular verbs in the immediate context of his entry into the narrative (cp viii 8, 12a, 25, 28 ix 27 x 16, 17b with viii 9, 12b, 29 ix 33 x 7a, 18), and the fact that in the earliest extant account of the sanctuary he had no function, Joshua being the servitor of Moses in the Tent of Meeting Ex xxxiii 11 render it probable that the passages narrating his activity are all secondary as compared with the original J.” (Vol. II. p. 85.)

The anger of the LORD will be seen to express itself quite clearly in the rebuke to Moses. The “want of uniformity” in Aaron's appearances is made perfectly clear by the narrative itself. Throughout Moses was in the position of God to Aaron, who played a very subsidiary rôle, and in these circumstances an ancient Hebrew could see no inconsistency in using singular and plural almost indifferently. A very curious illustration is to be found in vii. 8 f., attributed to P, who is supposed to exalt Aaron. God says to the brothers, “When Pharaoh shall speak unto *you*, saying, Show a wonder for *you*; then *thou* shalt say unto Aaron.” It would be difficult to convey a more vivid conception of the relationship between the two or its effect on the mode of expression than is here afforded. A parallel instance is provided by the plural in Deuteronomy xxxi. 19, in “Write *ye* this song for *you*, and teach *thou* it the children of Israel,” spoken (16) to Moses, and again puzzles Mr. Carpenter, who appears to be out of sympathy with Hebrew methods of thought and expression in this matter. Nevertheless he raises no objection to the similar alternations of singular and plural in Gen. xix. 17–19.

The alleged "fact that in the earliest extant account of the sanctuary" Aaron "had no function" needs further investigation, for it supplies one of the most convincing examples of the wholly unscientific procedure of the critics.

#### THE MINISTRY OF THE SANCTUARY.

Perhaps the clearest account of Mr. Carpenter's views as to this is to be found in his note on xxxiii. 7 (p. 133). "Further, it [i.e. the Tent of Meeting] is not served by the Levitical priesthood, but by the Ephraimite Joshua 11 Num xi 28, whose presence in the Dwelling would have been forbidden under pain of death." Reading this with the statement already quoted that in the earliest extant account of the sanctuary Aaron had no function, it would seem that Mr. Carpenter holds either that the Aaronic and the Levitical priesthood was not recognized in E, or else that it was in some way different from that of P. We say advisedly "it would seem," because there is considerable difficulty in ascertaining Mr. Carpenter's meaning, owing to the inveterate higher critical habit of self-contradiction. On page 114 of Volume I., we read, "The Tent of Meeting, however, when first instituted, needed the service of no sacred tribe. It was not even placed under the care of Aaron and his sons. An Ephraimite, Moses' minister, the young Joshua, was installed as its guardian; and when Moses returned into the camp, Joshua remained within the Tent. Nevertheless E does apparently contain traces of an Aaronic priesthood in the statement that on Aaron's death at Moserah, Eleazar his son succeeded him in the priestly office Deut x 6."

What Mr. Carpenter means by saying in one place that "in the earliest extant account of the sanctuary Aaron had no function," and in another that the same document contains

traces of an Aaronic priesthood, we cannot understand. But his idea that Joshua's presence in the Dwelling when first instituted would have been forbidden under the laws of P is flatly contradicted by the language of that document. In Numbers xviii. 22 we read, "And the children of Israel shall not come nigh *any more* to the Tent of Meeting." No doubt this refers primarily to xvii. 13 (Heb. 28), but it would seem from these passages that the law was thought to be less stringent before Korah's rebellion. Even assuming, therefore, that the Tent in which Joshua remained was in fact a "sanctuary,"—which we take leave to doubt,—and identical with the Dwelling which had not yet been constructed, it does not appear that E necessarily conflicts with P in this respect—even for those who would not admit that Joshua as the minister of Moses probably enjoyed some exceptional privileges.

In order, however, to make it clear that no priesthood save that of Aaron and the tribe of Levi is recognized by E, we propose to go somewhat more fully into the matter. We shall examine, first, the historical position postulated for E; secondly, the evidence of E as to the priesthood; thirdly, its evidence as to Joshua.

Mr. Carpenter, with considerable hesitation, ascribes the reduction of E to writing to the first half of the eighth century B.C. (vol. i. p. 119). Now there are abundant traces of the sacerdotal character of the tribe of Levi and the house of Aaron in the books of Judges, Samuel, and Kings. Micah's Levite (Judges xvii.), the house of Eli, Zadok and Abiathar—to mention no other instances—all bear witness to the unsoundness of any theory that might seek to throw doubts on the ministry of the sacred tribe and the family of Aaron.

But the evidence of E itself is still more interesting. Ac-



according to Mr. Carpenter, Deuteronomy x. 6, with its uncompromising statement that "Eleazar his son ministered in the priest's office in his [Aaron's] stead," must be assigned to this document. The blessing of Moses was also "incorporated" in E, and there we read, "And of Levi he said, Thy Thummin and thy Urim are with thy godly one. . . . They shall put incense before thee, and whole burnt-offering upon thine altar" (Deut. xxxiii. 8, 10). Of these passages Mr. Carpenter does indeed seem to have been dimly conscious, but there are others that he has entirely forgotten. The book of Joshua, it will be remembered, is ascribed to the same sources as the Pentateuch, and accordingly E figures there also. The information that may be gathered from a perusal of its fragments is singularly unfavorable. In iii. 3 we read, "When ye see the ark . . . and the priests the Levites bearing it." True, Mr. Carpenter remembers to assign "the Levites" to a redactor, but even that does not dispose of the awkward fact that the narrative of E here recognizes priests other than the Ephraimite Joshua (who is sharply distinguished from them), and that these priests have the custody of the ark. In verse 6 we read, "and Joshua spake unto the priests, saying, Take up the ark . . . and they took up the ark." In 14 we hear again of "the priests that bare the ark." Again and again this representation of the priests recurs (see Joshua vi. 4-9, 12b, 13, 20b). Finally it is E that in the last verse of the book narrates the death of Eleazar the son of Aaron.

It is in the light of these facts that we turn to see what the representations of E as to the alleged "ministry" of the Ephraimite Joshua really are. It does not appear that he was ever in charge of the ark or performed any sacrificial function whatever, nor did he "serve" the Tent. The whole case amounts to this. In Exodus xxxiii. 7, *before* the ark was in existence,

Moses takes a tent and pitches it without the camp *for himself* (so the Hebrew; see Van Hoonacker, *Sacerdoce lévitique*, p. 146, note). This appears to have been a practice—not an isolated act—and from verse 11 we learn that Joshua remained there when Moses returned, as minister of Moses, *not* as performing any priestly function. On another occasion Moses and a number of elders were near “the Tent” when Joshua made an observation (Num. xi. 28). We shall consider what his Tent was when we come to discuss the Tent of Meeting. In this connection we are only concerned with Joshua. It does not appear that he was apart from the elders or that he had any functions to perform except to act as the “minister of Moses,” in which capacity he would seem to have been present (ver. 28). But there is yet another passage in E (Deut. xxxi. 14 f.), and, as Van Hoonacker has acutely pointed out (*Sacerdoce lévitique*, p. 147, note), Joshua, so far from being permanently installed in the Tent, is summoned thither together with Moses. It is therefore patent that there is no justification whatever for holding that the ministry of any “sanctuary” was ever intrusted to the Ephraimite Joshua, or for throwing doubt on the priestly character of the family of Aaron and the Levites in E. The passages relating to the Tent of Meeting will be considered later, but it is already apparent that they afford no foundation for Mr. Carpenter’s remarks as to Joshua.

We return to the early chapters of Exodus. The next alleged criterion for the partition of these chapters is to be found in the rod.

#### THE ROD.

Mr. Carpenter’s charge on this runs as follows:—

“The rod was one of the ancient elements of the tradition. Here it is represented as the shepherd’s staff which was naturally in  
Vol. LXV. No. 259. 7

Moses' hands, and it becomes the medium of the display of the divine power to him. In E it is apparently given him by God 17, and consequently bears the name 'rod of God' 20b (cp 'mountain of God'): as such, it is the instrument with which Moses achieves the wonders vii 20b ix 23 x 13. P transfers the rod to Aaron, and supplies a different occasion for its conversion into a serpent cp vii 8-13." (Vol. II. p. 84, note on Exodus iv. 2.)

We begin by disposing of Mr. Carpenter's comparison. We set out in the form of a syllogism the reasoning which alone could give it cogency:—

(a) "Mountain of God" can only mean mountain given by God:

(b) *Mutatis mutandis*, "rod of God" can only mean the same thing as "mountain of God":

(c) Therefore "rod of God" can only mean rod given by God.

If for any reason the premises be rejected—and we imagine that it will be difficult to find anybody to adopt them—the conclusion falls to the ground. Obviously "rod of God" means nothing of the sort. It is merely a convenient expression for designating the rod which has been the instrument of a miracle. As to the words "take this rod" in verse 17, nobody who reads the narrative of this chapter continuously would understand this as referring to some rod that was given. The phrase is an entirely natural designation of the rod referred to in verses 1-3, and it requires a very captious reader indeed to misunderstand it.

Nevertheless, Mr. Carpenter is so firmly convinced that this rod must have been given by God and was not identical with the rod which had been turned into a snake, that in vii. 15 (E) he assigns the words "which was turned to a serpent" to a harmonist, and justifies himself thus: "A final harmonistic effort (15) identified the 'rod of God' which was expressly

given to Moses for the purpose of working the signs (E) iv 17, 20b, with his own shepherd's staff (J) which had been turned into a snake iv 2 ff." (Vol. ii. p. 89.) As there is not a particle of evidence for the alleged gift, the remarks about the "final harmonistic effort" may reasonably afford much amusement.

But then Mr. Carpenter further alleges that "P transfers the rod to Aaron." So does J. In iv. 30 we read, "Aaron spake all the words which the LORD had spoken unto Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people." And Mr. Carpenter gets out of the difficulty only by invoking his never-failing help in time of woe—the redactor—to conjure away "Moses" and "Aaron." It is impossible not to feel that he is here influenced by the theory which we have already examined, that Aaron was originally omitted altogether from these narratives.

There is in fact one difficulty connected with the rod; but, as that occurs in the narrative of the plagues, it will be better to postpone its discussion.

#### THE PLAGUES.

We begin the consideration of this topic with an extract from a paper by the late W. H. Green.

"In reality, however, the plagues form a symmetrical and regularly unfolding scheme, as they stand in the record, without any confusion or derangement. The first nine plagues spontaneously divide themselves into three series of three each.

- |  |                         |                         |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. (1) blood, vii. 14-25.                    | (4) flies, viii. 16-23. | (7) hail, ix. 18-35.    |
| 2. (2) frogs, vii. 26-viii. 11. <sup>1</sup> | (5) murrain, ix. 1-7.   | (8) locusts, x. 1-20.   |
| 3. (3) lice, viii. 12-15.                    | (6) boils, ix. 8-12.    | (9) darkness, x. 21-27. |

"In each series the first and second are announced beforehand; the third is sent without warning. The regularly repeated formula in the first is with slight variations: 'And the LORD said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning and stand before Pharaoh,—

<sup>1</sup> In A. V. viii. 1-15, with a corresponding change in the verses throughout chap. viii.

lo! he cometh forth to the water,—and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD (the God of the Hebrews), Let my people go that they may serve me; and if thou wilt not let my people go, behold I'. . . .

“The second of each series is introduced thus: ‘And the LORD said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD (the God of the Hebrews), Let my people go that they may serve me; and if thou refuse to let them go, behold I’. . . .

“While the first in each series was thus pre-announced to the king by the river’s side, and the second in his palace, the third was wrought without premonition, the LORD simply giving directions to Moses or to Moses and Aaron.

“This orderly arrangement of the plagues is rendered still more significant by their number, which cannot be merely the accidental result of combining separate accounts, which differ both in the number of the plagues and in the substance of the plagues themselves. Nine follow in immediate succession, three times three, suggestive of the three degrees of comparison, each series rising to a climax, the final series the climax of all that preceded; and these are but the prelude to the tenth, which seals the completeness of the whole, like the ten digits and the ten commandments.” (*Hebraica*, vol. vii. pp. 131–132.)

Mr. Carpenter’s introductory note on the subject begins as follows:—

“The narrative of the wonders vii 8–xi 10 is plainly composite. Various reasons unite to enforce this conclusion; the following analysis is founded on two broad classes of evidence, ( $\alpha$ ) material differences of representation, and ( $\beta$ ) accompanying peculiarities of phraseology. (1) Scattered through the record occur short sections of which vii 8–13 is the type. They are based on the idea of ‘showing a wonder’ vii 9. Moses receives the divine command, and transmits it to Aaron, who executes it with his rod: the magicians of Egypt then attempt to produce the same marvel, at first with success, but afterwards impotently: the heart of Pharaoh is strong, and he will not listen. These common marks unite the following passages: vii 8–13, 19–20a, 22 viii 5–7, 15b, 16–19 ix 8–12. They are unconnected by any marks of time; they constitute a succession of displays of power increasing in force until the editorial close in xi 10. Their recurring phrases (see the margins), the peculiar relation of Moses and Aaron cp vii 1 f, the prominence assigned to Aaron as the agent of the wonders with his rod cp Num xvii 8, while elsewhere the wonder is wrought by Moses with his rod, justify the ascription of these passages to P. Some points of linguistic affinity with JE are of course inevitable, in travelling over so much common ground.” (*Vol. II. p. 88.*)

Reserving for the present the alleged literary evidence, we proceed to investigate Mr. Carpenter's grave misrepresentations on the other points.

First, it is quite untrue that any of the passages cited, except vii. 8-12, "is based on the idea of showing a wonder." In that passage Pharaoh *asks for* a wonder. There is not the slightest hint of anything of the kind in the other passages. Moreover, vii. 9 contemplates the showing of a single wonder, not of five.

Secondly, the allegation that in all these passages "Moses receives the divine command and transmits it to Aaron, who executes it with his rod," is also false. In ix. 8-12 the command is given not to Moses, but to Moses and Aaron. It is not transmitted to Aaron, nor is it executed by him, nor does his rod enter into the action.

Thirdly, the magicians of Egypt are not here stated to have attempted to produce the same marvel.

The relation of Moses and Aaron has already been discussed.

It may therefore be confidently said that this portion of the analysis cannot be supported. Mr. Carpenter's note on vii. 8 then proceeds to effect the division between J and E, partly on the ground of the alleged distinction between Goshen and Egypt (already considered), and partly on the ground that in some passages Moses wields a rod and in others he does not. He writes: "Again the agency by which the plagues are successively induced, varies on different occasions. In one series Moses simply announces to Pharaoh the divine intention, but in another he is directed to stretch out his hand that the visitation may follow ix 22 x 12, 21 (cp ix 29, 33). The hand of Moses wields the rod ix 23 x 13 cp 22 vii 20b, apparently the rod of iv 17 expressly given to him for the pur-

pose" [1] That is to say, no discrepancy is alleged, but in Mr. Carpenter's opinion it was impossible for either J or E to compose a narrative relating a succession of plagues, some of which were initiated in one way and some in another. This was quite possible for P, who is allowed to tell of a number of signs that were initiated by Aaron's rod, and also of one that was begun by the action of Moses in casting handfuls of dust to heaven; but J and E are not as P and must not be allowed the same license. Besides, Mr. Carpenter did not really allow P to do this. He shut his eyes to P's actions and alleged that he had done something else. Hence he cannot conceive such conduct in J or E.

With regard to "the rod of iv 17 expressly given to him for the purpose" we must recall the fact that Mr. Carpenter is able to make this out only by banishing from vii. 15 the phrase which proves this to be the rod that was turned into a serpent. We have already discussed the alleged gift, but we have now to see how the rod is eliminated from J. Mr. Carpenter continues: "The coincidence of (i) [i.e. the presence in Egypt, not Goshen] and (ii) [i.e. the rod] in x 21-23 secures all the rod-passages to E. It will be noticed that these contain no mention of Aaron; Moses throughout appears alone; act after act follows without recorded speech." We have already dealt with the presence of Aaron in E. It will be noticed that the assignment of the rod-passages to E rests on nothing more secure than the theory that residence in Goshen excludes the proximity of Egyptians. It need only be added that the other statements are simply due to the arbitrary division adopted. Thus x. 28 f. are assigned to J without so much as a pretense that there is any reason for it, though the preceding verse is given to E. Any narrative in the world could be divided on these principles.

It remains to notice the other points as to material representation on the narrative of the plagues. We read in vii. 25, "And seven days were fulfilled, after that the LORD had smitten the river." On the strength of this, Mr. Carpenter writes as follows in his note on 14a: "In the formula 'Thus saith the LORD . . . Behold I will smite,' the LORD is obviously the subject of the verb cp viii 1 f, 20 f ix 13, 18 x 3 f, and it is plain from 25 that the writer conceived of the LORD as himself smiting the river [!], with the result that the fish died (18, 21), and the Egyptians could not drink the water." (Vol. ii. p. 89.) And this man apparently conceives that he is qualified to act as a *literary* critic!

The next point is not less marvelous. In ix. 6 we read that "all the cattle of Egypt died." By the context (verse 3) this is in effect limited to the cattle in the field, but Mr. Carpenter is not in the habit of attending to the context of any statement, and it pleases him, moreover, to treat "all" as a mathematical term. Therefore on 19 he gravely prints the following: "According to ix 6 'the cattle of Egypt' are already all dead, and in 25b, consequently, the destructive effect of the hail is limited to trees and herbs [Mr. Carpenter achieves this by giving the first half of 25 to E and the second to J]. The prediction of the death of the cattle which should be exposed to the storm, must therefore be regarded as an editorial afterthought in reference to 25a." And on verse 22: "When it is further added 'that there may be hail on man and upon beast throughout the land of Egypt,' it becomes plain that this passage cannot proceed from the writer of 6!" Hence again in xi 5 we are told that "and all the firstborn of cattle" is "probably a late editorial addition. The 'cattle' of Egypt (צֹמֶה) had already been killed ix 6; the term here employed, 'beast,' as in xiii 12, 15, suggests the presence of the harmonizer, anx-



ious to find a basis for legal usage in the sacred tradition." (Vol. ii. p. 96.) Similarly with xii. 29. We are surprised that Mr. Carpenter does not on the same principle argue that ix. 14 must relate to the introduction of the story of the plagues on the ground that God speaks of sending "all" his plagues. Similarly Dr. G. B. Gray argues that Numbers xxxi. must be unhistorical, because (amongst other reasons) "if it were historical, then, since *every* male Midianite was slain, Midian must have disappeared from history in the time of Moses; and this conclusion would conflict with the prominent part played by Midian in the Book of Judges (vi.–viii.), not to speak of later references [!]." (Numbers, pp. 418–419.) And Dr. Baentsch, the author of another higher critical commentary on Numbers, thinks it necessary to point out solemnly on verse 7 (every male), that, according to verse 17, the male children were not included in this! We can only express the hope that a time may come when some sympathy with the Hebrew genius and its methods of expression may be deemed an indispensable precondition to the task of producing a commentary on a Hebrew book.

There thus remains *one* difficulty in the narrative of the plagues. In Exodus vii. 17 God in speaking to Moses commands him to say, "Behold I will smite with the rod that is in *mine* hand"; whereas, in 19, He says, "Say unto Aaron, Take *thy* rod," etc. The passages are certainly not incapable of being harmonized, but there is perhaps a little awkwardness in the phrase "take thy rod," which would disappear if, for example, "take *the* rod" could be read. It is of course not impossible that there is some slight corruption in the text, and that it has been emended on the basis of verse 8, where the phrase is decidedly in place; but no variant is recorded in Kittel's "Biblia Hebraica." The editions of the

Septuagint by Swete and Lagarde give no help: and the Samaritan text is here manifestly inferior. On the whole, we are of the opinion that different minds will be likely to take different views, some holding that the text is correct as it stands, while others may favor some hypothesis of corruption. In any case the awkwardness here is the only point we have discovered in the narrative of the plagues that can be reasonably held to create any difficulty at all.

By the means we have considered, Mr. Carpenter produces the following table of the plagues (vol. ii. p. 89), which should be carefully contrasted with Dr. Green's table given above.

<u>J</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>P</u>
The river smitten, death of the fish	Waters of the river turned to blood.	Aaron's rod changed to a serpent. Waters of Egypt turned to blood.
<u>Frogs</u>	<u>          </u>	<u>Frogs</u>
<u>Flies</u>	<u>          </u>	<u>Lice</u>
<u>Murrain</u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
<u>Hail</u>	<u>Hail</u>	<u>Bolls</u>
<u>Locusts</u>	<u>Locusts</u>	<u>          </u>
<u>          </u>	<u>Darkness</u>	<u>          </u>
Death of the first-born	[Death of the first- born]	Death of the first- born

It is to be noticed that no system whatever is traceable either in the number of the plagues, or in the method of their execution or their significance, or in the relation of the documents to one another. In Mr. Carpenter's scheme we simply have aimless collections of fragments—nothing more.

#### THE SO-CALLED LITERARY EVIDENCE.

Nothing is more astonishing in the higher criticism than the arguments which by a desecration of language are termed "literary." Literary criticism cannot exist apart from literary feeling, and it takes but a very few minutes to see that this quality is entirely absent from the higher critical work. It

would be difficult to conceive anything more hopelessly unliterary than the evidence produced under this head. And it must be remembered that the lists of words adduced are further vitiated by the characteristics that we have seen at work in the statements as to material differences—the lack of care, accuracy, thoroughness, judgment, and impartiality that constitute the outstanding features of all the higher critical work. Opening Volume I. of the Oxford Hexateuch at random at the lists of words, we take two or three instances from the page (187) on which we happened to light. The phrases are alleged to be characteristic of J:—No. 34, “flowing with milk and honey”—said to be used 8 times by J, 7 times by D and once by Ph (the Holiness legislation—a separate code now incorporated in P); No. 36, “from the time that,” 4 J, 1 Rd; No. 38, “to do good,” 9 J, 2 E, 10 D, 2 P; and so on. This sort of thing is mere trifling. If a phrase can be used by any two or three or four of the alleged documents and redactors, it is obvious that there is nothing distinctive about it. And in estimating these lists other considerations must also be borne in mind. It quite frequently happens that the division of the documents by various critics is not identical. In such cases the lists of words break down. Again, there is much circular reasoning. The critics will say that a particular source uses a given word, and adduce, in triumphant justification of their dictum, passages which have been attributed to that source only on the ground of the occurrence of this very word. To take an illustration: in Exodus iii. 19 we find a particular use of the infinitive. This is assigned by the editors of the new English edition of Gesenius’s Hebrew lexicon to J, but by Mr. Carpenter to a redactor on the ground partly that this is an E phrase. Then this phrase is quoted in the E list of words to distinguish E from other documents. Moreover, redactors are

perpetually called in to account for unpleasant facts. Indeed, it may safely be said that the allegations as to the literary evidence are quite as unreliable as the other assertions of the critics. We have recently treated of the question at some length in the *Princeton Theological Review* for October, 1907, and we do not propose to enter at all fully into the matter in these essays, but Mr. Carpenter's table in the note on vii. 8 may be given as a fair example.

J	E	P
Pharaoh 'refuses to let the people go' vii 14 viii 2 ix 2 x 4.		
'The LORD, God of the Hebrews,' vii 16 ix 1, 13 x 3.		
'Let my people go that they may serve me' vii 16 viii 1, 20 ix 1, 13 x 3.		
'Thus saith the LORD . . . Behold I will . . .' vii 17 viii 1 f, 20 f ix 1 (3), 13, 18 x 3 f.		
'Intreat the LORD' viii 8, 28 ix 28 x 17.		
'Removal of the plague' viii 8, 31 x 17 cp ix 33.		
Marks of time 'tomorrow' viii 10, 23, 29 ix 5 f x 4.		
Unheard of character of the infliction ix 18, 24b x 6b, 14 xi 6.		
Pharaoh's heart 'stubborn' (Qal & Hiph) vii 14 viii 15, 32 ix 7, 34.	Moses stretches out his hand with the rod vii 15, 20b ix 22 f x 12 f, 21 f.	'Say unto Aaron' vii 9, 19 viii 5, 16. The magicians vii 11, 22 viii 7, 18 ix 11.
	Aaron stretches out his hand with his rod vii 9, 19 viii 5 f, 16 f.	
		Land of Egypt vii 19, 21b viii 5-7, 16 f ix 9ab xii 1, 12 f, 17, 41 f, 51.
	Pharaoh's heart 'strong' (Qal & Hiph) ix 35 x 20, 27.	Pharaoh's heart 'strong' (Qal & Hiph) vii 13, 22 viii 19 (ix 12 P1). And he hearkened not as the LORD had spoken vii 10, 13, 22 viii 15, 19 ix 12.

Examination shows how purely factitious this list is. We have already seen that in E, act is made to follow act without recorded speech. Hence every phrase that is natural in dia-

logue must be assigned to J or P. The view taken by Mr. Carpenter of the relations of Moses and Aaron further enables him to assign to P all phrases in which Aaron occurs. And so on. "Land of Egypt," which is here quoted as characteristic of P, is a phrase which elsewhere J and E are permitted to use; e.g., ix. 23b and 24b (both J), 25a (E), etc. There is nothing in this style of argument that would detain a man of common sense and ordinary judgment for five minutes. At one moment Mr. Carpenter alleges that certain verses must belong to P because the phrase "land of Egypt" occurs, and then in the same chapter he allows other verses to go to other sources in spite of the fact that the very same phrase is found in them. If higher critics regard this sort of thing as convincing, we shall be pleased to let them have a monopoly of it. But we have thought it right to say a few words about this alleged "literary method," lest it should be thought that it is in any way more substantial than the rest of the critical case. Before passing away from it we should like to give a sample of what the critics are prepared to believe on the strength of such evidence. The following is the assignment of Exodus xiii. 3-16 in the Oxford Hexateuch:—

## EXODUS XIII.

3. J:—And Moses said unto the people, *Harmonizing addition by RJe* [i.e. the redactor of J and E]:—Remember this day in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the LORD brought you from this place: there shall no leavened bread be eaten.
4. J:—This day ye go forth in the month Abib.
5. *Supplement by a writer of the J School (J<sup>s</sup>)*:—And it shall be when the LORD shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Amorite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite, which he swore unto thy fathers to give thee, a land flowing with milk and honey, that thou shalt keep this service in this month.
6. J:—Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, and in the seventh day shall be a feast to the LORD.

7. J\* [See 5 supra]:—Unleavened bread shall be eaten throughout the seven days; and there shall no leavened bread be seen with thee, neither shall there be leaven seen with thee, in all thy borders.

8. And thou shalt tell thy son in that day, saying, it is because of that which the LORD did for me when I came forth out of Egypt.

9. *A priestly redactor (Rp)*:—And it shall be for a sign unto thee upon thine hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes, that the law of the LORD may be in thy mouth:

Rje [see supra 3]:—For with a strong hand hath the LORD brought thee out of Egypt.

10-13. J.

14-16. Rje.

And this is regarded as scholarship!