

You see how, according to this theory, the regulations become more and more strict. In the J document, a man can make an altar anywhere. When Abraham comes into the land he makes an altar at one place after another. Wherever he is, he sets up an altar and sacrifices. Deuteronomy, however, says that there is only one place where sacrifices can be offered. The P document does not repeat the restriction so emphasized in Deuteronomy, but assumes it. Thus the critics claim that there is development from simple laws to complicated regulations.

We should pause here to notice the *real* difference between these sections of the Pentateuch. After its first ten chapters most of the book of Genesis is the account of the experiences of one family as God brings them into the land of Canaan and oversees their experiences as He prepares them to become a great nation that is to be the means of bringing His revelation to the world. Under these circumstances a complex and detailed system of religious observance is hardly necessary. Exodus and the following books deal with God's relation to a nation, composed of thousands of people, that is to honor God and show forth His glory to the world. The simple arrangements that are sufficient for dealing with one family as it travels through a thinly populated land can hardly meet the needs of the new nation that is to be brought into the promised land and settled there. These later books include regulations for an entire nation as it travels through the wilderness and as it prepares for life in Canaan. In this more complex situation complicated laws and requirements, which would have been meaningless for a single family, become absolutely necessary. The absence of complicated laws and ordinances from the account of God's dealings with Abraham, and their presence in His dealings with a large nation are only what one would expect.

The critics claim that there is a great increase in complexity between the J and P documents. But if one puts all the complicated regulations in P and leaves most of the simple narrative for J and E, it should not be surprising to find that P is much more complicated than J and E. Simple ways of worship are in the J and E documents and the complex regulations in P. They also claim that P is more spiritual than JE, but