

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)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *Journal of Biblical Literature* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_jbl-01.php

The Worship of the Tabernacle compared with that of the Second Temple.

BY REV. S. J. ANDREWS, D.D.

IN the year 587 B.C. the temple of Solomon was destroyed by the Babylonians; in 516 B.C. its rebuilding was completed, and it was dedicated to Jehovah. But what should be the worship? Should it be a reproduction of that of the first temple? If so, why? The answer which lies on the face of the Old Testament is, that it was a reproduction of the earlier worship, and this on the ground that that was divinely appointed. Jehovah had given minute details both as to the material structure in which He would be worshipped, and the service to be offered in it. The builders of the second temple could, therefore, do nothing else than re-establish the worship of the first.

But this answer is not satisfactory to a school of modern critics, of which Prof. Wellhausen may be considered a leading representative. They say, in general, that the accounts given us of the worship of the Jews in all the earlier stages of their history are not to be relied on. Doubtless they had rites of worship at the time they settled in Canaan, but of these, down to the time of Solomon, we know little or nothing; nor have we any accurate knowledge of the rites in the first temple.

The question, therefore, arises, Did those who established the service of the second temple intend it to be, and believe that it was, a reproduction of the service of the first, and this on the ground of its original divine appointment; or did they, not having any divine and authoritative model, arrange a new service, adapting it to the circumstances of their times? Let us take the last supposition as the fact, and from this point of view consider their labors to construct and establish a national cultus.

It will be well, however, first to recall to mind more particularly Wellhausen's position. He finds three distinct periods in the development of worship: first, that before Josiah, or down to 640 B.C.; second, the transitional period introduced by Josiah's reforms; third,

the period of the exile and the years following, B.C. 587-444. Of the three strata of the Hexateuch, the earliest is the law-book embodied by the Jehovist, or, as it is called by some, "the first legislation"; next, the Deuteronomic legislation; and last, the priestly Code. The priestly Code, he says, was gradually formed by the labors of learned priests during the exile, Ezekiel being a chief leader; and after the restoration of the temple the work went on, and further ritual developments were produced in action and reaction with the actual practice of the new temple. The work was completed 444 B.C. by Ezra, and the new creed incorporated with the Pentateuch.

We are here concerned only with that part of the priestly Code which treats of worship. The statements of Wellhausen as to its development from the earliest time, may be thus summed up. Jehovah was at first regarded as a family or a tribal God, perhaps of the family of Moses, or of the tribe of Joseph. His special dwelling-place was at Sinai, the Hebrew Olympus. When the Hebrews settled in Canaan they adopted and worshipped the local deities in common with Jehovah. Sacrifice was everywhere permitted, and there were many altars. When the temple at Jerusalem was built, it was not regarded as the sole sanctuary; there were others equally sacred, as at Gilgal and Beer-sheba; and when, soon after, at the division of the kingdom, worship was set up at Bethel and Dan, this worship was regarded as equally legitimate with that at Jerusalem. The worship of the calves was really the worship of Jehovah. Solomon's temple was chiefly pre-eminent as the "Court Chapel." It was not till the time of Elijah that monotheism was proclaimed, and the worship of Jehovah and of Baal declared incompatible. As monotheism increased, and Jehovah was believed to be the one sole God, it was seen that His worship was the only worship to be permitted. Thus the temple at Jerusalem began to be looked on as the sole sanctuary, and this belief was embodied by the Deuteronomist of Josiah's time. But monotheism did not then prevail; idolatry continued under Josiah's successors till the temple was destroyed. Kuenen affirms that the great body of the people continued to be polytheistic till after the exile.

If this be a correct statement of the history of worship in Israel, it is plain that there never was any divinely prescribed ritual, and that there could be, therefore, no restoration of it by Ezra and his helpers. If there was such a ritual, it was certainly that of the first temple at Jerusalem, and if so, the worship set up at Bethel and Dan was a departure from it and a sin, even if Jehovah was there worshipped

under the symbol of the calves. But Wellhausen affirms that it was equally legitimate with that at Jerusalem, and the necessary inference is that there was, at the division of the kingdom (975 B.C.), no ritual prescribed by Jehovah and obligatory on all. And another inference seems just, that there was no ground for centralization of worship, for if worship might be legitimately offered at several distinct places, He did not dwell in Jerusalem in any special, much less in any exclusive, manner.

But there was, by general consent, some form of ritual in the first temple, and if not of divine appointment, whence came it? Wellhausen affirms that it was of gradual growth, a mixture of Israelitish and Canaanitish elements, of which the latter formed the larger portion. "The cultus, as to place, time, matter, and form, belonged almost entirely to the inheritance which Israel had received from Canaan; to distinguish what belonged to the worship of Jehovah from that which belonged to Baal was no easy matter." Kuenen, also, says that the religion of Jehovah in the eighth century was a semi-pagan idolatry, and had been evolved out of still lower previous forms of religion. The cultus of the first temple could not, therefore, claim to be of Jehovah's appointment. It was not of divine origin in any other sense than was the worship of Chemosh or of Baal. If, as declared by Wellhausen, "it was first revealed to Elijah that we have not in the various departments of nature a variety of forces worthy of our worship, but that there exists over all one Holy One, who reveals Himself not in nature but in law and righteousness," monotheistic worship could date only from the time of this prophet. But as there was, so far as we know, no change in the Jerusalem cultus as to its matter or form in the interval between Elijah and Josiah, and as the Deuteronomic legislation in Josiah's day was to establish the temple at Jerusalem as the sole sanctuary, rather than to change the substance or order of its service, we conclude that the syncretism continued, and that there was not, down to the destruction of the first temple, any divinely appointed monotheistic service.

But it should be noticed that Prof. W. takes another position, which is unlike that we have just stated, and inconsistent with it; it is, that Solomon's temple was the original of which the tabernacle was the copy. This is to say, that the tabernacle was imaginary, but the temple real. But if the leading ideas which were embodied in the tabernacle and its service, had found an actual earlier expression in the temple of Solomon, its service could not have been a compound of incongruous elements, Canaanitish and Jewish, as Prof. W. has

declared. The ideas of Jehovah's local Presence, of one sole sanctuary, of a prescribed ritual monotheistic in spirit, could not have found expression in the temple unless they were then dominant; and if so, all worship except at the temple, as that at Dan and Bethel, all polytheistic elements and variety of ritual, must have been theoretically forbidden, if practically tolerated. The image of Solomon's temple could not have been thrown backward into the Mosaic time unless it actually existed. But if it existed, why should the post-exilian priests have invented this tabernacle image? If the first temple had in fact what they ideally attributed to the tabernacle, why not in the second temple simply copy the first? This was sufficient authority for them, and they gained nothing in any way by inventing a Mosaic model which was itself a copy.

But assuming that all this past was known to the priests of the exile and to Ezra as a period of semi-pagan idolatry, they could not, as monotheists, reproduce the ritual of the first temple, but were at liberty to devise a new ritual exclusively monotheistic, and addressed to Jehovah alone. Their intention was to preserve the returned exiles from all idolatry, and one means to this end was to prepare a service of worship free from all heathen elements. It was not, perhaps, necessary to invent absolutely new rites, but at least to select out of the old such as they found fit, and to purify and arrange them according to some principle of unity. And this, as we are told, they did; and the ritual they devised, with possibly some subsequent slight modifications, continued to be that in use till the second temple was destroyed.

It is not necessary for us to inquire here in detail what was the ritual of the second temple, as it was established by the returning exiles. Its general features are well known, and our present inquiry concerns only its relations to the earlier forms of the tabernacle and temple, regarding them all as the work of the same authors.

Having prepared the new ritual, the next point was how to give it authority, and make it binding on the people as of divine origin. They must not only present it as a product of the past, a growth out of the earlier worship; they must also give it divine authority, and establish it as the exclusive ritual; this was the problem before them. To affirm that there had been, from the beginning of their national existence, a divinely prescribed ritual, monotheistic in its character, and that it was this which they were now presenting, was a hazardous affirmation, since knowledge of the past was not confined to the priests. Still, this was the only feasible way open to them. They

must rewrite their ancient annals, and, going back to the dim wilderness period, make the shadowy Moses, already glorified in legendary lore, the author of a ritual which Jehovah had expressly appointed, and which had been the national worship for many centuries. And this they did. Skilfully revising and changing and interpolating the earliest narratives, harmoniously interweaving the new with the old, they prepared a history of worship so well adjusted to the changes of national life that every successive phase seemed to be a true reflection of its own time. And this worship had three stages.

Its first stage began with the tabernacle service at Sinai, perfectly developed at its birth, and this remained, down to the time of David and Solomon, the one authoritative worship, though often neglected or perverted or mutilated, according to the varying measure of the faith and obedience of the people.

Thus the most difficult part of the work of the exilian priests was done, and a broad and solid foundation for further ritual building was laid. The obscure period down to Solomon was now illumined and filled up with that system of worship which we find in the books of the Pentateuch, and set with great industry and circumspection in an historical framework that alike explains and illustrates and confirms it.

But the tabernacle was not intended to be permanent. With the kingdom, a new phase of worship begins; the tent gives place to the temple; but the unity of the ritual was not broken; in all its essential features it remained the same. And the temple, also, must have its historical setting, and its service be made to stand in correspondence with the progressive changes of the kingdom, both good and evil. Thus the second stage of worship was brought into harmony with the first, a continuation and development of it.

Having now filled in the empty canvas of their earliest history with the wandering tent and the overhanging Cloud, and having exalted the court temple of Solomon and sanctified it as the sole place where Jehovah could be worshipped, and having prepared a monotheistic ritual whose authorship they ascribed to Moses, the way was opened for Ezra and his associates to present to the faith of the returned exiles the worship of the second temple as the true and legitimate continuation of all the worship that had preceded it. It was in the line of succession, and had like divine sanction, and was obligatory upon all.

We may now proceed to state the problem as it lies before us.

We find in the Old Testament three successive stages of worship;

that of the tabernacle, that of the first temple, and that of the second. The last is historical, the others are unhistorical, ideal, the invention of the exilian and post-exilian priests. Their motive in devising those earlier ideal forms of service was, that they might serve as a sanction and confirmation of their own service in the second temple. We are, therefore, warranted in expecting a correspondence between them as to their fundamental ideas and chief characteristics. Is this correspondence found?

But to answer this question, it is necessary that we consider a little more fully the nature of those earlier forms of worship, that we may, for the purpose of comparison, distinguish the elements that are fundamental and essential; and for our present purpose the ritual of the tabernacle and that of the first temple may be regarded as identical. Their relation to the pre-Mosaic sacrificial worship it is not necessary here to consider.

The basis of Jewish worship from the time of Moses was the Presence of Jehovah in the sanctuary, first in the tabernacle, and afterwards in the temple of Solomon. At Sinai He became their King, and thenceforth stood to them in a twofold relation as their God and their King. Now would He dwell among them. "Let them make me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them." There was from this time a dwelling of Jehovah — a permanent, local manifestation of Himself — among His people. In the nature of the case, there could be but one dwelling-place, one sanctuary; and the worship that was offered to Him there was national, as distinguished from individual or family or tribal worship. Immediately after the people had entered into covenant with Him at Sinai, He gave directions that a tabernacle be built, and appointed certain rites of worship to be regularly performed in it. It was the worship of the whole people, and now first inaugurated at Sinai by solemn acts. It was offered to Jehovah dwelling among them, and could be offered only where He was, and by those whom He appointed. Centralization of worship, a national priesthood, and a divinely prescribed ritual, were the necessary effects of His presence in the sanctuary, and all had their origin at Sinai. Individual sacrifices had been, and perhaps still could be offered on a single altar erected elsewhere, but those of the nation only at the sanctuary in which He dwelt.

The second thing here to be noticed by us in this service is its unity. It is obvious to every one that the tabernacle ritual, as described in the Pentateuch, is a complete whole. The several parts stand in a clear and definite relation to each other, and all co-operate

to a single end. This unity will appear, whether we consider the tabernacle as to its material structure or as to its rites of worship.

First, the tabernacle as a material structure. It had three parts, — the outer court, inclosed by curtains, but open above; the tabernacle proper within the court, made of boards and covered over, and divided into the Holy and Most Holy places. In the outer court were the brazen altar and laver; in the Holy place, the table of shew bread, the candlestick, and the altar of incense; in the Most Holy, the ark, with the mercy-seat and the cherubim.

The most important part of this threefold division, and the basis of the whole order, was the Most Holy place, the place where Jehovah dwelt. From above the mercy-seat, between the cherubim, did He commune with Moses, and there would He make known His will unto His people.

Into this Most Holy place there was no entrance, nor was any act of worship performed there, except once a year by the High Priest — this was on the day of Atonement. The rites of this day had reference to the worship of the year past; to cleanse the sanctuary from its defilements through the sin and uncleanness of priests and people, and thus to prepare them for the worship of the year to come. Its characteristic features were, that all its rites from morning to evening were performed by the High Priest, who entered into the Most Holy and sprinkled the blood of the two sin-offerings upon the mercy-seat, and then proceeded to purify the altars of sacrifice and incense with a like sprinkling. The object of this day was to make reconciliation for the sanctuary, that the High Priest and the priests under him might be accepted in their acts of worship. Atonement must be made for the sins and uncleanness of all, priest and people, special reference being had to the defilement of the worship. It was, therefore, a day in which the sins of the covenant people might be put away; a day of confession, of cleansing, and forgiveness. It was an annual re-inauguration of the covenant made at Sinai, where Moses sprinkled with blood the altar and the people (Ex. xxiv.).

Thus the day of Atonement, annually occurring, was an indispensable part of the ritual, and only through its observance could their sacrifices and offerings be acceptable to Jehovah.

This brief survey sufficiently confirms what was said of the unity of the tabernacle service as it is set forth in the priestly Code. Not a single important rite could be changed as to its order, much less omitted, without breaking its unity. And the one fundamental fact which determined both the existence and structure of the tabernacle

and of its service, was the Presence of Jehovah in the Most Holy place. The nature of that Presence it is not necessary to define, but it was the ground of national worship. As the local presence of the body and blood of Christ, preserved in its tabernacle, or ciborium, now controls the structure of a Roman Catholic Church, and of its chief acts of worship, so the dwelling of Jehovah upon the mercy-seat between the cherubim controlled the structure and service of both the tabernacle and the first temple. Of this local Presence the ark was the symbol. Its absence was a sign that Jehovah no more dwelt in His sanctuary, and without it the unity of the service was broken, and its chief significance lost.

If we now turn to the historical books presenting the history of the people from the time of Moses to that of Solomon, we find that this dwelling of Jehovah in His sanctuary among His people is fully recognized as that which gave character and direction to the national life. The ark, the symbol of His presence, plays a most important part in the historical records. We need only recall the march in the wilderness: when it set forward, Jehovah went before them; when it rested, there did He rest; where it was, He was present to guide, to defend, to give the victory. And on this ground it was borne by the priests through the Jordan and around the walls of Jericho, and, later, was taken from time to time to the camp to insure the overthrow of their enemies. The reverence due it was attested by the judgments at Beth-shemesh and Peres-uzzah. When for a long period in the days of Samuel and Saul it was separated from the tent and the two altars, the unity of the ritual was broken, the appointed national worship could not be carried out, and hence Samuel and others felt themselves at liberty to offer sacrifices at other places. For a time there was a double service under David, at the altars in Gibeon, and before the ark in Jerusalem. A reason why worship on the high places during the time of the first temple was not suppressed, even by the most vigorous efforts of the most pious kings, may have been that it was regarded by the people only as an imperfect service offered by individuals in certain local precincts, but not national worship, and so not coming into rivalry with the temple service, and therefore might be tolerated.

Having considered so fully the tabernacle service, we may pass more rapidly over that of the second stage,—the service of the temple of Solomon. It was in its order and chief features the same as in the tabernacle. It was based on the same fundamental fact—the local Presence of Jehovah in His sanctuary. The temple had the

same general divisions, and, with some variety of size and number, the same furniture. It is to be noted, however, that the ark was that of the tabernacle, which was carried by Solomon into the Most Holy place.

Such was the very carefully devised scheme of worship in its twofold tabernacle and temple stages, as presented to us in the Pentateuch and the historical books, and which, as we are now supposing, the exilian priests desired the people of their day to receive as historically true, and the express appointment of Jehovah. We may safely say that no liturgy of the Christian Church now in use is so symmetrically constructed, with such clear perception of the end to be reached, and perfect subordination of parts to this end, combined with so minute elaboration of details. If constructed by a single uninspired mind, it is a marvel to which the history of worship offers no parallel; if by a number of persons in successive generations, it is a miracle. I say nothing here of any prophetic or spiritual meaning underlying it.

Thus far we have been dealing with the ideal form of worship of the tabernacle and first temple, devised by the post-exilian priests to give a divine sanction to their worship of the second temple. This was the end for which they had been laboring in their presentation of the earlier stages of Jewish worship. We may, therefore, with great confidence, expect to find a close correspondence between the old and the new, and at least that everything essential in the first will be found in the last. But, to our surprise, we find elements to which had been attached the highest importance, and which had been made most prominent in the earlier ritual, wholly wanting in the service of the second temple. How is this fact to be explained?

The Jewish Rabbis enumerate five things wanting in the second temple which were found in the first, — the Shekinah, or Visible Glory, the ark and mercy-seat and cherubim, the Spirit of prophecy, the Urim and Thummim, and the Holy Fire on the brazen altar. The chief of these is the absence of the Shekinah, or visible glory, or, in other words, the cessation of that local dwelling among His people which Jehovah had promised when He became their King. "Let them build me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them." Let it be granted that all this is unhistorical, that His local presence in the tabernacle and first temple is an exilian fiction, still the fact remains that these priests had not only represented His local dwelling in His sanctuary as an historic reality, but had made it the very basis of the national worship. Why had they done this, when they well knew that the want of correspondence as to this fundamental fact, between

their own representations of the earlier worship and that of their own day, was manifest to all? Why should they so have presented the past as to bring it into most striking contrast with the present, and make so open a confession of the defectiveness of their service?

As the Shekinah was wanting in the second temple, so also the ark and mercy-seat and cherubim. In giving directions to Moses respecting these, Jehovah said: "I will meet with Thee, and I will commune with Thee, from above the mercy-seat, from between the two cherubim." This was the glory of His people, that He would dwell among them, and the ark was the symbol of His presence. Its absence, therefore, from the second temple was the visible sign that He was no more dwelling among them as of old. When compelled by their idolatry to give up His temple to destruction by the Babylonians, and to depart from the Most Holy, the ark was not preserved. Why was its place left vacant by the exiles when they rebuilt the temple? They had, in their presentation of the past, made the ark the heart of the worship, knowing all the time that there was no ark in their own temple, and that, judged by their own standard, their representations of its earlier importance would be flagrant proofs that they had not restored the service as appointed by Jehovah. Its absence made it impossible that the rites of the day of Atonement could be duly performed. No blood could be sprinkled upon the mercy-seat year by year, and without this no true expiation could be made for the sins of priests and people, and their worship be made acceptable to Jehovah. If all that they had said about the sacredness of the ark and its importance was unhistoric, why not make a new one, and thus restore the earlier worship in its highest and most characteristic features, as they themselves had described it? It had been easy for them to make in this matter a correspondence between the earlier service and their own, either by conforming the past to the present, or the present to the past. It is comprehensible why they should have presented their own ritual as a development of the old, and, therefore, according to the law of progress, something higher and better, but not so comprehensible why they should have presented it as a degradation, — a fall from higher to lower, — why they should so carefully and laboriously have prepared an ideal service as their model, and ascribed it to Divine authority, when a realization of it was not possible. So far from obtaining a sanction of their service, they made it an obvious failure, since the very minuteness with which the earlier ritual was set forth served to show that Jehovah's order could not be departed from, and thus was their own condemnation.

As by the absence of the Shekinah, shown by the loss of the ark, the unity of the worship was broken, so also the basis of its centralization was taken away; for this was inseparably connected with the belief that Jehovah was dwelling in one place only, and there alone could the national worship as appointed by Him be offered. Why, then, should the ritualists of the second temple, knowing that Jehovah was not dwelling in their rebuilt sanctuary as He dwelt of old in the tabernacle and first temple, still insist that it was the sole sanctuary? Why could He not be worshipped elsewhere if His special Presence was no longer manifested in the Most Holy? If there had been in Samuel's day a cessation of the appointed worship because the ark was separated from the tabernacle, and local altars for sacrifice became for a time admissible, how much more truly might this be said of the post-exilian period, when the ark had been destroyed? Why insist upon worship in one place only, and according to a prescribed ritual, when Jehovah was no longer dwelling in one place, and the ritual He had appointed could not be carried out?

The prophet Ezèkiel, who is claimed as one of the founders of the new ritual, in his outline of a future service makes it the foundation of the worship that Jehovah should come again to His temple and make it His dwelling-place. As he saw in vision the departure of the Visible Glory from the first temple before its destruction, he saw, also, its return to that future one of which the Lord had showed him the pattern. "Behold the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the East, . . . and the glory of the Lord came into the house," and Ezekiel hears him, saying, "Son of Man, this is the place of my throne . . . where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel forever." His Presence was the basis of their worship, and one sanctuary and a prescribed ritual appeared therefore in Ezekiel's temple as truly as in that of Solomon.

Is it credible, we ask, that Ezra and his associates should have constructed, with such wonderful ingenuity and painstaking, a ritual embodying certain chief elements, and have ascribed to it an historical existence, and have done this in order to obtain authority for their own ritual, when in this ritual those chief elements were wanting? It was more than labor lost; it was the erecting of a permanent witness against themselves. Architects do not make perfect models in stone only that they may produce mutilated copies in wood. I submit, that Ezra and his associates, as reasonable men, — I say nothing of the morality of their action, — who wished to give the best ritual possible to the returned exiles, would not needlessly have placed it side by

side with a model invented by them and declared to be of Jehovah's direct appointment, only that by comparison its imperfections might be made more glaring.

If it be said that the loss of the ark was no real loss, but a sign that Jehovah might be everywhere worshipped, this is here not to the purpose, since to restore the past and to conform the present to it was the professed intention of Ezra and his friends. Tested by their own law of worship, as they had laid it down in the Levitical Code, the service of the second temple was a defective and inferior service.

I cannot hesitate to express my conviction that this inversion of Jewish history, advocated so strongly by many, will prove on deeper examination more and more untenable. It is an arbitrary forcing of history to meet the necessities of a theory of religious development, and rests on a superficial view of the exilian and post-exilian times, taking that for progress which was in truth deterioration and decay. There was in Ezra and his helpers a profound consciousness that the return of the few exiles to a condition of national dependence on heathen rulers was no restoration to their original position as Jehovah's people. They well knew that they had entered upon a lower stage of national life, and that their great task was to strengthen the things that remained and were ready to die. To this end they enforced as rigidly as possible the Law, that it might serve as a barrier against heathenism from without, and as a check upon lawlessness from within. To preserve in worship the old, so far as they could, was their duty, not to construct the new. The origination of a ritual like that of the tabernacle, with all its supernatural elements, was wholly foreign to the spirit that animated them, and to their perception of the needs of the time. The one thing necessary was to keep the people from contact with heathenism, and to give monotheism free scope for its development; and to this end the growth of an intensely conservative spirit, rigid adherence to the commands of Jehovah as authoritative, was most effectual. But such a spirit was not the creative spirit of an early age; it held fast to all that was transmitted, but it could do no more. Nor was the post-exilian period one of faith; its religion was above all legal, the punctilious observance, not only of all Mosaic precepts, but of all traditions. It could praise the fathers, but not do their works.

What is now most demanded is the careful study of the exilian and post-exilian times, following in the line of the earlier history. That which has hitherto stood greatly in the way of a correct estimate of those times is the assumption that the Exile was not a judgment upon

the people for their sins, but a gracious act of God to set aside the narrow legalism of the preceding periods, and bring them into a larger religious liberty. It is said that the Theocracy had answered its end, and was outgrown; that particularism must necessarily give place to universalism; and that the people, through their dispersion, entered upon a new and higher stage of national life. This is to do great violence to the Biblical history, and wholly to destroy its unity. We may say, on the contrary, that the last stage, from the exile to the overthrow by Titus, must be regarded as the poor existence of a remnant under heathen rulers, and in a condition in which the Divine appointments, as to social and political institutions and rites of worship, could be but very imperfectly carried out. A remnant was preserved in the land, that the hope of the Messiah might be kept alive and His early years be passed under Divine ordinances, but this remnant could not fulfil the purpose of God in the original election of the nation.

Thus preserving the historical unity, and following the successive stages of Jewish national life as presented in the Biblical records, we see that the Babylonian exile, and the period after the return, were not real stages of progress from lower to higher, but rather of a fall from higher to lower. It needs scarcely be said that this national decline is quite consistent with much enlargement, through experience, in the knowledge of the Divine purpose, and with a clearer consciousness of their standing as an elect people, and with high spiritual development in individuals. But as a nation, their history, measured by the purpose of God in them, is one of decline and fall; and the post-exilian time is the last and darkest, however particular truths may have been unfolded, and so prepared the way for the teachings of the Christ. So far from the exile bringing about the overthrow of the legal spirit, it greatly intensified it; and the inability of the Jews to fulfil their divine mission, as religious teachers, found its sad but conclusive proof in the rejection and crucifixion of their Messiah.

The more carefully the whole spirit of the exilian and post-exilian time is studied and its characteristics discerned, the more clearly, I believe, will it appear that it never could have been the outgrowth of such an anterior history as Wellhausen affirms; and that to ascribe the formation of the early elaborate rituals to it, is an anachronism scarce less than to ascribe the mighty pyramids of the early Egyptian empire to the Shepherd Kings, or the masterpieces of Roman literature to that time of weakness and conflict which immediately preceded national dissolution.