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SACRIFICE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Its Theory and Practice

BY

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VII

ALTARS: LITERARY AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

IN previous lectures I have dealt mainly with the materials and occasions of sacrifice, the difference of custom which they underwent, and the relation of custom and modification of custom to belief or theory. There still remain for consideration the altar and the ministrants of sacrifice, and more immediately the altar. Like the material and occasions of sacrifice, the altar underwent modifications; but variety in the altar, and modification of practice in respect to it, belong more largely to the earlier periods, and attracted less interest and provoked less theory at a later period. For example, Philo, who contributes many observations, and Josephus a few, in regard to the meaning of the material and occasion of sacrifice, have but little to say on the meaning of special features of the altar. Our present inquiry, therefore, takes us more largely into the origins and early history of Jewish, or rather Hebrew, sacrificial custom and belief.

The term 'altar' would at first appear to be sufficiently precise; yet as a matter of fact no little discussion affecting some fundamental questions of sacrificial custom and its meaning has arisen as to the scope of the term, as to what is and what is not an altar; to take a single instance, the question has arisen whether the *massebah*, the 'pillar' of E.V., was originally itself an altar, not, as it appears in Hebrew literature, simply an appurtenance of an altar. It is fruitless in such a case starting out with a definition, but it is important to define and justify the range of inquiry. In one respect the term 'altar', in relation to English description of Hebrew usage, is much less confusing than the term 'sacrifice'; the term 'sacrifice' in E.V. corresponds to several Hebrew terms, and is the consistent rendering of none; on the other hand, 'altar' always corresponds to מזבח, Aram. מרבח, except

in Ex. 38⁷ (A.V.: R.V. it = altar), 2 Ch. 30¹⁴ (altars (R.V. Mg. 'vessels') of incense = המקטרת) and Is. 65³, where it corresponds to nothing in MT and is omitted in R.V., and thrice in Ezek. 43^{15, 16}; in these three cases 'altar' (A.V.), and the compound expressions 'upper altar', or 'altar hearth' (R.V.) render the Hebrew אֲרָאִי(ל), and in N.T. 'altar' regularly renders θυσιαστήριον, once only (Acts 17²³) corresponding to βωμός. If then we could define the Hebrew term מזבח to our satisfaction, we should also be defining the term 'altar' as used in almost every instance in the E.V. of the O.T. Etymologically the Hebrew term is perfectly clear, but its very clearness, unless we are on our guard, may become misleading; the term means 'the place of slaughter', but, even though we limit this as the place of slaughter of sacrificial victims, the etymological meaning is too narrow to cover the uses of the term; in usage the altar became the place where sacred victims were *burnt* rather than where they were slain, and even the place where inanimate offerings, that never could have been *slain*, were burnt. No doubt the etymological meaning casts an important light on *an* origin of sacrifice; but regard for this fact must not limit our inquiry in such a way as to exclude from consideration other factors intimately and essentially connected, that may cast light on *other* origins of sacrifice and persisting elements in the Hebrew ritual of sacrifice and sacred gifts. In addition to and in connexion with what the Hebrews called 'the altar' (מזבח), it will be necessary to consider the piece of sacred furniture termed by them 'the table', with or without some closer definition. On certain conceptions of sacrifice this table may, indeed, be in no sense an altar; but this really carries us back to a question of origin which has come before us previously, viz. as to whether animal victims were, if not the exclusive, yet in all cases the prior and proper material of sacrifice. Yet at a certain period or at certain periods with the Hebrews, at least, the terms 'altar' and 'table' become intimately associated if not in some degree interchangeable; the term 'altar', as already remarked, is not limited to what was used for animal victims; and it is by some supposed that even the altar used for animal victims was in certain connexions termed 'table'. Even though the last point is far from certain, it still remains necessary to consider sacred

table and altar together in relation to sacrifice. And it may be convenient at once to examine the use of the term 'table'.

Much the most frequent use of the term 'table' for a sacred object is in reference to the table of the Shewbread, or rather the table of Presence (שֻׁלְחַן הַפָּנִים), on which the sacred loaves, renewed weekly, were arranged. The table prepared for Gad, referred to in Is. 65¹¹, may have been an object more or less similarly used in the cult of a foreign deity. Of tables used for sacred food nothing further need be said at present, except to refer to the mode of reference to the table of Shewbread in Ezek. 41^{21 f.}; if the Hebrew text (cp. E.V.) were correct, either the table of Shewbread is referred to as 'the altar', or the altar of burnt-offering is termed 'the table that is before Yahweh', and in either case we should have an identification of the terms 'table' and 'altar', and of the interchangeability, in Ezekiel's thought at least, of the ideas covered by the terms. But from what is probably the true text (LXX) not so much follows: this reads, 'And before the מִקְדָּשׁ was an appearance like the appearance of an altar of wood', i.e. an altar-like piece of furniture; this refers to the table of Shewbread standing before the Holy (of Holies), but it is not, if this text is right, actually said to be an altar, but to have looked like an altar; in other words, there is with Ezekiel an association but not an identification of the ideas of sacred table and altar. On the other hand, the identification exists in 1 Ki. 6^{20, 22}, where, in spite of much textual corruption, מִזְבֵּחַ seems clearly used of the table of Shewbread or ? = golden altar of incense (אֲרֹז corrupt).

It is commonly said, however, that the altar of burnt-offering is termed 'the table of Yahweh'; the passages cited in proof, apart from the passage just discussed, which, as just stated, probably does *not*¹ refer to the altar of burnt-offering, are Ezek. 44¹⁶, Mal. 1^{7, 12}. Of these, Ezek. 44¹⁶ has been differently interpreted; Davidson e.g. says of the table, 'the altar of burnt-offering is no doubt meant', and Driver in his note on Mal. 1⁷ cites this as one of the passages in which the altar of burnt-offering is called a table; but on the other hand, Bertholet understands the 'table' of Ezek. 44¹⁶ to be that of the Shewbread,

¹ 1 Ki. 7¹⁸ in spite of Dr. on Mal. 1⁷, Kit. *Studien*, p. 102, n. 4.

and this seems the more probable. Certain writers bring to this passage as proof that Ezekiel *could* call the altar of burnt-offering a table his words already cited in 41²² (so Da., Dr.); we might rather surmise from the true text of that passage that what he might rather have said was that the altar was *as* or *like* a table. For a decision we are driven back mainly to the context, which, though perhaps not conclusive, seems to balance against the conclusion that Ezekiel in this place calls the altar a table. The passage reads: 44¹⁵ 'But the priests, the Levites, the sons of Zadok, that kept the charges of my sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from me, they shall come near to me to minister to me, and they shall stand before me to offer unto me the fat and the bread, saith the Lord God: ¹⁶ they shall enter into my sanctuary (מקדשי), and they shall come near to my table, to minister to me, and they shall keep my charge. ¹⁷ And it shall come to pass, that when they enter in at the gates of the inner court, they shall be clothed with linen garments, &c.' The question is: Is Ezekiel here defining *two* privileges, or merely, twice over, a single privilege of the priests as distinguished from the Levites? Does he mean the priests shall (1) offer fat and blood on the altar of burnt-offering outside; and (2) shall approach the table of Shewbread inside the holy building? or does he only mean that they shall approach the altar outside the *Temple* but within the *sacred enclosure*, and on it offer the blood and the fat? As a matter of fact the non-priestly Levites slew the victims for the altar (Ezek. 44¹¹), and presumably, therefore, as they brought them, *approached* the *altar* though they never ascended it like the priests to offer the blood and the fat, but they never *entered* the Temple so as even to *approach* the table of Shewbread. A mere repetition of what is said distinctly in terms that exclude the Levites in v. ¹⁵ in terms that are not obviously unsuitable to them in v. ¹⁶ does not seem probable; and even though it could be proved (which it cannot) that Ezekiel elsewhere called the altar of burnt-offering a table, it would still seem improbable that he is doing so here.

Before considering the two passages in Malachi, it will be convenient to look at another passage in Ezekiel where the term 'table' seems to be used in the derivative sense of food set on

a table, table-fare. The passage (39¹⁹⁻²⁰) is figurative and eschatological; God destines the hosts of Gog to become the victims and to be eaten at a great sacrificial feast; and to those summoned to the feast God says: 'Ye shall eat fat till ye be full, and drink blood till ye be drunken. . . . Yea, על שלחני ye shall have your fill, &c.' Should "על" be rendered (E.V., Toy): 'at my table', as though the meaning were 'sitting at or round my table'? In that case this would be (another) case of the altar of burnt-offering being termed 'table'. But another view of the idiom is possible and has often been adopted (e. g. *BDB*, s.v. על, 1 e); on this view the preposition has the same force as in 'Man shall not live by (לע) bread alone' (Dt. 8³), and 'table' the same meaning as τράπεζα in 1 Cor. 10²¹: 'Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot partake of the table of the Lord, and of the table of devils.' The table of Yahweh in this case is not the altar, nor exactly the flesh placed on the altar of burnt-offering, but the food sanctified by the burning of other parts of the victim on the altar. It is the fare set by Yahweh for his guests.

The second meaning just proposed for Ezek. 44¹⁶ really seems most obvious in Mal. 1⁷, though 'table' is commonly said to mean there the altar itself. The passage reads: 'And ye say (viz. to Yahweh), Wherein have we treated thy name with contempt (בזינו)? (In that) ye offer upon my altar polluted food (לחם): And ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee (or LXX it)? In that ye say, Yahweh's table is contemptible. And is it not a bad thing when ye offer (viz. to Yahweh) a blind animal for sacrifice? And is it not a bad thing when ye offer a lame animal or one that is sickly? Try making a present of it (viz. such meat) to the governor (of) thy (province)? Is he going to be pleased with thee or take thy part (for such a miserable present as that)?'¹ Here the contemptible table of Yahweh seems to correspond more closely to the phrase 'polluted bread' than to Yahweh's altar; it is the flesh set before Yahweh or eaten for him by his priests rather than the altar on which the flesh was set. Even in v.¹² of the same chapter the polluted table corresponds antithetically rather to the pure offering of v.¹¹ than to the altar.

It seems to me wisest then, not to press any of these passages

¹ [Mal. 1^{6b-8}.]

as direct proof that the altar of burnt-offering was actually termed 'the table of Yahweh', but they are, even so, striking proof of the close association of the ideas of 'altar', the structure at or on which offerings made to Yahweh were slain and, in whole or part, burnt, and of the 'table' on which food for Yahweh, i.e. in the mind of Ezekiel and Malachi the priests, or food hallowed by Yahweh for the use of his worshippers, was arranged. There is no doubt difference as well as similarity of idea, once two distinct and definite objects, altar of burnt-offering and table of Shewbread, came to exist side by side, just as, when the terms derived from Jewish practice were transferred to Christian practice, some difference of dominant idea or theory attached to the Eucharist according as that on which the elements were arranged was called 'table', as it was predominantly in the first three centuries, or 'altar', as it was more frequently later. But the *origins* neither of 'altar' nor of 'table' can be conveniently discussed in isolation.

In regard to the altar, as to other features in Hebrew sacrificial custom, we have good reason for expecting two distinct lines of influence, which we may term extra-Canaanite or intra-Canaanite, according as they derive from the custom of the desert and the steppes, the home of the Hebrews before their incursion into Canaan, or from the customs of the agricultural life of Canaan. On the *origin* of the altar and the table there was, according to P, no such double influence; both alike were the result of direct divine instruction given at Sinai; but even if that record were historical there would be room for the double influence referred to in the subsequent history of the altar; and this of course has been generally recognized. Even though such an altar as P describes was, in every period, alone legitimate, in the actual usage of the community there was variety. In respect both to numbers and materials there are certain obvious stages. We have a period of many altars, a period of one altar of burnt-offering, and after A. D. 70, a period of no altar; similarly a period of altars constructed of stone or of earth, a period of bronze, and finally, if we may so put it paradoxically, a period of the immaterial altar, when in the absence of a material altar the altar idea is projected into the spiritual realm under the guise of a heavenly altar.

In all the stages just referred to the altar is a structure; but there are narratives in the O.T. itself which have been understood as referring to what may be termed natural altars—rock-surfaces, artificially modified perhaps, but not structures.

So far a brief *résumé* of the literary evidence, but some structures, still more rock-surfaces endure; and explorers and excavators have reasonably enough sought for altars. To what extent has their search been successful? Are the objects which they have identified as altars clearly and recognizably such? and consequently how far does archaeology in this matter reinforce literary evidence as to custom and belief?

We have on the one hand in the O.T. various terms for or used of rock-surfaces or sacred stone objects; and on the other hand various classes of stone structures, preserved intact or, if broken down or fractured, not destroyed beyond recognition of their function, and brought to light by exploration or excavation. How do these stand related to one another? To what extent do the terms refer to altars? To what extent do ancient altars recognizably survive?

The Hebrew terms in question, some of them technical, some of them wide terms used only in certain connexions of sacred rock or stone, are *מצבה*, R.V. pillar; *מזבח*, altar; *צור*, rock; *גל*, R.V. heap; *גלגל*, in R.V. always treated as a proper name, Gilgal, with neglect of the article which is invariably used except in the narrative of the naming of the place in Jos. 5⁹ (in M.T. in Jos. 12²³ also *לגלגל*); *אבן גדולה*. The archaeological types are in the terminology now widely used of stone monuments in other countries as well as Palestine: (1) Menhirs, single upright stones; (2) Dolmens, which in their simplest form consist of two uprights supporting a third placed roof-wise; (3) Cromlechs, circles or other groups of stones forming an enclosure; (4) Alignments, groups of stones in lines; (5) Rock-surfaces naturally or artificially remarkable more especially owing to the presence of cup-marks. These cup-marks are at times associated with stones of the first four groups, which, however, unlike a mere rock-surface, are distinguishable without the presence of such marks.

The correspondence of Menhir to *Massēbah* is obvious and generally recognized. As already remarked, on a certain theory

of sacrifice the *Maṣṣebah* has been regarded as a primitive or germinal form of the altar; but of an altar on which an animal victim was neither slain nor burnt, but to which unguents or liquids could be applied as by Jacob to the *Maṣṣebah* at Bethel.¹ We need not pursue this point further here, except to remark that the Menhirs would admit of anointing but not of receiving the animal or its carcase for slaying or burning. In this case we are able to identify the Hebrew *technical* term for an archaeological type. For the last archaeological type mentioned above, the rock-surface distinguished by special features, we can certainly discover no technical Hebrew term; but there are passages where the wide term צור 'rock' appears to refer to such rock-surfaces and to their use as altars. To these we shall return in the next lecture. The stones of which the Cromlechs or Alignments consist are of the Menhir-*Maṣṣebah* type; and there is merely one point to detain us for a moment here. It is possible that the Hebrew technical term for a Cromlech or stone circle survives in *gilgal*, though on another theory² the term really meant not the *round* or circle, viz. of sacred stones, but collectively the *rolled* (stones), in which case it may have referred to groups or collections of stones without reference to the form of the single cairns and Alignments as well as to Cromlechs. That one of the places named Gilgal possessed, at all events, a *group* of stones—whether arranged in a circle, line, or how, we are not informed—we learn from Jos. 4. According to this story twelve stones stood in the Gilgal, and they had been erected there in commemoration of the passage of the Jordan. But there can be little question that what the chapter actually contains is a story that had grown up amongst the Hebrews to explain a prehistoric monument which had stood and given its name³ to Gilgal long before the Hebrews entered the country. In the narrative these stones are called by the common name אבנים, 'stones', and it is perhaps implied that they were of no

¹ Gen. 28¹⁰.

² Baudissin in *ZDMG* lviii, 410 correcting 'Malsteine' in *PRE* xii. 131^{20h}.

³ How such names of places and towns arose we can perhaps actually see in Gen. 28: in or near the ancient town of Luz stood a numen-inhabited stone—a Bethel; people spoke of going to Luz or to the (famous) Bethel (of the place): gradually Bethel became the common term even for the town and drove out the old name. Cp. Kit. *Studien*, 117.

ג is also used, though much more rarely, even of the altar (Gen. 8²⁰, Num. 23^{2, 4, 14, 30}), so that גלגל *might* possibly mean *on* the Gilgal; it no doubt does mean, however, in the area—whether the stone-circle itself or the town named after it—which contained the altar; just as it was common to speak of sacrificing *in* (ג) such and such a town, *in* the mountain (Gen. 31³⁴: *cf. on* the tops of the mountains), and even *in* the *bamoth*, or high places which contained but were not themselves altars.

There are further facts worth considering in relation to the probability that an altar when associated with a group of stones was independent of the stones themselves. The story (Ex. 24⁴) that Moses (at Sinai) built an altar under the mount and twelve Masseboth, according to the number of the twelve tribes of Israel, points to familiarity with altars adjacent to but distinct from a *group* of Masseboth. If we adopt Baudissin's suggestion with regard to the meaning of the term Geliloth, and take that term in the sense he suggests in Jos. 22^{10f.}, we have a similar scene depicted: 'And when they came to the Geliloth of the Jordan . . . the children of Reuben, &c. built there an altar. . . And the children of Israel heard saying, Behold the children of Reuben, &c. have built the altar beside (ב) the Geliloth of Jordan.'

The surviving stone monuments of Palestine, which have by some been largely identified with ancient altars, are dolmens; this theory of Palestinian dolmens is, perhaps, losing ground, but cannot be said to be dead. Strongly advocated by Conder in earlier publications of the Palestine Exploration Fund, it has recently been attacked, not to say ridiculed, by Dr. Duncan Mackenzie in his report of an examination, undertaken by him, fresh from experience of European dolmens, of certain megalithic structures in the neighbourhood of Amman.¹ But so distinguished and erudite a scholar as Baudissin accepts the dolmen² as being, at least in certain cases, an altar, and Spoer in an article in *ZAW*, 1908, proposes a theory of the evolution of the altar of which the starting-point was the identification of altars with dolmens. The question still requires examination.

No Hebrew term for dolmen, if such ever existed, survives, and it is very doubtful whether any of the numerous narratives

¹ *Pal. Annual*, i (1911).

² *PRE* xii. 133^{22ff.} So also Kit. *Studien*, p. 124, n. 1; Kennedy, *DB Altar*.

very striking size: the story thinks of them as borne each on a single man's shoulder. Possibly the narrative in its present form both deliberately omits the use of the technical term *מצבה* for these stones, and also suggests a harmless explanation of that term for those who, reading the story, knew that the stones were commonly called *מצבות*: the stones, according to the story, were taken out of the Jordan, *מצב רגלי הכהנים*, 'from *the place where stood* the priests.' From the fact that Gilgal and Geliloth seem to be interchangeable names or descriptions, Baudissin (*ZDMG* lviii. 411) suggests that the individual stones composing the Gilgal were called not only *מצבה* but *גלילה*, and *גלילה* he connects with *גלל*, subsequently incorrectly pointed *גלל* (= *εἰδωλα* in Pent.), a favourite term with Ezekiel for idols; the *גלל*, he argues, is primarily a great stone, a numen-inhabited stone. Whatever the size or terms applied to the stones—whatever the shape of the group, it is certain that a group of stones stood at this particular Gilgal near the Jordan and Jericho: a second point about this place is also certain: it was a place, and indeed a famous place, of sacrifice. This is shown clearly enough by the narratives in Samuel of the anointing of Saul¹ and of Saul's and Samuel's sacrifices there²; the sacrificial importance of this Gilgal is still further attested, if it is identical with the place so named mentioned frequently in Amos and Hosea³; if it is not identical then this Gilgal of the prophets is a second Gilgal of sacrificial fame. The sacred nature of these places was, no doubt, originally marked by, and continued to be associated with, the ancient stone monuments from which they derived their name: and it is further probable enough that the place of sacrifice continued, throughout the historic period, to be either within the circle or in the immediate neighbourhood of the Gilgal proper. But if the Gilgal was a circle of many stones, not all the stones were actual altars, possibly none of the stones of the circle was such: but the altar may have lain within or adjacent to the circle. With this the use of the preposition *ב* in speaking of sacrifice in Gilgal agrees; the distinctive preposition *על*, used for sacrificing *on* the altar (Ex. 20²⁴, Gen. 22³, Dt. 12²⁷), is never used of the Gilgal: it is true that

¹ [1 Sam. 11¹⁴ f.]

² [1 Sam. 11¹⁵, 13⁸⁻¹⁰, 15²² (?).]

³ [e. g. Am. 4⁴, 5⁵, Hos. 4¹⁵, 9¹⁵, 12¹² (E.V.¹¹).]

of the O.T. referring to stone structures refer to dolmens in particular. There are one or two interesting possibilities: that is all. Spoer (p. 275 f.) has indeed claimed that the narrative in Gen. 31 not only has in view a dolmen-altar, but contained the Hebrew technical term for such, viz. לֵאל . 'The primitive one-stone altar', he remarks, 'was enlarged by the addition of other stones, as the narrative of the covenant between Laban and Jacob shows, Gen. 31^{46, 48, 51 f.}. The לֵאל is the altar which was erected on the occasion of this solemn covenant, and beside ¹ which the sacrificial feast was eaten. In the לֵאל may be seen the equivalent of the dolmen, which was the simple one-stone altar transformed by the addition of others into an altar-*structure*.' Not only is there nothing in the narrative to indicate that the *gal* was² of dolmenic form: but there are positive suggestions to the contrary, and in favour of the commonly accepted view that what Laban and Jacob erected was a *heap* or *cairn* of *many* stones, not a structure, like a dolmen, consisting of a definite small number—three, four, five, or six. The etymological meaning—apparently *rolled together*—need not be pressed; but the use of the term of the stones with which the corpse of Achan (Jos. 7²⁶) and the King of Ai (8²⁹) were covered, and of the mass or heap into which the masonry or materials of overthrown buildings sink (Is. 23³ al.: note Hos. 12¹², E.V.¹¹), point to a collection of many stones. Moreover, the narrative itself suggests the collection of many smallish stones, rather than half a dozen of great stones at most, for the construction of the לֵאל ; the verb used here is לָקַט ; and Jacob said to his brethren, 'Gather (לָקְטוּ)² stones, and they took (יָקָחוּ): gathered LXX) stones and made a *gal*.'

It is possible, though there are other possibilities, that the fabled bedstead of the great King of Bashan, Og, at Amman,³ the material of which was iron (בַּרְזֶל), i.e. the black basalt or iron-stone of the country, and the measurements of which were c. 13 feet by 6½, was a dolmen⁴ rather than, as is more commonly

¹ לֵאל . Spoer with R.V. may be right in taking the prep. in this sense: possible also is *on* the *gal*.

² Used elsewhere of gathering flowers (Cant. 6³), manna, arrows (1 Sam. 20³⁴), sticks (Jer. 7¹⁸), and particularly of gleaning corn.

³ [Dt. 3¹¹.]

⁴ Cp. Conder, *Heth and Moab*, 155, 245; Gressmann, *Z. A. W.*, 1909, 115 n. 2.

assumed, a sarcophagus. If so, ancient folk-lore did not regard this particular dolmen as an altar.

On the other hand, we should have an instance of folk-lore recognizing in some dolmens altar structures if we were to accept Vincent's suggestion that the groups of Moabite dolmens suggested the story of Balaam's offering sacrifice on the group of seven altars made for him by Balak,¹

But all this is at best uncertain; there is no unmistakable reference to dolmens in the O.T. In considering whether these structures or any of them are ancient altars we must turn from the literary to the archaeological evidence.

Dolmens have been observed in great numbers on the east of Jordan, but on the west exceedingly few have been found. Kitchener in *PEFQuSt*, 1878, p. 168, reported a total of eight on the west—four of them, according to Conder (*Heth and Moab*, 242 ff., Vincent, p. 411 f., cp. *PEF*, 1901, p. 409), in upper, one in lower Galilee, and three near Tell El-Kady. For long it was supposed that these monuments were entirely lacking in Judah, though Tyrwhitt-Drake had already reported traces of one in the very centre of Judah (*PEF*, 1874, 187), and Oliphant another in 1885 (*ib.*, p. 181)—a fact commonly attributed to the reforming zeal of Josiah. But more recently the number discovered has been gradually increased; and among the more recent discoveries are dolmens in Judah—in 1900 (*PEF*, 222) Macalister reported one at Beit Jibrin, and the next year (*PEF*, 1901, 231) another near Tell Sandehannah; and in 1901 Père Janssen described one found near Bethany (*RB*, 1901, 279). But these with a few others within and beyond Judah leave the number in Western Palestine still very small.

In East Palestine the total number discovered is very large; dolmens have been found there by the hundreds, and often in large groups within a restricted area. I cite a few reports to illustrate these two points—numbers and grouping—together with some others important for our present discussion.

Of the dolmen-field at 'Ain-Dakkari in the Jaulan, some fifteen miles east of the north-eastern shores of the Sea of Galilee,

¹ *Canaan d'après l'Exploration Récente*, p. 424; Num. 22¹¹, 23^{1, 14, 29}.

Schumacher writes (*Across Jordan*, 62 ff.): 'Half a mile north-east of 'Ain-Dakkar . . . a marsh . . . surrounds a stony region of about 30 acres, which is completely covered with dolmens. 200 yards north of this again a second field extends for about a mile west, over a slightly elevated ground, down to the Jiser-Rukkad, and covers an area of 120 acres . . . the whole country round is extremely stony, and quite unfit for cultivation, being covered with small volcanic mounds, from which are taken the large stone slabs used in the construction of dolmens.' A particular specimen Schumacher describes as built on a double terrace of basalt stones, 'which has a total height of 3 feet 2 inches; on this is erected a row of upright slabs 3 feet to 4 feet 7 inches high, and 1 foot to 1 foot 8 inches thick. These surround a covered chamber from 7 to 13 feet long, with an average width at its western extremity of 4 feet 6 inches, at its eastern of 3 feet 3 inches. The main axis of the building runs east and west. A single slab closes the eastern, another the western end, and generally two suffice for the long sides. On the top a great block of basalt—of an irregular square—7 to 8 feet or even more in either direction, and from 1 to 2 feet thick, covers the dolmen, having at the corners of the western end two raised headings. Should the chamber exceed 8 feet in length, two slabs of irregular length laid close together serve to cover it in'. 'The dolmens generally lie about 10 yards apart'; standing on one Schumacher counted 160, and computed the total number in this district at not less than two or three times this number. 'An examination of many specimens', Schumacher remarks, 'makes it apparent (1) that the dolmens of this district are always built on circular terraces, which elevate them about 3 feet above the ground; (2) that in most cases they are formed by six upright and two covering-slabs; (3) that the major axis of the dolmen runs east and west; (4) that the western side of the dolmen is broader than the eastern; (5) that the western side is often distinguished by headings, one on each corner of the top slab; and (6) that they vary in size from 7 to 13 feet in length'. Mr. Guy le Strange, visiting this dolmen-field subsequently, found one or two dolmens having a small opening about 2 feet in diameter (sufficient to crawl through) pierced in the eastern end slab.

To some six miles south of 'Ain Dakkar dolmens occur in numbers, and, far less frequently, to about the same distance north. The greater number of the volcanic mounds round Jamleh and Kurbit Hamatah on the southern confines of this district are crowned by a fallen dolmen. Near Hamatah the dolmen, instead of being raised on a terrace, is surrounded by a rectangular fence of stones about 3 feet high and about 2 feet 6 inches from the side of the dolmen.

Near the village of Tsil, and from 3 to 5 miles down (SE.) the Roman road that skirts the dolmen-field of 'Ain Dakkar, Schumacher (pp. 149 ff.) discovered another great field of dolmens. This stretches for about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles and has an average breadth of 200 yards and an area of about 120 acres. Here lines of rude unhewn stones about 1 yard high run in straight rows among the dolmens, and 'at the western end of the dolmen-field is a mound Rujm el-Kheleif covered with rude blocks of basalt. Each dolmen here occupies an elevation, but whether this was artificially terraced or not cannot now be determined'. The side stones are smaller in size and larger in number—four to six on each of the long sides—than at 'Ain Dakkar; an upper slab covers the western part of the chamber, but no example has been found in which it lies at the East; but many of the dolmens are in ruins and their upper slabs fallen.

Single dolmen slabs can be traced all the way from 'Ain Dakkar to the dolmens of Tsil.

At Tell el Muntar, some four miles only east of the Sea of Galilee, Oliphant (in Schumacher, 259) observed a dolmen-field containing about twenty dolmens averaging perhaps 100 yards apart.

In Ajlun,¹ the northern part of the country east of Jordan between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea, Schumacher examined a field of about 1,000 dolmens; and numerous groups have been observed in Moab, Conder in the *Scenery of Eastern Palestine* reporting in 1881 150 at El-Maslubiyeh (p. 250) and as many more at El-Mareighat (p. 255) or some 700 in all in Moab (*Heth and Moab*, p. 198). Among these southern specimens the simple trilithon is more conspicuous; and Musil

¹ *Ajlun*, 131-4, 169-77 (Vincent, p. 411 n.).

(*Arabia Petraea*, i. 269) gives an illustration of a portion of the northern slope of Gebel el Maslubiye showing eight trilithons arranged in two rough lines (3 and 5) following the slope of the hill; another such line he depicts on the southern slope of the Wadi el 'Afrit.

A not infrequent feature of the East Palestinian dolmens is that they have a floor-stone covering the ground between the uprights; and in these floor-stones,¹ not less than on the covering-stones,² cup-marks have been observed. It is also reported that cup-marks, which are anything but a regular feature of the covering-stones, have been found in some cases not on the upper but on the under side. A further point with regard to the covering-slabs is that they do not always present a flat surface; at times, owing to the uneven size of the supporting stones, they are far from horizontal, and have a marked, in some cases a very pronounced tilt³; in other cases the upper surface of the covering-stone is not flat; Merrill (p. 324) reports of one at 'Ain Dakkar that the covering-stone was a cone-shaped block.⁴

The modern Bedawin have different theories with regard to these stone structures; they are *Munahir*, watch-towers,⁵ or Beit el Ghul, Ghuls' houses or graves, more than one group, including that at 'Ain Dakkar, going by the name of Qubur Bene Israil, graves of the children of Israel.

The theories of modern scholars have also been various: Merrill (p. 439) seems inclined to suspect them of being Roman sentry-posts! But for the most part theorists have considered two competing theories: (1) that the dolmens are altars, (2) that they are graves or sepulchral ornaments.

The first of these theories seems to be at least insufficient; i. e. it does not offer a reasonable explanation of *all* or even most of the dolmens. For (1) the existence within the limited area of 800 acres or so of hundreds, in one case of a thousand, *altars* is extremely improbable, *except only we intend by altars, places for the reception of offerings to the dead*; (2) the

¹ *Heth and Moab*, 258.

² Also on other blocks: Vincent, 417 n. 1.

³ See fig. 2, *PEF Annual* 1.

⁵ See *Heth and Moab* 325.

⁴ Cp. p. 111 below.

obvious *chamber*-character of whole groups of dolmens indicates that in these at least the covering-stones are primarily *roofs*, not tables or altar-tops; (3) the tilt of the covering-stones in many instances, and the uneven upper surface in other cases, equally indicates that the primary function is to roof, not to secure a surface for slaughter, burning, or presentation of offerings.

The altar-theory of dolmens can at most be partial; and this in two forms; though many and even the great majority of dolmens cannot have been constructed for the purpose of serving as altars, it is conceivable either (1) that *some* were so constructed, or (2) that some acquired a secondary function as altars.

If all, and not merely most, dolmens were enclosed and, wholly or partly, roofed chambers, there would seem to be no room left for a theory of dolmens having had as their primary function to serve as altars. But the trilithon which occurs particularly in Moab does not suggest chamber structure, and is only to be explained as such if good ground be shown for assuming that all dolmens served the same purpose, and that the more elaborate chamber dolmen developed from the trilithon for the more effective discharge of the original purpose. The shape of the trilithon suggests an altar or table,¹ though not unambiguously, for taking the mere superficial suggestion of shape it might suggest the arch.

If, then, we isolate, with Conder,² the Moabite or i.e. particular the trilithon dolmen, how far can objections to the altar theory in this limited form be pressed? There remains the objection arising from the large numbers within a restricted area. Moab does not indeed contain the largest dolmen-fields, but two groups of about 150 have already been referred to. The shape and tilt³ of some of the covering-stones also remains as an objection. On the question of numbers, Conder (*Heth and Moab*, 234) is merely able to point to the fact that Balaam is said to have sacrificed at seven altars at three different sites, and to allege

¹ So even Gressmann, *ZAW*, 1909, 113.

² *Heth and Moab*, 232.

³ See picture of Heshbon dolmen, *Heth and Moab*, 190.

without, not to say against, evidence that 'New altars were built apparently whenever an important sacrifice was to be offered, and sacred centres would thus in time become crowded with such structures "like heaps in the furrows of the field";' suggesting that these last words were used by Hosea with dolmens in his mind's eye.

Of positive evidence apart from the ambiguous evidence of shape that might suggest that the dolmen of the trilithon shape was used, if not constructed, as an altar, by far the most important and interesting is the modern custom of the Beloha Arabs. 'The Arab', Conder reports of them, 'surrounds the grave of a man of noted sanctity with a circle of stones, and places on one side (almost invariably on the west) a little dolmen about three feet high, consisting of two stones supporting a third laid flat on the top. Whenever he visits the spot he kisses this stone and invokes the dead man's aid, placing his forehead on the altar, and then depositing a gift—a stick, a bullet, a copper coin, a berry, a piece of blue pottery, or some other material of his visit. He faces east as he does so, and mutters a prayer' (*Heth and Moab*, 327 f.).¹

On this there are two points to be observed: (1) ancient dolmens are in some cases surrounded by a stone fence, but do not form an adjunct to any such enclosure which might be regarded as tomb or temple; (2) the modern trilithon altar is a receptacle for offerings to the dead—as Conder himself puts it elsewhere.

Into other theories of dolmens it is unnecessary to enter here, and impossible adequately to discuss them, for this would involve an examination of evidence of similar stone monuments in other countries as well. This only need be said: The sepulchral character of many dolmens—alike in Palestine and elsewhere—is now generally accepted, and there is perhaps an interesting tendency to regard this as sufficient explanation of all. And we may say of the Palestinian dolmens that whereas many are, or

¹ Cp. Musil, p. 268, whose language, however, leaves it very obscure what exactly is the proceeding (*Vorgang*) of the modern Bedawin at the graves of their ancestors, and cp. Vincent, 416, Curtiss, *Primitive Semitic Religion To-day*, 268 'plays the role of a threshold': cp. p. 270 on Sheikh Muflet with pictures on p. 271.

all perhaps may be sepulchral, many are not, and possibly none are primarily altars. At the same time many of these dolmens present features, especially cup-marks, which suggest that offerings were made on or within dolmens. The significance of these for the evolution of the Hebrew altar may be left to the next lecture.

VIII

THE ALTAR: EARLIER HISTORY

THE earliest law of the altar (Ex. 20²⁴⁻²⁶) contemplates a more or less permanent *structure* of soil (אֶרֶץ), or of rude, unworked stones. The altar is to be *made*, wherever Yahweh manifests his presence; but once made it is to be maintained and repeatedly used afterwards: for where Yahweh has once manifested his presence, there will he make a practice of doing so in the future: and when he appears, there he wills to receive the offerings made to him.

This *permanency* of the altar may well have been the intention in all periods of its history; but certain narratives of the O.T. suggest that not in all cases was the altar a *structure*; and it is probable that constructed altars were preceded by altars obtained by the simple selection of existing natural rock surfaces; though it is possible enough that the unconstructed altar—in part owing to the force of the principle of permanency—continued in use after the custom of constructing altars of earth or stone had arisen.

There are thus narratives, in the O.T. in particular, which appear to refer to such unconstructed rock or stone altars, though in none of them is the term 'altar' unambiguously applied to the rock surface or stone; on the other hand, two of them close with a record that an altar was first constructed *on* or *in lieu of* the previously used rock surface or stone; the third either does implicitly term the rock surface an altar, or implies that an altar, distinct from the rock surface, stood on or near it. The narratives in question are those of Gideon (Jud. 6), Manoah (Jud. 13), and Saul (1 Sam. 14). The first two of these refer to fixed rock surfaces, the third to a single movable large stone. In the third the *slaughter* of the animal seems to be an essential sacrificial act, and the stone is, though not so termed, in the most literal sense of the Hebrew term, a place of slaughter מִזְבֵּחַ—an

altar. On the other hand, in the story of Gideon the slaughter takes place at some distance from the rock; and in this case the essential sacrificial act, according to the older custom contemplated in the story (for it is a story of transition and has an older and later custom in view), is the presentation of food. In the story of Manoah the essential act is, as in the later and more familiar Jewish ritual, the burning of the victim in fire.

Associated with natural rock surfaces, or movable rocks, in either case with something unconstructed, we have three types of sacrifice, or of sacrificial acts—slaughter, presentation of food, burning. How is this form of altar, or adjunct of altar, how is the evolution of the altar related to the practice of sacrifice, and changing conceptions of God reflected in the mode of sacrifice or the relative importance attached to different acts performed at the altar? The first stage in any resolution of these questions must concern itself more fully with the narratives to which I have briefly referred, and with certain distinctively marked rock surfaces brought to light by exploration and discovery; for here again the literary and archaeological data illuminate one another.

According to stories current as early as the ninth or eighth centuries, the constructed altar used in the worship of Yahweh at Ophrah, a township of Manasseh, not far from Shechem, but of which the site has not been identified, was regarded as the work of Gideon; on this point both the stories (Jud. 6^{11-21, 25-32}), preserved in Judges agree: but in details they differ. According to the one, belonging probably to the later literary source, this altar of Yahweh was built by Gideon after he had pulled down a previously existing altar which had been built for and used in the service of Baal. This story thinks of Ophrah as an ancient place of cult, where from time immemorial an altar, built in the customary manner, had stood; down to the days of Gideon men offered sacrifice on such an altar to Baal; Gideon, as a zealous devotee of Yahweh, destroys Baal's altar, the previous use of which defiled it for use in Yahweh's service, and built a new altar for Yahweh. The story preserves the memory of an ancient change in the cultus at Ophrah: but how accurately? Was a *constructed* altar so unusual a feature as the story implies? Or was a constructed altar prior to that now used

in the service of Yahweh merely a popular inference from the altar customs prevalent in the age when *this* story took shape? By that time it was, as Ex. 20 shows, the law of the altar that it should be *built*; and it was only natural for the story-teller, in explaining how one altar was discontinued and another brought into use, to think of that earlier altar in terms of the present and to describe the discontinuance of its use in terms of demolition of a structure.

The parallel story concludes with the statement that Gideon built an altar to Yahweh which was still standing at the time, more or less remote from Gideon's day, in Ophrah. It does not directly assert that an altar stood there originally, or that Baal there received offerings from his worshippers. On the other hand, it tells vividly and with much suggestive detail how, on the spot on which Gideon subsequently built an altar, the angel or messenger of Yahweh, in the guise of a traveller, one day rested under the oak or holy tree in Ophrah, or rather apparently just outside the village, and addressed Gideon, who was working hard by. Gideon begs to be allowed to serve the traveller with a meal, and, receiving permission, goes away—presumably to his house in the village—slays a kid and prepares part of it as broth, part as meat, and makes unleavened bread. He brings the broth, the meat, and the cakes with him; the visitor, instead of eating what is set before him, draws fire from the stone on which it was set, which burns up the meat and the bread; according to a verse which some regard as secondary, the broth was, at the visitor's direction, poured out on the rock. Gideon realizes by the way in which the meal he had prepared is treated that his visitor is not human but divine, and, in accordance with the custom embodied in the law of Exodus, builds an altar.

There are features in the story as we now read it which suggest that it has been more or less modified: certain phrases suggest that from the first the visitor reveals his divine character, and even that Gideon at least suspected it, and went away to prepare, not a meal for a fellow man, but a sacrifice for a divine visitor. According to different methods of dealing with these features, two views have been taken with regard to Gideon's intention in preparing the food: one is that he intended simply to prepare food for a human traveller, the other

that he so prepared it that it was sacrificially correct, with a view to testing, by the manner in which his visitor disposes of the food,¹ whether he was human or divine. In the latter case certainly, but possibly also in the former, we best explain this story, in the light of the later parallel, as resting on a remembrance, or possibly a surviving second use, of a different altar custom; in the days of the story-teller, sacrifices were offered on a constructed altar in Ophrah; but it had not always been so: and the story-teller knows that once—if not also still by some—sacrifices were offered on the bare rock or stone beside the holy tree; there the worshipper poured out on the rock broth to God, and there for God's use he left the meat and the sacrificial cakes. What in particular happened to the broth we may surmise in the light of archaeological data; but what ought we to infer was the *ancient* use with regard to the meat and the bread? Were they burnt on the rock, burnt like the flesh of animal victims and like the meal offering in later Hebrew ritual? Or were they simply deposited and left there? Is the action of the angel according to previously existing custom with regard to sacrificial food? Does he reveal his divine character by abstaining from partaking of the food as a human visitor would have done, and compelling it instead to be treated as food offered to God? Or does he by his action give a practical demonstration of what the usage must *henceforward* be, revealing his divine character and consequent right to instruct by the miraculous treatment of the flesh and bread? Does the story recall the institution at Ophrah not only of a constructed altar in lieu of a natural rock, but also of a practice of burning the food offered instead of simply leaving it, after the manner of the usage of the table of shewbread, before Yahweh?

Some of these questions may be for the present, perhaps must be altogether, left unanswered. But we conclude with considerable probability that the earliest story of changes in the sacrificial custom at Ophrah recorded not the substitution of one object of worship for another, Yahweh for Baal, nor the substitution of one altar for another *of the same kind*, but the disuse of a purely natural for a constructed altar, with doubtless

¹ Kittel: [*Studien zur hebräischen Archäologie*,] p. 98 f.

some change in the precise character of the ritual. Ultimately, no doubt, the later story is substantially correct: the immemorial custom of sacrifice on the bare rock ran back to Canaanite usage; if in Ophrah Canaanites lived side by side with Hebrews the two uses may for a time have continued together, Canaanites still offering their broth, their flesh, and their meat on the natural rock after the Hebrews had taken to burning their offerings on the altar of earth or stone. Whether slaughter from the first took place beside the built altar we cannot say; from the fact that the story does not refer to the matter, and the angel does not in this respect require any change of practice, we may perhaps infer that it did not.

In the story of Manoah (Jud. 13) the theophany takes place in the open country (בשדה, v. 9) outside the village of Šor'ah (v. 2), but obviously not far from it (cp. vv. 9, 10, 11, 15, 19). In this case the angel appears in human guise, and addresses Manoah's wife as a 'man of God' (v. 6) come to impart to her special knowledge. On the first occasion Manoah's wife is alone, and finds out nothing further about her visitor. On the next occasion she is at first alone again, but at once runs home for her husband, who, when he comes and engages the angel in conversation, at first suspects nothing of the visitor's divine nature (v. 11). The conversation on the child to be born being ended, and Manoah being now sure of the angel's instructions, presses him to stay to dinner, promising him for it a kid. There is no suggestion here that Manoah has at present in mind a sacrificial offering. On the other hand, the angel in this story at once declines the invitation to dine, and suggests that Manoah may make a sacrificial offering to Yahweh: 'I will not eat of thy food: but if you would prepare a burnt-offering (עלה) for Yahweh, you may.' Manoah accepts the hint. Presumably, as Gideon in the other story, though here the detail is not explicitly stated, Manoah goes home, while the angel stays on the spot where he had appeared; having reached his house, he selects (ויקח, v. 19, cp. Gen. 18¹) a kid, and, whether before or after slaying it is not stated, returns and offers it on the rock (על העל) (הצור ליה). Thereupon, as the flame leapt up from the altar, the angel ascended with it, and Manoah knew that he had seen God. The points of present importance here are two: the

sudden introduction of the rock (הצור) as the place of offering, and the sudden substitution of altar for rock in the next verse. In any event the rock appears as something well known in connexion with sacrifice at Šor'ah to the writer and his readers; but are we to infer that the natural rock was the altar (Moore, p. 323), or that a constructed altar stood on or beside the rock (Kittel)? The former certainly seems the more obvious meaning, for the phrase וַעַל עַל הַצּוֹר לֵי" corresponds, with the simple substitution of צוֹר for מִזְבֵּחַ, exactly to the common expression (לֵי"י) הָעֵלָה (הָעוֹלָה) עַל הַמִּזְבֵּחַ; but the analogy of the expression וַיַּעֲלֵהוּ עֹלָה עַל הַחֲטָא in 2 Ki. 3²⁷ of the sacrifice of the king of Moab's son might perhaps be claimed as justifying the view that the story in Judges contemplates an altar on the rock: for we may, perhaps, suppose that the King of Moab utilized an existing or constructed an altar on the city wall in order to burn his son.

So much for the narratives of sacrifice on slabs of natural rock *in situ*. In 1 Sam. 14 we have a narrative of a great movable stone used for the nonce to legitimize the slaughter of animals captured, slain, and eaten after a battle, and of this stone being subsequently built, along with other stones, as we may presume, into an altar. The narrative reads, adopting one or two emendations: 'And the people dashed on the spoil, and took small cattle, and oxen and calves, and slaughtered them earthwards (אֲרָצָה): and the people ate (them) blood and all; And Saul was told, The people are sinning against Yahweh in eating blood and all; and he said "to those that told him", Roll "hither" to me a great stone. And Saul said, Disperse among the people and say to them, Bring hither unto me each of you his ox or his small cattle, and slaughter them (here) and then eat: that (so) you may not sin against Yahweh in eating blood and all. And all the people brought each what was in his hand "to the (stone that was) rolled" and slaughtered (them) there. And Saul built an altar to Yahweh; with it¹ he began to build an altar to Yahweh.'

There are one or two other narratives that connect sacrifice with great stones, probably movable, though not, as in 1 Sam. 14, certainly said to have been moved. The ark, on its return from the Philistines, found its way to Bethshemesh; there it stayed, the

¹ H. P. Smith [*Samuel*, ICC, p. 117].

cart that carried it on a spot where was a great stone (so MT), or, as LXX has it, definitely implying that the stone was movable, when the ark reached Bethshemesh a great stone was placed beside it. Both texts agree in what follows: and they split up the wood of the cart, and the kine they offered up as a burnt-offering to Yahweh. The question which this passage raises, but leaves but obscurely answered, is: was the burnt-offering offered *on* the stone or on an extemporized altar, not mentioned in the narrative, beside it? Was this stone, as it stood, or was placed, used as an altar *of burnt-offering* (H. P. Smith at 1 Sam. 14), or as a *massebah*?

With this we may compare the story of the sacrifices for Adonijah's coronation feast: of these it is said that Adonijah sacrificed (יָצַח) sheep and oxen and fatlings by (עַם) the stone of the dragon, which is beside En-Rogel (1 Ki. 1⁹). Here there is certainly no placing of victims *on* the stone; the preposition does not admit this: moreover, the kind of sacrifice contemplated is not in the last instance the burnt-offering, i.e. that form of offering where the entire victim was withdrawn from human consumption; but, as in 1 Sam. 14, the peace-offering. It is, however, not impossible that the ritual in 1 Ki. 1 and in 1 Sam. 14 was much the same: the victim may have been so slain that the blood gushed forth on to and over the stone.

Meanwhile, it will be useful to recall one other narrative of a 'great stone' that was actually moved, though in this case no sacrificial act is mentioned. In Jos. 24^{25 ff.} it is said: 'Joshua made a covenant with the people . . . and took a great stone and set it up there under the sacred tree that was in the sanctuary of Yahweh. And Joshua said unto all the people, This stone shall be a witness against us, for it hath heard all the words of Yahweh which he hath spoken with us, and it shall be a witness against you lest ye deceive your God.' The stone being in a sanctuary (at Shechem) was doubtless close to an altar, unless it could be regarded as the altar itself: but of this the narrative gives no hint, and we could only hold that it may at one time have been such on the ground that such 'great stones' regularly were: but this, at present at all events, is far from made out.

I proceed now to consider the archaeological data that seem

to be related to the various narratives just reviewed. Ophrah, the scene of Gideon's altar, is an unidentified site; but Şor'ah, the home of Manoah, is clearly enough the modern Şur'a, fifteen miles west from Jerusalem. Now at about a quarter or half¹ a mile² from Şur'a there stands a rock rising some five or six feet from the present level of the ground, and with a base some 10 x 10 feet (cp. scale in Kittel, *op. cit.* p. 105) and a flat summit of about 5 x 5 feet, about 10 inches above the ledge or platform surrounding it, and in the side of the rock steps are hewn; and most of the flat surface of the top is marked by hollows connected with one another by channels. There can be little question that we have here a natural rock,³ adapted in ancient times to use as an altar; and it may, though of course this point cannot be pressed, be the actual rock of the narrative in Judges. At Marmita, a short distance from Şur'a, another similar rock has been observed with an upper surface about 8 x 2 feet and even more plentifully marked than the rock at Şur'a with cup hollows and channels.⁴ But far more famous than either of these among specially marked rocks rising above the present level of the soil is the great outcrop of rock now covered by the Mosque of Omar at Jerusalem. This great rock measures about 58 x 44 feet and rises 6½ feet above the pavement that now surrounds it (Baedeker); on its surface are various hollows and channels, and underneath a great cavern.⁵ It is probable, though of this later, that on this rock the altar of burnt-offering in front of the Temple was subsequently erected.

Granted that these artificially marked or cut rocks were altars, it would be impossible from those just mentioned, rocks rising above the soil, to define the age of their use as altars; we could not pass beyond vague suggestions of antiquity. But excavation has brought to light other examples of which the antiquity

¹ *PEF*, 1887, 57.

² Hanauer in *PEF*, 1885, 183 (with pictures).

³ According to Schick 'the altar stands in the open field, but near a rocky ridge out of which it and the surrounding area have been hewn' (ib. 87, 58). According to Hanauer it is 'a huge limestone boulder' which 'does not appear to have been connected with the surrounding rocky ridge when hewn into altar shape' (ib.). ⁴ [See illustration in Kittel; *op. cit.* p. 120.]

⁵ Subterranean chambers also at Gezer, Megiddo, Marnita. Cp. Kittel, *op. cit.* 108 n.

can be much more closely defined. Cup-marked surfaces have thus been shown to be of extreme antiquity;¹ but not all surfaces so marked were used as altars: many non-religious uses can be suggested for these marks, and doubtless explain many examples that occur; and even where, as in the 'High Place' at Gezer, the cup-marks occur on a clearly sacred site, it is not always certain that they were immediately connected with the altar in particular. We may, therefore, for the present, pass from mere cup-marked surfaces, even from such as are perhaps significantly associated with subterranean caves or hollows.²

But at Ta'anach Sellin³ laid bare an artificially dressed surface, recalling the rock of Şur'a in its cup-marked upper surface, in its presentation of a wall-like appearance from a lower surface, and in its approach by a step. The upper face is something over 3 feet above a rock floor; it contains one great hollow or cup-mark, about 19 x 17 inches in diameter, and three smaller ones less than a quarter of the size of the larger.

The most striking utilization of rock *in situ* for the purpose of an altar⁴ lies beyond the borders of Palestine, at Petra in Edom. But in considering the significance of this in relation to the history of the altar in Palestine, an important natural difference of the two countries must be considered. At Petra the vast extent of rock-cliff and surface offers itself for treatment in this way far more than the land of Palestine, which is in many places, it is true, rocky and stony, but always offers the opportunity of constructing an altar of gathered stones or turves as a very simple alternative to the selection of a suitable rock surface. The rock-hewn altar of Petra corresponds to the rock-hewn theatre, temple façades, and other monuments that form so striking a feature of the place—natural to it, unnatural or impossible in most other places. In being hewn out of the rock, not brought together for the purpose, the altar at Petra resembles the ancient rock-cut surfaces revealed by excavation, but in its elaboration it corresponds not to these, but to the elaborate constructed altars of later times. It belongs to the later rather than to the earlier history of the altar.

¹ Megiddo, Dr. [*Modern Research as illustrating the Bible*], 67.

² *Memoirs of Gezer*, ii. 378.

³ Tell Ta'annek, *WAW Phil. Hist.* ii. 2, 1904, p. 31.

⁴ *PEF*, 1900, 350 ff.

So far we have been concerned with the survival of altars of the type implied in the narratives of Jud. 6 and 13. This type is natural rock more or less dressed, but unquarried and left in position. The story of 1 Sam. 14 refers to the use of a stone or boulder rolled into position; obviously *such* extemporized altars, though they survive unchanged save by the weathering of 3,000 years, cannot be identified. But this narrative is illuminated by ancient Hebrew and modern Palestinian customs. Of ancient Arabian sacrifices Wellhausen remarks: 'The genuine Arabian rite of sacrifice (Opfer) is of remarkable simplicity. The blood is simply rubbed or poured on the holy stone' (*RAH*, p. 116). Nilus (sixth century A.D.), in an often quoted passage, speaks of stones in the plural gathered together: 'They offer to the morning star the best of the booty where anything fit for slaughter is found among it; and most willingly beautiful boys on stones gathered together, at dawn.' These 'gathered stones' correspond more to the improvised altar contemplated in the *law* of Ex. 20; the single stone to the *maṣṣebah* of Samuel. Modern observers of Palestinian custom, especially to the east of Jordan, are agreed that, as with the ancient Arabs, the essential sacrificial act consists in securing by the cutting of the throat, the head being turned in the sacred direction, the due emission of the blood of the victim.¹ In these cases a single stone is often used, the blood being caused to flow over it and into the hollow often worked in the stone; so, e. g., Schumacher (in Curtiss, p. 235 n.) records as a ceremony frequently observed by him among the Bedawin: 'A sheep or a goat is brought: the Kâtib or priest lays it across the altar, the body on the stone with head and neck falling over the side. He then cuts its neck with a knife, uttering the words *bismillah arrahman arrahim*.' These single stones are often hollowed out on the top and show circular cup marks.² According to the priest at Nabi Elisha the victim is slain on the rock, and the basin-shaped hollows in it serve for the reception of the blood. (Kit. 127 from Curtiss.)

Now when the altar as in the last case is reduced to, or, as we should perhaps rather put it, has not passed beyond, a single stone, it obviously approximates very closely in form at least

¹ Curtiss, p. 215.

² Other instances in Curtiss, *op. cit.* 231 ff.

to another adjunct of the ancient Canaanite and the ancient Hebrew place of sacrifice, viz. to the *massebah* or standing stone. What is the relation between the primitive altar and the primitive *massebah*? Were they ultimately identical? Is it legitimate to speak of the *massebah* as an altar? or as 'sacred stone and altar' in one? In this connexion the *massebah* of Gen. 28 naturally presents itself for comparison with that of 1 Sam. 14. The stone which in the evening Jacob converts into a pillow he in the morning converts afresh into a *massebah*, and thereupon pours oil over the head of it. The last action no doubt is closely related to the pouring of blood over the stone implied in 1 Sam. 14; and in both cases the stone utilized is a stone of the locality moved into position—in Genesis, before being anointed, into an *erect* position; in Samuel, as it would seem, left *prone*; for in Genesis the stone laid lengthwise for use as a pillow during the night is said to be made into a *massebah*, an erect stone, before being anointed, but in Samuel we are simply told that the stone was 'rolled' into position; a stone of somewhat different shape is naturally suggested by the two narratives, that in Samuel being rounded and squarer, and, however placed, probably with less that could be described as a 'head' than that in Genesis. On this general question it must suffice to remark here (1) that the narratives at least stand at different removes from the original significance of the action described; in Genesis it is still possible to detect the belief that God was in the stone, that *the stone* was a house of God,¹ and that anointing it with the oil brought the oil into direct contact with God; in Samuel, on the other hand, there is no suggestion of the indwelling of God in the stone, the action performed is an action to avoid the indiscriminate treatment of the blood: the blood must *pro forma* be poured upon a stone—a stone more or less selected at haphazard and that had not, as the stone in Genesis, previously shown its quality or given any indication of the special presence in it of deity; (2) the stone of 1 Sam. 14, therefore, is a stone of slaughter for the reception of the blood according to the will of the deity, but not, even in any form of the narrative which might be surmised as being

¹ The narrative concludes, 'And this stone which I have made into a *massebah* shall be (for me, LXX) the house of God' [28th].

behind the present, for direct application to him; the stone is an altar, implying by that for the moment something distinct from the deity, though, in virtue of its relation to his service, a sacred stone; it is not like the *maššebah* of Gen. 28, sacred as being the actual residence of the deity. Thus whether we regard altar and idol or *maššebah* as originally identical, the *maššebah* in Samuel already represents the stage at which altar and deity or symbol of deity are distinct. Yet the double aspect of sacred stones—home of the deity, instrument in his service—may perhaps account for the rarity among the Hebrews of the use of the single stone altar, and for the form of the early Hebrew law.

Thus early Hebrew narrative, illuminated by modern discovery and excavation, and early Hebrew law together bring before us, in all, four types of altar in use in Canaan in the early centuries of the Hebrew settlement: (1) Single movable stones, (2) fixed rock surfaces, (3) structures of earth or turves, (4) structures of stones. The use of the second of these is *perhaps* not ascribed to Hebrews; there is, as we have seen, a certain ambiguity in the narratives involved; and in any case the narratives in question point to the substitution by Hebrews of built altars for the natural rock previously used, if not by themselves yet by the Canaanites, as an altar: of the use of the first type—the single movable stone—we have only one clear case; but this was used at the instance of King Saul; the incident is early; so also are the possible other examples of such use by Adonijah and at Bethshemesh; but Kittel is surely not justified in suggesting that its use by Saul was a case of reversion to early custom *under pressure of necessity*, or, as he puts it, for lack of a correct altar (p. 116): it would certainly have been possible and easy on the field of Michmash to have found turves or stones and with them rapidly to have constructed such an altar as the law contemplates. We may rather conclude from the narrative that Saul insisted not on an altogether novel or exceptional device, but what was in that age the correct procedure under the circumstances. We may with some safety conclude that among the Hebrews, built altars, whether of earth or stone, survived the use of single stones and rock surfaces. Did they also precede it? is the use by the Hebrews of single

slaughter stones and rock surfaces for the deposition of offerings merely an interlude due to their settlement in Canaan? If we confine ourselves to the history of *Hebrew* custom, we cannot answer this question merely by tabulating a chronological table of types of altars for ethnography in general. Barton, e.g., in his article on Altar (Semitic) in *ERE*, claims that the altar built of undressed stones or turf is more primitive than worked rock surfaces found and left *in situ*; because human hands have fashioned the rock, but left the stones composing the altar untouched except so far as to move them into position. But much may turn on this exception, much more than Barton appears to realize. That the early custom of leaving sacred stones unworked rested on the belief that a numen inhabited the sacred stone may be granted, and consequently that the custom of using tools upon the *same* stones is later, and due to a weakening of the original belief; it consequently follows further that the taboo introduced into the Hebrew law of the altar forbidding the use of tool (חרבן) or iron (ברזל) upon the stones composing it springs *ultimately* from a *belief* more ancient than the *practice* of fashioning natural rock surfaces once regarded as housing a numen. But it does not prove that the *Hebrews* in particular or perhaps that any other people used *altars* built of unhewn stones before they used rock surfaces as altars; for (1) the custom of building many unhewn stones into an altar may not be, and pretty obviously is not, coeval with the belief that tools must not be used on numen-inhabited stones; on the other hand, *many* stones will only have been built into a single altar *after* the belief had weakened that these particular stones were numen-inhabited; for we may surely believe that the numens in all these stones would have resented being all huddled together into an altar heap as much as having their house trimmed with a tool. In other words, the altar of unhewn stones dates from a time when the avoidance of trimming a stone containing a numen—a bethel—was extended, through weakening of the belief, to stones used for any sacred purpose; and (2) the rock surfaces were not necessarily still regarded as necessarily numen-inhabited when they were cut to be more adapted for use as a form of altar.

And turning now to the Hebrews in particular, we may say

with some assurance that they rejected rock-surfaces and single stone altars in favour of constructed altars of earth or stone; i.e. they did not continue to use certain types of altar which had prevailed in Canaan long before they entered the country, continued to be used by Canaanites after the Hebrew immigration, and were probably, in common with other Canaanite sacrificial customs, adopted for a time by the Hebrews themselves.

The narratives in Judges and Samuel show us the process of replacement; the built altar comes in where the unbuilt altar had been previously used; and this process of replacement must have begun in the somewhat early days of the settlement, not only on account of the direct evidence of the stories of Gideon, Manoah, and Saul, but because the process must have been fairly complete by the ninth and eighth centuries B.C., for the narratives both of J and E regularly represent the patriarchs as *building* altars, never as utilizing, like Gideon and Manoah, existing rocks.¹

The question arises: does the law in Ex. 20²⁴ stand in relation to these earlier Canaanite customs? In requiring altars built of earth, or if of stone of unhewn stone, and in either case without steps, is it tacitly setting itself against the still continued use of ancient types of altar in which by steps cut in the rock access was obtained to a suitable natural rock surface, or single stones were employed as an altar? Or is it intended to secure the continuance of a long-existing dominant custom of altars of earth or unhewn stone against a *new* tendency to erect elaborate artificial altars? Is the author of the law, as Baentsch² puts it, 'a foe of the luxurious cultus as it certainly prevailed in the great sanctuaries of the northern kingdom', i.e. a foe of new methods sprung from increasing wealth in national life; or a foe of *certain* ancient forms of cultus? The probable age of the law admits of either view.

In any case, whether this particular law sets its face against certain simple and natural forms of altar or not, the fact remains that rock surfaces and single stones once used in Canaan, and probably in some measure at least by the Hebrews, fell into disuse among the Hebrews. Why? Not simply on account of their simplicity, which offended the taste and fell below the

¹ Gen. 15 offers a *possible* exception.

² ad loc.

capacity of a later and more luxurious age? For these simpler altars fell into disuse while the other types equally simple, viz. rude altars of stone, if not also of earth, survived. May we see in the abandonment of the single stone and rock surface an opposition to beliefs disapproved and yet more easily suggested by these? Is the disuse of the single stone as altar allied to the opposition to the single stone as *maṣṣebah*? Is the opposition to the rock altar due to the closer association of these with local numina?

Along some such lines as these we may most probably trace what was certainly a change of custom. As to the rock-surface altar, it may well have served more than one type of religious thought; and Kittel has attempted a history of its use from this point of view.¹ In so far as these surfaces are connected with subterranean hollows they may have served to facilitate offerings to earth-housing deities below, and in origin this usage may go back to pre-Semitic inhabitants of Canaan, *c.* 2500 B. C. and earlier; archaeology at least seems to indicate the possibility of such a use at this remote period. Next, according to Kittel, comes a period of Semitic worship of Baal falling into two periods: in the first, say from 2500 to 1500 B.C., these same rock surfaces or tables and others are used for setting forth of fruits on their surface, and for the pouring of libations into the hollows, to be retained there for the Baal or local numen that houses not under but on earth. About 1500 B.C., as excavation at Megiddo has shown, altars of burnt-offering come into use; the new form of altar, he suggests, corresponds to a new conception of Ba'al as Sun God, perhaps under the influence of Crete, whence also came the altar of burnt-offering appropriate to the new belief. Now if the old rock surfaces were converted to the use of altars of burnt offering, they serve as the base merely of the altar constructed upon them, like the Jewish altar on the ancient rock in Jerusalem; or in some cases perhaps the rock surface may itself have been so used, but to the manifest neglect of the original purpose of the hollows in its surface; at Šor'ah, e.g., there is no room for the burning of a carcase except by allowing it to cover the hollow. But what of the Hebrews in this outline history of the evolution of rock table into the altar of burnt-

¹ *op. cit.*, p. 152.

offering? For the evolution seems complete before they enter Canaan. But while the evolution was complete, ancient as well as younger types of altar remained in use. This is obvious from the story of Gideon, where the broth is still poured out on the rock to fill, as we may believe, the hollows in it, and the meat and meal set down but not burnt on the unhollowed part of the surface. The question then becomes: how did the Hebrews treat differences in existing types of altar? In the later Hebrew cultus the blood ritual at the altar—not as with Gideon at home—comes in with a modification of the earlier practice, perhaps particularly of the desert, of the slaughter stone, though the single stone itself is discontinued—possibly for a reason which I have already suggested; the later Canaanite practice of burning the victim on the altar, or at least certain parts of it, is adopted to the necessary exclusion of the practice of merely depositing food as for human consumption on the altar; though this practice of the god's table perpetuates itself in at least one important survival in Hebrew ritual—the Table of the Presence. The Hebrew law in its insistence on a structural altar, to the neglect, possibly with the positive but tacit disapproval, of the table-like rock-surfaces with their cup and channels, is accommodated to the Hebrew conception of God as housing neither below, nor on the earth, but in heaven; the smoke ascending from the altar ascends towards him; the burnt carcasses are offerings to him, but are no longer his food, except in the sense that the food is eaten by his ministrants at his altar.

IX

LATER HISTORY

THE later history of the Jewish altar is mainly confined to Jerusalem. The law of Deuteronomy required, and the Reformation of Josiah at the end of the seventh century B.C. aimed at, the abolition of all altars of burnt-offering, except that of the Temple on Mount Zion. Certainly the Reformation in this respect was not immediately and permanently completely successful; in particular, between the death of Josiah and the fall of Jerusalem twenty years later the use of other altars revived, and these were used in the service of Yahweh. It was otherwise with the altars in town and country forced on such Jews as were prepared to acquiesce in his regulations by Antiochus Epiphanes; and the altar thrown down by Mattathias at Modin, one of many like it, had been intended for the service of another God. Outside Palestine, as is now known, an altar of burnt-offering existed at Elephantine from before 525 B.C. to 411 B.C.; and three years or more later the Jewish community there received permission from the Persian government to re-erect the altar and to offer on it meal-offerings and incense, though permission to offer as formerly burnt-offerings also is not given. Again, from about 160 B.C. to A.D. 73 at the temple erected by the refugee high priest Onias at Leontopolis in Egypt, an altar existed on which sacrifices were offered. But the last-mentioned altar, like the temple to which it was attached, no doubt closely followed the model of Jerusalem; and of the altar at Elephantine we have no details. We may, with this brief reference to others, confine ourselves now to the altars of Jerusalem: i. e. ultimately the one altar of burnt-offering without and the altar of incense within the Temple.

As at Ophrah the first construction of an altar for the service of Yahweh was attributed to Gideon, so at Jerusalem to David; and as at Şor'ah there stands to-day on or near the site of

Manoah's sacrifice a natural rock altar, so on or near the site of the altar erected by David there exists a massive outcrop of rock bearing various traces of artificial workings; this rock, which has for the last 1,200 years been covered by the great Moslem building, the Dome of the Rock, has for long, in all discussions, been brought into association with the altar and Temple of Jerusalem; and rightly, the only question open being the precise nature of the association.

The earliest record of the Jewish altar of Jerusalem is in 2 Sam. 24, a narrative of the same nature as Jud. 6, the story of the theophany to Gideon, and his erection of an altar to Yahweh. 'The narrative is', as Budde¹ well remarks, 'first and foremost the *ἱερὸς λόγος* of Yahweh's sanctuary at Jerusalem, the charter for the sacrificial service offered to Yahweh there on Mount Zion. Since now the sanctuary on Zion at last remained the only sanctuary of Yahweh, and became in the conviction of Israel the only one that was legitimate, since later it passed over, transfigured and spiritualized, into the possession of Christianity, and in the N.T. Apocalypse is transferred to the heavenly world, this narrative must be regarded as one of the most important in the entire Old Testament.'

The age of the narrative is not to be too closely defined; on the one hand it rests on popular expansion of certain facts, and is not strictly a contemporary document; on the other, with its companion piece in c. 21, it resembles the earliest narratives of the O.T. and should not be brought lower down than, let us say, the ninth century B. C.

According to this story, then, the pestilence sent as a punishment for David's sin in numbering the people raged from Dan to Beersheba, leaving Jerusalem at first untouched; but then the destroying angel stretched out his hand to smite Jerusalem too, standing as he did so *beside* (עם) the threshing-floor of Araunah; but at that spot his destroying power is stayed by Yahweh, and Jerusalem escapes. *In* (ב) the threshing-floor *beside* which the angel has stood David is instructed to erect an altar to Yahweh (לֵּי מִזְבֵּחַ, 2 Sam. 24¹⁸), and does so, building it (לֵּי וּבֵן עַם-ט' v. 25) and offering on it burnt-offerings.

¹ ad loc.

In Samuel the site of this altar is not more closely defined by reference to features in the topography of Jerusalem which can still be determined; but the whole tenor of the story, even in the earliest form in Samuel, suggests what the much-modified form of the story in Chronicles affirms, that the site of David's altar *in* the threshing-floor of Araunah was within the site of Solomon's Temple (בית') including its courts, and consequently of the successive temples of Zerubbabel and Herod: 'And Solomon began to build the house of Yahweh in Jerusalem in Mount Moriah where Yahweh (so LXX) had appeared unto David his father "in the place which David had prepared" (LXX) in the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite' (2 Chron. 3¹).

I assume as proved that the Mount Moriah of Chronicles, more commonly called in the O.T. Mount Zion, is the eastern of the two hills or ridges of which Jerusalem consists, and that the Temple lay above the old Jebusite fortress, renamed after its capture, the city of David. On this loftier, plateau-like portion of the hill, nearly midway across from the eastern edge of the plateau, above the deep valley of the Kidron, to the western edge above the shallower Tyropoean valley lies the famous rock now covered by the so-called mosque of Omar. The Jebusites must have had an altar, and it would have been entirely in common with suggestions of such narratives as that in 1 Sam. 9 of Samuel's sacrifice at Ramah that this Jebusite altar lay *above* the Jebusite city itself; it is natural then to see in the remarkable rock on the plateau about a quarter of a mile away from the site of the old Jebusite city an ancient Jebusite altar; for there are features, in at all events the *present* surface, which make it resemble the rock altars of Megiddo, Šor'ah, and other places, and which would render it suitable to the kind of ancient sacrificial use to which the story of the rock at Ophrah points; and it would be in accordance with a common law of religious history that a place sacred in one cult continues to be sacred in a later cult that replaces it. On these grounds it is now commonly held that the rock was in the first instance a Jebusite altar, on which the pre-Hebrew inhabitants of Jerusalem set forth food and poured out liquids for the deity. The narrative of 2 Sam. 24, it is true, does not, as in the case of the rock at

Ophrah, in any way suggest this earlier religious use; and Budde is inclined to draw the conclusion that such use there had not been. 'The chapter', he remarks,¹ 'forms a companion piece to the stories of the foundation of (the) sanctuaries . . . of Beersheba, Bethel, Mizpah, Ophrah. Which is the most ancient? Was Jerusalem compelled to justify its origin because these other sanctuaries had such charters to show, or vice versa? The former alternative seems obvious, but is not really so. For the *ἱεροὶ λόγοι* of these other sanctuaries served to wipe out the stain of earlier heathen worship at them: this Jerusalem had no need to do, since it was founded on a threshing-floor, which had never persistently served any sacred purpose. In any case, on this in part rested Jerusalem's claim to rank above the others.'²

If the rock had a prior history as a Jebusite altar, how closely were the earlier Jebusite and the later Jewish altar connected? Among those who identify the site of the Temple with the immediate neighbourhood of the rock, there is, as is well known, a difference of theory in detail; some holding that the rock was enclosed and covered, as now by the Dome of the Rock, so formerly by the Temple, and in particular by the Holy of Holies; others that the Temple itself stood to the west of the rock, the rock forming the basis of the later-constructed Jewish altars. Both theories have some difficulties to meet: the area of the rock is too great to have been covered by the Holy of Holies: on the other hand, if the Temple is placed west of the rock, it is necessary to conclude that it rested on extensive substructures: and, further, if we must limit the actual threshing-floor (תר) to the actual circular area trodden by the oxen engaged in threshing, the rock and the threshing-floor would coincide: but the rock with its uneven surface is unsuitable for oxen treading out corn. On the other hand, a point sometimes urged in favour of identifying rock and altar, viz. that angels in the O.T. appear on rocks, really turns against the theory, for the angel appears close to (עַל) but not *in* the threshing-floor: if then the angel appeared *on*, or (1 Chron. 21¹⁶) hovering above the rock, the threshing-floor on which the altar was erected was neither on nor included the rock, but was simply contiguous to it; in this case we should naturally think of the threshing-floor and altar as south

¹ *Samuel, KHC.*, p. 327.

² Freely translated and slightly condensed.

of the rock and contiguous to it—the first plot of ground over which the destroying angel in approaching Jerusalem did not pass.

To enter further into theories of the exact site of the Temple and the altar is unnecessary: for our present purpose we need to note (1) that the narrative of 2 Sam. 24 certainly recognizes no *Hebrew* use of natural rock on Mount Zion as an altar; (2) that it attributes to David, i.e. to the earliest days of the Hebrew occupation of Zion, the *construction* of an altar of burnt-offering, though, as in many similar narratives of altar building, not specifying the material, whether earth or stone; but (3) the narrator probably had in view a *stone* altar, and in any case an altar with a continuous history to his own day: the story is told not like that of Saul at Michmash in 1 Sam. 14³²⁻³⁵ of an altar used for the nonce on a battlefield, but of an altar built close to a town *on a* particular occasion indeed, but not merely *for* a particular occasion;¹ the whole point of it is rather to describe the origin of not a natural but a constructed altar existing in the storyteller's own day; (4) consequently, as early as this story took shape, i.e. probably before the ninth century B.C., there existed on Mount Zion in connexion with the Temple a *built* altar. If I seem to labour the point, the reason will become clear as I pass to the altar of Solomon's Temple and a particular theory recently put forward with regard to it.

An altar existed and sacrifices were offered on Mount Zion before any temple was built, just as in many places altars continued to stand without temples. The *Temple* on Zion was the work of Solomon; the *origin* of altar and worship there was attributed to David. But what part had Solomon in the *history* of the altar? What altar, what form of altar, stood before his completed Temple? The question arises because, somewhat remarkably, in the full account of the Temple building and its furniture in 1 Kings 6 and 7 no account is given of the altar of burnt-offering.² In the following chapters (8 ff.) there are incidental allusions to such an altar; that is all. The first records that Solomon, when

¹ The chronicler's inference is correct, 1 Chron. 22¹.

² Altar in 1 Kings 6^{20, 22} is the table of shewbread (but ~~the~~ text). The omission in Kings is made good in 2 Chron. 4¹, which inserts before the account of the molten sea the statement that Solomon made an altar of bronze, giving its dimensions.

he prayed at the dedication of the Temple, stood before the altar of Yahweh, and at the conclusion of his prayer 'arose from before the altar of Yahweh' (8²², 44). These allusions occurring in a Deuteronomic passage merely imply that three or four centuries later than Solomon it was understood that an altar stood before the Temple as Solomon completed it. In 8⁶⁴ it is recorded of the same day: 'the king on that day sanctified the middle of the court that was before the house of Yahweh: for there he offered the burnt-offering, and the meal-offering, and the fat of the peace-offerings: because the bronze altar that was before Yahweh was too little to receive the burnt-offerings, and the meal-offering, and the fat of the peace-offerings'. This passage is at least less obviously Deuteronomic than those last mentioned, and may be earlier. The implications as to the *theory* of the writer, whatever his age and whether his theory accords with fact or not, are interesting—they are these: (1) that at the completion of the Temple there stood before it an altar of *bronze*; (2) that this altar was intended normally for burnt-offerings and other sacrificial portions requiring to be burnt in the altar fire; but (3) that its size was unequal to the vast offerings made by Solomon on this occasion—22,000 oxen, or 120,000 small cattle; and therefore (4) that Solomon utilized for the occasion an ampler space in the Temple court—apparently without erecting temporary altars for the occasion. The remaining allusion to the altar (9²¹) occurs in a passage of relatively early date, though the actual verse is regarded by some (e.g. Stade) as an addition. This records that 'three times a year did Solomon offer burnt-offerings and peace-offerings upon the altar which he had built unto Yahweh'.¹ The implications of this and the preceding notice are perhaps inconsistent: here, and here only, is Solomon recorded to have himself constructed an altar; so far, of course, this is merely additional information to that contained in the previous notice, and in no way inconsistent with it: but it has been urged (W. R. Smith) that the verb *build* is unsuitable to a bronze altar; it is not clear that this objection is insurmountable, though it may be admitted that 'build' in this connexion most naturally suggests stone as the material of at least part of the altar: the alternative, an

¹ 9²¹ is corrupt and unintelligible.

earthen altar, would be unlikely for so prominent and important an altar.

Certainly the apparent absence in Kings of an *account* of the altar and the nature of the *allusions* to it reasonably raise questions. Different types of solution have been suggested.

1. A literary solution. It has been suggested that an account of the altar stood in the original narrative and has been suppressed. If this theory¹ were correct, which, at least as the theory is commonly stated, is very doubtful,² it would leave open the historical question of what material was this altar, and what was its manner.

2. An exegetical solution. It has been argued by W. R. Smith³ that the absence of a description of the altar is only apparent, being due to misinterpretation, not real. The altar made by Solomon for the Temple really was of bronze, and consisted of one of the two lofty bronze pillars Yachin and Boaz placed at the porch of the Temple, and described in 1 Kings 7¹⁶⁻²²; Smith suggested that in the bowl-shaped top of the pillar the fat of the peace-offerings was burnt, whereas whole burnt-offerings were burnt on pyres of wood erected from time to time in the middle of the court (cp. 1 Kings 8⁶⁴).

3. The third solution we may term historical. On this theory no description is given of an altar constructed by Solomon, for the reason that, in spite of 1 Kings 9²⁵, he constructed no altar, but utilized for the Temple a previously existing altar. This theory takes two very different forms.

(a) It has been suggested by Skinner (*Ki.*, p. 155), and argued especially by G. A. Smith,⁴ that the altar of Solomon's Temple consisted simply of the great rock, that the king utilized a natural surface, previously perhaps used by the Jebusites, instead of building an altar of stones or casting one of bronze.

(b) Or we may suppose that Solomon used the altar of stones built by David his father on the threshing-floor of Araunah.⁵

Of these two the second seems the more likely to be correct,

¹ Wellhausen, *History of Israel*, E.T., p. 44 n., also Addis, *E.B.* i. 124.

² Burney, 102 f.; Skinner, *Kings Cent. B.*, p. 155.

³ *Rel. Sem.*¹, 358 f., 468.

⁴ *Jerusalem*, ii., pp. 60, 64.

⁵ This was distinct from the horned altar (1 Kings 1⁵¹, 2^{28 f.}) in the 'city of David' (2 Sam. 6^{16 f.}) attached to the tent that screened the ark.

though whether in itself sufficient to explain all the facts is another question. If without building a fresh altar from its foundation, Solomon enlarged or modified the altar built by his father, the description of it might have seemed out of place in the record of the construction of the Temple and its appointments, and yet at the same time he might perhaps, according to the usage of the Hebrew בנה, have been said allusively, as he is said in 1 Kings 9²⁵, to have *built* an altar: but if the bronze altar attributed to Solomon's Temple (1 Kings 8⁶⁴) even so far corresponds to fact that on the existing stone altar Solomon himself placed a bronze hearth, we might still have expected this bronze hearth to be included in the description of the Temple and its appurtenances, and we might still have to consider the possibility of the description of such an object having been deleted from the original text. In any case, we have a specific account of the building of an altar—presumably of stone—before Solomon, and allusions, but no specific account, of a bronze altar existing prior to the time of Ahaz, and, indeed, as early as Solomon. Against the theory that Solomon merely utilized the rock there are weighty considerations. It would be very remarkable for Solomon, whose tendency was towards the artificial and the magnificent, not the natural and the simple, to have reverted from the use of a constructed altar to the use of a natural rock; and even if the story in 2 Sam. 24 be so far discredited as to throw doubt on the fact of David having constructed an altar, the fact remains that the story is early, and yet is told to explain the existence of a built altar existing at the time of the origin of the story. If this altar did not originate with David or Solomon, with whom did it? We may go further and consider the matter in the light of the transition from natural to constructed altars, elsewhere discussed in the last lecture; this transition is certainly referred to pre-Solomonic times, and though the literary form of the stories is of course not contemporary, the stories or legends on which the stories rest, and of which the *building* of an altar is the very substance, must be ancient. In the light of this and the general elaboration of the Solomonic Temple and its appurtenances, it seems in the highest degree improbable that so important a feature as the altar was mere rude rock. These objections would not apply to

the exceptional case on a day of multitudinous sacrifices, such as the day of dedication of the rock for the sacrifices: 'the middle of the court' which Solomon used on that occasion may have consisted of or included the rock.

We may with less confidence and yet with probability go farther, and conclude that Solomon had constructed what passes by the name of the altar of bronze.¹ Such an altar stood in front of the Temple in the time of Ahaz (c. 735 B.C.: 2 Kings 16¹⁴), and was removed by him, i.e. it was already of *some* antiquity in his time; and, again, there is no one between Ahaz and Solomon to whom its construction can be so plausibly assigned as to Solomon himself. Both allusions (1 Kings 8⁶⁴ and 2 Kings 16¹⁴) imply that this bronze altar was relatively small. Whether it stood by itself, or on a stone substructure, or on the great rock, and in that case what particular part of the great rock it occupied, are questions which have been investigated in great detail, e.g. by Kittel, but with quite inconclusive results.

If, however, we may now conclude that the altar before the Temple from the time of Solomon consisted in whole or in part of bronze till it was replaced or supplemented, as 2 Kings 16¹⁵ directly affirms, by an altar *built*—presumably of stone—at the direction of Ahaz, we see how deeply other motives and ideas affected this central feature of the cultus. If worked stones represent a departure from the primitive unworked material enjoined by the law, *a fortiori* bronze; and even if Ahaz built an altar in the right material—stone—he built it on the model of a heathen altar seen in Damascus; and of stone rather than of bronze probably on account of its much greater dimensions. These two questionable altars appear to have served through the entire period from Solomon to the Exile; Solomon seeking after magnificence and costliness and the Assyrian-minded Ahaz gave a certain foreign character to the altar of what was at first indeed, in a measure, the king's chapel, but became the one legitimate place of sacrificial worship.

¹ 2 Chron. 4¹ directly affirms that Solomon made a bronze altar which consisted of a square 20 × 20 × 20 ells in measurement, but this is probably, so far as measurement goes, inference from the measurements of the altar of the second temple (Kit., *Studien*, p. 63), cp. Ezek. 43¹³.

The increase in size of the altar in the time of Ahaz is also of interest; for it corresponds, perhaps, to the increasing numbers of sacrificial victims commonly, and not as in Solomon's time on a single special occasion, offered on the altar in Jerusalem, to which Isaiah, the contemporary of Ahaz, appears to refer.¹

In connexion with the Exile there arise questions both of practice and theory which must be only briefly referred to. The suggestion has been made that though we must assume that Nebuchadrezzar destroyed the altar as well as the Temple, the rock remained, and may have been utilized.² But if any such use was made of the rock or some provisional altar during the Exile, the need for a new altar was felt by those who returned from the Exile: and in the Exile the altar of the future had been the subject of theory.

Of the material of the altar designed for the new Temple Ezekiel³ says nothing. It seems probable that he had stone in view; but whether unhewn stone, as the law of Ex. 20²⁵ required, is doubtful, for the exact measurements he gives suggest more naturally finished rather than rough surfaces, and certainly in another respect the altar he imagines flagrantly violates that law in Ex. 20. Exodus (20²⁶) forbids the altar to be approached by steps; Ezekiel requires steps, and directs that they shall face eastwards. Ezekiel's interest is not in material but, as it is predominantly with the Temple also, in form and dimensions. The altar is to consist of four squares of diminishing size superimposed the one on the other; the uppermost of these is a square of 12 cubits (= 18 ft.); and 12 cubits is the height from the base to the top of the horns standing at the four corners. In this recurrence of the measurement 12 we may safely trace numerical symbolism; and the symbolism is more probably due to Ezekiel than repeated by him from the actual shape and dimensions of the pre-exilic altar, though on this point we cannot speak with certainty, since we have no trustworthy records of either the shape or dimensions of the earlier altar; the statement in 2 Chron. 4¹ that Solomon's altar was a square of 20 cubits may be more safely taken as evidence for

¹ Is. 1¹¹ ff.; cp. Kit., op. cit., pp. 62 ff., who questions the measurements attributed to Solomon's altar in 2 Chron. 4¹.

² Kit., op. cit., 67 f.

³ 43¹³⁻¹⁷.

the altar of the Chronicler's own time than for that of Solomon, the more so that the same figures are given by Hecataeus (Jos. *Cont. Ap.* i. 22)¹—say third century B.C. Ezekiel's theory of shape and later practice in regard to it agree; Chronicles and Hecataeus show that the pre-Maccabaeon altar was square; the Maccabaeon altar resembled the pre-Maccabaeon;² and Josephus and the Mishnah attest the squareness of the altar of Herod's Temple; and, according to the Mishnah, this last Jewish altar resembled Ezekiel's in consisting of squares placed upon squares, though of three squares only, not four, and in the part played by numerical symbolism; the top square being twice the size of Ezekiel's, i.e. $(12 \times 2) \times (12 \times 2)$, and the height to the *base* of the horns 6 cubits. Into the question of the actual dimensions of the later Temple, whether they were those given by the Mishnah or the very different dimensions given by Josephus ($50 \times 30 \times 15$), we need not enter now. Suffice it that, judged by any of the descriptions, the altar erected by the Maccabees, still more the altar of the Herodian Temple, was a most imposing structure, and in size corresponded not inadequately to the greater position that Jerusalem attained, as the Jewish community dispersed throughout the world increased in numbers, and the worshippers coming from far and near multiplied.

For theory as to the material of the altar we turn to the Priestly Code, for the Tabernacle and its altar in P are theory and idea clothed in historical form, as are the Temple and altar of Ezekiel theory and idea clothed in the form of prediction; both of course being in greater or less measure governed by the actual facts of the first Temple. In attributing to the Tabernacle a wooden altar plated with bronze, the Priestly writer may have been determined merely by a desire to fill in the picture of the past, when Israel was moving from place to place, with an altar resembling the altar of Solomon in being of bronze, but hollow and of a size $(5 \times 5 \times 3)$ suitable for carrying. Even so, P shows himself as indifferent as Ezekiel to the law of Ex. 20, for that this portable bronze-plated box altar was at every fresh encampment filled up with earth is certainly not the thought of P, and is nothing more than a rather desperate harmonistic theory which is even so inadequate to its task;

¹ Schürer.

² 1 Macc. 4¹⁷.

for to shovel mould into a box is not to *build* with earth. But it is possible that P does not picture the wilderness altar as bronze-plated merely because Solomon's altar was bronze, but because he held the theory that the altar of the future ought to be of bronze: if so, this theory in this respect failed to affect practice. On the other hand, whereas the imaginary altar of P and the actual altar of the first Temple in so far as they were bronze, and in so far as they were stone, if they were of hewn stone, violated the early law of Ex. 20, the altars of the second and third Temples deliberately followed it, being guided by the explicit command of the early code in lieu of any other explicit command, P providing an historic example of a different form of altar, but no actual law on the subject. That the Maccabaeal altar and the altar of the Herodian Temple were constructed of unhewn stones is certain, that the pre-Maccabaeal altar even so far back as Zerubbabel was similarly constructed is a probable inference. The ancient altar, presumably that erected three-and-a-half centuries previously by Zerubbabel,¹ having been profaned by the heathen altar, the abomination of desolation, which had been placed upon it, the priests appointed by Judas to cleanse the holy place decided to pull it down; 'and', the narrative of 1 Macc. 4⁴⁵ continues, 'they pulled down the altar, and laid down the stones in a convenient place until a prophet should come and decide about them. And they took whole stones according to the Law, and built an altar according to the former one'; i.e. in the matter of material they followed the explicit direction of the Law, and in other matters—plan, size, &c. not defined in the Law—they carefully copied the old altar; though not certain, it seems probable that the old altar, which was certainly of stone, was also like the new of *unhewn* stones. If we accept the evidence of Hecataeus as quoted by Josephus in *Cont. Ap.* i. 22 as good for the third century B.C., it is directly attested that the pre-Maccabaeal altar was built 'not of hewn stones but of white stones gathered together'. For the fact that the stones of the altar of the third Temple were unhewn we have the evidence of Philo (*De Vict. Off.* 4), Josephus (*Wars*, v. 5⁶), and the Mishnah (*Mid.* 3⁴). The original reason for leaving sacred stones uncut—viz. that the numen housed within it—must,

¹ Ezr. 3⁶; cp. Hag. 2¹⁵.

as I suggested in the last lecture, have weakened before many such stones were brought together in an altar structure. To the Maccabees, like so many other matters in ritual to the later Rabbis, the only and sufficient reason for leaving the stones unworked was that this was commanded in the Law: but from an interesting 'hedge' supplied to this law in the Mishnah we see that later again the meaning of the Law was so far considered that it was found in the naturalness of the material required: and in order to secure this naturalness unimpaired the Mishnah requires that the stones must not only be whole and unhewn, but dug out of virgin soil (חופרין למטה כן הבתולה, Mid. 3⁴)—i.e. soil that had not previously been ploughed, for the plough in passing over the soil might have cut the stones subsequently dug up for the building of the temple.

But the objection to worked material, even to worked metal, did not hold good in regard to the other altar that formed so significant a feature of the later Temple. And possibly in the material which remained undisputed as the correct material for the altar of incense, or, as it is otherwise called, the golden altar, or the inner altar,¹ we may see a certain effect of the theory of P, which saw in another metal, bronze, the ideal material for the altar of burnt-offering.

The history of the altar of incense is far briefer and simpler than that of the altar of burnt-offering. It has long been a matter of common agreement² that in the Pentateuch the only references to this altar occur exclusively in secondary strata of the Priestly Code, and that other references to it in the O.T. are no earlier. On the other hand, in Pss. and Chron. in the O.T., in 1 Macc. (1²¹, 4⁴⁹) and certain other apocrypha and pseudepigrapha, in the N.T., Philo, Josephus, and the Mishnah, the references are frequent. Now it is no mere *argumentum e silentio* that the altar of incense did not exist much if at all earlier than the earliest of these references—let us say not earlier than the fourth or fifth century B.C.; the argument from silence is reinforced and clinched by the fact that in P^s movable censers carried into the Holy Place by the priests sufficiently play the part of the

¹ References to Mishnah in Schürer, II. i. 281, n. 225

² Otherwise Orelli in *PRE*, *Rauchenaltar*.

altar of incense. Consequently the inference drawn from Hebrew literature is not to be withdrawn out of regard to more recent discoveries of actual incense-altars in Palestine—as it has become necessary to call them—on the sites opened up by excavation. Of these the most notable example is the incense-altar of Tell Ta'annek; but others similar have been found elsewhere. The differences between these and the Jewish altar of incense are more remarkable than the resemblances, extending to shape, material, and method of use. In shape the Jewish altar of incense resembles and was probably, so far, a model in miniature of the altar of burnt-offering: like that altar it is square with a flat upper surface and horned— 1×1 cubits and 2 feet high; the discovered incense-altars are tall shafts—that of Tell Ta'annek, for example, being in shape 'roughly like a truncated pyramid . . . ' and the whole ending at the top in a (circular) bowl one foot in diameter.¹ The difference in shape corresponds to difference in method of use: the Jewish altar of incense was a piece of furniture *fixed* in the Holy Place; and on its top surface fire taken from off the altar of burnt-offering was placed, in which the fragrant substance was burnt. The discovered altars are movable and apparently were placed *over* a fire previously kindled on the ground, the necessary draught for which was furnished by holes in the side of the so-called altar: the aromatics were placed in the bowl at the top which was heated by the fire beneath and within. The material of the discovered altars is clay, that of Tell Ta'annek in particular of terra-cotta, these objects being thus in shape, material, and method of use similar to the modern Palestinian *tannur* or oven: the Jewish altar of incense was gold-plated. The age of the discovered altars seems to be about 700 B.C.; the evidence seems to point to the Jewish altar being some centuries later. But however that may be, from the comparison just briefly drawn it would appear that the Jewish altar is not at all closely related to or derived from these. For calling these discovered objects *altars* there is of course no evidence: we may suspect that some term derived from the root קטר² was anciently

¹ Cp. the shape and bowl top of altar at Sinai—Petrie, *Sinai*, p. 134, no. 3. Dr., *Modern Research as illustrating the Bible*, p. 85.

² Sellin, *Tell Ta'annek*, suggests אֲרִיאל.

applied to them. On the other hand, the application of the term *מזבח*, slaughter-place, to the Jewish gold-plated square piece of furniture is a striking illustration of the extent to which the term used for manipulation of sacred offerings to God had travelled from its primary meaning of 'place of slaughter'.

For the existence of two altars—a larger and a smaller and more costly—in the same temple, we have a parallel in the Babylonian temple as described by Herodotus (i. 183). But to say, as Barton does,¹ that these correspond to the altar of burnt-offering and altar of incense is misleading: the correspondence extends only to size and in part at least to material, not to function. What Herodotus says is that in the temple at Babylon there is an altar of gold: and there is also another altar of great size, where full-grown animals are sacrificed, whereas on the golden altar it is not lawful to sacrifice any but young sucklings only, and also on the larger altar the Chaldeans offer the thousand talents of frankincense every year, &c. In some important respects the functions of the two altars in Babylon and Jerusalem are reversed.

The age of the origin of the altar of incense must not of course be confused with the age of the introduction of incense into Jewish worship; this was certainly earlier, perhaps centuries earlier, and at Elephantine the offering of incense (*לכנה*) on the same altar as that on which burnt-offerings were offered may be most naturally explained as directly derived from pre-exilic Palestine both in respect of the use of incense and of the single altar. In any case, the altar of incense which subsequently stood in the Holy Place was not essential to the use of incense; and as indication of the later development of the altar it is to be observed that even after the introduction of this altar, while it was reserved exclusively for the burning of incense, the burning of incense was not confined to this altar; to the last at Jerusalem, as at Elephantine, the incense mingled with a meal-offering was burnt on the altar of burnt-offering.

We may then conclude that the altar of incense came into existence not much earlier than P^a or, let us say, the fifth century B.C.: but is it even so early as this? or is the altar of P^a still

¹ *ERE* i. 353 a.

theory, the programme of a school which had to wait perhaps a century or two before the programme was carried out? The absence of reference to it by the Pseudo-Hecataeus¹ has sometimes been treated as evidence that it did not yet exist towards the close of the third century B.C.; before the middle of the next century, however, according to 1 Macc. 1²¹ (cp. 4⁴⁹), the golden altar was among the plunder carried off by Antiochus.

We may say, then, that for the last two or three, perhaps for the last four or five, centuries of the Temple but not probably longer, it had two altars—one of great size, built of natural untrimmed stone, standing in front of the Temple under the open heaven, on which a fire burned which was never suffered to go out, and from which daily there rolled up the heavy smoke of burning carcasses, with which there mingled at times the smoke of small quantities of incense; the other of small size, constructed within of wood but covered with the costliest of all metals, standing within the Temple, in the centre of the Holy Place before the veil that screened off the Holy of Holies, on which no fire of its own ever burned, but from which there ascended daily at morning and evening the smoke of fragrant substances and never any other. This smaller altar is in a sense strictly derivative from and dependent on the larger; it is designated by the same term *מזבח* though unlike the other it has no relation at all to slaughtered victims or even to offerings that could be slaughtered; as an altar it comes under the Law that no altar must be erected outside of Zion; and consequently the altar of incense was not repeated while the Temple stood, nor after its fall in synagogue worship, suitable as the symbolism of its ritual might have seemed to that worship; from the great altar, coals were daily brought and placed on the smaller; it had no fire of its own; annually, like the other altar, its horns were expiated with the blood of a victim slain beside and burnt upon that other. And yet in the costliness of its material and in the refinement of its purpose it differs in a way that fastened on the minds of some who meditated on the meaning of these sacrificial customs. The symbolism which scarcely gave rise to it but was rather obviously suggested by it—that of prayers ascending to God—is already seized by the N.T.

¹ Cp. Schürer, loc. cit.

Apocryptist in his reference to the heavenly counterpart of the altar of incense. At greater length Philo draws out the suggestions of this altar with a veiled but perceptible relative depreciation of the altar of burnt-offering. He finds proof that God is pleased not even with hecatombs, but with the love of himself and a holy life, in the law of the two altars : ' the Law commanded two altars to be constructed differing in material, place, and purpose ; for the one is built up of stones left unhewn as they were gathered, stands under the open sky close by the steps of the Temple, and serves for bloody sacrifices (τῶν ἐναιμάτων), but the golden altar is prepared of the purest metal, stands in the Temple within the first veil, is seen by none save the priests, and of them only in a state of sanctity, and serves for offerings of incense. Whence it is plain that God regards even the smallest offering of incense from a holy man of more worth than a thousand beasts sacrificed by any one who is not altogether nice (ἀσρεῖος). For, I suppose, as gold is better than useless (εἰκαίων) stones, whatever is within is holier than that which is without the fane, by so much is thanksgiving offered by means of incense better than that offered by victims of blood. . . . All which is a symbol only of the fact that with God it is not the number of things slain in sacrifice that is of value, but the entire purity of the rational soul of him that sacrifices.' ¹

Philo has travelled far from the thought that created the rule of natural and readily accessible material for the altar ; that which is wrought and costly has for him the deeper meaning. It is true that it is the two altars together, the one of commoner, the other of costlier material, that constitute his symbol. And yet we see perhaps here, as elsewhere in Philo, how readily the altar of burnt-offering might have dropped out of his religion ; and if it had dropped out he would not have been very eager to restore it. Both altars have for eighteen centuries disappeared from Jewish ritual. Will both or either ever be restored ? I touched on this question three years ago. In the interval the possibility of restoration has come nearer. If, as we hope, Jerusalem is permanently delivered from the Turk, will the Jews be enabled to build a temple ? If they build a temple, will they

¹ *De Vict. Off.* 4.

furnish it with altar or altars? In the last eighteen centuries animal sacrifice has grown increasingly repugnant: the use of incense has not. Is it likely that, given the opportunity, the Jews will restore the sacrifice of incense, but not that of animals? The history of sacrifice is full of examples of surrogates; of the substitution in certain cases of animals for men, of wine for blood, and after A.D. 70, under the stress of necessity, of prayers for sacrifice. Two considerations however weigh against the probability of restoring the altar that would not, and refraining from restoring the altar that would, offend a sense of fitness that has developed since the fall of Jerusalem: first, the two altars, as we have seen, are most intimately connected, and the service of the altar of incense is dependent on the altar of burnt-offering: and second, in the matter of sacrifice as of much else, the reason and meaning of it has been lost without developing a new reason for its continuance or restoration; the one reason that prevails in Jewish discussion of the subject is that it is a command of God; circumstances have for centuries forced the command of God to be held in abeyance; whether freedom of worship in Jerusalem will be regarded as a sufficient change of circumstances to render sacrifice once again obligatory remains to be seen: but on the whole it seems probable that, given the opportunity, the sacrificial service will be restored wholly or not at all; and that both altars will be rebuilt and used or neither.

X

THE SACRIFICIAL SERVICE IN HEAVEN.

i

IN last term's lectures we were concerned with the history more especially of the practice of the Jews in regard to the altar, and in a minor degree with the theory associated with or promoted by this practice. In these concluding lectures I turn exclusively to belief or theory, beliefs in some respects extravagant, apparently remote from practice and reality, and yet illustrative of certain not unimportant ideas of Jewish sacrificial theory and expression.

The history of the Jewish altar is of a movement away from many altars to one, away from altars primarily or exclusively serving a locality, and mostly small localities, to an altar which was the central point and common symbol of the unity of the Jews, though scattered over all parts of the world, in the service of the one true God. On the one altar of burnt-offering in Jerusalem were presented the sacrificial gifts to God including the daily offerings on behalf of the whole community; about this one altar took place the expiatory rites on behalf of the whole community on a great annual celebration of the Day of Atonement; from this one altar ascended daily the smoke of sacrifice towards heaven, the proper abode of God. And the symbolism of the altar ritual had impressed itself upon the imagination and thoughts of the Jews of the Dispersion, who rarely saw the symbols, not less, and in many cases far more, than even on the inhabitants of the Holy City, who were able daily to observe it.

Strictly, the single sanctuary at Jerusalem contained two altars, that of burnt-offering and the golden altar of incense—and as I pointed out in my last lecture, there was with some a certain recoil from the practice of gifts to God in the form of slain

beasts on the altar of burnt-offering, and a greater appreciation of the symbolism of the gifts offered on the costlier altar of burnt-incense. But both altars were alike destroyed in A. D. 70, and thenceforward, as a necessary consequence of the now long-established theory that only on Mount Zion might an altar be erected to God, Jewish sacrificial service ceased. The hope of the restoration of altar and service never died out; sacrifice was, for the Jews, not abolished, but through force of human oppression suspended. Nevertheless, while the memory of the past and the hope of future sacrificial service on Zion continued to affect the thought of the Jews, the actual practice and with it the visible symbolism of the service had ceased.

But before the fall of the Temple on Mount Zion, the destruction of its altar, and the suspension of its sacrificial service took place, Jewish thought had busied itself with another altar that could not be affected or could not at least be directly affected by human movements or by human opposition to the Jews: this was the altar, or again, perhaps, to speak strictly, the two altars, in heaven. It is my present purpose to examine the origin of this idea and, so far as it can be traced, its history: its relation to the Jewish theory of the purpose and efficacy of sacrifice and its influence in early Christian thought.

The belief in a heavenly temple, altar, and sacrificial service is part of the far more general and comprehensive idea of the correspondence of things earthly and things heavenly. As it is above, so is the earth: for the copy of what is in heaven is here on earth.¹ Cp. Ber. R. i: Whatever is in heaven is also on earth and you will find that whatsoever God created above he created also below: above, a dwelling and a cloud (ובל וערמל): (1) Behold from thy holy dwelling (Is. 63¹⁵): Through the cloud doth he judge (Job 22¹³); (2) Then said Solomon: Yahweh hath said he will dwell in the cloud: I have built a dwelling for thee (1 Kings 8^{12f.}). (1) Above: Yahweh is in his holy temple; (2) Below: the temple of Yahweh. (1) Above: the throne of Yahweh; (2) Below: the throne of glory. (1) Above: And the man clothed with white linen (Ezek. 9²); (2) Below: With a holy white linen tunic shall he (Aaron) be clothed (Lev. 16⁴, &c.).

¹ Cp. Assumption of Isaiah 7¹⁰ (Jeremias, *ATAO*, p. 12; *BNT*, p. 66). For Chinese theory in the third millennium B. C., cp. Jeremias, *BNT*, p. 118.

And this *general* idea appears to be very ancient. It has been claimed for a remote antiquity in Babylonian thought, and, in consequence, by Pan-Babylonians for the whole of the ancient world. Leaving what may need to be said further on this point for the present, I remark that the general idea was certainly worked out in different detail in different countries and at different periods, and even at times differently in different centres of the same age and race. And thus the age and origin of the idea in general is a very different question from that of the age and origin of specific developments of it, such as those represented by the belief in a temple, altar, and sacrificial service in heaven. Still, temple and altar on earth are of indefinite antiquity and common to most peoples and religions; and the possibility, though not of course apart from definite and specific proof, of the actual existence and expression of the belief in heavenly counterparts of these must be admitted whenever and wherever the doctrine of the correspondence of earth and heaven prevailed. The way in which the general idea was carried into special applications can be more clearly seen in connexion with early institutions of more special and particular character. And of these Jewish and even late Jewish religion furnishes some striking examples. It is certainly a peculiarly Jewish development to conceive of a heavenly ark of the covenant (Rev. 11¹⁹), though this conceivably might be with the Jews a relatively early development: but peculiarly Jewish also must be the belief in a heavenly Sanhedrin, and this Jewish idea cannot have originated earlier than the Greek period. In other words, among the Jews the general idea of the correspondence of things earthly and things heavenly was undergoing special development and expansion at a quite late period. Does the idea of a heavenly temple, altar, and sacrificial service belong to these later or to earlier developments? With what significant differences are they expressed?

It may first be observed that these ideas just mentioned are closely connected, yet not so closely that they must necessarily all have become explicit at the same time. There was a time in the history of Israel when altars and temples were anything but necessary concomitants; many altars stood in the open attached to no temple: at such a period *if* the *general* doctrine of corre-

spondence had developed the *special* idea of heavenly altars, these also might have stood free of any heavenly temple; and the idea of heavenly temple need not necessarily have found expression. Again, so long as the primary function of an earthly altar was vividly realized to be a place from which the offerings made on earth might ascend in smoke to heaven, it would have been natural, even if the idea of a heavenly temple developed, for such a temple not to be thought of as possessing an altar, at least not an altar of burnt-offering. Such possibilities must be kept in view so long as the existence only of the general idea can be proved or rendered probable apart from proof of the special developments.

Of the special application of the general formula, that all things on earth correspond to things in heaven, to temple, altar, and sacrificial service, there are at least three different forms: of all these we find more or less clear examples at one time or another in Hebrew or Jewish thought; of two at least, less clearly of the third, we find earlier traces in Babylonian literature. Thus, for some of the special applications as well as for the general formula the Jews may have been ultimately indebted to Babylon, though in the working out of the idea not a little most specifically Jewish appears.

1. The temple as the abode on earth of God, or, in polytheistic thought, of the gods, may be regarded as the earthly equivalent of heaven itself,¹ or, more widely, the whole temple area may be regarded as a symbol or reproduction in miniature of the entire cosmos.

In Babylon as early as the time of Gudea, in the third millennium B. C., we find the term or name E-anna,² 'heavenly house', applied to the temple; and another similar name is that of the Temple of Nana at Erech, which was called E-khi-li-anna—'house of heavenly glory'. Hammurabi (Code ii. 31) says that the temple at Sippar was built *ša ki šu-ba-at ša-ma-i*, i. e. like the heavenly dwelling—not, as Jeremias erroneously renders, the heavenly temple (*BNT*. p. 62, but nothing in *ATAO*). Conversely

¹ 'Will God in very deed dwell on earth? Behold heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee: how much less this house that I have builded?' 1 Kings 8²⁷.

² Jastrow, *Die Religion Babyloniens u. Assyriens*, i. 76.

we find in a hymn to Marduk the temple name E-kur, meaning 'mountain house',¹ used figuratively and in parallelism with heaven: 'in the shining heaven his course is mighty, in E-kur the carefully tended house, is his command highly exalted'.² The wider cosmic symbolism of the Babylonian temples may be seen in the custom of erecting on the temple area the staged towers or Zikkurats, symbolizing the world-mountain, the great basin or *apsû* ('molten sea'), symbolizing the Deep, which had its parallel in the Temple of Jerusalem, in the great laver supported on the brazen (bronze) oxen, three looking towards each point of the compass. In this, and in certain other features of Solomon's Temple, we may perhaps see an indication that it was built with a view to cosmic symbolism: in any case such an interpretation was certainly applied to the later Temple of Jerusalem. On this point both Philo and Josephus, though not independently, speak clearly. I shall have occasion to quote what Philo says on this matter in another connexion, I therefore confine myself here to a part of Josephus' description by way of illustration. The general principle Josephus states in these words: 'Each of these (is designed) to imitate and represent the universe: ἕκαστα γὰρ τούτων εἰς ἀπομίμησιν καὶ διατύπωσιν τῶν ὅλων' (*Ant.* iii. 7¹). The reference in this is to the actual structure (πῆξιν) of the tabernacle and its furniture, including the priestly robes, which he has just alluded to. The other parts of the tabernacle, he then goes on to explain, correspond to the earth, sea, and heavens, the first two being accessible to the priests as earth and sea are to man, the third like heaven to God alone. The various items of the furniture and equipment of the Temple have a cosmic significance; amongst other illustrations Josephus instances the *seven* candlesticks corresponding to the *seven* planets: the four materials used for the veils of the Temple signify the four elements—the flax, which grows out of the earth, earth; the purple obtained from a sea shell-fish, water; the blue and the scarlet obviously by their colours suggesting air and fire. Some of the details given in the antiquities with reference to the tabernacle appear also in *De Bell. Jud.* v. 5⁴⁻⁷ in reference to the Temple, with some

[¹ Otherwise Jeremias, *ATAO*, p. 28.]

[² King, *Creation*, i. p. 207, l. 14; Jastrow, *op. cit.*, i. p. 496.]

differences and some additional references, including a specific reference to the altar of incense and the altar of burnt-offering, but in neither case does he suggest that it is an earthly representation of an exactly similar heavenly object: the altar of burnt-offering he does not interpret symbolically at all; of the altar of incense he says, that 'by its thirteen kinds of sweet-smelling spices with which the sea replenished it, it signified that God is the possessor of all things, whether these be in the habitable or uninhabitable parts of the earth'.

Such a treatment as that of Josephus enables us to see how the idea of correspondence of things earthly and heavenly was applied to the earthly temple without involving, or at least without expressing, the belief in a temple in heaven distinct from heaven itself, still less in an altar employed for sacrificial service in heaven; the seven candlesticks correspond to something in heaven, viz., the planets, but not to candlesticks; so the altar, though Josephus is silent on the point, might have corresponded to something in heaven, though on the analogy of the other correspondences not to an altar. Josephus thus offers us one of two or more different methods of applying the law of correspondence which were influential in the same period, for certain of the contemporaries of Josephus certainly believed in the existence of an actual altar in heaven.

2. I pass to a second form of the belief in the correspondence of things earthly to things heavenly in relation to the temple and the altar. At a very early period in Babylon, at a much later but at a well-defined date among the Jews, we find expression given to the belief that the earthly temple, including in the Jewish account an altar, was built according to instructions given from heaven, these instructions being accompanied by the display of something visible, a building-plan or model. In a certain respect this might pass as the antithesis of the last conception: whereas, according to that, the earthly temple is a miniature reproduction of heaven, according to this it is constructed on a larger scale after a miniature plan or model shown in heaven.

Apart from the reference to the Babylonian temples being built according to the 'heavenly writing'—an idea not immediately related to our present inquiry—ancient Babylonian literature contains one clear reference to a temple built according to

a *building-plan* revealed from heaven. This is in an inscription of King Gudea about 3000 B. C. According to this Gudea dreams a dream in which he sees three heavenly figures who are subsequently identified for him by the goddess Nina as her brother Ningiran, her sister, and Nindub: in the dream the first of these orders Gudea to build a temple, the second reveals to Gudea the construction of the temple, and the third gives the plan of the temple. On a statue of Gudea a building-plan is engraved, held in the lap of Gudea, in another section a builder's stylus and measure are likewise engraved, and these engravings may with probability be referred to the things seen by Gudea in his vision of the temple revealed in *plan* from heaven.¹

The earliest Jewish parallel to this is remote in time, but in spite of differences presents striking resemblances, and is the more noticeable as coming to us from Ezekiel, the prophet who was resident in Babylon and shows himself in certain respects singularly open to Babylonian ideas. Like Gudea, Ezekiel has a vision of a temple that is to be built, and as Gudea sees a human form which proves to be that of a god drawing the plan of this temple, so Ezekiel sees a form which proves to be that of an angel with a line and, recalling the measure on the statue of Gudea, a measuring reed, measuring before his eyes the dimensions of the temple and its courts and altars; and is instructed to pass on to his countrymen what he has thus been shown, that they may build the temple accordingly (43^{10, 11}). 'Son of man,' are his introductory words, 'see with thine eyes and hear with thine ears and pay attention to all that I shew thee . . . and tell the house of Israel all that thou seest' (40⁴): therefore the man measures off, while Ezekiel looks on, the various dimensions of the temple itself, the courts, and the altars: and in conclusion the man repeats the charge to tell all this to the house of Israel, with the addition now of terms (צורה, תכונה, תבנית) covering form and arrangement of parts as well as measurements, and also with the additional charge to write this down in the sight of the people. That is to say, Ezekiel sees, not however in heaven itself, but on the spot on earth on which the actual temple is to be built, a vision of the temple vouchsafed from heaven and explained by a heavenly being, in the light of which he is to

¹ *ATAO* 353 for reproductions, [cp. Jastrow, op. cit. ii. 955 f.].

produce for his people, to guide them in building, a written or engraved plan clearly marking both the form and dimensions of the temple that is to be built. There is, of course, here no word of a temple or altar in heaven of which the Temple on Zion is to be a copy; consequently there can be no suggestion as yet, or at least here, of any sacrificial service carried on in heaven; but there is clearly enough the belief that the earthly temple is made in heaven in the sense that mind covers the architectural idea in all its details of which the earthly temple is the corporeal reproduction—a conception closely similar to certain Babylonian and later Jewish conceptions to which we may return later.

As Ezekiel regards the plan of the future temple as sent from heaven, so P represents the tabernacle as constructed according to what Moses was caused by God to see. Yet here again, what was shown and seen, whatever it was, was seen by Moses, not in heaven, but on Mount Sinai, though it was there shown to him by God. Once again, what is seen is of heavenly *origin*, though, as ever, not materialized or located in heaven. One of the terms used by Ezekiel reappears in P. According to him, what Moses was shown was the תבנית, the build or form of the tabernacle and its appointments; the command of God to him is: 'According to all that I am showing thee—the build of the temple and the build of its appointments, so make or construct' (Ex. 25⁹, cf. v. 40). The term 'show' (הראה) may be used metaphorically of what is apprehended, as well as literally of what is seen with the eyes; and in another passage the term *mishpat*, commonly used for law, custom, and in this connexion most naturally meaning some principle of construction, is used of what Moses was shown (Ex. 26³⁰); 'see that thou erect the tabernacle according to the principle (E.V. fashion) shown thee in the mount'. Still it is most probable that the writer means by 'the build' shown to Moses something seen with his eyes, whether a plan or a model; but even this model, if such it were, is not represented as having its place in heaven; still less is it implied that 'the build' shown to Moses after which he was to construct the earthly altar was itself an altar located in heaven and used in heaven for sacrificial service.

This same term תבנית 'build' is used by the Chronicler (1 Chron. 28¹¹⁻²⁰) in relation to the construction of Solomon's Temple, and by him of something that could be given by one

human being to another, apparently being passed on from hand to hand,—of something, that is to say, at once visible and tangible,—and in particular, as 1 Chron. 28¹⁰ shows, material on which was engraved or written a plan, or perhaps merely (so Curtis¹) a description *in words* of the shape and form of the building. The Chronicler characteristically modifies and transforms his source: we should gather from Kings that the Temple was built from plans supplied by and realizing the architectural ideas of a Tyrian architect: according to Chronicles it was built according to 'the build' written 'from the hand of Yahweh upon David', i.e., apparently, written down by David under inspiration and by him handed to Solomon. Once again there is no suggestion of an altar existing or of a sacrificial service carried on in heaven; the earthly temple is not implied to be a replica of a heavenly temple, but only to have been built according to the idea not of some human architect but of God.

A careful examination of what Ezekiel, P, and Chronicles say with regard to the heavenly origin of tabernacle and temple does not, therefore, appear to me to justify the conclusion which was drawn perhaps relatively early, possibly by the LXX, and is still drawn by some—e.g. Dr. Charles on Test. Levi, 3⁶ remarks:² 'A sacrificial service in heaven is suggested by the heavenly patterns spoken of in Ex. 25^{9, 40}', but a sacrificial service in heaven could only be if the 'heavenly pattern' shown Moses, Ezekiel, and David were actual objects used in heaven for the same purpose for which the corresponding objects on earth were used: but so far are the O.T. references from suggesting this that they do not even locate the 'patterns' permanently in heaven—they are patterns made in heaven and handed over to men.

The two ideas last considered are not mutually exclusive; for obviously at one and the same time and by the same people it might be believed that there was a temple and altar in heaven,

[¹ *Chronicles*, ICC, p. 299.]

² *Apoc. and Pseudepigrapha* (1913) summarizing the note in the *Comm.* In *Studies in the Apoc.* (1913) he withdraws this view and remarks, 'These references (Exod., Ezek., Chron.) taken in themselves do not postulate a belief in a heavenly temple', and he goes on to argue that the Jewish belief as a matter of fact originated later than Exodus and Ezekiel, if not also later than Chronicles.

and that the temple and altar on earth were constructed from plans supplied from heaven; yet it seems improbable that P in particular would have been entirely silent as to sacrificial service in heaven if he had believed in such a service, and believed in it as the original of the sacrificial service of the tabernacle and temple; for it would have been after his manner to point out that, as the Sabbath rest on earth corresponded to God's Sabbath rest in heaven, so Israel's sacrificial service corresponded to the sacrificial service in heaven—a correspondence which his successor, the author of the Book of Jubilees, does not fail to observe. Thus there is not only an absence of any positive evidence for the existence of a belief in a heavenly altar with a regular sacrificial service associated with it, but there is at least a certain presumption *against* the existence of this belief among the Jews in the age of P, let us say *c.* 500 B.C. The case would of course be different *if* the altar and temple seen by Isaiah in his inaugural vision were in heaven; but they were not: what was revealed to Isaiah in the vision was the Holy One of Israel perilously present on earth in the midst of the holy Israel.

The idea of a heavenly temple and a heavenly sacrificial service is clear and prominent in the Apocalypse of John in its present form, i. e. by the end of the first century A. D.: but it appears clearly if less prominently in apocalyptic literature which may be perhaps about two centuries earlier than this. If so, this Jewish belief appears most probably to have evolved between *c.* 500 and 100 B. C. (Charles, *Studies in the Apocalypse*, 166, between 300 and 150).

The two earlier apocalyptic books with which we are now concerned are: 1. The Testaments, and 2. The Book of Jubilees. Both are assigned by Dr. Charles to the close of the second century B. C., and though the former work has received numerous Christian interpolations, the passage of present interest bears no sign of being one of these but is apparently part of the original work.

The Testament of Levi contains an account of the seven heavens into which Levi enters in vision. This account appears to have been expanded from an earlier form of the text which spoke only of three heavens. In one of these heavens—apparently the sixth of the seven—are 'the archangels (v. l. angels of the

presence of the Lord) who minister (*λειτουργοῦντες*) and make propitiation to the Lord for all the sins of ignorance of the righteous, offering to the Lord a sweet-smelling savour, a reasonable and bloodless offering'.¹ A briefer form of the text reads simply 'And the hosts of the angels are ministering and praising the Lord'. Even the longer form of the text does not, it is true, mention the altar by name, but the sacrificial nature of the service which they perform is clear in the longer text and probably covered by the term *λειτουργεῖν* in the shorter, and we may therefore infer that the writer pictured to himself an altar in heaven which the angels served, making propitiation at it for the errors of the righteous. Later writers enter into fuller details with regard to the nature of the sacrifice offered by the angels and the details of their service, but before considering these it will be convenient to notice the implications of statements in the almost contemporary work—the Book of Jubilees.

According to Jubilees the Jewish law was part of the eternal purpose of God, and as such written on the heavenly tablets and communicated through angels to men. This general principle is reiterated in reference to several particular rituals, amongst others the ritual of the Feast of Weeks; but with regard to this (6) it is remarkably added that 'this whole festival was celebrated in heaven from the day of creation to the days of Noah, when Noah and his sons commenced to celebrate it on earth'; but this festival included—and the fact is specified immediately afterwards—sacrifices. We must infer then that sacrifices were offered in heaven during the period specified, though it is not said, but the reverse is rather suggested, that the sacrifices in particular of the Feast of Weeks continued to be offered in heaven after the purpose of God that they should be offered on earth had been achieved. The heavenly sacrificial service contemplated in Jubilees differs in another respect from that in the Testaments: in the Testaments the service is propitiatory; in Jubilees it is scarcely, and should certainly not be primarily, this; for in the special sacrifice appointed in the Law for Pentecost the propitiatory element plays a small part, especially as compared with the Day of Atonement.² But this fact, of different ideas of

[¹ Test. Levi, 3⁸; Charles, p. 306.]

² Cp. Num. 28²⁸⁻³¹ with 29⁷⁻¹¹ [also Lev. 16].

the particular forms of sacrifice offered at the heavenly altars, appearing in almost contemporaneous writings at the close of the second century B. C., together with the allusive way in which the idea is introduced as something accepted not something new, rather indicates that the idea itself, if as already indicated later than c. 500 B. C., is earlier than say 125 B. C.

Thus an altar in heaven seems to be clearly implied though not named in both Testaments and Jubilees—an altar, scarcely two altars; and the altar invoked corresponds to the altar of burnt-offering, not to the golden altar or altar of incense in the earthly temple; for on the altar of burnt-offering were propitiatory sacrifices such as Testaments contemplates offered, and the offerings at the Feast of Weeks or Pentecost referred to in Jubilees. The earliest references to an altar of incense in heaven, which are also the earliest clear evidence of any kind that this particular detail of the heavenly temple had been thought out and expressed, are in the Apocalypse of St. John. But of this idea here we may certainly say, and with even more confidence, what may be said of the idea of the heavenly altar in Jubilees and the Testaments, that it is not a novel idea of this particular writer, but an already current idea adopted by him; and without going into any questions of the relation of the Book of Revelation to Jewish *literary* sources, we may safely conclude that these ideas are of Jewish origin and not a peculiar Christian development of a more general Jewish idea: for (1) the development is a natural Jewish development from the ideas already established as previously prevalent among the Jews; and (2) the subsequent prevalence of the idea amongst the Jews is attested by Jewish sources and is connected with peculiarly Jewish further developments. At the same time the presence of the general and the particular idea in Revelation is of first importance for the history of the idea in Christian thought; for from the first, as later, this must have been one of the chief channels, and indeed the primary channel, through which this originally Jewish idea passes on into Christian thought not merely as an element in the Christian conception of heaven, but affecting or at least forming a mould for certain elements in Eucharistic doctrine.

It is an interesting and an important question how far the conceptions of the heavenly temple, altar, and sacrificial service in

different parts of the book are homogeneous. The visions of the book include both heavenly and earthly scenes; and at certain points the question arises whether heavenly or earthly altar and service are referred to: such a phrase as 'the temple in heaven' is immediately decisive, but the corresponding phrase 'the altar in heaven' does not occur, and the altar intended, whether earthly or heavenly, can only be determined by the context. The first occurrence of the decisive phrase 'the temple in heaven' occurs in Rev. 11¹⁹; but already in 8¹⁻³ the context is decisive unless we conjecturally rearrange the text; for we read, 'And when he opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. Then I saw seven trumpets being given to the seven angels who stand before God. And another angel went and stood at the altar, &c.'

On the other hand, down to the eighth chapter no decisive phrase and no altogether unambiguous context occurs; and unless we are prepared to impose upon chs. 4-7 the same conceptions that unmistakably occur in the present text subsequently, there is some reason for seeing in these earlier chapters the conception not of a temple in heaven as there is a temple on earth, but of heaven itself as a temple, an easy development from one of the ideas we have already examined: if the earthly temple is a reproduction in miniature of heaven, as the abode of God, it is no great or difficult step to apply the terms used for God's earthly to his heavenly abode and to call, not some building within heaven, but heaven itself, the temple of God; indeed, in the application of the term E-kur to heaven in Babylonian we should have a close parallel to this. But while in this case there will be no temple in heaven, there may well be and will be other things corresponding to the equipments and appurtenances of the earthly temple, as these in the first instance, according to the cosmic interpretation of the temple, were designed or were interpreted as correspondences to things heavenly.

In this section of the Apocalypse—chs. 4-7—then, we may, and perhaps most naturally, understand the conception of heavenly temple, altar, and sacrificial service as follows: The seer beholds a door of heaven open (4¹), as he might see the door of the earthly temple open; he is invited to enter the door and immediately on passing through the door of heaven he catches

sight, not of any further temple-building within heaven, but of a *throne* with God seated on it (4²), just as he might, had he been admitted to the inner chamber of the tabernacle or the first temple, have seen the ark, the earthly throne of God; in front of the throne he sees seven torches of fire burning, as in the earthly temple he would have seen the seven-branched candlestick; and also 'as it were a sea of stars', as before the earthly temple he might have seen the great laver which was termed a 'sea'. Once only in this section (7¹⁵) does the term 'temple' occur; still, in this one passage the scene is unquestionably laid in heaven: and yet the question arises: is the term 'temple' here co-extensive with heaven, or is it used of a temple within heaven? What we are told is that the seer beheld an innumerable company composed of men of every nation on earth standing before the throne; and one of the heavenly company explains to him that these are the redeemed, adding: 'For this they are now before the throne of God, and they serve Him day and night in His temple.' Now we must of course admit that it would be reasonable to conceive of a temple within heaven as of vast dimensions and capable of accommodating many ministrants; but the picture presented here is of virtually the whole population of heaven assembled before the throne and engaged in ministrations that cease neither day nor night. For such an assembly, is a limited building even of heavenly proportions likely to have been pictured by the seer? Or does he not rather mean: 'standing before the throne in heaven, which is itself as the abode of God one vast temple, they render him unceasing service'? With such an idea the transition to what follows is easier: the Shekinah is limited to no temple within heaven, but extends throughout heaven, overshadowing the redeemed and securing them from sun and heat wherever they go.

Altar and temple are not inseparable: with the conception of heaven itself, not something within heaven, being the heavenly temple, the conception of a heavenly altar is compatible though it is not necessarily associated with it; at the same time the existence of an altar, if it can be proved to appear in this section of the book, need not prove that it was attached to a temple within heaven as distinct from heaven itself. Now as to the altar in chs. 4-7 there are two points to consider, (1) After the opening of

the fifth seal the seer sees underneath the altar the souls of the martyrs (6^o). This altar is not directly defined—whether it stood on earth or in heaven; and the context does not unambiguously define the scene: the seals are indeed opened in heaven, but the visions that follow the opening of the seals are not confined to heaven. The first four visions are of the heavenly riders starting out from heaven to carry out their commissions on earth; but the sixth vision—that which immediately follows the vision of the altar—is entirely of earth and of sun and moon and stars as seen from earth. Is then the altar of the fifth vision located in heaven as are, primarily, the objects and events seen in the first four visions, or on earth like the objects and events of the sixth vision? The vision itself is in many ways remarkable, but it must suffice here to recall that the retention of the souls under the altar is a variant of another idea, viz. that the souls of the righteous are retained in special chambers or treasuries, and that at least in the earlier references to these, so far from being located in heaven, they are located in Sheol (1 En. 22^{1ff}; Apoc. Baruch 21²³; 4 Ezr. 4⁴¹). It may further be noted that if chs. 4-7 are from the same hand as the writer who is careful to define the heavenly temple as 'the temple in heaven' we might have expected him to say 'the altar in heaven' had he intended it, since as it is it is ambiguous. Still, he is at this point in heaven (4²): when he defines the temple as 'the temple in heaven' he is on earth (see 10^{1,4}). On the other hand, the white robes given to the souls under the altar while they remain quiet till their number is completed can perhaps be best explained if the souls are conceived as being chambered in heaven rather than on earth. Yet interpreting chs. 4-7 by themselves the balance in favour of a heavenly altar is by no means marked, if it exist at all. And certainly the golden phials full of incense in the hands of the twenty-four elders is far from proving, as Dr. Charles would have it, that there was an altar of incense.

The second consideration in this connexion is that the section regards the Lamb as a sacrificial victim, now living but once slain, slain, as we must infer unless we adopt an *exclusive* astronomical interpretation, on earth but living in heaven. How the now living Lamb was recognized as slain is discussed by the Commentators; but it would seem that to a writer who pictured to him-

self an altar in heaven nothing could have been more natural than to represent the Lamb in his character of sacrificial victim as connected with, standing on or beside, the altar: this could have been done with results less strange than the picture of the souls of the martyrs under the earthly, still less strange than that of these martyrs under the heavenly, altar. And the picture could have been as easily expressed in words as visualized: instead of 'I saw a Lamb as it had been slain standing before the throne', it would have been easy to write—had the picture been really seen—'I saw a Lamb as it had been slain standing on the altar before the throne'. That this obvious symbolism is not adopted and this clear picture not presented might be regarded as some slight indication that this section of Revelation, or the source on which it rests, did not contemplate an altar in heaven. Be that as it may, in any case the sacrificial act to which the Lamb had been subject necessarily belongs (so far as this section is concerned (not 13⁸)) to heaven just as little as the slaying of the martyrs. It formed and forms no part of any sacrificial service carried on in heaven. Of the nature of other sacrificial service contemplated here or elsewhere in the Apocalypse, its relation to a similar conception within the N.T. and in Jewish thought, I hope to treat in the next lecture.

XI

THE SACRIFICIAL SERVICE IN HEAVEN.

ii

AT the close of the last lecture I suggested that in and by themselves chs. 4-7 of the Apocalypse might imply a belief, native perhaps to a source of the book rather than to the book itself, that the heavenly temple was not some building *within* heaven, but heaven itself, and further that these same chapters do not unambiguously refer to an altar in heaven, though at the same time an altar may have been pictured as belonging to heaven regarded as a temple rather than to a temple within heaven. It is in the subsequent chapters of the book that the belief in a temple within heaven is expressed with all clearness: 'And the temple of God which is in heaven,¹ was opened, and the ark of the covenant in his temple was seen' (11¹⁹); 'and another angel came out from the temple which is in heaven' (14¹⁷); 'And the temple of the tabernacle of testimony in heaven was opened and the seven angels came out from the temple' (15^{6f.}). In other passages the temple is not defined by the clause 'which is in heaven'. So in 14¹⁵ (where rather curiously 'temple' undefined *before* v. 17, where it is defined), 15⁸ (immediately after 15^{5, 6}), and 16^{1, 17}; but in these passages identification with the temple defined as in heaven is clear, or in some other way the context shows that the temple in question is located in heaven. It may be admitted that a certain suspicion rests in some of these passages on the originality of the defining clause; it has sometimes the appearance of a glossator's addition; but the several passages taken together—both those in which the defining clause is added and those in which the context indicates a heavenly locality for the temple—indicate that, at least in the present form of the book, the belief in the heavenly temple has exercised an

¹ So defined now because the seer is on earth (cp. 16^{1, 4, 8}), and has referred without definition to the temple on earth (11¹) previously.

extensive influence: it is not only a case of some subsequent scribe having remarked here and there: the temple here is the heavenly temple; but the several references imply a more or less elaborated belief. Even if therefore it were possible to accept such a view of the composition of the book as Spitta's¹ and with him to conclude that from the component parts of the book—Jewish and Christian alike—all allusion to the heavenly temple was absent, and that the introduction of this belief is due to the redactor, by that redactor at least (who would be answerable for the form of the book as we know it and would represent Christian thought at the close of the first century A.D.), the belief was well articulated and elaborately expressed.

The articulation of thought whether on the part of such a redactor, the author of the book, or of the sources in question in relation to the altar or altars in heaven is less clear and certain: and to this corresponds a greater divergence among modern interpreters as to how many and which passages refer to the altar in heaven. The ambiguity is partly due to the fact that the author, as already remarked, never defines the heavenly altar as such, but leaves the context alone to determine the locality of the altar of which from time to time he speaks.

In five passages it has been commonly supposed the heavenly altar is spoken of: the first of these contains the vision of the altar with the souls of the martyrs beneath, seen after the opening of the fifth seal; I discussed this in the last lecture, and merely recall here that this vision, whether of a heavenly or of an earthly altar, is conceived as seen by the seer while rapt up into heaven (4¹). Two of the remaining passages, however, occur after ch. 10, which appears to represent the seer as again on earth; and, in these therefore, whether the altar seen be heavenly or earthly, it is seen by one who is himself on earth. In 14¹⁸ moreover, the altar is referred to in a chapter opening with the vision of the Lamb in Zion, i.e. with a vision of earth, and representing the seer as hearing voices '*from heaven*' (14^{2, 13}), as though he himself were on earth. After one of these voices from heaven, the narrative continues: 'And I saw and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sitting like unto a man

¹ *Die Offenbarung des Johannes.*

having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud: send forth thy sickle and reap, for the time to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud cast his axe over (ἐπί, R.V. upon) the earth and the earth was reaped.' So far the narrative is ambiguous: the vision might be of a temple in heaven to which the seer, after hearing the voice from heaven, looks up, or of angels in the temple on Mount Zion. The verbs used are ambiguous: 'send (πέμψον) thy sickle', 'cast (ἔβαλεν) the sickle over' are certainly applicable to the action of working on or over the earth from an earthly starting-point; no such tell-tale verb as *send down* occurs. On the other hand, as soon as the narrative continues afresh it becomes, in its present form, unambiguous: 'And another angel came out from the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar and cried with a loud voice to him that had the sharp sickle,' &c. Both temple and altar must be in heaven if this phrase 'which is in heaven' is original; and may still be of course, till the ambiguity of the passage as a whole is cleared up, even if it is not: but this decisive phrase is not too safely to be used, for it is strange that it defines the temple not on the first but on the second reference to it. Provided the passage refers to an altar in heaven, it is mainly of importance as a case of speaking of *the* altar, not *an* altar, or one of two altars in heaven. To the significance or insignificance of this we will return. One other point: both of the temple and of the altar the same phrase is used, ἐξῆλθεν ἐκ: does this imply that the altar referred to is pictured as *within* the temple? In other words, as the altar of incense rather than that of burnt-offering?

The same use of the term 'the altar' occurs in 16¹: 'And I heard the altar cry, Even so, Lord God almighty, true and just are thy sentences of doom.' This altar, in the intention of whoever is responsible for the final form of the passage, is in heaven, for chapter 15 begins: 'Then I saw another portent in heaven—seven angels with seven plagues', and the cry of the altar comes between the outpouring of plagues by the third and fourth angel; moreover, in 15⁶, the temple, to which we must regard

this altar as attached, is called the temple of the tabernacle of testimony in heaven.

The main ground for surmising that the present form of the passage was preceded by a form in which the earthly temple and altar were intended lies in 15⁸, which records that 'the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God', i. e. with the smoke of God's wrath, and that 'none could enter the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were over', i. e. till God's wrath was over and the temple again free from its manifestation.¹ It has been argued that this really fits only the earthly temple; and no doubt the comparison with 1 Kings 8^{10, 11} has force: here it is said of Solomon's Temple that 'it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the Holy Place, that the cloud filled the house of the Lord, so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord'. The manifestation of the glory of God, an occasional phenomenon in the earthly, was presumably constant in the heavenly temple.

The two remaining references that have been taken to refer to the altar in heaven occur in the vision of the seven angels with the trumpets: both are closely connected and must be taken in the same sense. Here again, if the verse introducing the vision is original, the altar is certainly in heaven; for this verse reads: 'And when he opened the seventh seal, silence reigned in heaven for about half an hour',² and this must be taken as defining the scene of what follows. But it is better in the first instance to see what impression the vision of the seven trumpet blasts taken by itself gives. It opens: 'And I saw the seven angels, who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them. And another angel came and stood beside (*ἐν*) the altar with a golden censer: and much incense was given to him that he might add it to the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which is before the throne. And the smoke of the incense with the prayers of the saints went up out of the hand of the angel before God. And the angel took the censer, and filled it from the fire of the altar and cast it into (*εἰς*) the earth' (8²⁻⁶). Then follow the blasts of the first five of the angels and the plagues which

¹ Spitta, p. 162.

[² Rev. 8¹.]

they introduce: and then we read 'And the sixth angel blew: and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar before God, telling the sixth angel with the trumpet, Let loose the four angels,' &c. (9^{13f.}).

Now of this passage three interpretations, so far as our present point is concerned, have been put forward.

1. It is suggested that the vision is of the Temple in Jerusalem and of its two altars—that of burnt-offering and of incense.
2. That it is of the heavenly temple, possessing, like the earthly, two altars.
3. That it is of the heavenly temple, but of this pictured as possessing only a single altar.

Dr. Charles in his *Studies in the Apocalypse*, 161 ff., has recently advocated the third; but in spite of his arguments, it still appears to me by far the most improbable of the three. Dr. Charles's main arguments are (1) that elsewhere in Christian and Jewish literature alike no reference is to two altars in heaven, and (2) that in speaking of 'the altar' (not *an* altar) in heaven, the several writers imply that not more than one altar in heaven existed; (3) that the nature of the references imply that this one altar in heaven was the altar of incense; and therefore (4) that Rev. 8³⁻⁵, both when it speaks of 'the altar', as it does first, and when it speaks of the golden altar of incense, refers throughout to the altar of incense and recognizes no other.

Of these four points the first is, so far as I am aware, correct; i.e. no other passages definitely mention two altars in heaven, but the regular method of reference is 'the altar' in heaven. Dr. Charles cites in illustration of the prevailing method of reference in Christian literature Hermas, *Mand.* 10, 3²: 'The intercession of a sad man hath never power at any time to ascend to the altar of God', cp. *Sim.* 8, 2⁵: Irenaeus iv. 18⁶, 'Thus God wishes us also to offer gifts at the altar frequently without intermission, there is, therefore, the altar in heaven (for thither our prayers and oblations are directed),' &c.: Apoc. Paul 44, 'And I saw the four and twenty elders lying on their faces, and I saw the altar and the throne';¹ this altar is said to stand in the midst of the heavenly city (29),² a not very apt description of an

[¹ Cp. M. R. James, *Apocryphal New Testament*, p. 548.]

[² Cp. *ib.*, p. 541.]

altar corresponding to the altar of incense which stands 'without the temple': a Gnostic work of the second century (in Clem. Alex. iii. 43), 'The soul lays down the body near the altar of incense near the ministering angels of the prayers that are offered'.

From Jewish sources Dr. Charles cites or refers to *Test. Levi*, iii. 6, where the altar is not named but belief in it may legitimately be inferred: *Abhoth d. R. Nathan*, A 26 (second century A.D.), where it is said that the souls of the righteous rest under the heavenly altar: T.B. *Hag.* 12 b, *Zeb.* 6²⁰, *Men.* 10 a. It will be useful to quote Hagigah 12 b a little more fully and with more comment than Dr. Charles does. Hagigah here cites as authority for what is said Resh Lakish, a Rabbi of the third century A.D. Resh Lakish said, 'There are seven heavens. Zebul (the fourth of these) is that in which is Jerusalem and the sanctuary (בית המקדש) and a built altar, and Michael the great prince standing and offering (מקריב) on it offering (קרבן): and Ma'on (the fifth heaven) is that in which are companies of ministering angels, who utter His song in the night and are silent in the day for the sake of the glory of Israel' (Ps. 42⁹ [E.V.⁸]).

Now from the consistent absence, apart from Rev. 8³⁻⁵ itself, of explicit reference to two altars in heaven, from the somewhat numerous allusions to the heavenly cultus, we might perhaps infer at least that a second altar in heaven was rarely visualized, and that Rev. 8³⁻⁶, if it refers to two altars in heaven, is exceptional; but Dr. Charles's second point, to show that not even in Revelation are two heavenly altars referred to, is invalid; it does not necessarily follow from a writer's use of the term 'the altar' that he did not believe in the existence of two altars, or that he might not, had occasion required, have referred to them. All that we can say is that he may or may not have believed in two altars; for, doubtless as a result of the late period at which the altar of incense was introduced into the Jewish cultus, the term 'the altar' continued to be applied *without definition* to the altar of burnt-offering; and this current usage is adopted by the writer of the Apocalypse himself: in 11¹, for instance, no one questions that in the command 'Arise, measure the temple and the altar' the earthly temple and altar are referred to, although it is equally beyond question that the writer was aware that belonging to the earthly temple there were actually *two* altars. But obviously if

he could speak of 'the altar' in reference to the earthly temple though knowing that the temple had strictly two, he could do the same of the heavenly temple, and that more especially when so soon as he comes to speak of the second altar he uses a distinctive phrase—the altar of incense.

Dr. Charles's third point is interesting, though, his second breaking down, it loses cogency for his particular purpose. It may be admitted, I think, that most Christian writers were affected mainly by the association of the altar of incense in speaking of the altar in heaven; this is not so clear with the Jewish. I am quite at one with Dr. Charles when he remarks (p. 162) that 'it is quite unjustifiable to conclude that every characteristic part of the earthly temple has its prototype in the heavenly temple, as conceived in Apocalyptic'. But for this very reason, among others, he is on more questionable ground when he assumes that 'the conception of the heavenly temple that prevailed in Apocalyptic' was one and the same throughout; and consequently that, because in Rev. 8³ the prayers are offered on the golden altar of incense, therefore wherever prayers are mentioned in connexion with a heavenly altar the particular altar contemplated was the altar of incense. This would only follow if these beliefs were rigidly consistent throughout the whole range of Apocalyptic literature, and we have certainly no sufficient ground for maintaining that they were. And there are elements in Jewish thought, as we shall see immediately, that might have made for connecting prayers with the altar of burnt-offering.

But even if the arguments were more cogent to prove that the use of the term 'the altar' excludes the belief in two, and that as applied to heaven 'the altar' meant 'the altar of incense', they would break down over the passage in Rev. 8³⁻⁵ itself. For it is surely nothing but a *tour de force* to maintain that only one altar is spoken of there: and it is quite beside the mark for Dr. Charles to explain the almost unanimous conviction of interpreters that two altars are intended as due merely to the illegitimate argument that the heavenly temple must in all respects resemble the earthly. Two altars have been recognized here because two altars are clearly indicated, (1) by the use in this passage of the same two *different* terms which were used of the two earthly altars, viz. 'the altar' and 'the altar of incense',

(2) by two different ritual acts being attributed to the two different altars after the analogy of the earthly usage. As in the earthly temple the fire burnt on the altar, and coals were at need carried thence to the altar of burnt-incense; so here the incense is burnt on the altar of burnt-incense, but the fire burns on the altar (undefined). The alternatives therefore that remain are: either Rev. 8 refers to two altars in heaven, or to two altars on earth; and in the present form of the chapter only the first of these is possible. We can to some extent explain why here only the two altars in heaven are mentioned: it is the only passage also in which two different ritual acts proper to the two different altars in heaven are mentioned; here the incense mingled with the prayers of the saints naturally suggests the altar of burnt-incense, but the fire symbolizing God's unity requires the additional picture of the main altar standing before the temple, on which alone in the earthly temple a fire burned.

But if we pass from the altars to the cultus, then Dr. Charles really re-admits what he has just taken away; for while he denies that there were two altars in heaven, he admits that the altar combines some of the characteristics of the altar of burnt-offering and of the altar of incense (p. 178). This weakens in some degree the sharpness of the antithesis between the one altar of burnt-offering with animal sacrifice during the major part of the existence of the earthly temple, and the altar of incense, by its very purpose wholly divorced from animal sacrifice, in heaven. But so far as we can follow the sorting-out of Jewish thought on the subject of the heavenly cultus, it may be taken as one indication of a diminishing appreciation of the virtues of animal sacrifice. On the earthly altar, so long as the Temple stood, the Jews sacrificed animals because the Law, the expression of the will of God, required it, but why the Law required it was a question the Jews were content to disregard. But once the idea of a heavenly altar arose, that of the cultus at it also called for consideration; a very mechanical application of the formula 'As in heaven, so on earth: As on earth, so in heaven' might have led to the thought of heavenly animals sacrificed on the heavenly altar. Certainly such a thought might seem impossible by its very extravagance: but is it more extravagant than that of God as the archetypal scribe

poring over the Book of the Law as he created the world? Something, then, beyond its extravagance perhaps prevented this application of the formula becoming general. In a blunted form it does, indeed, find expression, but in work composed later than the Christian era: in the חכם הרבים (113³, cp. Michael, Luken 31, n. 3, Schöttgen, i. 1220) it is said that before the Temple was destroyed, Michael the high priest offered after the manner of the sacrifices of Israel, and this pleased God; but after the destruction of the temple, God said to Michael: 'You shall no more offer to me the likeness of oxen or sheep or goats, but of the souls of the righteous and of children who have not yet sinned: these shall ascend as a sweet savour.' Another explanation was that Michael's sacrifice consisted of sheep offered כבשים של אש (Schöttgen, 1220, Luken, 48). Yet even in these later expressions of the general idea, this was only one form under which the heavenly cultus was conceived. Another late Midrash (Talmud Reubeni, Luken, 48) says that from the time that the earthly altar *was finished* or served: 'I will not that thou shouldst slay to me on the altar that is above sheep and oxen, but only the souls of the righteous,' &c.

The prevailing view with regard to the gifts offered on the heavenly altar was that they consisted of either (1) the souls of the righteous, or (2) of the prayers of men. In the Testament of Levi the offerings are described less definitely as a sweet-smelling savour, a reasonable, i. e. a bloodless, offering—a description that would fit either altar, for the altar of burnt-offering was not limited to bloody offerings.¹ But already in the Apocalypse, as soon as 8³⁻⁵ came to refer to the heavenly altar, the belief that prayers are the offerings presented on the heavenly altar appears. Similarly, if the vision of the souls beneath the altar is a vision of the heavenly temple, we are near the conception expressed in later Jewish sayings already, that the souls of the righteous are offered on the heavenly altar.

Now of the souls of the righteous it is definitely said in some of these passages that they are the equivalent in the heavenly

¹ 'Minister and make propitiation for sins of ignorance', however, only suits strictly the altar of burnt-offering.

cultus of slain animals in the earthly—in other words, they naturally suggest an altar of burnt-offering. On the other hand, of the prayers of the righteous it is said in Revelation that they are offered on the altar of incense. But was this the exclusive view? In this connexion it is interesting and perhaps significant to recall that when with the fall of the Temple animal sacrifices became impossible, prayers¹ took the place of the great sacrificial occasions; for the morning and evening offering on the altar of burnt-offering was substituted morning and evening prayers.

It will be obvious that, except in the late-attested and apparently rarer idea of the heavenly sacrifice consisting of animals of fire, the heavenly *sacrifice* is less materially conceived than the temple and altar in heaven, and, at least where prayers form the offering, the actual sacrifice is not, like temple and altar, visualized. It may be further remarked that neither souls nor prayers appear to form a *propitiatory* offering such as the phraseology of the Testament of Levi suggests. But in both cases, under the form of sacrifice what is suggested is mediation on the part of heavenly beings—in Jewish thought pre-eminently Michael—in bringing the human soul, made righteous, to God. It is the souls of the *righteous*, and of them—or sinless children—alone, that are presented acceptably to God; it is the prayers of the righteous that the angelic intermediary brings before God—and these as the heavenly or real equivalent of earthly sacrifice that had no intelligible *raison d'être*. It is in some measure a resetting of the older idea that the sacrifices of God are a broken and a crushed heart. While these ideas obtain, as we have seen, alike in Jewish and Christian circles, they do not hold the field to the exclusion of others which perhaps show up more clearly against them. The activity of Michael in particular as the officiant at the heavenly altar does not appear in the N.T., though angelic officiants unnamed appear clearly enough in the Apocalypse. But may we see in the ascription at the close of the Epistle of Jude a reaction against it? It is God himself and no intermediary that places, not at the altar, but that for which after all the altar stood, before his own presence

¹ Cp. prayers = sacrifice in early Christian thought: Lightfoot on Clem. Rom. 44^o.

the souls of the righteous. The language may be, though it is not unambiguously, sacrificial; 'to stand you faultless' (στησαι ὑμᾶς ἀμώμους)¹ is the exact idiom used in Lev. 14^{10 f.} of standing the sacrificial lambs faultless; and 'before his glory' (κατενώπιον τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ)¹ is the exact equivalent of the constantly recurring clause in the sacrificial ritual 'before the Lord' (ἐναντι Κυρίου) in the earthly cultus. The material animal was stood before the immaterial and invisible Lord by being brought to his visible earthly altar; but what of an altar to stand the soul in heaven before God? Still the soul might be, and was, to some degree no doubt, materially conceived? But what place is there for a material visualized altar on which to present immaterial prayers before God?

It will be seen, then, that in the main, thought, in extending the idea of material counterparts in heaven to details of an earthly ritual, really broke down over the material of sacrifice. The heavenly altar and the heavenly sacrifice are in reality heterogeneous. It is not surprising, therefore, that the idea of the true offering being the righteous soul, and the object, if we may so put it, of the heavenly cultus being to present this to God, often avoided or broke loose from the encumbrance of a heavenly altar, and used freely another conception, which we examined in the last lecture, of the correspondence of earth and heaven. Examples of this we find in Philo, and, more completely than is sometimes recognized, I believe, in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Both these writers alike refer to the 'heavenly pattern' of the earthly temple; neither conceives of a temple *in* heaven, nor apparently of an altar, though of a heavenly high priest Hebrews has much to say.

From the general character of Philo's thought we might safely have inferred that he would immaterialize the patterns shown to Moses in the mount; but he actually expresses himself on the point in a way which shows that he errs as much, as an interpreter, in this direction as others who have adduced from the passage the belief in a material temple have erred in the other. But this only serves to make the passage the more important for Philo's own thought. Moses, he says (*De Vita Mosi* III. 3, *Mangey*, II. 146), saw 'with his mind the incorporeal ide

[¹ Jude 24.]

of the corporeal things that were to be brought to completion', i.e., I suppose, realized the architectural idea of the Divine Architect for the *earthly* temple, but without seeing anything corporeal in the form of pattern or model. There is no temple or altar in heaven, for, as Philo writes elsewhere (*De Monarchia* II. i.), the entire cosmos constitutes the highest and true sanctuary (*ἱερόν*) of God, having as its fane (*νέω*) the holiest part of the essence of existing things, to wit, heaven: the other (i.e. lower or earthly temple) is wrought with hand (*χειρόκμητον*). Similarly, the altar of the earthly temple has no pattern in heaven, nor even symbolizes aught in heaven: but 'the candlestick is the symbol of heaven, . . . the altar of incense the symbol of the things of earth' (*De Vita Mosis*, III. 10). The pure sacrifice with Philo is the righteous soul, but for its presentation he requires no heavenly priest: the true sacrificial victim (*ἱερουργία*) is nothing but the piety of the God-loving soul; and its gratitude is immortalized and, unwritten, is yet graven before God and co-eternal with sun and moon and entire universe.

It is possible that in Philo we have a tacit reaction against the material conceptions suggested by the idea of a material temple and altar in heaven, with heavenly ministrants reproducing some semblance of the earthly sacrificial service in heaven. In any case, with Philo the temple, altar, and cultus are corporeal signs of immaterial heavenly realities, and corporeal counterparts of them cannot be in turn located in heaven. Such reaction is even more probably to be detected in the Epistle to the Hebrews. The author certainly makes use of the prevailing ideas of the correspondence of things earthly and heavenly, for he speaks unmistakably of the heavenly Jerusalem, though, significantly enough, even here he is contrasting the heavenly realities as in being the immaterial with the material tangible things of earth.

For his own purposes, again, he makes much use of the idea, probably already current among the Jews, of Michael as the *merciful* high priest, of a heavenly High Priesthood; but immediately and naturally as this is associated, as it is in the case of Michael, with a heavenly altar, he never speaks of an altar; nor, in the sense in which the term is often understood, does he even speak of a heavenly sanctuary or temple; he

thinks like Philo of heaven itself as a holy place or temple, but he never pictures to himself, at least he never pictures for us, a holy building, a temple in heaven. The holy place (τὰ ἅγια) into which Christ, having come a high priest of the good things to come, enters once for all (Heb. 9^{11f.}) is not a temple *in* heaven, but heaven itself, as the writer definitely explains a little later in the chapter (v. 24): 'For Christ entered not into a holy place (ἅγια) made with hands, an antetype of the true, but into heaven itself', i. e. the real type of the earthly temple is not a temple in heaven, but heaven itself. Thus the writer selects from the alternative ideas of his time that of heaven itself as the true temple, and he rejects together with the idea of a temple in heaven that of an altar in heaven, because together with material sacrifice material altars have place only on earth. He pictures his heavenly high priest as indeed an officiant (λεειτουργὸς) in the true temple, i. e. in heaven, yet not like Michael standing beside the altar, but, as he repeatedly says, seated for all time on the throne at the right hand of God (8^{1f.}, 10¹², 12²).

A single sacrifice this heavenly high priest offered once *on earth*; but he does not repeat it in heaven: he does not immolate himself on the heavenly altar. On the other hand, in heaven his priestly activity is twofold: he intercedes and he saves (7²⁵): i. e. without altar service, he performs the same services which the form of Jewish thought on these matters ill adapted to the idea of an altar in heaven which a particular development of the formula 'as in heaven so in earth' had created: the high priest of the Epistle to the Hebrews intercedes directly; the heavenly priest of Jewish thought by presenting the immaterial prayers of suppliants on the material heavenly altar; the high priest of the Epistle to the Hebrews saves directly, bringing the souls of men into the immediate presence of God; the Jewish pictorial alternative, harmlessly perhaps, but unnecessarily, introduces the altar on which Michael daily offers up the prayers of the righteous.

A complete history of the idea of correspondence between things earthly and heavenly in relation to temple, altar, and cultus it is impossible, for lack of material, to construct, and in these lectures it has been impossible to touch on all the ideas and

expressions in Jewish literature which have been affected by it directly or by way of reaction. But two broad lines should be evident : one which starts from the conviction that the things of earth, including temple, altar, and sacrifices, are the material counterparts of immaterial heavenly originals, and thus makes earth *correspond to* or symbolize heaven ; and the other which transfers to heaven more or less exact counterparts of the material things of earth and so makes heaven reproduce earth. Broadly, the Epistle to the Hebrews represents in the earliest Christian literature the first of these lines, the Apocalypse the second. Both of these writings exercised great influence over at least the form of later Christian doctrine ; the abolition—and not merely, as in Jewish thought, the suspension—of animal sacrifice is one of the points in which the Epistle to the Hebrews became normative of all Christian thought ; on the other hand, the heavenly altar, which plays so conspicuous a part at all events in that form of the Apocalypse which the Church finally received, plays a prominent part at many periods, more especially in Eucharistic thought. And here we may perceive in Christian doctrine a certain parallelism to the double treatment which the heavenly altar and the sacrifices offered on it had received in Jewish thought. On the one hand, spiritual immaterial sacrifices are constantly associated with this heavenly altar and the altar is immaterialized to correspond with this view. As in Jewish so in Christian thought, it is in particular the prayers ascending to heaven that are treated as the sacrifices presented on this altar, and with these are associated at times other Christian activities. In Irenaeus, as already cited, it is our prayers that ascend towards the heavenly altar. On the other hand, in proportion as the material Eucharistic elements are regarded as the sacrifice offered on the Christian earthly altar, is the way opened up for a visualized and more materially conceived heavenly altar. And the need has been found for continuing such natural developments. So Bellarmine writes of the 'altar on high' : 'this is not to be understood so stupidly as to make us think that in heaven any bodily or sensible altar has been built, and that the sacrament of the body of the Lord ought to be borne to it actually and bodily by the hands of angels : but that there is an altar, that is, a spiritual altar, in heaven . . . no one can deny without wishing

to deny the Scriptures' (Stowe, ii. 367). Into the various attempts to maintain along with the conception of a heavenly altar the immaterial, spiritual character of the heavenly service, it is impossible to enter here. But this allusion to it may be allowed to round off this survey of the influence of remote thought on the correspondence of things earthly and heavenly on Jewish and, in part through it, on Christian sacrificial theory.