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## *THE HEAVENLY TEMPLE AND THE HEAVENLY ALTAR.*

### I.

It is an old question whether the temple and the altar which were seen by Isaiah in his vision (Isa. vi. 1, 6) were in heaven or on earth. A century ago the question was differently answered by different interpreters; and it continues to be answered differently still, in spite of some forcible attempts on the part of scholars in recent times to settle it by reference to considerations that were beyond the range of the earlier scholarship. Duhm, for example, writes in his commentary: "The view that it is not the earthly but the heavenly temple that is meant needs no refutation, for the chapter is not of post-exilic origin; and so far as Isaiah is concerned it is not even certain that he thought of Yahweh as dwelling in heaven at all." A. Jeremias, in his *Babylonisches im Neuen Testament* (p. 65) with equal assurance asserts the contrary: "There is no doubt that the vision of Isaiah contemplates a heavenly temple with an altar of incense." Thus Duhm rules out the possibility of Isaiah speaking of a heavenly temple on the ground that the belief in such a temple belongs exclusively to the post-exilic period; whereas Jeremias argues, indirectly indeed with reference to this particular point, but clearly enough if I understand his general argument aright, that the belief in a heavenly temple was of ancient Babylonian origin, that what was believed in Babylon was

believed in Judah because the ancient world was dominated by the single coherent theory that all that existed and all that occurred on earth corresponded to what existed and occurred in heaven, and that, therefore, Isaiah believed in a heavenly temple and spoke of it in the passage in question. The reasoning is obviously unsound even if the premisses be correct. The conclusion may be correct, but is not necessary.

I will refer at present to one point only in connexion with this argument. It is less obvious than some, but of considerable importance. There is probably sufficient evidence to justify the assertion that the doctrine of correspondence between things earthly and heavenly is of great antiquity. But though the doctrine is ancient it does not necessarily follow that all that was implicit in it was explicitly apprehended at any particular period, or played any part in the thought and imagination of any particular age. Even granting that an *implicitum* of the doctrine of correspondence between things earthly and heavenly was the belief that a temple and an altar existed in heaven, yet the question still arises, at what time did this *implicitum* become explicit? When did people draw the particular conclusion from the universal formula and begin to think and speak of a temple in heaven?

This then is the wider question to which the disputed interpretation of a particular passage leads. We have to ask when, and where, and how the idea of a heavenly temple arose; what was the history of that idea, and how it was related to kindred ideas; and throughout we must be careful to distinguish between ideas which, though they may be related, are nevertheless distinct.

I propose to start my examination at a point at which the Jewish belief in a heavenly temple and a heavenly altar had become clear and precise, and then to notice

briefly some elaborations of the belief which first appear in literature of a later date. I shall next consider the evidence that has been adduced to prove the existence of this or similar or kindred beliefs in Babylonian literature, and for the Jewish parallels to these beliefs. Finally, I will return to the consideration of Isaiah vi., which, if valid, is an exceedingly important piece of evidence for the history of the belief in a heavenly temple. I shall conclude with a summary of what the evidence permits us to say with regard to the history and relation of the several ideas that will have been discussed.

In the Testament of Levi, written, if we may accept Dr. Charles's arguments, about 107 B.C., Levi relates (v. 1) that "The angel opened to me the gates of heaven, and I saw the holy temple; and upon a throne of glory the Most High." With Dr. Charles, I believe this to be the oldest *unambiguous* reference in Jewish literature to a temple in heaven. The Testaments do not refer quite explicitly to an altar in heaven, though it would be a fair inference from two of the three forms of the text given by Dr. Charles in his translation of the third chapter that the author believed in the existence of such an altar. I will return later to this point.

The earliest work in which both altar and temple are explicitly and unambiguously mentioned is the Apocalypse of John, and in this work both are prominent. Moreover the allusions are such as to show that the heavenly temple (almost) exactly resembled the earthly Jewish sanctuary. "The temple (*vaós*) of God that is in heaven" contains "the ark of His covenant" (xi. 19; cf. xv. 5), the heavenly counterpart of the ark which had disappeared from the earthly sanctuary before the time of Jeremiah (Jer. iii. 16); and also the golden altar (viii. 3; ix. 13; cf. v. 8), a piece of temple furniture which appears to have been of late origin

and is mentioned first in the later strata of the Priestly Code. This fact was, of course, not known to the author of the Apocalypse, but it is of some importance as showing a development in the conception of the heavenly temple if that conception can be thrown back to an early period. It is also worth observing that the presence of the ark in the heavenly temple shows that the heavenly temple resembles the earthly temple, not as it actually was when John knew it, but as it was described in the sacred literature with which he was familiar.

The altar of burnt-offering which stood in the forecourt of the temple at Jerusalem facing its entrance also has its fellow in the heaven of John's vision. For this, and not the golden altar, is that from under which was heard the cry of "the souls of them that had been slain for the word of God" (vi. 9 f.; cf. xvi. 7). Whether the altar mentioned in xiv. 18 is the golden altar within or the altar without the heavenly temple, is disputed, and need not be determined here, for the belief in the two altars in heaven is established apart from this passage.

The service of the heavenly temple is performed by angels. "Another angel," we read, "came and stood over the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense that he should add it unto the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand" (viii. 3 f.). But the temple service is not confined to angels; they also "who came out of great tribulation . . . serve God day and night in His temple" (vii. 14 f.). The term "priest" is not applied in the Apocalypse of John to those that serve the heavenly temple, though it was so applied by others, probably in his own generation, and certainly later.

Within the heavenly temple is a throne (xvi. 17); this may be the heavenly analogue to the cherubim of the earthly sanctuary on which Yahweh was said to sit (enthroned),<sup>1</sup> or this particular detail may have another explanation which I will suggest later.

The heavenly temple, the heavenly altar, the heavenly priesthood in the passages to which I have thus far referred would appear, so far at least as nothing to the contrary is suggested, to be permanent institutions. Nor is the permanence of these institutions questioned, (at least not directly) when the author towards the close of the Apocalypse writes: "There was showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven, having the glory of God . . . and I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple thereof . . . and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be therein, and His servants shall do Him service" (xxi. 10, 22, xxii. 3). This holy city, the New Jerusalem which contains no temple, is at present in heaven, but is not, of course, co-extensive with heaven; the heavenly temple stands somewhere in heaven outside the New Jerusalem, and will continue to stand in heaven when the vision is realized and the New Jerusalem descends from heaven to earth.

Before passing away from the Apocalypse I make two remarks: (1) Even if we could find no indisputable references earlier to the heavenly temple, altar and priesthood, we should be compelled to assume for the origin of these ideas a date earlier than that of the Apocalypse, for the ideas there appear not as new creations needing explanation, but as current and familiar; and (2) in spite of the evident familiarity of the idea of the heavenly temple, the author takes very considerable pains to distinguish it from the earthly temple. Not only is the scene placed in heaven,

<sup>1</sup> Cp., e.g., 1 Samuel iv. 4; Numbers vii. 89 (Ex. xxv. 18-22).

but the temple is more than once particularly described as the "temple that is in heaven."

Nowhere else within the New Testament do these ideas come into the same prominence ; indeed it may be questioned whether other New Testament writers adopted or wished to perpetuate the belief that a temple and an altar served by an angelic priesthood existed in heaven. Nevertheless we may with certainty, or with greater or less probability, trace the influence of these ideas in several places, and more particularly in the Epistle to the Hebrews, where the form of the discussion has not improbably been affected by them. Yet when this writer speaks of the "holy place" into which Christ entered (ix. 12), he does not mean part of a temple in heaven, but, as he elsewhere says distinctly enough, heaven itself (ix. 24).<sup>1</sup> We may in particular question whether he adopted as his own the belief in the permanence of a heavenly altar. What is prominent in Hebrews is the thought of a high priest in heaven (e.g. viii. 1, x. 21) ; but this high priest is a priest who neither offers nor ever has offered a sacrifice on any heavenly altar, but has made once for all one supreme offering *on earth* (x. 5-18). The nature of the allusions not improbably indicates the familiarity of the author with a belief held by others in an altar in heaven served by a heavenly priesthood, but excludes the possibility that he himself adopted the belief.<sup>2</sup>

I shall not attempt to reproduce here to any considerable

<sup>1</sup> Heb. ix. 12, εἰσῆλθεν ἐφάπαξ εἰς τὰ ἅγια ; ix. 24, οὐ γὰρ εἰς χειροποίητα εἰσῆλθεν ἅγια Χριστός, ἀντίτυπα τῶν ἀληθινῶν, ἀλλ' εἰς αὐτὸν τὸν οὐρανόν.

<sup>2</sup> It lies beyond my purpose to discuss all the possible traces of these ideas in the New Testament, whether in Hebrews (see, e.g., viii. 5 ; cf. Acts vii. 44, dependent on Ex. xxv. 40 which I discuss later), or elsewhere (e.g. 2 Cor. v. 1 [cf. 1 Cor. iii. 16 f., vi. 19], vi. 16 ; Eph. ii. 21). If I am right in detecting the influence of the belief in a heavenly temple, though not the adoption of it, in any or all of these passages, they strengthen my argument that the origin of the belief lies well before the Apocalypœ of John ; if not, that work by itself gives us the close of the first century A.D. as a minimum date for the existence of the belief.

extent the later Jewish accounts which were gathered long ago by Schöttgen and have been often cited since.<sup>1</sup> The new features which these later accounts present are relatively unimportant; and the references in later Jewish literature to the heavenly temple and the heavenly altar are chiefly of interest as indicating the range and persistence of the general idea. Two points come out a little more clearly than in the Apocalypse: (1) the term priests is given to those that serve the heavenly altar; and (2) the souls of the righteous are more clearly described as the offerings presented on the heavenly altar. The subject in itself, or in relation to others, raised questions for the curious, and some of these are answered in traditions that have been handed down. In some cases, too, we perhaps find a confusion of originally distinct ideas. The Babylonian Talmud (*Hagiga*, 12b) contains a tradition attributed to R. Meir (c. 160 A.D.) explaining in which of the seven heavens the heavenly altar stood: "In Zebul (i.e. the fourth heaven) is Jerusalem and the house of the sanctuary, and an altar built, and Michael the great prince stands, and offers offerings upon it." It is not surprising that traditions varied on a matter of this kind, and that in a *Midrash* of the eleventh century we read that "There in Araboth (the highest heaven) stands the great prince Michael, and on the altar before him offers the souls of the righteous."<sup>2</sup> Such a question as the relative size of the heavenly and earthly temples was raised, and Simeon ben Yokhai (second century, A.D.), according to the *Midrash Rabba*, asserted that "the sanctuary which is above is only 18 *mīl* higher than the sanctuary which is below." As the *mīl* is said to have been 2,000 stadia, the difference is considerable.

<sup>1</sup> In *Horæ Hebraicæ* (Dissertatio v.). Among recent discussions I may refer especially to Lueken's in *Michael*, pp. 30-32, 91-100.

<sup>2</sup> Cited by Lueken (p. 31) from Jelinek, *Bet ha-Midrash*, iii. 137.

In this later literature we also find ideas that have been confused with, but should be distinguished from, that of the permanent heavenly temple. Of these it will be necessary to refer to what is commonly described as the Jewish belief in the pre-existence of the temple and certain other things. This may take the form of a belief in the pre-existence of the actual earthly temple, or in the pre-existence of the temple in the New Jerusalem. Again, the pre-existence may be regarded as pre-existence in thought or idea, or pre-existence in reality. Probably the earlier form is the belief in the pre-existence of the idea of the temple, the belief in the pre-existing reality being a later materialization either in thought or expression.

I will illustrate this belief by a full quotation from the *B'reshith Rabba* (on Gen. i. 1), omitting the proof texts which are immaterial to our discussion. The first part of the passage has been often quoted or referred to; the story with which it closes, and which appears to me particularly instructive, less frequently.

“Six things preceded the creation of the world. Thus prior to the creation of the world was the actual creation of some of these things, viz., the law and the throne of glory, and the thought of creating the rest, viz., the Patriarchs, Israel, the Temple and the name of the Messiah, and, according to R. Ahabah, repentance. Rab Huna and R. Jeremiah, on the authority of R. Samuel, said: ‘The thought of Israel was prior to everything else’;<sup>1</sup> and what is meant by this may be illustrated by the case of a king who was married to a matron but had no son by her. One day the king was passing through the market, and he said, ‘Take this ink

<sup>1</sup> ששה דברים קדמו לבריית העולם יש מהן שנבראו ויש מהן שעלו במחשבה להבראות חתורה והכסא כבוד נבראו האבות וישראל ובית המקדש ושמו של משיח עלו במחשבה להבראות רבי אהבה ברבי זעירא אמר אף התשובה . . . רבי הונא ורבי ירמיה בשם רבי שמואל בר ר' יצחק אמרו מחשבתן של ישראל קדמה לכל דבר.

and pen to my son.' Then every one said, 'He has no son, and yet he says, Take this ink and pen to my son.' They reflected and said, 'The king is a great astrologer; did he not foresee that he was about to have a son by her, he would not have said, 'Take this ink and pen to my son.' So had not the Holy One, blessed be He, foreseen that after twenty-six generations Israel would receive the law, He would not have said in the Law, 'Command the children of Israel.' "

The argument is clear, though by parity of reasoning it would seem to follow that everything mentioned in the law existed in the mind of God before the law itself was actually created. But the Rabbis, who often draw long and precarious chains of reasoning, were at other times content not to see beyond their noses.

In another Midrash all that is said to have preceded the creation of the world is explained to have pre-existed thus only in the mind of God.<sup>1</sup> Such an existence of the temple in the thought of God is obviously something very different from the heavenly temple of John's Apocalypse.

The pre-existence in heaven of the New Jerusalem prior to its descent to earth was, no doubt, an existence in reality. This is clear at least in certain cases; as, for example, in an interpolated passage of the Apocalypse of Baruch (iv. 2-6): "Dost thou think that this is that city of which I said, 'On the palms of my hands have I graven thee'? It is not this building which is now built in your midst; it is that which will be revealed with Me, that which was prepared beforehand here from the time when I took counsel to make Paradise, and showed it to Adam before he sinned, but when he transgressed the commandment, it was removed from him, as also Paradise.

<sup>1</sup> See Dalman, *Words of Jesus*, p. 129, where references will also be found to variant enumerations of the things that existed before the world.

And after these things I showed it to my servant Abraham by night among the portions of the victims. And again also I showed it to Moses on Mount Sinai when I showed to him the likeness of the tabernacle and all its vessels. And now, behold, it is preserved with Me as also Paradise. Go, therefore, and do as I command thee." (Charles's translation.)

Whether this passage definitely attributes a temple (or tabernacle) to the Jerusalem kept in heaven ready to descend to earth, and thus differs from the Apocalypse of John, I am not sure ; but for the most part the allusions<sup>1</sup> to the New Jerusalem do not specifically refer to temple and altar, and we need not pursue the subject further now. I will only add that Dalman (*Words of Jesus*, 130 f.) seems to me right in insisting that there is a distinction, and an important distinction, between the Jerusalem "that is above" and the Jerusalem that is to come down from heaven. The Jerusalem "that is above," like the heavenly temple and the heavenly altar, was a permanent institution, distinct from the Jerusalem that was to descend while that still tarried in heaven, and still to remain in heaven when the other had taken up its place below.

I now pass to consider the Babylonian conceptions which are parallel, or may be related, to the Jewish conceptions just described. And a quotation from Dr. Jeremias's *Babylonisches im Neuen Testament* will make a convenient transition. The fourth chapter of this book is entitled, "The Earthly Sanctuaries (*Heiligtümer*), copies (*Abbilder*) of the Heavenly Sanctuaries," and begins (p. 62) as follows : "The conception of a 'pre-established Harmony' constitutes the fundamental element in the ancient oriental view of the world. All earthly things and all earthly events are patterned forth in heavenly models. When in the Etana myth

<sup>1</sup> See e.g. Test. Dan. 5 ; 4 Esdras vii. 26, xiii. 36, viii. 52, x. 44-59.

Ishtar and Bel look about in heaven and on earth for a king, the insignia—sceptre, band, cap and staff—lie ready in heaven before Anu, the highest God. The priest-prince Gudea of Lagash receives in a vision on a tablet of lapis lazuli the building plan of the temple which he is to build for Ningirsu the messenger of the divine king, Anu. The most important document for this Babylonian doctrine occurs in a narrative of creation . . . Out of the primeval water the heavenly world with its three kingdoms is first created and then the earth. On the earth the sanctuaries of the three highest gods are created according to the pattern of the cosmic sanctuaries. Similarly in the Codex Hammurabi it is said that the Temple of Sippar was built in conformity with the heavenly Temple. And in an inscription of Sennacherib it is related that the plan of Nineveh was once drawn in conformity with the heavenly writing" (itti šitirti šamê).

If this account be correct, we have to do with two Babylonian ideas, which, though they may be related to one another, are certainly different and must in the interests of clearness be sharply distinguished. There is first the idea of sanctuaries (*Heiligtümer*) or temples (*Tempel*) in heaven; and second, the idea that some temples on earth are built according to a building plan supplied from heaven. The second of these ideas will bring us back shortly to Jewish ideas which we have not yet examined; as to its existence among the Babylonians there can be no doubt. On the other hand it will be necessary to examine rather closely the evidence adduced by Dr. Jeremias for the first idea, for it is by no means clear that the Babylonians anticipated the Jews in the belief that a temple (or temples) existed in heaven.

Of the two pieces of evidence adduced by Dr. Jeremias in the foregoing summary for a Babylonian belief in a

heavenly temple, that which is based on Hammurabi's reference to the temple at Sippar falls to the ground as soon as we pass from the loose German or English equivalent "temple" to the Babylonian term itself. Literally translated, the passage in question (in which Hammurabi is speaking of himself) reads: "Founder of Sippar, he who has clothed with verdure the sanctuary of A-a, architect of E-BABBAR (i.e. the temple of the sun in Sippar) which is like the dwelling of heaven" (mu-ši-ir bit E-BABBAR ša ki šu-ba-at ša-ma-i).<sup>1</sup> The crucial word *šu-ba-at*, which is loosely rendered by Jeremias in the passage quoted above "Tempel," is translated "trône" by Father Scheil and is, I suppose, as little specific as the cognate Hebrew *moshab*. The most that follows from the reference is that the Babylonians about 2000 B.C. thought of heaven not merely as the place where the gods dwelt, but as containing a building or house or throne of the gods.<sup>2</sup> But whether they pictured this heavenly building as resembling an earthly *temple* or as resembling an earthly *palace*, the term *šubtu* is not sufficiently precise to determine. From this passage it would obviously be illegitimate to argue that there was a Babylonian belief similar to the belief in a heavenly temple and a heavenly altar such as is found in the Apocalypse of John.

The second piece of evidence adduced by Jeremias for Babylonian belief in heavenly temples is a narrative of

<sup>1</sup> Col. 2, ll. 24-31. (The reference wrongly given by Jeremias in *Babylonisches im Neuen Testament* is correctly given in his *Das alte Testament im Lichte des alten Orients* (ed. 2), p. 52.

<sup>2</sup> It is doubtful whether the words of Hammurabi necessarily mean even as much as is suggested above. May not *šu-ba-at ša-ma-i* be a case of the appositional genitive, so that the phrase means not the "dwelling in heaven" but "the dwelling-place which is heaven"? In that case the temple is said to resemble not a building in heaven, but heaven itself, as later in the code the foundations of E-SAGGIL are compared to those of heaven and earth (xxiv. 87 l.). For the belief that the temples resembled heaven there is analogy, as we shall see below.

creation preserved in a Neo-Babylonian copy, but itself presumably of far earlier origin. As everything in this case turns on interpretation, I shall give Mr. King's translation <sup>1</sup> of the narrative in full and then briefly indicate the chief differences of interpretation so far as they affect the present subject.

The holy house, the house of the gods, in the holy place had not yet been made ;

No seed had sprung up, no tree had been created.

No brick had been laid, no building had been set up ;

No house had been erected, no city had been built ;

5. No city had been made, no creature had been created.  
Nippur had not been made, E-kur <sup>2</sup> had not been built ;  
Erech had not been created, E-ana <sup>3</sup> had not been built ;  
The Deep had not been created, Eridu <sup>4</sup> had not been built ;  
Of the holy house, the house of the gods, the habitation had not been made.
10. All lands were sea.  
At that time there was a movement in the sea ;  
Then was Eridu made, and E-sagil was built,  
E-sagil, where in the midst of the Deep the god Lugal-dul-azaga dwelleth ;  
The city of Babylon was built, and E-sagil was finished.<sup>5</sup>
15. The gods the Anunnaki he created at one time ;  
The holy city, the dwelling of their heart's desire, they proclaimed supreme.  
Marduk laid a reed upon the face of the waters,  
He formed dust and poured it out beside the reed.  
That he might cause the gods to dwell in the habitation of their heart's desire,

<sup>1</sup> Both text and translation will be found in *The Seven Tablets of Creation* (1902), i. 130 ff. Another English translation with commentary is given by Jastrow in *Babylonian and Assyrian Religion*, pp. 444 ff. Jeremias gives a German translation in *Das AT im Lichte des alten Orient* (ed. 2), pp. 129 f. ; and Jensen, in *Keilinschriftliche Bibliothek*, vi. 39 ff. In details these translations differ frequently ; but the differences need not be noted here since they are not material to the discussion.

<sup>2</sup> Bel's temple at Nippur.

<sup>3</sup> Ishtar's temple at Erech.

<sup>4</sup> City sacred to Ea at the mouth of the Persian Gulf.

<sup>5</sup> This line is considered by many, including Jastrow and Jeremias, to be a late addition to the original narrative.

20. He formed mankind.  
 The goddess Aruru together with him created the seed of mankind.  
 The beasts of the field and living creatures in the field he formed.  
 He created the Tigris and the Euphrates, and he set them in their place ;  
 Their names he declared in goodly fashion.
25. The grass, the rush of the marsh, the reed, and the forest he created.  
 The green herb of the field he created.  
 The lands, the marshes and the swamps ;  
 The wild cow and her young, the wild calf ; the ewe and her young, the lamb of the fold ;  
 Plantations and forests ;
30. The he-goat and the mountain goat . . . him.  
 The lord Marduk laid in a dam by the side of the sea.  
 [He . . . ] a swamp, he made a marsh,  
 [ . . . ] he brought into existence.  
 [Reeds he form]ed, trees he created.
35. [ . . . ] he made in their place.  
 Bricks he laid, buildings he set up ;  
 [Houses he made], cities he built ;  
 [Cities he made] creatures he created.  
 [Nippur he made], E-kur he built.
40. [Erech he made, E-an]ja he built.

In order to bring out the difference of interpretation which is of importance for our subject, the narrative may be briefly analysed thus :—In the first ten lines chaos is described ; there was nothing but sea ; among things that were then non-existent some are specified, including the cities of Nippur, Erech and Eridu, seats of the worship of Bel, Ishtar and Ea respectively. Then the process of creation is described, the *order of description* being as follows : (1) Eridu and E-sagil (lines 12, 13) ; [(2) “ Babylon ” (line 14)] ; (3) the Anunnaki (line 15) ; (4) a structure of reed and dust on the face of the water (lines 17, 18) ; (5) mankind (lines 20, 21) ; (6) animals (line 22) ; (7) Tigris and Euphrates (lines 23, 24) ; (8) grass, forest, countries, etc.

(lines 25-27); (9) the wild cow and sheep (line 28); (10) plantations and forests (line 29); (11) the goat (line 30); (12) the dam beside the sea, swamp, marsh, trees (lines 31-35); (13) houses and cities, including Nippur and Erech.

Does this curious order of description correspond to what was believed to have been the actual order of creation? If so, why was Eridu created first of all, and Nippur and Erech last, though when speaking of the cities non-existent before creation Eridu stands last, Nippur and Erech first?

Three interpretations that have been offered by different Assyrian scholars may be mentioned:

1. Zimmern (*Die Keilinschriften u. das AT*, 630 n. <sup>1</sup>, 498) remarks that it is particularly worthy of notice that the cities of Ea and Marduk, viz., Eridu and Babylon, together with their temples, were created first of all before heaven and earth. In this he discerns a parallel to the Jewish conception, already mentioned in this article, of the pre-existence of the New Jerusalem.

2. Jastrow (*Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, 446 f.) explains thus: "Eridu at the head of the Persian gulf, which for the Babylonians was the beginning of the great "Okeanos" surrounding the world, is the first dry land to appear, and hence the oldest place in the world. . . . The rest of the narrative, so far as preserved, is concerned with Marduk, Eridu alone is beyond his jurisdiction. Everything else, vegetation, mankind, rivers, animals, and cities, including even Nippur and Erech, are Marduk's work." So previously, and somewhat similarly, Jensen in *Die Keilinschriftliche Bibliothek*, vi. 361.

3. Jeremias (*Das AT im Lichte des alten Orients*,<sup>2</sup> p. 131) considers that the Eridu of line 12 is not the earthly city of that name, but the heavenly water-region, that lines 15, 16 refer to the creation of the heavenly kingdom of Anu, and line 17 f. to the creation of the heavenly kingdom of Bel, that

in line 21 ff. the creation of animals and plants is proleptically narrated, and that the creation of the earth is *first* mentioned in lines 31 ff., and that the earthly Eridu was mentioned after Nippur and Erech (lines 39, 40) in a line now lost.

The assumption that a line at the end referring to Eridu has been lost would not be unreasonable if Jeremias is right in his conclusion that the earthly Eridu has not been previously mentioned. But a point which Jeremias's interpretation fails to explain is why Eridu alone of the heavenly cities or regions (if these really are intended) is mentioned by name, and why the heavenly Eridu is mentioned before the other (heavenly) regions, though when the earthly cities are named, Eridu is mentioned last—after Nippur and Erech. Other points might be urged against Jeremias's interpretation. If it is incorrect, the narrative contributes absolutely no evidence direct or indirect for the belief in permanent heavenly buildings of any kind; nor, if Jastrow's interpretation be correct, for the belief that temples now on earth had had a previous existence in heaven. But, doubtless, there are difficulties and uncertainties on any interpretation. We may, therefore, ask how much follows, if Jeremias's interpretation be the correct one. His own conclusion apparently is that as the earthly Nippur, Erech and Eridu contained temples, so also did the heavenly Nippur, Erech and Eridu. But does this follow? Or may it be that the heavenly E, or house, was pictured as a palace rather than as a temple?

Everything considered, it appears altogether precarious to adduce from the evidence offered that early Babylonian thought contemplated temples in heaven with altars, like the heavenly temple and altar of later Jewish thought.

But questionable as the existence of a Babylonian belief in a temple and altar in heaven may be, there can be no

doubt that the belief that some earthly temples were built in accordance with instructions from heaven existed.

The belief can be traced back to about 3000 B.C., for it clearly dominates the inscription of Gudea<sup>1</sup> to which Jeremias refers, difficult and uncertain as much of it still remains.

The inscription falls into three sections; in the first Gudea dreams a dream in which he is directed to construct a temple; in the second part Gudea makes preparations in accordance with the instruction received, purifying the town, gathering materials and making and laying the first brick; in the third part the building of the temple is related. In the dream which chiefly concerns us, Gudea sees a man great as heaven and earth ordering him to build him a house; a woman holding in her hand a stylus and the tablet of the lucky star of heaven, and a second man holding a tablet of lapis lazuli and drawing the plan of a temple. The goddess Nina explains to Gudea the meaning of the dream; the first man is her brother Ningirsu ordering Gudea to build his temple, the woman is her sister revealing to Gudea "the temple, its construction, its pure star"; the man is Nindub giving the plan of the temple. The goddess explains other details, and concludes with the words: "He (Ningirsu) will reveal to you the plan of his temple, the warrior whose decrees are great will bless you."

Throughout this narrative there is no suggestion, as there well might have been, that Gudea ever saw, as Levi in the Testaments and John in the Apocalypse, a temple in heaven. Nor is there any indication that such a temple was believed to exist.

I am not aware of any exact parallel to Gudea's narrative

<sup>1</sup> The inscription is that denominated Gudea Cylinder A. It has been edited by F. Thureau-Dangin with a French translation in the *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* (xvi.-xviii.) and with a German translation in the *Vorderasiatische Bibliothek*, i. pp. 88-123).

in Babylonian literature. But we find more than one statement that cities, temples, or particular parts of temples, were built to conform to "the heavenly writing." This, if a related, is a different idea, for it appears to be established that the heavenly writing (*šitir ša-ma-i* or *šitir burûme*) is a term for the stars and constellations; sometimes the phrase is used with the suggestion that these are the writing which those who read the heavens can decipher and act accordingly, but sometimes also without any such suggestion, as in the passages where it is said that a temple is made brilliant as the heavenly writing, i.e. resplendent like the stars.<sup>1</sup>

There remains a third Babylonian idea to which brief reference must be made. The Babylonian temples were reproductions in small, or symbols, of the Kosmos. The lofty-staged tower or zikkurat is a reproduction or symbol of the world-mountain; one of the oldest temples of Assyria bore the name E-kharsagkurkura, "the mountain of all lands"; a conspicuous feature in the temple area was the great basin called *apsu*, i.e. the Deep, the domain of Ea: the Du-azagga, i.e. the "brilliant chamber," or papakhu situated at the eastern end of the temple of Marduk, symbolizes the place whence the sun rises in the morning. The names of the zikkurats at Erech and Borsippa were "the house of seven zones" and "the house of the seven divisions of heaven and earth."<sup>2</sup>

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(To be concluded.)

<sup>1</sup> For illustrative passages and on the subject generally see Jensen, *Kosmologie*, pp. 6-8.

<sup>2</sup> The details in this paragraph are drawn from Jastrow, *The Religion of Babylon and Assyria*, 614 f., 653, 629.