

of unity draws everything to God'.³⁰

It was a matter of great importance that the man who was to express his concern for the restoration of the true dignity of the priestly life by the foundation of the French Oratory in 1611, should thus have been fitted to lead so many disciples to the waters of a new life. The lines of his influence may be felt throughout the century. M. Vincent de Paul is a son of his; through Condren and Jean-Jacques Olier his doctrine inspires the prayer of St Sulpice, and even the teaching of the Brittany missionary Louis Marie Grignon de Montfort at the turn of the century would be unintelligible without Bérulle. Every time of crisis and change is a time of crisis for the doctrine of God and the doctrine of man. It is, I believe, significant that at the time of which we have been speaking, it was not a doctrine of man of humanistic origins that gave hope to the human situation, but a doctrine that had a deep theological root. As Bossuet, who often has the manner of Bérulle, was to say just after the middle of the century in his great *Sermon sur la mort*: 'La foi nous a rendu à nous-mêmes, et nos faiblesses honteuses ne peuvent nous cacher nôtre dignité naturelle'.³¹

Encounter with God—III: from Tabernacle to Temple

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RADIANCE, CONVERGENCE AND CONCENTRICITY

In two previous articles¹ I have tried to explore that special conception of Yahweh's encounter with, and presence to Israel which Old Testament theologians call *kabod* theology. When the Jerusalem temple was destroyed in 586 B.C. the exiled priests finally committed to writing

³⁰*Discours*, VII, 4, p. 267.

³¹Hachette edn. p. 303.

¹*Life of the Spirit*, March and May, 1961.

their own sacred tradition of how Yahweh had first encountered Israel in the desert, made himself present to her, and chosen from among her tribes a priestly race to minister to him in the immediate sphere of his holiness. At the roots of this tradition lies the conception of the *kabod* (glory), the manifestation of Yahweh's holy presence in the form of a radiant and fiery cloud, numinous and death-dealing to all that is profane. The *kabod* descends at intervals to meet the people at a sacred place chosen by Yahweh himself. This sacred place, initially the holy mountain of Sinai, becomes in the pre-Priestly tradition the Tent of Meeting, an oracle tent pitched outside the camp, and in the Priestly tradition proper the Dwelling (*mishkan*), a panoply for the ark, here conceived of as the throne of God; in this guise the shrine of ark and tent combined occupies the centre of the camp with the community of Israel and also (in the later developments of the Priestly tradition) the whole of creation ranged about it in a carefully graded hierarchy.

It can be seen then that the highly idealised Priestly vision of the encounter between Yahweh and man is dominated by a sense of radiance, convergence and concentricity. From the shrine of his *kabod* at the centre of the camp holiness radiates outwards, first to the inner circle of the priests, then to the outer circle of the lay tribes of Israel and then (following the later developments already referred to) to the still broader circles of the Abrahamites, Noachites, and so outwards to the bounds of creation itself. Simultaneously the worship of all creaturehood ceaselessly converges upon the shrine, mediated to the divine presence through Israel and through her priests.

This sense of radiance and convergence, the outward and inward movements of revelation and response, is reflected in the actual structure of the shrine. The innermost sanctuary is the 'holy of holies'; this, as we have seen, is conceived to be the throne-room of Yahweh, with the ark, his empty throne, waiting within for him to descend upon it. Outside this and separated from it by a veil is the 'holy place' (Exod. 26. 33). Surrounding the whole is an area known as the 'court of the tabernacle' (Exod. 27. 9 ff.). This constitutes the immediate sphere of holiness and is separated from the camp by a curtained boundary. The sense of radiance from, and convergence upon the shrine as source of holiness is vividly reflected in this arrangement of the tabernacle courts. Yet it must be recognized that the basic historical realities have been idealized and overlaid with the interpretations of a much later age. In the minds of these priestly theologians, writing from the perspective of the exile, the two separate desert shrines of ark and tent have been

fused into a single complex structure known as the tabernacle. Moreover they have projected their memories of Solomon's glorious temple backwards in time to this desert age, so that the tabernacle to them is a sort of small portable temple made of wood, curtains and skins, while conversely the temple is a vaster version of the tabernacle fixed upon Mount Zion, and reproducing in permanent and more elaborate materials the essential structure and proportions of the earlier shrine. In the temple the 'holy of holies' becomes the *debir*, the innermost cell where the ark is placed (I Kgs 6. 19 ff.). The 'holy place' becomes the *hekal* (I Kgs 6. 3, 17, 33), the main hall or nave of the temple which leads up to the *debir*, and which was almost certainly on a lower level, being separated from it by olive-wood doors (I Kgs 6. 31 ff.), corresponding to the curtain of the tabernacle (Exod. 26. 31-33). Outside this again lies the porch (*ulam*, I Kgs 6. 3 ff.), separated from the *hekal* by cypress-wood doors (I Kgs 6. 34); these correspond to the screen of the tabernacle at the entrance to the 'holy place' (Exod. 26. 36 ff.). The whole edifice stands on a sort of broad platform extending outwards on every side and constituting a sacred area or *temenos* round the actual shrine. This is known as the 'inner court' of the temple, and is bounded by a low wall (I Kgs 6. 36). It corresponds clearly to the 'court of the tabernacle' (Exod. 27. 9 ff.). A further boundary wall divides the temple precincts and the royal palace from the rest of the city, enclosing both buildings within a wider area still, known as the 'outer court' or 'great court' (I Kgs 7. 12); for the king too is sacred and lives closer to God than the common people. But all Jerusalem is a holy city and so constitutes a still broader sphere of holiness. Finally, all round the holy city extends the holy land, God-given and consecrated to his glory.

This idea of the divine presence radiating outwards and of Israel's worship converging inwards through successive spheres of holiness appears even more strikingly in Ezekiel's vision of the restored eschatological temple. (Ezek. 40-42). Here the basic structure of Solomon's temple is reproduced with certain significant modifications (notably the removal of the royal palace from the sacred precincts cf. Ezek. 45. 7 ff.), and in a vastly more elaborate form. The sanctuary of Yahweh's renewed and intensified presence to Israel is here seen as the centre of a still more elaborate series of concentric courts and spheres of holiness extending outwards to include the whole land, with the ancient tribal divisions restored in an altered and idealised form.

Finally in the temple of Herod, the temple which our Lord knew, the arrangement of the courts is supremely expressive of the idea that

the worship of the whole world is gathered up by Israel and converges upon the shrine of God's presence in her midst. On his way to take part in the ministry of the inner sanctuary a priest of this period would have passed successively through the court of the Gentiles (the immense esplanade on which the temple was built), the court of the women, the court of Israel, the court of the priests, and so inwards through the 'ulam into the *hekal*, where he would have found himself standing before the *debir*, the 'holy of holies', that small empty cell, now bereft of the ark, where the God of Israel was believed to dwell in silence and darkness.

If then the priestly writers describe in immense and often tedious detail the exact structure and measurements of the shrine, that is because they believe that every element in that structure has been directly revealed by God himself and must be preserved as sacrosanct. For them the details of this sacred architecture have an eloquence of their own; they express the priests' own deep sense of radiance and convergence. And this applies in a vital sense to the Church as the 'new Israel of God'. The body of Christ is the new temple replacing the old and becoming, in a still more intimate sense, the shrine of the divine presence among men, the throne of the *kabod*. And the Church, his mystical body, centred upon this new and living 'holy of holies', reproduces in her hierarchical structure this divine eloquence of radiance and convergence. From the dead and risen body of God made man ('Destroy this temple and in three days I will rebuild it', Jn 2. 19) the glory (*kabod*) of the only-begotten (Jn 1. 14) radiates in the form of light and life through successive orders of priests and people outwards to the bounds of creation. Simultaneously worship, embracing even the most dumb and blind motions of creaturely adoration, is gathered up and made articulate in the liturgy of the visible Church and mediated to the presence of God in God made man, through the faithful and through their priests. This same sense of convergence and concentricity is reflected in certain of the psalms and canticles, above all in the *Benedicite*, where the command to bless God is addressed initially to all creation and then to successively narrowing groups within the created order culminating with the sons of Aaron and the 'saints' who are humble of heart. 'All ye works of the Lord bless the Lord! . . . O sons of men bless the Lord! . . . O Israel bless the Lord! . . . O ye priests of the Lord bless the Lord! . . . O ye holy and humble of heart bless the Lord! etc.' (Dan. 3. 57, 82-84, 86, etc.).

It will be evident therefore, to return to the Old Testament temple,

that in their structure and proportions the temples of Solomon, Ezekiel and Herod successively resume and re-express the essential significance of the tabernacle, just as the hill of Zion on which they stand acquires the attributes and significance of that earlier place of encounter, the sacred mountain. But to appreciate the further significance of the temple it will be necessary briefly to refer to certain mythological conceptions of the sacred dwelling of the gods which were prevalent in various forms throughout the Ancient Near East.

THE MYSTIC MOUNTAIN OF THE NORTH

The idea of the sacred mountain as the place of encounter between Yahweh and his people originates, as I have attempted to show in an earlier article, in the historical encounter at Mount Sinai. Subsequently the idea is transferred to the hill on which Jerusalem stands, and Zion becomes the sacred mountain of Yahweh's dwelling. 'Why do you glower, you high mountains, at the mountain which God has desired for his home?' (Ps. 68. 16). But in later descriptions of Zion other motifs appear, which owe far more, as it seems, to the religious literature of Israel's neighbours. The gods of the various Ancient Near Eastern pantheons were commonly conceived to dwell in a mystic mountain situated in the remote north (perhaps even, as one writer has suggested, 'on the other side of' or 'at the back of' the north). In Ugaritic (i.e. Canaanite) mythology this is actually called 'Mount Zaphon', 'Mount North'. In Babylonian literature it is referred to as the *arallu* mountain. It is, in effect, the Semitic version of the Greek Olympus, a mountain of wonderful beauty and fertility, sparkling with gold and precious stones, where the gods dwell in unending bliss. The description in Ezek. 28 of the 'holy mountain of God', the remote and marvellously fertile and beautiful dwelling where the 'anointed cherub' once 'walked amid stones of fire' is evidently influenced by this mythologem. And the statement in Job 37. 22 that 'out of the north comes gold' seems clearly to presuppose a similar vision of the golden *arallu* mountain in the north. In Hebrew poetry Mount Zion is sometimes thought of as the earthly counterpart of this celestial mountain, and sometimes actually identified with it, as in Ps. 48, 2-3: '... the mountain of his holiness, beautiful in elevation, the joy of all the earth; Mount Zion in the uttermost parts of the north'. Thus in later Hebrew literature foreign mythological motifs are applied to a progressively idealized Zion, and used to express the idea that this sacred mountain of God embodies all that is richest, holiest and most beautiful in the

created order.

But the influence of the 'sacred mountain' mythologem does not end there. In the 'city-state' civilization of ancient Mesopotamia artificial 'sacred mountains' known as *ziggurats* (literally 'towers') were constructed actually within the city walls. This had the effect of situating the point of encounter between heaven, the abode of God, and earth, the dwelling of man, within the city itself. The sloping ramps leading up the sides of the *ziggurat* were intended to reach from earth to heaven. In the story of Jacob's ladder (Gn. 28. 12) what Jacob saw in his dream was not 'a ladder set up on earth with the top of it touching heaven', as the English versions quaintly but inaccurately suggest. *Sullam*, the word translated as 'ladder' here, actually means the vast sloping ramp of a *ziggurat*, the side of a 'sacred mountain'. Again the story of the tower of Babel (Gn. 11. 1 ff.) is intended to refer, in a derisory sense, to the colossal *ziggurat* of Babylon. 'Come, let us build a city and a tower with its top in heaven'. (Gn. 11. 4).

Ziggurats were built in successive stories or stages (often seven in number), converging upon a sanctuary at the summit, the initial point of contact where the god first entered the realm of the earth. Here then the idea of convergence and concentricity reappears in a new form. Now within the Hebrew temple, the great bronze altar of sacrifice was certainly designed as a sort of miniature *ziggurat*, a microcosm of the storied mountain of God. The minute description of the altar in Ezek. 43. 13-17 is probably derived from the earlier altar of Solomon's temple (cf. II Chron. 4. 1). It is built in stages and surmounted with horns. A bas-relief of a *ziggurat* of precisely this type survives from the ruins of Nineveh. This Jewish altar of sacrifice is actually called *har-el*, mountain of God, and its base is referred to as 'bosom of the earth'. It is so high that the priests need steps to climb to its summit, where the sacred fire burns ceaselessly (Lv. 6. 13), transforming the flesh of innumerable victims offered by all Israel into '... a fire-offering, a savour pleasing to Yahweh' (Lv. 1. 9, etc.). The holocausts offered by Noah (Gn. 8. 20 ff.) and by Abraham (Gn. 22. 13) on the tops of sacred mountains, and by the elders of Israel on Mount Sinai in her initial encounter with her God of fire, are continuously renewed on this miniature 'mountain of God' composed, like the mythological *arallu* mountain, of glowing metal; its base is the 'bosom of the earth,' and its summit supports the holy fire, symbol of Yahweh's *kabod* ever present to his people and ever ready to be propitiated by their sacrifices.

THE BUILDING OF GOD'S HOUSE

A further motif which occurs frequently in the religious traditions of the Ancient Near East is the myth of the building of the god's palace. This often comes as the climactic aftermath to his victory over the forces of chaos and death. One of the most striking examples is to be found in the Canaanite epic of Baal and Anat. Baal the conqueror has a sumptuous palace built in his honour. It is designed and built by a sort of divine craftsman or 'demi-urge' named 'Adroit-and-Cunning'. Now in the account of the making of the tabernacle in Exod. 35. 30 ff., we are told of specially selected workmen charismatically endowed with marvellous skill and cunning so that they are able to carry out the divine plan exactly: 'Bezalel and Oholiab, and every wise-hearted man, in whose heart Yahweh has put wisdom and skill to know how to perform all the workmanship for the service of the sanctuary' (Exod. 36. 1). Again, the temple of Solomon is built by human labourers of marvellous skill. These correspond in human and historical terms to the figure of 'Adroit-and-Cunning' in the myth. Again in the myth the materials used to give supreme honour to Baal and to rejoice his heart are gold, silver and cedar-wood. And these are precisely the materials used in Solomon's temple. The account of the building of this temple in I Kgs 5-8 is in fact the counterpart in true historical terms of this Canaanite mythologem. Moreover in the Ancient Near East the design of the temple was commonly thought to have been directly revealed by the god who dwelt in it, so that every detail of its measurements was sacrosanct. If the temple, or any part of it, had been destroyed, it had to be rebuilt on the original site and exactly according to the original plan. The plan of the temple was therefore a sacred document, preserved with meticulous care. The plan of the Hebrew temple of Solomon has been preserved with equal care. The idea of God himself imparting the original plan of his shrine to a chosen leader is vividly expressed in Exod. 25. 9: 'According to all that I show you, the pattern (*tabnit*) of the tabernacle and the pattern of its equipment, so shall you make it', says Yahweh to Moses.

At this point it will not be altogether irrelevant to consider briefly the materials of which the tabernacle was composed. These are enumerated in Exod. 25. 3-4: 'Gold and silver and brass, blue and purple and scarlet, fine linen and goatshair, ramskins dyed red and porpoise-skins, and acacia wood'. Naturally it is not possible to determine the exact significance of each of these materials. But they do appear to fall into four distinct groups. First, a number of elements are characteristic of

rough portable sanctuaries such as the Arabic *utfah* or *qubbah*, tent-shrines of wood and leather designed to be carried on camel-back. Up to relatively recent times shrines of this type were carried on pilgrimages to Mecca, and representations of what appear to be similar wood-and-leather tents have survived from far earlier epochs. The scarlet-dyed skins, the goatshair and acacia wood mentioned in the list of materials are all characteristic of this essentially nomadic type of shrine. It is reasonable to suppose that the tabernacle of the desert period would have been composed more or less exclusively of these materials and would have been of this *utfah* type. The other materials mentioned represent successive stages of idealisation of this relatively simple structure.

The second element in the materials is probably of Canaanite provenance, and was added either in fact or else in the imagination of the idealising writers after the entry into the land. This is the trellis-work of wooden frames known as *qerashim*, a word wrongly translated 'boards' in many English versions. (cf. Exod. 26. 15 ff.). The exact function of this trellis-work in the structure as a whole is exceedingly difficult to determine. It is almost as though it formed a tabernacle within a tabernacle. But once more Canaanite documents provide a probable solution. In Canaanite mythology El, the supreme god, is described as dwelling in a structure of q-r-sh-m (virtually the same word), here apparently designating a sort of arbour or booth of trellis-work. Now in Hebrew thought Yahweh as the sole God of Israel replaces El and many of the glories ascribed to El by his Canaanite devotees are accorded to Yahweh by his people. Thus either in fact or in imagination the *qerashim* booth, the dwelling of the supreme god, has been embodied in the tabernacle. It is as though the Hebrew author were asserting: 'It is Yahweh, not El, who dwells in the *qerashim*'.

The third element in the list, the rich hangings of dyed cloth, is most probably of Phoenician provenance and would not have been added to the sanctuary either in fact or imagination before the early monarchy when Phoenician influence—notably that of Hiram of Tyre—began to make itself felt. Finally the metals mentioned, gold and silver and brass, could well have constituted an original element in the shrine, which was subsequently added to and elaborated as the people became more prosperous and as votive offerings increased. A tabernacle embodying all the elements enumerated in the list could well have existed in historical fact at the time of David, but hardly before. In its final stage the tabernacle would have become the royal pavilion of Yahweh bedecked with

all the rich embroidery obtainable from the merchant-princes of Phoenicia, its decoration influenced consciously or unconsciously by Phoenician mythological motifs. Chief among these motifs would have been the cherubim (cf. Exod. 26. 1, 31, etc.). These were monstrous winged beings, hybrid in form and often half man, half beast. They were embroidered on the curtains and veil of the tabernacle and moulded in the metal of the ark-throne. They constituted a body-guard, as it were, to keep ceaseless watch over the shrine of the divine presence and to ward off all that was offensive or alien to Yahweh's holiness.

Now if one were asked to assess the typological significance of all this, one might attempt to state it somewhat as follows. Tabernacle and temple are types of the human body of Christ. 'The Word was made flesh and *tabernacled* amongst us'. As the sanctuary of the old law grew under the hands of craftsmen working in the power of God's Spirit and emerged as an earthly copy of a divinely revealed plan, so the body of Christ is marvellously knit together in the womb of the Virgin under the power of the Holy Spirit through her perfect obedience to the eternal plan of God. Like the original desert tabernacle this human tabernacle is essentially transient, destined to carry its divine occupant through and beyond the wilderness of this world on to a 'new Jerusalem not built with hands'. Like the *qerashim* tabernacle this human body enshrines the supreme God of heaven and earth. As the first tabernacle was decked out with the trappings of royalty after its entry into the old Jerusalem, so the second is endowed with the royal glory of the resurrection as it enters the new. As the ancient sanctuary was surrounded with representations of cherubim, so the human body of Christ is surrounded with hosts of heavenly beings.

THE TEMPLE AS AN ARTIFICIAL PARADISE GARDEN AND MICROCOSM OF THE FERTILE EARTH

A further idea prevalent in the religious thought of the Ancient Near East is the belief that the supreme god dwells in a fertile paradise garden situated at the source of the great cosmic rivers which flow out to fertilize the whole earth. A typical example occurs in Ugaritic literature where the *qerashim* arbour of El, the 'high god' is said to lie 'at the sources of the two floods, in the midst of the headwaters of the two oceans'. This intensely fertile paradise garden is planted with every variety of herb and fruit-tree, and at its centre stands the tree of life. Formal representations of the tree of life with the waters of life issuing

from it are fairly frequent in Mesopotamian inscriptions. Often too a guardian deity or deities are included in the picture. Here then the supreme god dwells at the source of all fruitfulness and life attended by his guardian cherubim. In the biblical account of the garden of Eden these and similar mythological motifs have been borrowed and adapted so as to express the inspired truth. In this garden Yahweh '... makes to grow every tree that is pleasant to look at and good for food, and the tree of life too in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil... A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers'. (Gn. 2. 9-10). Here too Yahweh is attended by a guardian cherub with lightning for his sword. With this weapon he expels all that is alien and sin-polluted from the divine presence. The cherub of the lightning sword also appears in Mesopotamian inscriptions. Commentators nowadays find a close connection between this account of the garden of Eden in Gn. 2, and the poem entitled 'A Lamentation upon the King of Tyre' in Ezek. 28. 12-19. The imagery of this poem seems to have been drawn to a large extent from a 'myth of the fallen angel' which recurs in various forms in Ancient Near Eastern literature. It may have applied originally to a supreme cherub who dwelt in the primordial paradise garden and guarded it on behalf of the 'high god'. 'You were a pattern of perfection, full of wisdom, marvellous in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God. Every precious stone was your covering: the sardius, the topaz and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald and the carbuncle. And the gold of which your tabrets and flutes were made was prepared on the day of your creation. You a cherub, anointed and protecting; and I set you to be on the holy mountain of God; you walked in the midst of the stones of fire'. (Ezek. 28. 13-14).

All this has an important bearing on the symbolism of the Hebrew temple. As the dwelling of God and the place of his throne, Zion is conceived to be the centre of the whole earth. In one passage (Ezek. 38. 12) it is actually called the 'navel of the earth', a motif which is greatly elaborated upon in the later Jewish apocrypha (e.g. Jubilees 8. 19). In Jewish mythology a certain flat stone in the temple was believed to cover this 'navel' of the earth. When lifted it disclosed an aperture which led directly down to the vast subterranean ocean of fresh water with which the whole earth (such was the popular belief) was fertilized. In Hebrew thought, then, the temple is the paradisaical source of all fruitfulness whence issue the cosmic 'waters of life', '... a river whose

streams rejoice the city of God, the sanctuary of the dwelling of the Most High' (Ps. 46. 5; cf. Is. 33. 21, Ezek. 47, Joel 4. 18, Zech. 14. 8). As in Mesopotamian and Egyptian temples these cosmic waters are represented symbolically by certain elements in the actual equipment of the Hebrew temple. In Mesopotamian mythology the subterranean reservoir of life-giving water is personified as the god *Apsu*. An immense basin or 'sea' of fresh water placed in the Babylonian temple is actually known as the *apsu*. In the Hebrew temple the great bronze 'sea' described in I Kgs 7. 23 ff. likewise symbolises the subterranean reservoir of the water of life, and gives expression to the belief that the water of life issues from beneath the sanctuary of Yahweh's presence. This 'sea' rests on the backs of twelve oxen (I Kgs 7. 25 ff.), also symbols of fertility and vigour in Semitic thought, and the fact that the oxen look outwards north, south, east and west (I Kgs 7. 26) indicates that the fertility which they support and represent is to radiate out to all parts of the earth. The temple is also equipped with smaller wheeled basins or water-carriers decorated with lions, oxen and cherubim (I Kgs 7. 27 ff.). These are generally considered to symbolise the fertilizing rains. However, both the 'sea' and the basins served a practical purpose too, the former being used for the ablutions of the priests (cf. II Chron. 4. 2-5), the latter for the washing of the sacrificial victims (cf. II Chron. 4. 6). This conception of the temple as the paradisaical source of fertility finds its supreme expression in Ezekiel's vision of the new temple, where a river of healing waters issues '... from under the threshold of the house eastward... and the waters came down from under from the right side of the house, on the south of the altar'. (Ezek. 47. 1). Deepening and broadening as it goes, this life-giving river flows down to the sea, 'healing' its waters and vivifying all creation. On its banks grows '... every tree for food; their leaf shall not wither and their fruit shall not fail. It shall bring forth new fruit every month because its waters issue out of the sanctuary' (47. 12). Thus the paradise of the renewed earth is to grow out of the paradise of the temple.

The actual decorations on the temple walls and doors also give expression to this idea that it is thought of as a sort of formal paradisaical garden constructed by human artifice, the earthly counterpart of a heavenly exemplar. Outside the porch of the temple stand the two great free-standing pillars known as Jachin and Boaz (I Kgs 7. 21), which perhaps in Hebrew thought represent the pillars on which the earth rests. (Similar pillars outside pagan temples were probably fertility symbols representing the male and female deities respectively). The

capitals of these pillars are decorated with emblems of fertility, pomegranates and 'lilies' or 'lotus blossoms' (I Kgs 7. 19, 20, 22). The walls of the 'holy place' and the doors leading respectively from the porch into the holy place, and from the holy place into the holy of holies are decorated with a motif of palm-trees, cherubim and open flowers. Here then all the elements of the paradise garden are artificially reproduced: the fertilizing waters, the fruit-trees and plants, and the cherubim. But what of the supreme guardian of Ezekiel's vision, the 'anointed and protecting cherub' who was 'set in the holy mountain of God'. who wore 'every precious stone for his covering' and 'walked amid the stones of fire' in 'Eden, the garden of God'? This figure too finds its earthly counterpart in the temple of Zion. That, surely, is the significance of the High Priest and his vestments. Arrayed in his robes he is, like the supreme cherub, 'a pattern of perfection, marvellous in beauty'. The pectoral on his breast is composed of precisely the same stones, sardius, topaz, diamond, etc., as those with which the cherub is covered, and they and the rest of his vestments are fashioned under divine inspiration in preparation for his investiture. Like the cherub the High Priest is *anointed* and *protecting*. He receives the numinous impact of Yahweh's presence miraculously upon his own person, and goes unscathed. He walks in the midst of the stones of fire. In fact, having constituted this formalised paradise with human craftsmanship for his dwelling, this God of fire and mystic life chooses a human figure from among his people and 'creates' him too into his ministering cherub. The mystic lyricism of the description of the High Priest Simon, son of Onias, in Ecclus 50. 1-21 confirms this impression. All the beauty of everything that exists, sun, moon, stars, the rainbow, the cedar of Lebanon, the fire of incense, etc.—all these are concentrated and epitomised in the beauty of the High Priest in his robes. 'He shone in his days as the morning star in the midst of a cloud, and as the moon at the full. And as the sun when it shineth, so did he shine in the temple of God. And as the rainbow giving light in the bright clouds, and as the flower of roses in the days of the spring, and as the lilies that are on the brink of the water, and as the sweet smelling frankincense in the time of summer. As a bright fire, and frankincense burning in the fire. As a massy vessel of gold, adorned with every precious stone. As an olive tree budding forth, and a cypress tree rearing itself on high, when he put on the robe of glory, and was clothed with the perfection of power' (Ecclus 50. 6-11).

THE EARTH AS YAHWEH'S MACROCOSMIC TEMPLE-TOWER

In the Hebrew temple, as we have seen, the elements of the cosmos are symbolically represented: the pillars supporting the world, the cosmic waters and rains, the fruitfulness they produce, etc. In this sense the temple is a microcosm of the fertile earth. Now in the vision of the temple priests the converse is also true, that the fertile earth is Yahweh's temple-tower or *ziggurat*, the macrocosm of the temple. This appears clearly in the 'first creation narrative' (Gen. 1-2. 4a). To appreciate the significance of this poem it is essential to recapture the 'architectural' mentality characteristic of this priestly tradition. The glory of Yahweh is reflected and expressed by the ordered and symmetrical proportions of his shrine. Just as order and symmetry appear in the construction of the tabernacle and temple by Yahweh's servants, so too they appear in the construction of the earth by Yahweh himself. The most perfect symmetry is achieved by a combination of ten, seven and three, the 'holy' numbers, in the proportions of the structure as a whole. Now in the first creation narrative this is conveyed obliquely by the structure of the poem itself. It is composed almost entirely of a number of formal refrains, each of which occurs either ten, seven or three times in the course of the poem. Thus 'And God said . . .' occurs exactly ten times, 'And it was so' seven times, 'And God saw that it was good' seven times, the description of the works seven times, the recording of the days seven times, the giving of names three times, the divine blessing three times. The works themselves are arranged in a schematic form in such a way that the works of the first, second and third days correspond respectively to the works of the fourth, fifth and sixth. Thus, the light on the first day corresponds to the planets on the fourth; the firmament of heaven dividing the waters of the second day corresponds to the birds and fish, the denizens of heaven and the waters, of the fifth; the dry land and the green herb of the third day corresponds to the creeping things, beasts, and man of the sixth day, for these inhabit the dry land and have the green herb for their food. Moreover the description of each particular creative work is fitted into a stereotyped formal framework, the essential elements of which may be summarized as follows: The opening phrase 'And God said . . .' is followed by a command, 'Let there be . . .', followed by the carrying out of the command, 'And it was so', followed by the approval of God, 'And God saw that it was good'. The whole is concluded by a statement of time: 'It was evening, it was morning, day one', etc. This formal framework recurs, with certain essential modifications, in the 'architectural' accounts of the

construction of the tabernacle.

What is the basic vision underlying all this formalisation? It appears to be the interpretation of an upholder of the priestly tradition writing from the perspective of the exile. Behind him the Jerusalem temple, the centre, probably, of his whole life, lies in ruins. About him his fellow Israelites, dangerously impressed by the splendour of the Babylonian temple-tower, need to be awakened to a new vision of the glory of Yahweh's dwelling. So the priestly writer composes a poem showing that the whole earth is Yahweh's temple-tower, constructed by himself alone with marvellous symmetry and order. Myths of the building of temple-towers in seven stages or stories were well-known in Babylon. 'See', says the priestly writer in effect, 'Yahweh built the entire world as his temple-tower in seven days'. Babylonian temples were decorated with lifeless representations of living creatures, and occupied by lifeless images of the gods. 'See', says the priestly writer of Israel, 'Yahweh has decorated his temple-tower with trees and fruit and living creatures that are *alive*. And at the centre and summit of the whole glorious structure he has set not a lifeless image, but a living and breathing image of himself, man'. Thus the vision which he had previously won from the symmetry, order and decoration of the temple is expanded and reapplied to the cosmos of which the temple was a microcosm.

THE NEW JERUSALEM AND THE NEW TEMPLE OF THE KABOD

We have seen the sanctuary of the *kabod*, the visible manifestation of God's presence to his people, grow from a tabernacle into a resplendent temple, and move from Mount Sinai to Mount Zion. Set on this shining 'mountain of God' the temple becomes a point of radiance and convergence for all creaturehood. 'In the last days the mountain of Yahweh's house shall be established in the top of the mountains and raised up above the hills, and all the Gentiles shall stream to it', Isaiah had predicted (Is. 2. 2). 'You are the light of the world', says our Lord to his disciples, 'A city set above the mountains cannot be hidden' (Mt. 5. 14). 'Sir, we would see Jesus', say certain Greeks to the apostles; they have arrived at the holy mountain of Zion just as our Lord is about to enter upon his passion. And immediately he replies to their request: 'The hour is come for the Son of Man to be *glorified*' (Jn. 12. 20, 21, 23). This is the hour, so often predicted, when his own body is to become the new temple of the *kabod*, the glory, a second paradise, microcosm of the fertile earth, containing within itself the 'navel' of the earth from which the sweet waters flow out to heal and quicken all the world. This

last point becomes supremely important for St John. It is he who records, with every possible emphasis, that cry of Jesus at the feast of Tabernacles, 'If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. As the scripture says, "out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water"' (Jn 7. 37-38). New Testament scholars have recently established that our Lord was here referring to his own body as the source of the living water, and not, as used to be thought, to the body of the believer. But the context of this saying is all-important. Jesus cries out in the temple itself on the last and greatest day of the feast of Tabernacles. This particular day is known as 'the feast of the joy of water-drawing'. At the supreme moment a priest leaves the temple precincts with a golden pitcher in his hand to draw water from the spring of Gihon at the foot of the holy mountain. Then he returns amid triumphant acclamations to pour the water out before the God of Israel. This ceremony is meant to induce Yahweh to pour out the life-giving autumn rains upon his holy land. And at this moment, in the popular belief, the waters of the subterranean lake rise up beneath the 'navel' stone of the temple and issue forth anew to irrigate all the earth. This is the background to the cry of Jesus. Earlier he has refused to go up to *this* feast (*eis ten heorten tauten*) because his *time* has not yet come (7. 8). But on the last and greatest day of the feast he is there, offering to all who believe his own *time* or *hour* as the new 'feast of the joy of water drawing', his own body as the new temple, his own 'belly' as the eternal source of the life-giving waters. And when the hour comes, the hour in which the glory of his Father shines out from the temple of his crucified body, we see that promise fulfilled. 'One of the soldiers pierced his side with a lance and there came forth blood and water; and he that saw has borne witness and his witness is true . . .' (19. 34). It is the river of life-giving water foretold long before by Ezekiel ' . . . flowing down from beneath the right side of the temple' (Ezek. 47. 1), to heal and quicken the whole world. For it is given to us believers to see not only a human body ravaged and crucified, but the new temple of God's glory, a new point of radiance and convergence set up on a new 'holy mountain'. For us that crucified figure is at once victim and lord of heaven and earth, living eternally in his own death, 'a Lamb standing, as though slain' (Rev. 5. 6). About his throne the powers of heaven and earth are ranged in an ordered hierarchy: the four living creatures (Rev. 4. 7), the twenty-four elders (4. 4), the myriads of angels (5. 11), the forty-four thousand of the sons of Israel (7. 4, ff.), the innumerable multitude of the Gentiles who have 'washed their robes and made them white in

the blood of the Lamb' (7. 9-14). For the Lamb a new Jerusalem is created, 'coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband . . . Behold the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things are passed away.' (21. 2-4). One by one we recognize the features of this city. It is set on a great high mountain (21. 10) and has 'the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal' (21. 11). The perfect symmetry of this city (21. 16-17) expresses the flawless perfection of God, as do the materials of which it is composed. 'The wall was built of jasper, while the city was pure gold, clear as glass. The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every precious jewel . . . the twelve gates were twelve pearls . . . *And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb*'. (21. 18-23). Here too is ' . . . the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month, and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations . . . ' (22. 1-2).

Such is the city and the temple towards which we make pilgrimage. We await the encounter in which 'God himself will wipe away every tear from our eyes' (21. 4), and the communion which is 'the marriage supper of the Lamb' (19. 9). Meanwhile our temple is his crucified body, our river of life the blood and water that issue from his side. 'He that testifies to these things says "Indeed I come quickly. Amen". Come, Lord Jesus'.