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HEAVEN IN THE HEBREW TRADITION

By

U. E. SIMON, M.Th., F.K.C.

THE VICTORIA INSTITUTE

22 DINGWALL ROAD, CROYDON, SURREY

HEAVEN IN THE HEBREW TRADITION

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SYNOPSIS

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DURING the two millennia, which the Bible covers, no specific Hebrew cosmology appears to have existed. The Hebrew view of the Universe merely reflects the general non-scientific milieu of the Near East, which no technical advance and no astronomical discovery disturbed. The flint that first engraved the Hebrew word for Heaven, *shamaim*, was directed by a mind whose cosmic information hardly differed, if at all, from that of the author of the last book in the New Testament, who wrote the Greek word *Ouranos*. Thus in the Old Testament a Deborah may sing "The earth trembled, the Heavens also dropped" (Jdg. 5: 4), and a St. John on Patmos in the New Testament may see "a door opened in Heaven" (Rev. 4: 1). This generally accepted world-view permitted of endless deviations. The Bible never presents us with a precise definition but with a large variety of endless shades of meaning. One could evidently believe anything about Heaven without being suspected of betraying the right faith. Only the fact that Heaven is a place does not admit of doubt; the vault rests upon pillars (Job. 26: 11), divided by the firmament from the waters and the world beneath (Gen. 1: 8; Prov. 8: 27 ff.).

An investigation into the origin of the word *shamaim* is disappointing; etymological enquiries do not always tell us what we want to know, names and words change their meaning, and origins lie hidden in the past. Just as the English word Heaven defies a simple explanation while its sound guards its secret (the alleged connection with "to lift" is but a guess), and just as the German *Himmel* probably never had the remotest connection with "to cover" (though it is a favoured conjecture sometimes

associated with the Greek *Oouranos*), so we also plunge uncertainly among various possibilities of origin.¹

The Hebrew *shamaim*—with which must be bracketed the Aramaic *shemaia*, the related *šmm* in Ugaritic, *šamu* in Accadian, *šmv* in old South Arabic—fails to reveal its origin and therefore has also given rise to many a guess. It has been conjectured that the Accadian *šamu* denoted a cover or a roof; on the other hand, the whole family of related words may have signified height at an early date. In Hebrew the words always appear in what looks like a plural ending. This, it is generally agreed, adds nothing to our knowledge and may even mislead us if we conclude that *shamaim* always denoted the layers of spheres of Heaven.

The ancient speculative regard for a word strikes a modern philologist as absurd, but it deserves some respect, for, however artificial the associations, they shed a great deal of light on the Biblical conception of Heaven as a place. The great Jewish and Christian expositors of Scripture were scholars and yet took an interest in unscholarly plays on words; paromasia was a time-honoured method of teaching essentials in non-academic circles.² Ordinary people could see with their own eyes that Heaven was a compound of fire and water, aglow with reds, pinks, and blues, full of wonders: did it not deserve to be called divine, to carry the name of the Lord? Thus the popular impression fills up the vacuum of linguistic obscurity. Imagination is stronger than semantics and grammar.

In the Midrash on Genesis (Gen. R. 4: 7) examples of interesting conjectures, amounting to inventions, can be found. By slight changes in the spelling of the word *shamaim*, or by the introduction of a new division of the letters of this word, the common form undergoes some strange changes: *sa-maim* means "laden with water"; *esh-umaim* equals "fire and water"; *she-maim* is a later form for "of water". Indeed, the linking up of water (*maim*) and Heaven (*shamaim*) is very ancient: e.g. in Gen. 8: 2 "the windows of Heaven were stopped and the rain from Heaven was restrained". When God speaks there is a "tumult of waters in the Heavens" (Jer. 10: 13), i.e. of the heavenly ocean. But the Rabbis go even beyond these ancient associations. They allude to *sammim* which suggest to them the different colours of paint of the chemicals which cause the glow of Heaven; they mention *shamam* to remind their pupils of the wonders from above; they speak of *shamim*, the weighing up of merits or sins, for Heaven is a place of judgment.

Before the conjectures, however, comes the direct experience by sight. Partly, at least, Heaven is visible from below, whereas to the other senses,

¹ Only with the Latin *Coelum*, which is akin to the Greek *Koilos*, and its derivatives, we are on safer ground. The notion of a hollow and a high place which covers the earth used to express what in general people believed about Heaven in pre-scientific cosmologies.

² Cf. E. G. Rashi, on Gen. 1: 8. See also A. Levene, *The Early Christian Fathers on Genesis*, pp. 135 ff.

except hearing, it is not known. But even the sight of men fails to penetrate the blue crust. The "inside" of Heaven would be unknown except for the special event when the Heavens are "open" to human discernment. This extraordinary experience belongs to the abnormal vocation and the privilege of prophetic seeing. It is, therefore, almost impossible to say whether such a vision can be classed with the normal process of perception. It varies according to the degrees of directness and only the recipient can measure and report the nature of his celestial contemplation. No doubt dream experience is the most common and lacks by no means in reality. The Heavens are obviously more transparent by night than by day. Jacob dreams when he sees a ladder set upon the earth whose top reaches Heaven and angelic traffic moves up and down. This dream experience not only shapes the inner life of Jacob but serves as the true type of religious experience which Jesus commends: after obeying their call his disciples will partake of the celestial vision. The "opened Heaven" is to become a conscious reality for them (Jn. 1: 50-51). Lest this be taken to be a metaphor one must recall Ezekiel's ecstatic vision (ch. 1) through which the visionary transcends his place on earth, by the river Chebar, so as to approach the "open Heaven". His vision is the *locus classicus* of celestial visions and assures the hearer by its very detail that the experience entails the seeing of abnormal things and creatures which pertain to the divine self-manifestation.

The extraordinary experience stresses the contrast with the normal state, when Heaven is a closed place. Then experience must be content with the knowledge of Heaven's existence without a perception of its real nature. Traditionally it becomes a hidden and mysterious place which excites a constant interest, just because it is both concealed and visible, always above men, unattainable, and eminently desirable. The Hebrews "consider" the Heavens; after a day's work they look up with admiration and ponder the size, structure, and meaning of this place.

The immensity of Heaven suggests to the beholder the plurality of the spheres behind the firmament. "The Heaven, and the Heaven of Heavens" (Deut. 10: 14; I Kings 8: 27) becomes the key expression and starting-point for speculative multiplications. The first popular division probably reckoned in terms of three Heavens. The Testament of Levi, before it suffered interpolations, tells of the first Heaven as a gloomy place where man's unrighteous deeds are seen and their punishment anticipated; the second Heaven contains fire and ice, ready for the day of judgment (3: 1 f.). In the third Heaven, God is enthroned and surrounded by his adoring angels (3: 4 ff.). But another tradition, defended by Rabbi Jehuda (b. Chag. 12 b), refers to Deut. 10: 14 literally and acknowledges only the existence of two Heavens, as if Heaven and Heaven of Heavens constituted two different realms. The Rabbis discuss the matter with noticeable restraint: the subject is not only elusive but

possibly also suspect. Yet the opposing Rabbi (Resh Laqisch) in proposing the seven Heavens has the majority opinion behind him. "The doctrine of the seven Heavens was prevalent in Judaism before and after the time of Christ" says Charles, for the figure seven always seems to have proved irresistible. The passage in the Talmud actually mentions the names of these Heavens—they are not found in the Christian tradition nor in the pseudepigraphical writings. The arrangement of the seven Heavens seems arbitrary and forced, "puerile in the extreme" according to Charles. The first Heaven is the *Wilson*, a word borrowed from the Latin *velum*=curtain. It covers the stars and is renewed every day. This curtain, though based on Is. 40: 22, resembles the notion of the cosmic mantle or the divine cloak;¹ it is not part of the Christian tradition. Ascending from this lowest Heaven we come next to the *Raqi'a'*, the firmament, on which the stars are fastened, then to the *Shechagim*, the place of grinding, a vaporous cloud, from which the Manna descends (Ps. 78: 23; 89: 7, 38); the fourth place is the *Zebul*, the eternal dwelling (I Kings 8: 13), indistinguishable from the *Ma'on*, the holy habitation of Deut. 26: 15, and from *Makon*, the place of I Kings 8: 39. The last name of all shows the ingenuity of the Rabbis. It is the '*Araboth* of Ps. 68: 5, which usually means deserts; but since God cannot very well ride "through the deserts" (E. T.) they conclude that it must be another name for Heaven.

Although the Christian tradition is free from these expositions it has its own difficulties. Jesus, Paul, and the early Church seem to have accepted the sevenfold cosmogony. The seven stars and the seven golden candlesticks of the Apocalypse (2: 1) are symbols of the early Christians' world-view in which Jesus figures as the light of the world in Heaven. This imagery is reminiscent of the candelabrum or *Menorah* of the Jews, itself a cosmic symbol of the light of the spheres. The numerical order in this connection presupposes respective degrees of both glory and virtue, and it is implied that there is an ascent from the lower to the highest sphere. Thus "the Father's house has many stations" comparable to the floors of a block of flats. When Jesus promises them this accommodation in the future (Jn. 14: 2) he knows that they will understand the meaning of being initiated into the order of the universe, for the floors of the house represent the corresponding spheres of Heaven. The picture of the hero who traverses one Heaven after another until he reaches God's own domain was well-known and popular. The Prophet in the Ascension of Isaiah advances in a manner similar to the Visionary of the Apocalypse. In the Ascension of Isaiah the Heavens are wholly without the taint of evil, probably because Christ has cleansed the Heavens. The distance between the Heavens is very great (7: 28). The seventh Heaven contains innumerable companies of angels and just men, awaiting the

¹ See R. Eisler, *Weltenmantel und Himmelszelt*, 1910.

exaltation of Christ and their own coronation (Ch. 9). A similar order is symbolically alluded to in Enoch (Chs. 24; 25) where the seven magnificent mountains illustrate the progression. 4 Ezra (7: 81-98) distinguishes between seven ways of confusion or Hell, and seven ways of rest and Heaven.

Much later a further revolution altered the spatial arrangement. It appears that the seven Heavens became a favourite and discredited theme of the heretics, and, as Charles believes, unnecessary for orthodox thought. Illogically, however, instead of simply abolishing or simplifying the divisions of Heaven, the Christians actually increased them to ten. The date of the original addition remains unknown. The tradition of the ten Heavens represents the blending of the traditional system with Pythagorean thought and may have been favoured also by the assumed existence of ten orders of angels. Possibly the passages in Is. 6, Ezek. 1 and 10, and Dan. 7: 9, 10, suggested this in the popular amplification of Enoch 14: 17 ff., which speaks of "ten thousand times ten thousand". But even in the Secrets of Enoch, the reference to the ten Heavens in chapter 22 is rejected by Charles as a late interpolation.

The importance of the numbering of the Heavens from a Biblical point of view focusses mainly upon St. Paul's somewhat casual reference to his own experience in the following well-known passage: "I know a man in Christ, fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I know not; or whether out of the body, I know not; God knoweth) such a one caught up even to the third Heaven. And I know such a man . . . how that he was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter" (2 Cor. 12: 2-4). The Apostle does not only retain the veil of the secret lest the glory of the mystical trance be lost through boasting: he confesses his own ignorance about the actual occurrence and his physical condition at the time. The vagueness recalls Ezekiel's simple and non-committal description: "the spirit lifted me up between the earth and the Heaven" (8: 3). Nevertheless, the Apostle mentions the number of the *third* Heaven though he does not make it clear whether the penetration into the third Heaven and into Paradise are one and the same thing, as is most probable. Unlike the hero of the third-rate Apocalypse of St. Paul (esp. chs. 21; 45) the Apostle is silent about the first and second Heavens. Yet, notwithstanding the obscurity "the condensed intensity of the narrative leaves little room for the play of fancy or exaggeration";¹ two things emerge with decisive clarity: there are degrees of Heaven and abnormal experiences, which when vouchsafed to some saints and others grant a momentary penetration into Heaven. The degrees of Heaven and the penetration are conceived of in spatial terms.

¹ Cf. Plummer, *2 Corinthians* (I.C.C.), *ad loc.*

Assuming, then, the third Heaven and Paradise to be the same thing (as in Apoc. Mos. 37: 5-6; 40: 2) it is still questionable whether St. Paul claims to have been translated to the highest or to an intermediary Heaven. The notions of Paradise—probably unknown among the non-Jewish Corinthians—are contradictory, although the term Paradise itself is of international usage. This Persian loan-word occurs in the Old Testament to describe the garden of Eden. It is a park or orchard: "I made me gardens and Paradises" (Eccles. 2: 5); Asaph is keeper of the king's Paradise (Neh. 2: 8). This enclosure is plainly on this earth. At the same time Eden-Paradise, as the garden of God, gained currency, not only through the story in Genesis but also in Ezekiel's utterances (28: 13; 31: 9). It is still on earth, but the unworthy are expelled from it. Even the school of Enoch (60: 8) retains the earthly Paradise, although Apocalyptic writers tend to think of it more and more as a place out of this world. In Isaiah 51, for instance, the consolation of Zion is not simply a return to the perfect garden but "her wilderness is made *like* Eden", a place of perfection. The comparison shows that already Eden-Paradise has been removed from this earth to a higher sphere. In the Apoc. Mos. (chs. 37 and 40) it is the place of transit for the just, who, with Adam, dwell there between Death and Resurrection.¹ In 4 Ezra (7: 36), it stands over against the furnace of Gehenna, with all its torments, for it offers endless delights. In Enoch (70) it is between Heaven and earth, at the remotest Northern corner of an unspecified Heaven (77: 3), or at the East, the gates of the Sun (42). The Syr. Ap. Baruch, whose division of Heaven into five or seven is very ambiguous, places it in the fourth Heaven (59: 8) or very high; within its domains there are the beauty of the living creatures, which are beneath the throne, and all the armies of the angels (51: 11). In the Talmudic tradition Paradise is not Eden, but rather a heavenly place of somewhat indistinct dimensions, suitable for mystic enquiry, with rooms or dwellings, commensurate with the record of men (b Chag. 14 b).

It is obviously not an easy task to explain St. Paul's account with reference to such a great number of potential parallels. Most commentators prefer the pre-Christian Testament of Levi (ignoring the later interpolations with the additional four Heavens), in which the hero ascends in his trance from a high mountain to the first Heaven of the sea, the second of brightness and height, and lastly the third of incomparable beauty. The first couple of Heavens contains armies, good and bad; these are set aside for warfare, retribution, and punishment. But the third Heaven is the highest and different, for it belongs to God (II. 5-III. 4). St. Paul has seen not only the immensity of the universe but has

¹ As also in the Secrets of Enoch, 8: 3-5; Paradise is "between corruptibility and incorruptibility"; the Lord rests on the tree of life in the middle during his visits there.

gazed upon the spiritual perfection of the highest realm. He does not report events in some intermediary sections of the universe nor does he wish to entice his converts with Gnostic speculations about emanations and spirits in the spheres. In his trance he has been made to follow the Messiah, the second Adam, to whom God has opened the gates of Paradise for the salvation of the Gentiles (T. Levi. 18: 6-10). So Irenaeus (Adv. Her. II, XXX, 7) confirms the general tradition that the Apostle to the Gentiles reached the highest Heaven; there he obtained the celestial sanction for his mission, with which, after all, his work among the Corinthians is concerned. To conform them to the will of God he has seen the height and perfection of all things as they will be at their final state.

It must be conceded, however, that St. Paul's restraint is inexplicable, despite the apologies, made for him by commentators, that the Corinthian context explains it. Would someone thus initiated, albeit in a temporary trance, really wish to be silent about the highest Heavens? Hardly so: and indeed, the Apostle declares himself that he is willing to glory "on behalf of such a man". He looks upon the entranced visionary almost as another person, of whom he can speak objectively and *without* restraint. This high estimate, on his part, of visionary and vision seems to confirm, from an unexpected quarter, that the third Heaven is Paradise and that both are the highest of God. It compels us to set aside even the evidence of Lk. 23: 43; there the penitent malefactor is almost certainly to "be in Paradise" as in an intermediary state, either as envisaged in Apoc. Mos. (chs. 37 and 40) or perhaps even as a place of punishment in Heaven. Places of retribution and even torment are in Heaven, according to some apocalyptic passages (e.g. T. Isaac, pp. 146 f.), and Hell and Paradise were neatly balanced, at least according to the Secrets of Enoch (7: 1-3; 10: 1-5). The Lukan word of our Lord, however, conveys consolation because Jesus will be with the dead man; even in Paradise, whether the place of judgment, or of waiting, he will not be alone. Jesus will remember him in that place, where in fulfilment of Daniel's vision the fiery judgment of the thousands (7: 9-10) must occur. Paradise oscillates in meaning between serene peace and final bliss on the one hand, and judgment on the other.

St. Paul's interest is not devoted to cosmogony but to this final state, already apprehended in the vision. At the end of the world this Paradise descends from Heaven to earth or it ascends from the earth into Heaven. Both ideas were common and popular. The moving and connecting impetus to this transport is the movement of the redeemed: "To him that overcometh (namely, in martyrdom), to him will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God" (Apoc. 2: 7). It may be in earth or in Heaven, but it is certainly near the throne of God, for the tree of life which bears the fruit for the healing of the nations (Apoc. 22: 2) grows on the river-bank of the city of God. Even in this eschato-

logical picture Paradise remains the Park-garden of God, though it is no longer an intermediary clearing-house but the goal of the redeemed. It is not surprising that the final location in the tradition does not place it on earth but in the highest Heaven, following, in this respect, the highly individualistic account of St. Paul.

Heaven is, therefore, not only invoked for authority and adored for its awful majesty, but also looked upon as a happy place, albeit one of judgment. The blessedness of Heaven is no doubt inferred from the impression of light and purity. The firmament shines with brightness (Dan. 12: 3) under God's feet: the work of sapphire brilliance has the transparent clarity of the very Heavens. God's strength is in the skies, the firmament of his power, and is compared to the metal of a molten mirror (Job. 37: 18), the reflection of the superbly strong and blinding Light. Thus light and energy and matter together make up the pattern of the glory which men perceive in their vision of the sky. In that sense "the Heavens proclaim God's glory and the firmament shows his hands' work" (Ps. 19). The natural enjoyment of this daily unfolding of the beauty of holiness is universal and spontaneous and belongs to this world. But the apocalyptic protest balances this view by insisting that the real vision of the inner beauty of Heaven is barred to the ungodly and only the worthy victor in the strife sees beyond the natural spectacle. This supernatural Heaven is another place than anything known to men. It has grown out of the visible phenomenon. The heavenly Jerusalem is "above", with foundations of sapphire, pinnacles of rubies, gates of carbuncles, borders of pleasant stones and the Temple and its treasures. The felicity of Heaven consists in the faith that all these things exist already in their perfection.

The paradox between Jerusalem that is on the map of the earth and the heavenly Jerusalem is peculiar to the Christian conception of Heaven. The Jewish ideology, on the whole, hoped for the vindication of Jerusalem in this world and did not go beyond the picture in Isaiah 54: 11 ff.; even the equation Jerusalem=Paradise (as interpolated in Syr. Ap. Bar. 4: 2 ff.) does not invalidate the political expectation. Yet the notion of a cosmic city of God was also known in these circles: Adam, Abraham, and Moses had seen that imperishable city for which the godly are destined (4 Ezra 8: 52). St. Paul transcended the earthly conception by stressing the freedom of the exalted Jerusalem (Gal. 4: 24) at the expense of that below, and in *Hebrews* (12: 22) the decisive identification has been made: "ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem . . .", and that at a time when the earthly city had probably been sacked by the Romans. The end of all history coincides with the coming down of this heavenly Jerusalem (Ap. 21: 2), and it is this city after which the Christians seek, the sole abiding social reality (Hebr. 13: 14). There stands the throne of God (Apoc. 4: 2 ff.) with the

fiery chariot (Dan. 7: 9-10; b Chag. 13 a), the living beasts and the crystal sea. There the heavenly treasures are stored away which are absolutely safe (Mt. 6: 20) and rewards are received in recompense for earthly title-deeds (Mt. 19: 21); the capital for future living (I Tim. 6: 19) and the heavenly house of every individual citizen on earth (II Cor. 5: 1 ff.) is kept in readiness there, and from thence eternal life is bestowed (Jn. 6).

The spatial paradox between "here" and "there", which in its sharpest form is peculiar to the Christian tradition, decrees a corresponding temporal contract between "now" and "then". The two conflicting aspects of time—permanence and transitoriness—are held together in a strange dialectic, and Heaven provides the key to the puzzle of duration. On the one hand the Heavens were made to stand for ever, for the Old Testament view of the creation is not to be annulled. Thus God's faithfulness is often compared in the Psalms to the stability of Heaven, Sun, Moon, and the stars; men swear by Heaven as a permanent witness (Mt. 6: 34). The Heaven of the Christian tradition—in which the Father dwells and from which the Son descends and from whence the Holy Spirit is received—is unquestionably felt to be stable and permanent. On the other hand, the apocalyptic sentence of the dissolution of Heaven pronounces the instability of the whole universe: "The Heavens that now are, and the earth . . . have been stored up for fire" (2 Peter 3: 7). This tradition of the darkening of the sun and the eclipse of the moon and of the stars falling from Heaven, and of Heaven itself being rent and shaken, is as important in Apocalyptic thought as that of the stability of the universe. Indeed cessation defeats permanence, the Heavens tremble, lose their light, and melt away, notwithstanding their immensity, beauty, and strength. This great catastrophe precedes God's judgment (Mk. 13; cf. Assump. Mos. 10; En. 80; 83: 3 f.; 4 Ezra 5: 4; 6: 20; Sibyl. Or. III. 796 ff.), and this judgment, according to the Christian Gospel, follows immediately upon the appearance of Jesus Christ. The cosmic upheaval—"Heaven was removed as a scroll when it is rolled up"—is the climax of the judgment at the opening of the sixth seal (Rev. 6: 12-14). Thus a definite Christian bias severs the idea of the end of the world from the common stock of chaotic events in the universe. The Parousia governs the dissolution of the age.

Permanence and instability became in apocalyptic thought the warp and woof of the cosmic fabric. On the one hand, "Heaven is my throne" (Is. 66: 1), the Father is in Heaven, the will of God is done in Heaven; on the other "all the host of Heaven shall be dissolved, and the Heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll . . . for my sword has drunk its fill in Heaven" (Is. 34: 4-5). The permanence of Heaven derives from the perfect creation, i.e. the providential order "of the world and the things therein", is dissolution from evil and rebellion.

In most prophetic utterances of the Old Testament the moral problem concerns the present earth and has little or nothing to do with a celestial cataclysm. "Heaven and earth" belong together but they are not thought of as indivisible. Heaven is not only more immense and awful than the earth but also purer and eternal, because uncontaminated by the abuses practised on earth. The latter, though also reflecting God's glory, is often given into the hands of wicked men and after a succession of wars heads towards a violent end and desolation. But Heaven is not implicated. The Prophet as the moral analyst detects the moral evil in man and it is man's abode which must suffer from the divine vengeance in the first place, while the Heavens remain untouched. The historical sense does not normally include the non-earthly realm in such disasters. Yet it must be confessed that the darkness, even if caused by domestic politics, always borders on a more than purely historical plane and evokes apocalyptic interpretations. Typically, for instance, Jeremiah views not only the earth as "waste and void", but even the Heavens are without light and deserted (Jer. 4: 23). The Apocalyptic visionaries returned to the earlier belief that evil comes not only out of the heart of man, but is a power outside man. This outlook was bound to influence their cosmogony.

In the Bible the underworld plays no important part; it lies under the earth to which it belongs. Despite its distance from Heaven, *Sheol*, the dusty hole of death and decay, is still within divine control: "Though they dig into Sheol thence shall my hand take them" (Amos 9: 2), for "If I make my bed in Sheol, behold thou art there" (Ps. 139: 8). The subterranean depth belongs to the world of this earth. Sheol remained too vague a place to account for the origin of evil and to accommodate the consequences of the reign of sin. Even in the New Testament, although the fires of Gehenna endanger the wrathful, the adulterous, and the proud, and consume their souls and bodies, and although the gates of Hades would fain shut upon the failing Church, the world is not divided into Heaven, Earth and Underworld.

The Apocalyptic tradition exercises a surprising restraint with respect to the underworld and locates the seat of evil not on earth but in the universe. A paradox inevitably ensues, for God had excluded the waste and void, the slimy, inert evil when he divided the world into "Heaven and Earth", breaking "the heads of the sea-monsters . . . of Leviathan . . . cleaving fountain and flood" (Ps. 74: 13-15). His order and light ended the darkness of Chaos. Nevertheless, the forces beneath and behind the chaotic are still permitted to surge up, endeavouring to intrude into the spatial world. They enter the historical processes on earth and, in the view of the apocalyptic writers, transcend the earthly confines.

According to the Apocalyptics the unity of "Heaven and Earth" extends, therefore, not only to God's domain but also to the incursion of

evil. Since Satan and the fallen Angels were originally celestial dwellers, it is by no means absurd to speak of Hell in Heaven. The rebels' corner is above, and from the second Heaven, according to 2 En. 7: 1-3, or the fifth Heaven (2 En. 18), the Watchers spy out and attack the earth. From thence they introduce moral chaos and war and the forging of weapons (En. 7: 1; 69: 6). Thither the wicked depart to receive their recompense of torment. The passage in Daniel 7: 10 ("a fiery stream issued and came forth from before him") acted as a source for the notion of a celestial place of punishment. The law of correspondence decrees that there are always complimentary parts, Paradise and Hell, even in Heaven (b Chag. 15 a; Midr. Ps. 90: 3). In the Testament of Isaac the visionary sees mis-shapen animals in Heaven; these were once human beings and are now exposed to retribution as the prey of lions and demons and fire-flood. In the Gr. Apoc. Bar. (chs. 4-9), the seer visits the third Heaven where horrible serpents lie in wait for punishment. Here the underworld has arrived in force in Heaven.

Obscure as most of these passages are they explain why Heaven also lies under the sentence of dissolution. It is a place no longer wholly clean but implicated in revolt and in need of salvation. Hence the work of Christ affects the heavenly topography and the final manifestation of His Glory coincides with a cosmic cataclysm. Heaven becomes an area of peril and conflict before the Last Day, instead of being a place aloof and safe. The extreme Christian eschatology insists that Heaven must pass away so that its perfection may come. In the catastrophe no place is found for the present Heaven. Beyond lies the vision of the new Heaven, already existent in God and anticipated by hope in the Gospels. It is plainly a reality outside the present spatial universe and historical time. The last chapters of the Apocalypse reflect the eschatological hope that both the physical and spiritual constitution of the recreated universe neither need, nor provide for, the exigencies of the present age. This new Heaven is a "new place".