

FIVE

THE GOD OF THE SPIRITS OF ALL FLESH¹

But there is a spirit in man,
And the breath of the Almighty giveth them
understanding.²

Some thinkers have told us that to recognise limitation (Section 4) is to overcome it; while others have said that the instinct for worship is part of the human make-up. We need not ask here whether the reaching out for perfection which in religion is the passion for God creates the object which satisfies it. For Biblical writers the question would be meaningless; and their conviction would be part of our own answer.

It is the character of that conviction as well as its strength which I have tried to illustrate in this Section. God seems to be apprehended as the source not only of time and space and physical things (as in Section 3) but also of personal integrity and right living.

O God, thou art my God ; early will I seek thee:
My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee,
In a dry and weary land, where no water is.³

As the hart panteth after the water brooks,
So panteth my soul after thee, O God.
My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God:
When shall I come and appear before God?
My tears have been my meat day and night,

¹Num. 27: 16.

²Job. 32: 8.

³Ps. 63: 1.

While they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?
These things I remember, and pour out my soul within
me,

How I went with the throng, and led them to the house
of God,

With the voice of joy and praise, a multitude keeping
holyday.

Why art thou cast down, O my soul?
And why art thou disquieted within me?
Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him
For the health of his countenance.

O my God, my soul is cast down within me:
Therefore do I remember thee from the land of Jordan,
And the Hermons, from the hill Mizar.
Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts:
All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me.
Yet the Lord will command his lovingkindness in the
day-time,

And in the night his song shall be with me,
Even a prayer unto the God of my life.
I will say unto God my rock, Why hast thou forgotten
me?

Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the
enemy?

As with a sword in my bones, mine adversaries reproach
me;

While they continually say unto me,
Where is thy God?

Why art thou cast down, O my soul?
And why art thou disquieted within me?
Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him,
Who is the health of my countenance, and my God.

Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against an
ungodly nation:

O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man.

For thou art the God of my strength; why hast thou
cast me off?

Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the
enemy?

O send out thy light and thy truth; let them lead me:
Let them bring me unto thy holy hill,
And to thy tabernacles.

Then will I go unto the altar of God,
Unto God my exceeding joy:
And upon the harp will I praise thee, O God, my
God.

Why art thou cast down, O my soul?
And why art thou disquieted within me?
Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him,
Who is the health of my countenance, and my God.¹

Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord.

Lord, hear my voice:

Let thine ears be attentive

To the voice of my supplications.

If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities,

O Lord, who shall stand?

But there is forgiveness with thee,

That thou mayest be feared.

I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait,

And in his word do I hope.

My soul looketh for the Lord,

More than watchmen look for the morning;

Yea, more than watchmen for the morning.²

A Prayer of Moses the man of God.

Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place
In all generations.

¹Ps. 42, 43.

²Ps. 130: 1-6.

Before the mountains were brought forth,
Or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world,
Even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.

Thou turnest man to destruction;
And sayest, Return, ye children of men.
For a thousand years in thy sight
Are but as yesterday when it is past,
And as a watch in the night.
Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a
sleep:

In the morning they are like grass which groweth up.
In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up;
In the evening it is cut down, and withereth.
For we are consumed in thine anger,
And in thy wrath are we troubled.

Thou hast set our iniquities before thee,
Our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.
For all our days are passed away in thy wrath:
We bring our years to an end as a tale that is told.
The days of our years are threescore years and ten,
Or even by reason of strength fourscore years;
Yet is their pride but labour and sorrow;
For it is soon gone, and we fly away.

Who knoweth the power of thine anger,
And thy wrath according to the fear that is due unto
thee?

So teach us to number our days,
That we may get us an heart of wisdom.

Return, O Lord; how long?
And let it repent thee concerning thy servants.
O satisfy us in the morning with thy mercy;
That we may rejoice and be glad all our days.
Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast
afflicted us,
And the years wherein we have seen evil.

Let thy work appear unto thy servants,
And thy glory upon their children.
And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us:
And establish thou the work of our hands upon us;
Yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.¹

And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me,
I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am
Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt.

And now be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves,
that ye sold me hither, for God did send me before you
to preserve life. For these two years hath the famine
been in the land: and there are yet five years, in the
which there shall be neither plowing nor harvest. And
God sent me before you to preserve you a remnant in
the earth, and to save you alive by a great deliverance.

So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God.²

I, even I, am he that comforteth you: who art thou,
that thou art afraid of man that shall die, and of the
son of man which shall be made as grass; and hast for-
gotten the Lord thy Maker.³

How art thou fallen from heaven, O day star, son of
the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground,
which didst lay low the nations!

And thou saidst in thine heart, I will ascend into
heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God;
and I will sit upon the mount of congregation, in the
uttermost parts of the north: I will ascend above the
heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High. Yet
thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the uttermost
parts of the pit.

¹Ps. 90.

²Gen. 45: 4-8.

³Isa. 51: 12-13.

They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, they shall consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; that made the world as a wilderness, and overthrew the cities thereof; that let not loose his prisoners to their home?

All the kings of the nations, all of them, sleep in glory, every one in his own house. But thou art cast forth away from thy sepulchre like an abominable branch, clothed with the slain, that are thrust through with the sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcase trodden under foot.

Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial, because thou hast destroyed thy land, thou hast slain thy people.¹

Now the Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses flesh, and not spirit.²

Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyre, Thus saith the Lord God: Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I am a god, I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the seas; yet thou art man, and not God, though thou didst set thine heart as the heart of God: behold, thou art wiser than Daniel; there is no secret that they can hide from thee: by thy wisdom and by thine understanding thou hast gotten thee riches, and hast gotten gold and silver into thy treasures: by thy great wisdom and by thy traffic hast thou increased thy riches, and thine heart is lifted up because of thy riches.

Therefore thus saith the Lord God: Because thou hast set thine heart as the heart of God; therefore behold, I will bring strangers upon thee, the terrible of the nations: and they shall draw their swords against the

¹Isa. 14: 12-20.

²Isa. 31: 3.

beauty of thy wisdom, and they shall defile thy brightness. They shall bring thee down to the pit; and thou shalt die the deaths of them that are slain, in the heart of the seas.

Wilt thou yet say before him that slayeth thee, I am God? but thou art man, and not God.¹

For there shall be a day of the Lord of hosts upon all that is proud and haughty, and upon all that is lifted up; and it shall be brought low: and upon all the cedars of Lebanon, that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan; and upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up; and upon every lofty tower, and upon every fenced wall; and upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all pleasant imagery. And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be brought low: and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. And the idols shall utterly pass away. And men shall go into the caves of the rocks, and into the holes of the earth, from before the terror of the Lord, and from the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake mightily the earth.

In that day a man shall cast away his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made for him to worship, to the moles and to the bats; to go into the caverns of the rocks, and into the clefts of the ragged rocks, from before the terror of the Lord, and from the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake mightily the earth.

Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?²

Though thou mount on high as the eagle, and though thy nest be set among the stars, I will bring thee down from thence, saith the Lord.³

¹Ezek. 28: 2-10.

²Isa. 2: 12-22.

³Obad. 1: 4.

O thou king, the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father the kingdom, and greatness, and glory, and majesty: and because of the greatness that he gave him, all the peoples, nations, and languages trembled and feared before him: whom he would he slew, and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he raised up, and whom he would he put down.

But when his heart was lifted up, and his spirit was hardened that he dealt proudly, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him: and he was driven from the sons of men; and his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild asses; he was fed with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven: until he knew that the Most High God ruleth in the kingdom of men, and that he setteth up over it whomsoever he will.

And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this; but hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou and thy lords, thy wives and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified.

Then was the part of the hand sent from before him, and this writing was inscribed. And this is the writing that was inscribed, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN.

This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and brought it to an end. TEKEL; thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. PERES; thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.

Then commanded Belshazzar, and they clothed

Daniel with purple, and put a chain of gold about his neck, and made proclamation concerning him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom.

In that night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was slain.¹

Who knoweth not in all these,
That the hand of the Lord hath wrought this?
In whose hand is the soul of every living thing,
And the breath of all mankind.²

With him is strength and effectual working;
The deceived and the deceiver are his.
He leadeth counsellors away spoiled,
And judges maketh he fools.
He looseth the bond of kings,
And bindeth their loins with a girdle.
He leadeth priests away spoiled,
And overthroweth the mighty.
He removeth the speech of the trusty,
And taketh away the understanding of the elders.
He poureth contempt upon princes,
And looseth the belt of the strong.
He discovereth deep things out of darkness,
And bringeth out to light the shadow of death.
He increaseth the nations, and destroyeth them:
He spreadeth the nations abroad, and bringeth them in.
He taketh away the heart of the chiefs of the people of
the earth,
And causeth them to wander in a wilderness where
there is no way.³

Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God
afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places that I

¹Dan. 5: 18-30.

²Job 12: 9-10.

³Job 12: 16-24.

shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord.¹

There is no wisdom and there is no understanding and there is no counsel against the Lord.²

Which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him.³

The spirit of man is the lamp of the Lord,
Searching all the innermost parts.⁴

The souls which I have made.⁵

If thou sayest, Behold, we knew not this:

Doth not he that weigheth the hearts consider it?
And he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it?⁶

For man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.⁷

Thou, even thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men.⁸

Hear the causes between your brethren, and judge righteously between a man and his brother, and the stranger that is with him. Ye shall not respect persons in judgement; ye shall hear the small and the great alike; ye shall not be afraid of the face of man; for the judgement is God's.⁹

¹Jer. 23: 23-24.

²Prov. 21: 30 (A).

³Zech. 12: 1.

⁴Prov. 21: 30.

⁵Isa. 57: 16.

⁶Prov. 24: 12.

⁷1 Sam. 16: 7.

⁸1 Kings 8: 39.

⁹Deut. 1: 16-17.

God standeth in the congregation of God;
In the midst of the judges he judgeth.¹

I will not justify the wicked.²

Thou shalt not oppress an hired servant that is poor
and needy, whether he be of thy brethren, or of thy
strangers that are in thy land within thy gates: in his
day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall the sun
go down upon it; for he is poor, and setteth his heart
upon it.

Lest he cry against thee unto the Lord, and it be
sin unto thee.³

All my bones shall say, Lord, who is like unto thee,
Which deliverest the poor from him that is too strong
for him,
Yea, the poor and the needy from him that spoileth
him.⁴

The Lord of hosts is exalted in judgement, and God
the Holy One is sanctified in righteousness.⁵

He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker:
But he that hath mercy on the needy honoureth him.⁶

I know that the Lord will maintain the cause of the
afflicted,
And the right of the needy.⁷

Whoso mocketh the poor reproacheth his Maker.⁸

He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord.⁹

¹Ps. 82: 1 (A).

²Exod. 23: 7.

³Deut. 24: 14-15.

⁴Ps. 35: 10.

⁵Isa. 5: 16.

⁶Prov. 14: 31.

⁷Ps. 140: 12.

⁸Prov. 17: 5.

⁹Prov. 19: 17.

In the day that God created man, in the likeness of
God made he him.¹

The rich and the poor meet together:
The Lord is the maker of them all.²

Lord, I have called upon thee; make haste unto me:
Give ear unto my voice, when I call unto thee.
Let my prayer be set forth as incense before thee;
The lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.
Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth;
Keep the door of my lips;
Incline not my heart to any evil thing.³

I delight to do thy will, O my God;
Yea, thy law is within my heart.⁴

The way of the just is uprightness: thou that art upright
dost direct the path of the just.⁵

Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God:
Thy spirit is good; lead me in the land of uprightness.⁶

Thou triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness.⁷

The upright shall dwell in thy presence.⁸

¹Gen. 5: 1.
²Prov. 22: 2.
³Ps. 141: 1-4.

⁴Ps. 40: 8.
⁵Isa. 26: 7.
⁶Ps. 143: 10.

⁷1 Chron. 29: 17.
⁸Ps. 140: 13.