

PRAYER IN THE BIBLE

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Rabbi

Thesis

by

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This thesis is humbly dedicated to
my father and my mother
Selig and Serel Finkelstein
who taught me how to pray.

Table of Contents

Introduction

Chapter I. Psychological Approach to Prayer

- A. General Prayer page 1.
- B. Biblical Prayer page 3.

Chapter II. Origin and Development of Prayer

- A. General Prayer page 9.
- B. Prayer and Sacrifice page 15.
- C. Mysticism and Prophetic Religion page 20.
- D. Origin and Development of Biblical Prayers page 23.
- E. Prayer and Sacrifice in the Bible page 26.
- F. Mysticism and Prophetic Religion in Biblical Prayers page 30.

Chapter III. The Prayers of the Bible

- A. Petitional Prayers page 37.
- B. Intercessory Prayers page 52.
- C. Thanksgiving Prayers page 55.
- D. Blessings and Curses page 58.
- E. Confessional Prayers page 63.
- F. Vows page 66.
- G. Book of Jeremiah page 67.

Chapter IV. Jeremiah

page 69.

Chapter V. Conclusion

page 75.

Notes

page 76.

Introduction

The Bible is the great religious classic of the world; prayer is the expression of religion. We hope that by our study and analysis of Biblical prayer to gain an insight into the religion of men, to recapture the religious genius of a race who poured out their hearts to a God, who was real to them--as real as their own sorrows--and found in that communion the strength that cometh in the night.

We, men of little faith, lost in a labyrinth of cold reality, pray for a glimpse of that greater reality which came to Moses and Jeremiah--the vision of a God and a purpose, a dream and a guiding star.

We hope we shall succeed--not only in collecting specimens of prayers and utterances from the lips of the past--but also to catch a glimpse of the robe of God and to hear, even if only faintly, the voice of a Job, a Moses, a Jeremiah whispering through our pages.....

I. Psychological Approach to Prayer

A. General Prayer

"We hear in these days of scientific enlightenment a great deal of discussion about the efficacy of prayers and many reasons are given why we should not pray, while others are given us why we should. But in all this, very little is said of the reason why we do pray....The reason we pray is simply that we cannot help praying." ¹

With this introductory suggestion by William James, we embark on our study of prayer, a religious and spiritual expression, universal and eternal. Man has never been without some form of prayer; mankind will never outgrow prayer; truly has it been said that man is a "praying animal." Harry Emerson Fosdick adds that "prayer is a native tendency....any crisis which shakes us out of our mere opinions down to our native impulses is likely to make us pray." ²

What a multiplicity of forms prayer has assumed! A cry of distress, a child-like entreaty for life, health and happiness, a petition for bread, a yearning for God, a vengeful thirst, a heroic intercession for enemies, a humble confession of guilt, a joyous thanksgiving, an artistic flight into mysticism. Every emotion, every occasion lends itself to the beauty of prayer--and all of us pray. Why?--to fortify, to reinforce, to enhance one's life. Prayer is the expression of a primitive impulse to a higher, richer life--a longing for life, purer and

more blessed. This is the psychological root of prayer. But this root and essence is not prayer's most peculiar aspect; there is something deeper; what is that religious impulse that makes a man pray; what does a person think when he prays?

Three thoughts are present in a true prayer-experience; faith in a living, personal God, faith in His presence, and a realistic fellowship between God and man. Each soul that prays--the hungry or the bitter, the vile or the loving, the selfish or the merciful--believes strongly in these three principles, for prayer is a turning to a Being--a "Thou" and an "I". Belief in the personality of God is the necessary pre-supposition, the fundamental condition of all prayers. But prayer is more; rising above the belief in God's personality, higher even than the assurance of His presence (the two basic qualities of prayer) it also conceives of a living relation, a converse, a direct contact of God and man. "Prayer is a living communion of the religious man with God, conceived as personal and present in experience, a communion which reflects the forms of the social relations of humanity." 3

B. Biblical Prayer

As we turn from our general analysis and definition of prayer to our specific application to Biblical prayer, we discover the same psychological approach, the stressing of the same essence and root of prayer.

Biblical prayer assumes the existence of a God. "For what great nation is there that hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is whensoever we call upon Him."⁴ In the twenty-third psalm, the theme foremost is that God lives;⁵ especially interesting of notice is the interchange of "He" and "Thou"--third and second persons--for to the psalmist so real, personal and intimate was his God! God lives; men believe and pray. Joshua at the defeat of Ai,⁶ David after the famine,⁷ Hezekiah on a sick bed,⁸ Samson with a dying prayer for vengeance,⁹ Jeremiah in a meditative mood--¹⁰ God was real and living to these men.

There was more to God than mere existence. Not only does God exist, but there is none else beside Him.¹¹ He has the pity of a father;¹² He hears the prayers of men.¹³ He helps; all nations are His; His arm is strong and mighty.¹⁴ Though above man, time and space, He is not removed from the world; He is the God of men; His eyes run to and fro.¹⁵ He searches the heart of man;¹⁶ His love is great and marvelous;¹⁷ to Him belongs mercy.¹⁸

Biblical prayer is the pouring of the heart by men who felt and lived with God, eager to talk, knowing that there was a Hearer, a Source of Hope and Inspiration. So real was the personality of God, that efficacy was assumed. Men prayer and knew their prayers would be heard and answered. Abraham praying for Abimelech,¹⁹ Moses

entreating for Miriam,²⁰ Elijah requesting the return of a dead
 child²¹ and for fire on the Mountain Carmel,²² Isaac²³ and Hannah²⁴
 begging for sons and Hezekiah beseeching for recovery.²⁵

Such are our Biblical heroes and their prayers. The Bible is filled with their utterances--cries in distress, petitions, confessions, intercessions, thanksgivings--all different colors and hues of man's longing for communion with his God. "Is there anything too wonderful for the Lord?"²⁶ And men prayed, eager for a richer, more blessed life, talking to a living God, whose ear was attentive and whose arm was never too short.

The Chronicler assumed that a pious king would consult God.²⁷ Prayer in the Bible is natural, sincere, earnest--even as the existence of need. Prayer is natural in a society where a God is so naturally accepted and heeded. It was easy for the Biblical characters to pray because they saw God in every deed of theirs, in every scene of their life. This was the God who had spoken to Adam²⁸ and Cain,²⁹ who had sent Moses,³⁰ who had whispered to Samuel in the sanctuary,³¹ who had ordered Elijah before a king.³² God assumed so important and vital a role in the daily experiences of men, that prayer became a natural procedure. We, men of little faith, are completely awed by that overwhelming faith in God that makes the prophets exclaim:

"Thou, O God, hast enthralled me and I am enthralled; Thou hast seized and overpowered me.
 I thought I will not need Him; I will not speak any more in His name, but it was within me as a raging fire, shut up in my bosom. I strove to withstand it but I could not." ³³

"For he who hath held converse with God hath perceived and heard His word; he who hath hearkened to His word, must proclaim it." ³⁴

"If a lion roars who can but fear; if the Lord speaks, who can but prophesy?" ³⁵

Once we were convinced that the Bible showered prayers on all its creatures, we were rudely awakened and shocked by the omission of prayers in incidents and places we felt they were needed and where men of great faith would have prayed. The Book of Ecclesiastes is absolutely devoid of prayer; surprised are we that Abraham (who prays at his sacrifices) ³⁶ offers no prayer of thanksgiving at the deliverance of Isaac. ³⁷ Jacob, hearing of the death of Joseph, mourns but does not pray; ³⁸ when he hears of his fortunate recovery, he faints, but does not pray. ³⁹ Chronicles, replete with prayers, has no word resembling communion with God at the great occasions of the Hezekiah and Josianic reformations. ⁴⁰ The greatest of all disappointments is the story of Joseph, considered the most elegant and artistic story in the Bible and lacking a prayer to God. True, the presence of God is felt. ⁴¹ A reading of the story leaves one with the impression that Joseph lived a life of prayer and the narrator feels no need for including actual prayers. Yet we wonder, and wildly hope that this simple, beautiful tale would have been adorned with a few outpourings of the heart of Joseph, in sorrow or gladness, hatred or love.

In the main, our thesis holds that prayer occupied an important and natural position in the life of Biblical men. It

was their method and technique to attain a higher life, a seeking after God. In its highest form, prayer transcended mere lip- worship and expressed itself in action, in deed. What prayers more powerful in their search for God and for a higher life than the prophetic utterances:

"Seek good and not evil, that ye may live and that the Lord God of Hosts may be truly with you as ye believe. Hate evil and love good and establish justice in the court of justice. Perchance God might show mercy unto decimated Joseph." 42

"He hath told thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justice and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God!" 43

"Cleanse yourselves. Purify yourselves. Remove your wicked deeds from mine eyes. Cease to do evil. Learn to do good." 44

"Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, And that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him, And that thou hide not thyself from thy own flesh? Then shalt thou call, and the Lord will answer; Thou shalt cry, and He will say: 'Here I am.'" 45

We have dealt with the naturalness of Biblical prayers. The other aspects--sincerity and earnestness--also prevail. Great men of true prayer insisted upon these two qualities. Hosea derides the prayer of those whose hearts are not attuned to the divine.⁴⁶ Jeremiah strikes the very core of prayer as he cries out: "Ye shall seek Me and find me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart."⁴⁷ The Psalmist echoes: "Were my heart conscious of guilt, the Lord would not have hearkened."⁴⁸ How stirring with its call for sincerity and appeal for decency is the Deuteronomic injunction: "When thou hast made an end of tith-

ing....and hast given it unto the Levite, to the stranger, to the fatherless and to the widow....then thou shalt say before the Lord.⁴⁹ There is a sincerity, a rugged honesty in the prayer of a Jacob, with his insistence that he is unworthy of all the love God has shown him;⁵⁰ there is a rare psychological attitude in Hezekiah's appeal that God should remember how he walked before Him in truth and with a perfect heart;⁵¹ there is unimpeachable reverence in a Job loudly declaring his innocence.⁵² It is not in the spirit of boldness, not in rebuke, not in unwarranted audacity, but an attitude of sureness, sincere regard for a righteous God that makes men dare utter such words.

At times, the earnestness and sincerity assume physical forms. Weeping accompanying prayer is found in the cases of Hezekiah,⁵³ Ezra⁵⁴ and Nehemiah.⁵⁵ Signs of mourning are employed in the story of Joshua.⁵⁶ Job lies prostrate, rending his robe and shaving his head.⁵⁷

The posture most common for Biblical prayers is prostration.⁵⁸ There are also cases of the face on the ground,⁵⁹ the bowing of the head,⁶⁰ the falling on the face.⁶¹ Elijah prays with his head between his knees.⁶² Daniel kneels;⁶³ Hannah⁶⁴ and Solomon⁶⁵ and Jeremiah⁶⁶ stand while they pray. The hands were stretched out in prayer.⁶⁷ The places towards which the hands were directed were usually the Temple, a shrine or heaven.⁶⁸

The terms of address indicate the attitude of the worshipper.

As a rule, the mode of address is the essence of simplicity. There is the simple "O God."⁶⁹ Sometimes it is "my God";⁷⁰ at others it is "O Yahveh."⁷¹ Frequently Yahveh's relationship to Israel is mentioned.⁷² God is called father;⁷³ He is addressed as the "God of vengeance,"⁷⁴ and again as "the good."⁷⁵ The idea of the merciful God is also expressed in the types of invocation.⁷⁶ Sometimes the invocation is lengthy; especially is this true of post-exilic times and Nehemiah.⁷⁷ Abraham begins a prayer by asking for permission for a moment's time.⁷⁸

II. Origin and Development of Prayer

A. General Prayer

The problem of the origin of prayer and its primitive roots would lead us into folk-lore, primitive religions, psychology and sociology--outside the scope of our field of interest. All we shall attempt in that direction, therefore, is to indicate and hint at certain suggestions. We are primarily concerned not with how did prayer begin, but once the phenomenon exists, how did it express itself. What prayers are there in the Bible; what do they convey? Prayer is the heart and center of religion. We are hoping that by a study of Biblical prayer, we can attain an intimacy with Biblical religion, with men and ideals that color our lives to-day. Our interest is not in discovering the date prayer began or the first need that made our primitive ancestor seek comfort with his God. We accept the existence of prayer; that problem precedes our study. We would gain an insight into religious experiences of Biblical characters, their reactions, their aspirations, their life--for prayer is the connecting bond. We are guided by men like Rothe¹ and Sabatier²; to them the prayers of the past opened great expanses and mighty horizons.

The many theories that do exist with regards the origin of prayer are closely bound up with the particular protagonist's view as to the origin of worship and religion. One conjecture

is that "in its simplest and most primitive form, prayer is the expression of a desire cast in the form of a request, to influence some force or power, conceived as supernatural....Genetically, prayer is related to the spell or charm....In performing a magical act the performer often supplements the mimetic action by indicating in a phrase or two what it is that he wishes to be done...." ³

Tiele attacks the whole problem from a different viewpoint, and arrives at a different conclusion. "A sentiment of kinship with the superhuman powers, as well as a sense of entire dependence upon them, impels the religious man to seek communion with them." ⁴ Defiantly attacking those who join prayer with magical rites, Robertson Smith argues that "from the earliest times, religion, distinct from magic and sorcery, addresses itself to kindred and friendly beings, who may indeed be angry with their people for a time, but are always placable except to the enemies of their worshippers. It is not with a vague fear of unknown powers, but with a loving reverence for known gods who are knit to their worshippers by strong bonds of kinship, that religion in the only true sense of the word begins." ⁵

These are several of the views of students of the origin of prayer. Was prayer, originally, a magic rite whereby gods and spirits were exorcised and subjected to the human will; was the original purpose of prayer an endeavor to propitiate the hostile powers, or was prayer a feeling of reverence for gods men knew

before and to whom they felt attached? Each angle has its protector; each can be defended with facts and opinions. To us, we must admit, Smith's theory sounds most convincing and we must agree with Tiele that prayer could not have arisen from a magic rite to coerce the deity just as superstition could not have been the mother of religion.

Though shrouded in a mist of obscurity, the fact remains that prayer became a reality and primitive man began to call upon the Lord. At first, prayer was employed only intermittently; it was a call in the hour of need. Since certain crises--birth, marriage, death, sowing, harvesting--occur more or less regularly, there arises something that approximates an organized ritual. Generally speaking, prayer among primitive peoples remains a refuge in times of crisis for purposes of protection or propitiation.⁷

At very early stages, prayer developed in relation to a belief in power (mana) rather than definite superhuman personalities. We find also the existence of certain individuals to whom were attributed superhuman powers and who were addressed by prayers. The spirits dwelling in natural objects were also frequently addressed in primitive prayer. With the development of the gods, the act of praying shifted to these new-found deities.

(As a final discussion of the development of prayer, we would present in detail Heiler's scintillating and scholarly

study. The spontaneous prayer of primitive man is the prototype of prayer; moreover it is the anticipation of the noble creations of later ages. A study of primitive prayer, therefore, is a necessary key to a complete understanding of the subject.)

The original incitement to prayer was the presence of a concrete, immediate need.⁷ It might have been famine or drought, danger in storm or lightning, the shame of childlessness or an attack by an enemy--a moment of danger or need. This need plus a sensitive emotional state (which is characteristic of primitive people) aroused the individual to pray so that the danger be averted and he be preserved; the will to live expressed itself in prayer.⁸ Primitive man was aware of his absolute dependence on higher powers; in crises, this consciousness awakened his vitality, giving him hope and refuge. An attitude of weakness, a feeling of complete dependence, an immediate need--and spontaneously primitive man invoked a divinity and cried for help. There is trust; there is fear; there is hope.

Faith in the existence of supernatural beings preceded man's prayers. "God must have revealed Himself to man before man, on his side, comes to Him."⁹ Man already possessed an idea of God. "The feeling of weakness and dependence awakened in distress can only raise this idea to a firm conviction; it cannot evoke it out of nothing."¹⁰

Alongside of "need" the "wish" is a second motive for prayer. Primitive man wishes for game, for a good harvest; this spontaneous wish changes itself into a prayer.

Primitive man, however, does not always wait until he falls into distress or cherishes a wish before he prays. There exist in his life regular seasons worthy of prayer--sunrise and sunset, seedtime and harvest, the changes of the moon.

The individuals in primitive society were bound together by a strong tribal bond and by a self-sacrificing altruism. Primitive man prays not only in his distress, but invokes the powers to send happiness to others--even, at times, to those outside their tribe, to people alien in race and blood. Altruistic sympathy is among the motives of primitive prayer.

It is also true that the emotion of joyful gratitude is among the motives of prayer. Usually, a petition precedes thanks-giving; the feeling of joy is bound up with the consciousness of dependence. Not only do petitional prayers call forth thanks-giving, but the occasions which we mentioned above. The consciousness of being dependent on some higher power for food led man to pray for food and then to thank the power for this satisfaction. The regular recurrence of the occasion gave rise to the custom of grace before meat. The custom of blessing at the table is a primitive idea; a blessing was also used for greeting. In fairness to primitive man, it must be added that the prayers of thanks were more than calculating; their primary motive was not an insurance that the gods would continue to be gracious and merciful; they were heartfelt prayers with no ulterior goal. Only in the religions where sacrifice became a "formal commerce" with the supernatural powers, does the thanksgiving prayer sink into

nothingness. (This may throw new light on the prophets' attack on sacrifice. Their ideal of true, genuine prayer was crippled by the institution of sacrifice; prayer, the prophets felt, could become genuine and meaningful only if this cold, calculating bargaining was overthrown).

Even in primitive prayer, there is a hint of mysticism, the adoration losing itself in God. Awe is another motive of prayer. The notion of power (mana, tabu) led men to fear, to reverence, to dread. The mystical prayer is based on this reverence and dread, dignified into thoughts of the holiness and love of God and the "Highest Good."

Ecstatic enthusiasm is our final motive. It means a passing out from the ordinary life into one, obsessed by the idea of the divine and the superhuman. It is a magnified praise of God.

We have outlined the occasions and motives of primitive prayer. One final problem arises which needs an answer: did the individual or the social form of prayer come first? The question of priority cannot be answered with certainty; Heiler is of the opinion that the prayer of individuals in personal need or wish is the original."

B. Prayer and Sacrifice

"Prayer was originally quite independent of sacrifice."¹² When the motive for prayer was a need or a feeling of gratitude, prayer was a simple, unadorned utterance. When this feeling gave way to a desire to win over the supernatural power by gifts, sacrifice and prayer were joined. It was the primitive psychology that produced "Ye shall never appear before Yahveh empty"¹³ that corrupted prayer, linking it with gifts and flattery so as to gain divine favor. Prayer is older; Sacrifice arises as an afterthought, something to give weight and certain efficacy to prayer.¹⁴ In time the two blend into one united service; even the terminology points to a connection.¹⁵

Sacrifice did not become the more important of the two. There are multitudes of cases (and these shall form the basis of our later study) where prayer is unaccompanied by any type of sacrifice or gift. Even at the occasions where sacrifice and prayer went hand in hand, the former assumed the subordinate position. As man progresses, as his culture advances, as his needs and wishes become more insistent, the maid-servant becomes the queen and sacrifice stands at the center of religion, prayer (never eliminated) relegated to a minor position. The level of a religion where this is true is lowered; the feeling of dependence on God is weakened; man begins to assume that God is dependent on man's gifts and offerings. The worshippers in a sacrificial transaction

frequently assume that they are God's equal or even His superiors. Since it is with prayer that we are primarily concerned, it may be well to emphasize the fact that even in the most developed sacrificial cult, prayer was never eliminated. When the great prophets decry the corruptness of religious worship, they specify both the sacrificial offering and prayer.

"What is the multitude of your sacrifices to me, saith the Lord?

I have enough of your holocausts of rams and the fat of fed beasts;
and in the blood of bullocks and he-goats I delight not.
And when you spread forth your hands
I hide mine eyes from you;
even if ye offer up many prayers, I will not hear:
Your hands are full of blood." 16

"I loathe, I despise your festivals,
I cannot abide your sacred assemblies.
When ye offer me sacrifices and gifts
I do not care for them,
and at your thank-offering of fatted calves I do not look.
Begone from me with the noise of your hymns!
To the music of your harps I will no longer listen." 17

The gifts are as varied as man's needs. Everything he has is placed on the altar, even though it mean a human life. The attainment of a higher stage of civilization brought about a different concept of sacrifice. People shrank from the gruesome offerings of an earlier age; offerings, they now felt, did not feed the gods; they were signs of reverence and dependence; objects of lesser value made their appearance--animals or parts of a human body (blood or hair). The idea of communion (which is the primary definition of prayer) was now stressed in the sacrificial cult. The divinity was not only appeased by the sacrifice, but he was invited as a guest.

Time passes and man is made wiser by his experiences and again his concept of sacrifice changes. Not always is his wish granted, even though the gift was most costly and precious; man no longer trusts his god. Instead of offering gifts, he lures his god into a conditional understanding--a vow. The vow is undoubtedly later than the prayer and sacrifice day.¹⁸ The feeling of dependence is completely shaken; even the bargaining is cheapened by this withholding from the god the gift until the latter make the first step. The means of persuasion also become more elaborate. The suppliant is polite, he flatters, appeals to God's interest, he threatens. He mentions his own worth, he humiliates himself, he works upon the weak side of god. Every emotion is employed. Man threatens to withdraw his sacrificial meals; he reproaches his god for being impotent and valueless; he appeals to sympathy; he cries and laments; he never grows weary of entreaty. It is not entirely shameless, for this primitive psychology, though it meant to persuade and influence, yet it also held an invincible confidence in the higher powers so that even though the prayer was not granted, more means, better means must be used.¹⁹ It must be remembered that the changeableness of God is an essential presupposition of primitive prayer.²⁰ So men continue to pray and pray, hoping for a change.

The great revolution in prayer came with the separation of prayer from sacrifice. Primitive prayer now becomes personal prayer. Breaking with the past, with gifts, with favors,

flattery and special occasions, prayer becomes a continuous practice of men who were moved by a burning desire for union with God. It may be the same motive of primitive time--peace and blessedness--but refined and enlightened. Man prayed not only in times of need or special occasions, but at all times; his life became a life of prayer.

There is a deeper difference between primitive prayer and this higher stage. Primitive man had a selfish end. His prayer was a bargaining, in which he acted and God responded; primitive man felt that his prayer was his own achievement, his idea. The truly religious man began to believe that his prayer was not his own achievement but came to him from God; God put into his heart the thoughts that result in prayer. "The mysterious impulse which drives him to prayer is the revelation of the indwelling

God at work in the deepest places of his soul."²¹ Prayer becomes the expression of all that stirs in the human breast. Primitive prayer had been petition and persuasion; now we behold the entire range of feelings, moods, emotions and values.

Primitive people had prayed at places where the gods dwelt. If there was no home, he built an altar and prayed; if his god was far away, he directed his hands or eyes towards the dwelling-place. Now prayer assumes the position that in the silence of the heart, in the stillness of the soul should man pray. Solitude becomes the "mother of prayer."²² Prayer takes the form of the inner perception of God. Jeremiah stealing away from the

crowds for communion with his God, the inward longing of God that makes Samuel exclaim: "Speak, O Lord, thy servant heareth."²³

"Every new creation in the sphere of religion has its origin in solitary prayer."²⁴

We have reached the great heights of prayer. Gone is the materialistic, the mechanical and magical prayer of the masses. Now it is the prayer of a great religious personality, a prayer born of religious experiences, carved from sorrow and anguish, love for humanity and desire for blessedness. It is the prayer of the psalmist seeking salvation--spiritual salvation: "Say to my soul, 'I am thy salvation'".²⁵ It is the longing of a Jeremiah for familiar, holy intercourse with God; it is the search for the effects so meaningful to the pious soul--strength in the trust of God, hope, steadfastness and inspiration. Prayer becomes an end in itself; it is the beautiful communion of a soul with its God.

C. Mysticism and Prophetic Religion

Two main types of personal prayer are found among religious personalities--the mystical and the prophetic. Since a discussion of this problem occupies so important a place in Heiler's treatment, we wish to present his point of view--as much as we deem of interest and value for our particular study.²⁶

Mystical prayer is a form of intercourse with God in which world and self are denied, in which human personality is dissolved and absorbed in the unity of God. Prophetic prayer, at the opposite pole from the mystical, is an uncontrollable will to live, an impulse to assert and enhance life, a passionate endeavor to realize aims and living values. Mysticism is passive and resigned; prophetic religion is active and ⁹challenging. The mystic aims at the extinction of the emotional life; in prophetic experience, the emotions blaze up.

Mysticism assumes the form of an emptied psychic life. It strips off everything human and earthly in a straining for nothing but God, the Highest Good, the supreme Value, the highest Spiritual Reality, the eternal Beauty. There is in mysticism a complete surrender, a blessed rest in God.

Born of a tenacious will to live, nurtured by confidence and hope, prophetic religion is a fighting struggle--upward--from doubt to assurance, from despair to courage, from fear to hope, from guilt to salvation. Faith is the basic impulse of prophetic

piety; a feeling of confidence in life that evokes an utterance:

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me." ²⁷

"If love and union are the central conceptions of mysticism, faith is the watchword of prophetic religion." ²⁸

The contrast between these two feelings is sharp--mysticism with its denial of life, prophetic religion with its unconquerable belief in life.

To the mystic, the idea of God is static. He draws into his being the gentle breath of divine peace. To the prophet, the idea of God is dynamic and active. He traces God's presence everywhere and always; God's wrath and dread, power and help, wisdom and mercy are ever present. The static God, outside time and space, has no relation to the world and history. Prophetic religion conceives of a revelation of God in history. To the prophet, God is the God of history.

Mystical morality has a negative significance; mystical ethics is individualistic and non-social. Prophetic religion strives for the realization of a social idea. It knows no morality that is not at the same time social, in fact, the social aspect is more important than the personal. Prophetic religion is revolutionary, attempting upheavals in the history of religious thinking; the prophets are creators and heralds of a purer religion. Their preaching is blunt and severe, firm and jealous.

Mysticism is not a Jewish inheritance but has penetrated from the syncretist mystery religions. ²⁹ Though mystical prayer has

something to offer, and at times attains a beauty and power, comparable to the greatest of man's prayers, it remains beneath the prophetic prayer, with its "personality-affirming", its values, history and purpose. The root of mystical prayer is a pure life, love, blessedness, faith in God, but its expressions, passive, static, negative are not to be classed with those of active, dynamic, living prophetic prayers.

"Mystical prayer is, in its most classical form, the sublimest kind of prayer....The serene and sublime contemplation of the summum bonum in which the devout person surrenders himself to the infinite God, appears to many as the purest and most tender, the most fervent and profoundest form of all prayers. Many people are inclined to call the mystical prayer, i.e., the ascent of the soul to the Highest Good, the most complete form of prayer. For even the prophetic type of prayer of the Bible does not show that refinement, tenderness, and world-denying spirituality characteristic of mystical prayer. The devotional religion of the Old Testament has not the impressive movement of mystical prayer. Nevertheless, the prayer of the Bible in its unpretentious simplicity and childlike sincerity of heart, in its healthy passion and original, native power stands incomparably nearer to genuinely human feelings than contemplative, mystical devotion in its calm renunciation and majestic solemnity, its melting tenderness and consuming, passionate surrender." ³⁰

D. Origin and Development of Biblical Prayers

We shall present here an examination of the types of Biblical prayers to indicate the development of prayer and religion. Let it not be thought that later prayers are always finer and profounder; prayers of hatred and vengeance are among the latest as at the earliest in the Bible. Generally (and we hope not too wildly) speaking, there is an evolution of Biblical prayers, the theme advancing from the crudest type of material petition to the lofty confessions and intercessions of the prophets. The descendants of men who had begged for corn, wine and oil and that their enemies might fall by the sword learned to pray for strength in the trust of God, beseeching God's mercy for others and yearning for a reign of justice and righteousness for all men.

As in all primitive prayer, the original incitement for Biblical prayer was the presence of a concrete, immediate need. Men need food, drink and raiment and so they prayed. Enemies were ever present at the very gates and so men prayed for victory and that the danger be averted. Our Biblical heroes asked for fatness and plenty of corn, cisterns and vineyards, oliveyards and fruit trees--these were the symptoms of a blessed life.³¹ Jacob prays that God might deliver him from the hand of his brother;³² Hezekiah, in mortal terror of the Assyrians, begs God to save him from Sennacherib.³³ "Save us" is the re-echoing theme of primitive prayer; it is the answer to a need, a crisis. There is the grim distress of women devouring their children and crying³⁴ unto the Lord; there is Samuel praying at the battle of Eben-

³⁵ ezer, Abijah at his war with Jeroboam, ³⁶ Asa before his assault on the Ethiopians. ³⁷ We see Samson begging for vengeance, ³⁸ and David blessing God when death has removed Nabal. ³⁹ The men who wander through the pages of the Bible were often confronted by distress and needs; they turned to a God in whom they believed and trusted. The need and the wish find expression in prayer.

Prayers at regular occasions are found in Biblical sources. A formally prescribed prayer must be offered by the worshipper after he places the basket of firstfruits before the altar. ⁴⁰ There is the form of the Priestly Benediction. ⁴¹ There is reference to a regular daily sacrificial service. ⁴² Individuals made ^{annual} pilgrimages to the shrines to worship and sacrifice. ⁴³ There seem to be city-sacrifices when all the people join in the festival; ⁴⁴ moreover there were regular celebrations at the coming of the new moon, which were, perhaps, accompanied by prayer. ⁴⁵

The blessing and the curse are among the types of Biblical prayers. ⁴⁶

Altruistic sympathy expressed itself in the intercessory prayer which is very common in the Bible. We behold Abraham interceding for Sodom and Gomorrah, ⁴⁷ Samuel interceding for his people. ⁴⁸ The life of Moses is a life of such prayers--now pleading for the removal of the plagues from the Egyptians, ⁴⁹ now asking God's forgiveness for rebellious Israel, ⁵⁰ now praying for the removal of leprosy from Miriam. ⁵¹ It is worthy of note that to Moses (who is considered the incomparable prophet) ⁵² the inter-

cessory prayer is attributed in its fullest extent. The great prophets appear frequently as intercessors--Elijah and Amos, Isaiah and Jeremiah.

Prayers of gratitude and thanksgiving find their place in the Bible. There is the short prayer of greeting; there is thanks-⁵³giving at the birth of a child,⁵⁴ and for recovery from illness.⁵⁵

Ecstatic enthusiasm and mysticism are also motives for the Biblical prayers in the Psalms. The yearning to be at one with the divine, to deny material qualities form the main theme of the prayers in the Psalms.

Every motive for prayer--need, wish, altruism, thanksgiving, mysticism--is present in Biblical prayers.

E. Prayer and Sacrifice in the Bible

Prayer and sacrifice are closely connected in Biblical passages. Abraham called upon the name of Yahveh after building an altar.^{55a} Job's intercession for his friends and Samuel's for the people were accompanied by sacrifice.⁵⁶ At the festivals celebrated at the various sanctuaries and later in the Temple, sacrifice played an important role and was always accompanied by prayer.⁵⁷ Seeking God and sacrifice even at a late date were connected.

With the development of the Temple rites and the sacrificial cult, genuine prayer became a rare object. The development of a priesthood, the advance in civilization that deemed a spotless ram of more worth in the eyes of God than a contrite heart made for a period in Biblical history, where the true soul of Jewish prayer was hidden and masked. Elaborate gifts and human sacrifices, ornate services and a materialistic communion with God became the order of the day. Genuine prayer was at its lowest point. There existed a spirit of bargaining, a shaken feeling of dependence, a cheapening of communion with God.

Genius is not dead forever and there arose in Israel men, whom we call prophets, who revolutionized the entire concept of prayer and sacrifice, communion with God and acceptance of divine favors. We behold a hint of their message in the story of the

sacrifice of Isaac and the reform along lines of human sacrifice;⁵⁸
in Leviticus 18:21 and 20:2-5⁵⁹ the reform became law--no human⁶⁰
sacrifice. There is another suggestion in the utterance:

"Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices,
As in hearkening to the voice of the Lord?
Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice,
And to hearken than the fat of rams."⁶¹

The great advance in religious thought came with the return of prayer to pre-eminence. "In Israel it was the great prophetic achievement of Moses to have made personal communion with Yahveh independent of all sacrificial rites."⁶² In prophetic religion, this concept reaches its climax--the sublime thought that prayer is the true sacrifice and the only one worthy of God; no need of burnt-offerings when there is love and communion with God.

"Ye shall know God by aspiring to know him.
Love do I desire, not sacrifices; knowledge of God, not holocausts."⁶³

God is to be sought--and found--not by sacrifice but by aspiration and true prayer. The psalmist rhapsodies:

"Let my prayer be set forth as sacrifice before Thee;
The lifting up of my hands as the evening offering."⁶⁴

The breakdown of the sacrificial cult, the advance in prayer and more--for true communion with God leads to greater heights, to nobler dreams. What do the prophets offer as substitutes for rams and bullocks?

"Let justice flow forth like water,
And righteousness like a perennial stream."⁶⁵

"He hath told thee, O man, what is good;
and what doth the Lord require of thee,
but to do justice and to love mercy,
and to walk humbly with thy God!" 66

Men--giants--of great minds and thoughts; of greater love
and truer prayer!

With the prophets, prayer reached its height. No longer
materialistic, no longer an established formula for an immediate
crisis or need; they lived lives of prayer in constant communion
with God. There is in the prayers of the prophets the perma-
nent experience of the immediate presence of God; so real was
God to them. The greatness of prayer can be conceived only when
men realize that prayer is not their own achievement but streams
into their hearts from God.⁶⁷ To the prophets, the awareness of
an indwelling, immanent God residing in their moral consciousness
led them to a deeper appreciation of God and communion with Him.
The prayer of a Jeremiah springs from the assurance of God's
love which draws man upward. Prayer is not his own achievement;
it is a gift from God. "Thou hast enthralled me and I am en-
thralled." 68

With the development of prophet^{ic}, personal prayer, there is
the emphasis on solitude and meditation. God revealed Himself
to Moses on the lonely mountain of Sinai;⁶⁹ in secret fellowship, | ✓
the spirit of Yahveh seized the prophets and made them His
messengers. Then from their loneliness and stillness, these men
of prayer are hurled among their fellow-men for their religion is

active and vital, their prayer, meaningful and powerful. Moses-- seeing God's face....communing with Him....an intimate relationship, but a purposeful one. He is the great man of prayer who intercedes for his people. The prayer-life of his followers, a Samuel, an Elijah, an Amos, a Jeremiah moves within the same form. They are in direct relationship with God, but not for their own gains; they are concerned with the welfare of others. "In Jeremiah, this prophetic intercessorship becomes a personal relation in prayer." ⁷⁰

F. Mysticism and Prophetic Religion in Biblical Prayers

We have presented above a critique of Heiler's distinction between mystical and prophetic prayers; our study now leads us to an application of those principles to the prayers of the Bible. Mysticism finds its noblest expression in the Psalms.⁷¹ Though the Psalter falls outside the scope of our presentation, a survey of the mystical elements in the Psalms will suffice to clarify the point at question. If love and union are the central conceptions of mysticism, then the Psalms are mystical prayers. Yet, if we accept Heiler's category for mystical prayers, the Psalms must be excluded. They are not expressions of an emptied psychic life; they do not deny the world and self; they do not breathe the spirit of a static God. Faith (which Heiler considers the watchword of prophetic religion) is the guiding motive of the Psalms. The Psalms are outpourings of anguish and despair culminating in a victorious confidence and hope in the future. "The Psalms are in their inmost essence nothing else than the prayer life of Jeremiah transformed into poetry."⁷² Not an escape from life, but a more powerful grasp on life; not a shutting of the eyes to this world but an interest and care for men and the world, a yearning for nearness to God, for at oneness with Him, but^{also} a dynamic striving that leads not to complete forgetfulness and dissolution of human personality but a sincerer trust in God, a happier acceptance of sorrow and a greater con-

fidence in efforts for human good. The psalmist wishes for the spirit of God and His presence, but also for a clean heart and right spirit--⁷³not a sinking into sleep, but the gaining of new strength and hope. There is a vitality about the Psalms that places them at the opposite poles of Hindu mysticism. True, there is union with God, there is solitary communion, but there is the breath of life and not death, there is power and not impotence; there is the tenacity for striving for justice and righteousness.

Heiler does mysticism a great injustice in presenting only the passive, empty type, represented by Hindu mystics. He forgets the healthy mysticism that produced prophetic ecstasy and the Psalms. The elements of surrender to the will of God, nearness, union, love are mystical qualities and there is no need for hesitating in applying the word mystical to several of the Psalms. It would be better for a wiser analysis to perceive that the Psalter and certain prophetic utterances are born of the mystical experience ^{plus} ~~but~~ what Heiler terms the prophetic outlook. One need not exclude the other. We conclude, then, that the Bible does possess mystical qualities as well as prophetic.

The "leitmotif" that runs through the prayers of the Bible is faith. "And Abraham had faith in Yahveh and it was counted unto him for righteousness."⁷⁴ Faith is the great demand. Isaiah exhorts the people;⁷⁵ Jeremiah and the psalmist arrive at a daring faith after an intense inner conflict.

The Biblical prayer accepts the God-idea which in Heiler's classification would be prophetic. Yahveh is a true God; He is living and everlasting.⁷⁶ At His wrath the earth trembles;⁷⁷ He is the Father of Mercies.⁷⁸ He directs the course of nations and history.⁷⁹

The concept of God as the God of history is extremely important for Biblical religion. The emigration from Chaldea, the exodus from Egypt, the wanderings in the wilderness, the conquest of Canaan are all the will and work of Yahveh and these historical elements color the religion and prayer of the Bible. The historical sufferings and tribulations were interpreted by the prophets in the light of God's will and word. Israel's humiliation was Yahveh's punishment; foreign kings became tools in the hand of the God of history.

The problem of sin also indicates the direction of Biblical religion. Sin is not indulgence in natural emotions, an assertion and delight in life; in the Bible (and how true this is of the great Hebrew prophets) sin lies in a breach of the moral values, in a revolt against God's decree of righteousness and justice. Even the mystical psalmist cries out: "Against Thee, Thee alone have I sinned."⁸⁰ It is not the guilt of flesh; it is the feeling of moral unworthiness; it is the consciousness of the chasm between man and God--and to the prophetic mind "this distance is not metaphysical but moral."⁸¹ Allied with sin is the problem of forgiveness. To the prophetic mind, there is no need for unnatural communion, for hours of preparation to

82

ascend to God; there is the simple "return to Yahveh"--a change of heart and a solemn acceptance of God's will and his law of moral order--that was all the prophets of Israel demanded from a sinful generation. In Biblical prayer and religion, morality and religion are necessarily united. There is a cry in the prophets of Israel for right and righteousness, for piety and brotherly-love, for personal ideals and a social ethics. This social aspect is of the utmost importance. Though the prophet stands before God as an individual, he is not isolated from men. His distress is also the distress of his contemporaries; his values and ideals are duties not only for himself but for all humanity. The great prophets felt they were chosen not for a mystical communion with God, for a private session benefitting only themselves, but for concrete duties among all peoples. Personal communion with God drives them to a market place, to a temple, to a street of Jerusalem to shout aloud God's word; an urge that cannot be bound up, a will to serve that cannot be checked. Of such stuff is Biblical prayer....

As with the primitive man, the presence of a concrete need is again the motive for prayer. In the face of calamity, Amos cries out: "Forgive, O Lord."⁸³ Jeremiah, summoned by God to a prophetic career, recoils and begs not to be chosen.⁸⁴ It is the need and the crisis that produce prophetic prayer. Petition and intercession are the primary forms; praise and thanksgiving are secondary. "The chief motive of prophetic prayer lies, therefore,

in painful emotions.⁸⁵ Prophetic prayer is a manifestation of emotion, the vital, living emotions; in contrast to the primitive, these emotions are more frequently sad than joyful; they are the results of experiences of spiritual value. Again do we find the consciousness of complete dependence upon a higher will, the hope and trust in God--so that it may be said that hope is the motive of prophetic prayer and painful emotion the driving force.

The themes of prophetic prayer but echo the primitive ones. The essential content of prophetic prayer is the unrestricted expression of a compelling emotion. There is complaint and question;⁸⁶ there is reproach and interrogation.⁸⁷ There is petition. It may be a petition from inner catastrophe, the break-down of self-respect--"not to be put to shame."⁸⁸ It may be a plea for security of life,⁸⁹ for light in inward perplexity,⁹⁰ for the forgiveness of sins,⁹¹ for self-judgment.⁹² It may be a petition for ethical values.⁹³ Sometimes the theme is that of intercession.

Petition (in primitive and prophetic prayer) is reinforced by persuasion. Frequently the appeal is to God's own interests;⁹⁴ it may be reference to previous kindness.⁹⁵ Mention of one's piety and goodness is also among the means used to move God to hearken.⁹⁶ Appeal to God's pity also recurs in the prayer of prophetic leaders.⁹⁷ Reference to social relationship with God appears as a means of persuasion in prophetic petition.⁹⁸

Also found in prophetic prayers are the themes of expression of weakness and dependence, confession of sinfulness and unworthiness.⁹⁹ Whereas in primitive prayer, these utterances were meant to rouse God to aid, in prophetic prayer there is no attempt at awakening God's pity or appeasing His wrath; here it is the spontaneous expression of sincere self-condemnation and the consciousness of complete dependence.¹⁰⁰

The mood changes and we find expressions of trust.¹⁰¹ Now it is an expression of resignation.¹⁰² There are also prayers of thanksgiving and praise.¹⁰³ The mystical elements of yearning and vision are also well represented.¹⁰⁴

The psychological approach of prophetic prayer is similar to that of primitive minds. There is again the assurance of the efficacy of prayer, there is the belief in the presence of God. Prayer remains always a vital relation between God and man; prophetic prayer is the utterance of a profound need in man's inmost being. In Israel, especially among the prophets and the psalmist, prayer became a communion with God, a wrestling with a challenging God. In the Bible we can find a beautiful union of the best qualities of mystical and prophetic prayer--vision of a union with God, a silent, contemplative delight, an exaltation of spirit, a yearning for God's love, a passionate cry and plea for social and moral ideals, for forgiveness and happiness--for peoples--all peoples. An Isaiah or a Jeremiah could be swayed

by the mystical beauty of silent communion and yet with force and vitality preach social values, the destruction of evil, the reign of justice and righteousness. The prophets--children weeping before the Lord, hiding their face, seeking the lonely mountain peak, giants hurling God's commands at a sinful nation, facing death and anguish in the dwellings of men, sacrificing themselves that others might be happy. Men of true prayer!

III. The Prayers of the Bible

A. Petitional Prayers

Our study now leads us to a complete classification of every prayer (exclusive of the Psalms) in the Bible. Petition is the heart of all prayer and therefore we begin with that phase. It must be mentioned that classifications are never simple, and ours is no exception. There are many prayers that combine the features of lament and petition, or intercession and petition--prayers of a double motif--and it was difficult for us to place them under one heading and disregard the other. We have attempted (and we hope we have not failed) to ascertain the main motif and classify the prayer accordingly. In all events, we have included every prayer in our classification.

The petitional prayers vary from crass materialism to the loftiest idealism, from hatred to love, from gifts, vulgar and cheap to the noblest aspirations and longings, worthy of men's words and God's attentiveness.

There are two dying prayers. Samson, ere he seeks a self-inflicted death, prays for physical strength and vengeance!¹ The dying prayer of Zechariah, son of Jehoida, slain by the command of king Joash reads: "Behold, O Lord, and avenge."²

The battle field offered a setting for prayer. Jehoshaphat indulges in a lengthy prayer before his battle with the combined forces of Moab, Ammon and the Meunim. He begins by invoking

"Yahveh, God of our Fathers." He continues with an appeal to God's power and might "art not Thou alone God in heaven? and art not Thou ruler over all the kingdoms of the nations? and in Thy hand is power and might, so that none is able to withstand Thee." He mentions past history, indicating a close relationship between God and Israel "Didst not Thou drive out the inhabitants of this land before Thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham, Thy friend for ever?" He refers to the building of the temple in God's name, so that in times of distress, Israel may cry and be heard. He presents another argument, to indicate the decency of Israel. When Israel came out of Egypt, they did not attack the children of Ammon and Moab, but turned aside; now these peoples, whom Israel spared, "come to cast us out of Thy possession." He appeals for justice, for God's judgment against the enemies; he humbly confesses that his small army is powerless in the face of the mighty hosts arrayed against them, admits that he knows not what to do and concludes with faith in God--"our eyes are upon Thee." Every element of petitional prayer is present--the mention of relationship, the appeal to history and justice, the awareness of dependence, the reliance of God and the hope for deliverance.³

In simpler form, Asa prays before the battle with Zerah. Again the mention of God's power and Israel's reliance on and relationship to God "Help us, O Yahveh our God, for we rely on Thee and in Thy name are we come against this multitude."⁴

Not only on the battlefield but within the city during siege do the dangers of enemy and starvation, death and pillage call forth prayers. The author of Lamentations puts in the mouth of Jerusalem the simple cry "Behold, O Lord, my affliction, for the enemy hath magnified himself."⁵ There is a more detailed description of distress in later verses. There is a picture of Jerusalem during the siege--the sword that bereaves outside and the other manifestations of death within. There is a confession of guilt "My heart is turned within me, for I have grievously rebelled." The evil has been brought by God because the people have sinned. Let God now hear the sighs. As for the enemies--let them not go unpunished but "Let all their wickedness come before Thee, May they be like unto me."⁶ The picture becomes more distressing and the anguish more poignant. "See, O Lord, and behold to whom Thou hast done thus." Women eat their own children; priest and prophet are slain in the sanctuary; youths and old men lie in the streets and "Thou hast slain them in the day of Thine anger; Thou has slaughtered without pity."⁷ It is a prayer of lament and bereavement and an appeal to God to behold and help. The theme recurs. "Remember, O Yahveh, what is come upon us; behold and see our disgrace." There is the mention of God's everlastingness and the lament "Why dost Thou forget us for ever and forsake us so long? Turn us unto Thee."⁸ It culminates in a prayer for help and also for a spiritual return to God.

*This is
not a prayer*

Lamentations cannot be taken as a prayer

Since we are treating the book of Lamentations, we may present the petitional prayers found in chapter three--a post-exilic section. The customary mis-translation of verse 56a to read "Thou heardest my voice" (disregarding the b part "hide not Thine ear at my cry for help") has led commentators to assume this prayer as a prayer of gratitude and thanksgiving. Correctly translated, however, it becomes a cry of anguish and despair and a longing for vengeance on the enemies. "I call upon Thy name, O Lord, out of the lowest dungeon."^{8a} "O Lord, Thou hast seen my wrong; Judge Thou my cause." "Thou wilt pursue them (enemies) in anger, and destroy them from under the heavens of the Lord."⁹

The speedy coming of the great day of Yahveh causes the priest to pray "Oh Yahveh, to Thee do I cry."¹⁰ The interests of the people make the priests pray again "Spare Thy people, O Yahveh." A reason is added why God should save Israel--so that "the heathen mock them not. Why should they say among the peoples, 'Where is their God?'"¹¹

Need and distress--again and again do they accost men--and a prayer to God is the rest. Jacob prays to God for help and deliverance from Esau.¹² He invokes the God of his fathers, Abraham and Isaac; he repeats God's earlier promise to him; he humbles himself "I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies Thou hast shown unto Thy servant." Now the plea "Deliver me from the hand of my brother." The conclusion is another mention of God's promise to^{do} good and multiply the seed of Jacob.

Now it is Lot, in a prayer addressed to an angel, in the place of God, who seeks deliverance praying that he be allowed to escape to a nearby city so that he might live.¹³

Oppression by an enemy produces a confession of guilt and a plea for help. "We have sinned against Thee. We have sinned; do Thou unto us whatsoever seemeth good unto Thee; only deliver us, we pray Thee, this day."¹⁴

In their contest with Elijah, the priests pray: "O Baal, hear us."¹⁵ Elijah, also, offers his prayer. He addresses the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel; he reminds God that this is a test for God and Elijah, His servant "let it be known that thou art God in Israel and that I am Thy servant."¹⁶

Hezekiah, terrified by the taunts of the Assyrians, and their threatened assault upon Jerusalem, prays to God "Thou art the God of all the kingdoms of the earth: Thou hast made heaven and earth." He has paid homage to God's omnipotence; now he prays "Incline Thine ear, O Yahveh, and hear; open Thine eyes and see....save Thou us." The conclusion again presents that argument that men used with God--God should save so that "all the kingdoms may know that Thou, Yahveh, art God."¹⁷

When he receives the announcement of his impending death, Hezekiah prays: "Remember, O Yahveh, I beseech Thee, how I have walked before Thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in Thy sight"--a prayer accompanied by tears.¹⁸

Another petitional prayer which has falsely been interpreted in the light of a prayer of thanksgiving is the utterance of Jonah. In anguish and affliction, Jonah prays to God that he should hear and save him from the flood and the waters, the billows and the deep.¹⁹

A post-exilic prayer for help is found in the book of Isaiah.
 "O Yahveh, be gracious unto us;
 We have waited for Thee.
 Be Thou our arm every morning,
 Our salvation also in the time of trouble."²⁰

Sometimes the prayer is directed against an individual or a specific group. Moses refers to Dathan and Abiram and prays:
 "Respect not Thou their offering."²¹ David prays; "O Yahveh, I pray Thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into folly."²² Nehemiah cries out: "Remember, O my God, Tobiah and Sanballat according to these their works, and also the prophetess Noadiah, and the rest of the prophets that would have put me in fear."²³

Abraham's servant prays that he might be guided to the right wife for Isaac. "O Yahveh, God of my master Abraham, I pray Thee send me good speed this day, and show kindness unto my master."²⁴ When Saul pursues him David prays for information. "O Yahveh, God of Israel, I beseech Thee, tell Thy servant....Will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul?"²⁵ Moses inquires of God; "What shall I do unto this people?"²⁶ Manoah prays for guidance, regarding the child to be born.²⁷ The prayer may be in the form of a wish as "God Almighty give you mercy before the man that he may release unto you your other brother."²⁸

Abraham prays: "Oh, that Ishmael might live before Thee."²⁹
 Elijah complains to God "O Yahveh, my God, hast Thou also brought
 evil upon the widow, whose guest I am, by slaying her son?"³⁰
 He follows this with the petition: "O Lord, my God, I pray Thee.
 let this child's soul come back into him."³¹

Even as there are prayers for life, so are there prayers for
 death. Elijah, who prays that a child might live again, prays
 for himself: "Now, O Yahveh, take away my life."³² When the Nin-
 evites repent and are saved, Jonah prays: "OYahveh, take, I
 beseech Thee, my life from me."³³ Job exclaims: "Would that my
 prayer might be fulfilled, that God might grant that for which
 I yearn, that it might please God to crush out my life, that He
 might loose His hand and cut me off."³⁴ In greater anguish, he
 complains of his sufferings and begs for death. "I prefer death
 to my pains. I loathe my life. Why dost Thou not turn away
 from me, or grant me respite? Why dost Thou not forgive my trans-
 gression and pardon my sin? For then might I lie at rest in the
 grave."³⁵ When Job realizes that there is no hope for man beyond
 the grave, he prays for a temporary hiding in the nether-world.
 "Oh That Thou mightst hide me in the nether world."³⁶

The act of praying is indicated in the verse "Moses cried
 unto the Lord concerning the frogs";³⁷ likewise "Moses entreated
 the Lord"³⁸--with regards the removal of the flies and locusts.

We have mentioned the prayer for resurrection of a dead
 child--a miracle. Two other prayers are found with their re-

quests for miracles. Joshua prays: "Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Aijalon."³⁹ With regards to the Aramean army which invaded Israel, Elisha prays: "Smite this people, I pray Thee, with blindness."⁴⁰

The activities of Nehemiah were usually accompanied by prayers. At times the psychological approach is not the most laudable; it is apparent often that the main theme of Nehemiah's prayers is to remind God how worthy he (Nehemiah) was. We have already presented one of Nehemiah's prayers. We wish to present the others that are found in the book of Nehemiah.

When Nehemiah learns of the evil plight of his countrymen, and of Jerusalem, he gives vent to a long prayer. He begins with adoration: "I beseech Thee, O Lord, God of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and lovingkindness with them that love Him, and keep His commandments; let Thine ear be attentive." Speaking for the children of Israel and for himself, he confesses sins and guilt. He reminds God of His promise to Moses that He will gather Israel from all corners if they obey God's law. The plea follows: "O Lord, let Thine ear be attentive to the prayer of Thy servant....and prosper, I pray Thee, Thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man." Nehemiah tells us that ere he prayed, he wept and fasted.⁴¹

After describing his generous conduct as governor of Judah,

Nehemiah prays: "Remember unto me, O my God, for good, all that I have done for this people."⁴² When he learnsⁿ of the intrigues against him, he prays: Strengthen Thou my hands.⁴³ After describing his zeal for the observance of the Sabbath, Nehemiah pleads: "Remember unto me, O my God, this also, and spare me according to the greatness of Thy lovingkindness."⁴⁴ A picture of his zeal for religious reform is followed by: "Remember me, O my God."⁴⁵ Concerning those who have defiled the priesthood by intermmariage with foreign women, Nehemiah prays: "Remember them, O My God."⁴⁶ After his reorganization of the clergy, he prays: "Remember me, O my God, for good."⁴⁷

Sometimes the theme of the prayer is the clearing of guilt and responsibility. There is reference to a prayer by the elders in case of an untraced murder with that intention in mind.⁴⁸ When the sailors throw Jonah overboard, they pray not to be held guilty.⁴⁹

In the Elihu Interpolation, we find a prayer. God will be gracious unto a man if "he would say unto God, Forgive, I will not offend anymore; if I have sinned, make Thou it known to me, if I have spoken iniquity, I will do it no more."⁵⁰

There are a few petitional prayers that are recited at specific occasions. After the triennial tithe has been given to the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless and the widow, a prayer is offered. It is a pledge that the worshipper has done the right thing, according to the commandments. A plea ends the recitation: "Look down from Thy holy habitation, from heaven and bless Thy people Israel, and the ground which Thou hast given us, as Thou swarest unto our fathers--a land flowing with milk and honey."⁵¹

When the ark set forward, they said: "Rise up, O Yahveh, and let Thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate Thee flee before Thee."⁵² When the ark rested, they said: "Return, O Yahveh, unto the ten thousands of the thousands of Israel."⁵³

We find a different note in the prayer of Jabez that "Thou wouldest bless me and enlarge my border; oh ~~that~~ Thy hand might be with me, and that Thou wouldest keep me from evil."⁵⁴

Moses, after praising God for His works and acts, prays: "Let me go over and see the good land that is beyond the Jordan."⁵⁵

With the interest of the people at heart, Moses prays for a successor "that the congregation of Yahveh be not as sheep which have no shepherd."⁵⁶

We see a lengthy petition begging for God's interest and care in national affairs. It appeals to God as Father and Redeemer. Why has God been wroth for so long; the country has been destroyed; the entire place has become a wilderness. "Wilt Thou refrain Thyself for these things, O Yahveh? Wilt Thou hold Thy peace, and afflict us very sore?"⁵⁷

There are a number of prayers, asking for spiritual and lofty gifts from God. Jacob prays: "I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me."⁵⁸ Solomon prays: "Give Thy servant an understanding heart to judge Thy people, that I may discern between good and evil."⁵⁹ The prayer of Agur reads: "Two things have I asked of Thee: deny me them ~~not~~ before I die. Remove far from me falsehood and lies,

give me neither poverty nor riches. Feed me with the food that is needful for me; lest I be full, and deny Thee, and say, 'Who is Yahveh?' or else I be poor and steal, and use profanely the name of God." ⁶⁰

Habakkuk entreats: "O Lord, revive Thy work in the midst of the year, in the midst of the years make it known; in wrath remember compassion." ⁶¹

Guided by the prophetic spirit, the book of Exodus contains a few of the noblest spiritual prayers. Moses prays for the presence of God. "If I have found favor in Thy sight, show now Thy ways, that I may know Thee,...If Thy presence go not with us, carry us not up hence. For wherein now shall it be know that I have found favor in Thy sight, I and Thy people? Is it not in that Thou goest with us?" ⁶² In the same spirit, Moses prays for a vision of the Divine glory. "I pray Thee, show me Thy glory." ⁶³ Again Moses begs for the presence of God, concluding with the hope that the people be forgiven. "Let my Lord, I pray Thee, go in the midst of us, for it is a stiff-necked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for Thine inheritance." ⁶⁴

There remains for our study the great prayer attributed to Solomon at the dedication of the temple. ⁶⁵ The prayer is of exilic origin. It remains one of the greatest and loftiest utterances of

man. It breathes the spirit of universalism and justice, forgiveness and compassion. There is adoration and praise, confession and petition--presented so nobly, so artistically.

"O Yahveh, God of Israel, there is no God like Thee in heaven above, or on earth beneath; who keepest covenant and loving-kindness with Thy servants that walk before Thee with all their heart....But will God in very deed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee; how much less this house that I have built! Yet have Thou respect unto the prayer of Thy servant....that Thine eyes may be open toward this house night and day....And hearken Thou to the supplication of Thy servant and of Thy people Israel, when they shall pray toward this place; yea, hear Thou in heaven Thy dwelling-place; and when Thou hearest, forgive....hear Thou in heaven, and do, and judge Thy servants, condemning the wicked, to bring his way upon his own head, and justifying the righteous, to give him according to his righteousness....if there be in the land famine, if there be pestilence, whatsoever plague....what prayer and supplication soever be made by any man, or by all Thy people Israel, who shall know every man the plague of his own heart....then hear Thou in heaven and forgive....for Thou, even Thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men....Moreover, concerning the alien that is not of Thy people Israel....when he shall come and pray toward this house, hear Thou in heaven Thy dwelling-place, and do all that the alien calleth to Thee for....if they (Israel) sin against Thee--for there is no man that sinneth not--and Thou be angry with them and deliver them to the enemy....if they bethink themselves....and turn again, and make supplications unto Thee....saying, "We have sinned"....if they return to Thee with all their heart and with all their soul....then hear Thou....and forgive."

The prayer combines the prophetic and primitive elements of petitional prayer. Alongside the universal note is the choice of Israel and its separation from the other nations for God's own inheritance. There is the appeal to God to remember former promises to Moses and David; God is asked to maintain the cause of Israel against its enemies in times of war. Of a more dignified

spirit is the reason why God should be attentive to the alien--
not for a display of might and force but "thall all the peoples
of the earth may know Thy name to reverence Thee."

After the dedicatory prayer, a benediction at the consecration
of the temple is recited.⁶⁶

"Blessed be Yahveh, that hath given rest unto His people Is-
rael according to all that He promised: there hath not
failed on word of all His good promise which He promised by
Moses His servant."

Then follows the final petition:⁶⁷

"Yahveh, our God be with us, as He was with our fathers; let
Him not leave us, nor forsake us, that He may incline our
hearts unto Himself, to walk in all His ways....and let these
my words, wherewith I have made supplication before Yahveh,
be nigh unto Yahveh our God day and night, that He maintain
the cause of His servant, and the cause of His people Israel,
as each day shall require; that all the peoples of the earth
shall know that Yahveh is God, and none else."

There remain a few prayers which though petitional in nature
do not present the direct form of the petitional prayer. They
are couched in the form of a lament or complain with the petition
implied. Because of this difference of style, we include them
separately though they fall within the field of petitional prayers.

When a still harder service is imposed upon Israel by Pharaoh⁶⁶,
Moses cries: "Lord, wherefore hast Thou dealt ill with this
people? Why is that Thou hast sent me? For since I came to
Pharaoh to speak in Thy name, he hath dealt ill with this people:
neither hast Thou delivered Thy people at all."⁶⁸ Implied is the

petition for God's intervention and help. Again, when the people weary of the manna and long for flesh, Moses laments: "Wherefore hast Thou dealt ill with Thy servant?....Whence should I have flesh to give unto all this people?....I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me. And if Thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray Thee, out of hand, if I have found favor in Thy sight, and let me not see my wretchedness." ⁶⁹ The complaint reaches its climax in the petition for death. Also implied is the asking from God for flesh and an easier lot.

When Israel is defeated at Ai, Joshua prays: "Alas, O Lord Yahveh, wherefore hast Thou at all brought this people over the Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to cause us to perish?....Oh Lord, what shall I say, after Israel hath turned its back before the enemies? For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land will hear of it, and will compass us round, and cut off our name from the earth; and what wilt Thou do for Thy great name?" ⁷⁰ The defeat leads Joshua to despair of God's help and he prays for the reason. The lament ends in a petition for guidance and an appeal to God for help. After the slaughter of the Philistines, Samson complains of thirst and asks: "shall I die for thirst and fall into the hand of uncircumcised?" ⁷¹ Again it is a complaint with a petition for water and deliverance.

In the book of Habakkuk, we find two such laments. "Oh Yahve, how long shall I cry, and Thou wilt not hear?--cry unto Thee of wrong, and Thou wilt not save? and why dost Thou cause me to look upon wrong?"--a cry of anguish begging God to hear and save. ⁷² "Art Thou not from everlasting....wherefore dost Thou

look (silently) on, while traitors deal treacherously, and holdest Thy people when the wicked swalloweth up the man that is more righteous than he?" Again it is a plea for God to act.⁷³

The great man of sorrow, complaining and lamenting, is that man from Us called Job.⁷⁴ We have by him two great prayers, combining a complaint and a petition. He asks God for information: "Tell me wherefore Thou hast attacked me;" he argues with God: "Doth it become Thee to crush, to despise the work of Thy hands? Hast Thou human eyes? or seest as man seeth?....that Thou seekst my guilt and searchest for my sin, although Thou knowest that I am not guilty, and that there is none who can deliver one from Thy hand?" He reminds God that He created him, clothed him with skin and flesh, bestowed life and love. He accuses God: "Should my head exalt itself,...Thou! wouldst summon ever new witnesses against me, wouldst ever increase Thy anger towards me, wouldst heap upon me ever new relays of misery." The climax of the complaint: "Wherefore didst Thou bring me forth from the womb?" Then the cry of anguish bursts into a cry of petition: "Leave me in peace, that I may have cheer for a short while." Complaint and anguish, pleading and petitioning--a great prayer.⁷⁵

Again Job prays, lamenting his sad fate, pleading for mercy, asking for enlightenment. "Remove Thy hand from me; let not Thy terror affright me....Let me know my transgression and my sin! Why hidest Thou Thy face? Why holdest Thou me for Thine enemy? Wilt Thou scare a leaf driven by the wind? Or wilt Thou pursue dry straw? For Thou hast decreed bitterness for me."⁷⁶

B. Intercessory Prayers

They are not very numerous but are of great significance. A man's religion may be estimated by the earnestness with which he longs for the welfare of others. It is fitting that the prophets who were charged with the welfare of Israel appear as the great intercessors. People attached a special efficacy to the intercessory prayers of their leaders and prophets. Twice in moments of danger, the people beseech Samuel to cry unto God for them,⁷⁷ and Samuel regards intercession as part of his official duty, the neglect of which is a sin. "Far be it from me that I should sin against Yahveh in ceasing to pray for you."⁷⁸ A similar sense of the duty and power of prophetic intercession shines through the words of Jeremiah: "Were Moses and Samuel to intercede, I would show no concern for this people."⁷⁹

Moses--the incomparable prophet--lived a life of intercession. Repeatedly he prays that the plagues be removed from the Egyptians.⁸⁰ In language reaching almost unparalleled heights, he prays for his apostate people. "O Yahveh, why doth Thy wrath wax hot against Thy people....Turn from Thy firece wrath and repent of this evil against Thy people."⁸¹ "Oh, this people has sinned a great sin, and has made gods of gold. Yet now if Thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written."⁸² What self-sacrificing devotion! "Pardon, I

beseech Thee, the iniquity of this people, according to Thy great lovingkindness, and according as Thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt until now."⁸³ "And the people cried unto Moses; and Moses prayed unto the Lord, and the fire abated."⁸⁴ At the rebellion of Korah, Moses and Aaron, in the form of a complaint, intercede for the people as they pray: "O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and wilt Thou be wroth with all the congregation?"⁸⁵

One of the oldest prayers in the Bible is Moses' intercession for Miriam: "Heal her, O God, I beseech Thee."⁸⁶

Other prophets and leaders pray for their people. Elisha prays for his servant, who is terrified by the sight of the enemy, that his eyes may be opened.⁸⁷ (The incident of Elijah praying for the restoration of the widow's son, which we included among the petitional prayers, may be mentioned here). Jeroboam I entreats the man of God to pray for the restoration of his withered hand.⁸⁸ Amos prays: "O Lord, forgive; how could Jacob endure, since he is so small."⁸⁹ David confesses his guilt and prays for the people who were smitten by the pestilence. "It is I that have sinned....but these sheep, what have they done? let Thine hand, I pray Thee, be against me and my father's house."⁹⁰ When David hears that his child will die, he besought God for the child."⁹¹

Ezekiel has two intercessory prayers. They fall in the category of vaticinium post eventum, since they are uttered by Ezekiel in his vision, and relate of things already happened, but they offer the style of the intercessory prayer. "Oh, Lord

Yahveh, wilt Thou destroy the remnant of Israel, in Thy pouring out of Thy wrath upon Jerusalem?" ⁹² "Oh, Lord Yahveh, wilt Thou make an end of the remnant of Israel?" ⁹³

King Hezekiah, after the insulting message of the Rabshakeh, entreats Isaiah to "lift up his prayer for the remnant that is left." ⁹⁴ The Chronicler puts in the mouth of Hezekiah a beautiful prayer: "May Yahveh the good pardon everyone that setteth his heart to seek God, the God of his fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary." ⁹⁵

Similarly, Abraham prays in behalf of people (and his prayer is efficacious). "He is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live." ⁹⁶ "Abraham prayed unto God; and God healed Abimelech and his wife and his maid-servants." ⁹⁷

The greatest of the intercessory prayers is the prayer put into the mouth of Abraham, interceding for Sodom. ⁹⁸ This utterance marks a great advance in religious thinking. It is an intercession not for own's people, family or friends but for aliens and strangers. It is the height of love and universal brotherhood. "Wilt Thou consume the righteous with the wicked?... I have taken upon myself to speak unto the Lord, and I am but dust and ashes; peradventure, there shall lack five of the fifty righteous: wilt Thou destroy all the city for lack of five?...."

It is a prayer of humility ^{and} ~~not~~ justice, love and sympathy.

C. Thanksgiving Prayers

The prayer of thanksgiving is usually a humble or happy acknowledgement that God has bestowed help or a gift on man, whether unexpectedly or in answer to an expressed desire. It may be gratitude for land,⁹⁹ for food,¹⁰⁰ for victory.¹⁰¹ The Philistines praise Dagon for their victory over Samson;¹⁰² Israel's war-poetry becomes a hymn of thanksgiving and gratitude to Yahveh.¹⁰³

There is a formally prescribed prayer of thanksgiving to be offered by the worshipper after he has set down the basket of firstfruits before the altar.¹⁰⁴ Prayers of thanksgiving were no doubt offered for the birth of a child. We possess the prayer of Hannah at the birth of Samuel.¹⁰⁵ Recovery from illness was also an occasion for praying; there is found a psalm of thanksgiving after Hezekiah's recovery.¹⁰⁶ When Abraham's servant has been successfully guided to a wife for Isaac, he gives thanks to God: "Blessed be Yahveh the God of my master Abraham who hath not forsaken His loving-kindness and His faithfulness towards my master."¹⁰⁷ When David hears Nathan's prophecy that his kingdom would be everlasting, he pours out a lengthy prayer of gratitude. He lauds God and His greatness; he recalls God's great and mighty acts. He concludes with a petition hoping that God will confirm what He has promised--that the house of David will endure.¹⁰⁸

When the people have presented free will offerings towards the building of the temple, David offers a prayer. It is an

utterance of praise and adoration of God. "Thine is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty.... Our God, we thank Thee and praise Thy glorious name. But who am I and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee...." A lofty concept of thanksgiving! ¹⁰⁹

Daniel offers a prayer of gratitude when Nebuchadrezzar's dream has been divinely revealed to him. Opening with a doxology, he blesses God and recalls His powers. Then follows: "I thank Thee and praise Thee, O Thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might and hast now made known unto me what we desired of Thee." ¹¹⁰ "It appears that Daniel often offered prayers of gratitude for the book represents him as "kneeling three times a day and praying and giving thanks before his God, as he did aforetime." ¹¹¹

Artaxerxes' generous decree causes Ezra to offer a prayer of gratitude to God who "hath put such a thing as this in the king's heart, to beautify the house of Yahveh which is in Jerusalem." ¹¹²

There is a late exilic prayer of gratitude in the book of Isaiah.

"I will give thanks unto Thee, O Yahveh
For though Thou wast angry with me,
Thine anger is turned away,
And Thou didst comfort me.
Behold, God is my salvation;
I will trust and not be afraid.
~~For~~ Yahveh is my strength and song
And He is become my salvation." ¹¹³

Another prayer of gratitude is found in Chapter twenty-five.

"O Yahveh, Thou art my God; I will exalt Thee, I will praise Thy name...." "4

In the Elihu interpolation, there is a short song of salvation.

"I did sin and di pervert that which was right,
Yet God hath not requited me according to my sinfulness;
He hath delivered my soul from going down to the pit,
And my life beholdeth the light." "5

The great prayers of thanksgiving--for religious and ethical blessings--are found in the Psalms and that falls outside our study. This is mentioned in self-defense. From our study of the thanksgiving prayer, it would seem that gratitude is usually offered for materialistic, trivial, every-day matters. Where is the loftiness of praise, the grandeur of adoration and contemplation of God? They are found in the Bible; we have not included them.

D. Blessings and Curses

Closely allied to the prayers of thanksgiving are those speeches which we term blessings; in most instances the theme and content of the blessing is gratitude and praise--identical with the prayer of thanksgiving--and our only reason for not including them with the preceding is based on the form of these blessings. The present a definite method of invoking the deity or person: "Blessed be Yahveh", and for this difference we set them apart. From the standpoint of content, they may (and perhaps should) be classified among the thanksgiving prayers.

Primitive man believed in the power of the word.¹⁶ If an utterance were made, it would be fulfilled. Since the blessing was considered efficacious, it was used with the greatest care.

The Priestly Blessing is a blessing and a petitional prayer. It invokes God's blessing on Israel and asks for graciousness and peace.¹⁷

Isaac's blessing for Jacob is a petition for material gifts. May God bestow on Jacob plenty of corn and wine and of the fat places of the earth; may he be ruler over nations. "Cursed be every one that curseth thee; and blessed be every one that blesseth thee."¹⁸

When Esau returns and asks his father for a blessing, Isaac's answer is: "Behold I have made him thy lord....and with corn and wine have I sustained him."¹⁹ Conscious of the power of the word, Isaac realizes that it would be impossible to revoke the blessing

which he had uttered in the name of God. Esau insists upon a blessing, and Isaac asks, for his first-born, material blessings.¹²⁰

When Jacob is about to leave for Paddan-aram, his father blesses him and invoking God's name, asks that Jacob be blessed with many children and ^{possession of} the land of his wanderings.¹²¹

Jacob's prayer for Ephraim and Manasseh does not possess the form of the blessing, yet its intent is similar to the preceding. Jacob says: "Bring them unto me and I will bless them."¹²² Then follows a prayer which is blessing and intercession. "The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God who hath shepherded me all my life....bless the lads; and let my name be named on them and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth."¹²³

Jacob's death-bed utterance though the author of Genesis writes: "this is it that their father spoke unto them and blessed them; every one according to his blessing he blessed them"¹²⁴ is not in the nature of a blessing. It is either a comment about each son or a wish. The blessing of Moses contains some petitional elements as well as the style of a blessing. "Hear, Lord, the voice of Judah, and bring him in unto his people."¹²⁵ "Blessed of the Lord, be his land."¹²⁶ "OH Naphtali, satisfied with favor, and full with the blessing of the Lord: possess thou the sea and the south."¹²⁷ "Blessed be Asher above sons."¹²⁸

At Abigail's arrival, David says: "Blessed be the Lord, the

God of Israel, who sent thee this day to meet me; and blessed be thy discretion, and blessed be thou."¹²⁹ Hearing of Nabal's death, David prays: "Blessed be the Lord, that hath pleaded the cause of my reproach from the hand of Nabal and hath kept back His servant from evil; and the evil-doing of Nabal hath the Lord returned upon his own head."¹³⁰

The prayers of Ezra, David and Daniel which we included among the thanksgiving prayers may be mentioned again in connection with blessings, because of the opening invocation of God.¹³¹

Naomi's prayer for her daughters in law, though more of a wish than a blessing, yet because it invokes God's name belongs in this section. "The Lord deal kindly with you,...the Lord grant you that ye may find rest."¹³² Boaz's comment to Ruth may also be mentioned: "The Lord recompense thy work, and be thy reward complete from the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to take refuge."¹³³

Especially among the blessings that follow is the theme of thanksgiving and gratitude predominant. Interestingly, the remaining blessings are by foreigners, but are a recognition of something that Yahveh has done for Israel. After Abraham's victory over the kings, Melchizedek says: "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Maker of heaven and earth; and blessed be God the Most High, who hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand."¹³⁴

The marvellous deliverance of Israel from Egypt draws from

Jethro the following prayer: "Blessed be Yahveh, who hath delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians....Now I know that Yahveh is greater than all gods." ¹³⁵

A similar blessing and praise to Yahveh is offered by the Tyrian Hiram, when Solomon approaches him with a request for timber to build a temple. "Blessed be the Lord this day who hath given unto David a wise son over this great people." ¹³⁶ The Queen of Sheba remarks: "Blessed be Yahveh thy God who delighted in thee, to set them on the throne of Israel." ¹³⁷ It is interesting that these blessings begin the same way and celebrate circumstances distinctively Israelitic--the deliverance from Egypt, the founding of the temple, the wisdom of Solomon. Similar in form and spirit is the prayer in Daniel where Nebuchadrezzar thanks the God of Israel for delivering Daniel's three friends from the fiery furnace. ¹³⁸ Similar in spirit is the decree of Darius with its prayer: "May the God that hath caused His name to dwell there overthrow all kings and peoples, that shall put forth their hand to alter the same, to destroy this house of God which is in Jerusalem." ¹³⁹

Returning to our own heroes, we conclude with the blessing of Solomon that precedes the dedicatory prayer. Solomon blesses the congregation and says: "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel." ¹⁴⁰

More powerful than the blessing is the uttering of a curse. Even for literary purposes, people refrained from using a curse because of the fear that it might take effect; moreover, were the person against whom the curse was uttered innocent, the curse would serve as a boomerang upon the curser. Thus, the dangers inherent in the uttering of a curse make the imprecation a very unusual weapon. The efficacious nature of the curse can again be determined from the story of Balaam: "come curse them; peradventure I shall be able to fight against them, and shall drive them out." ¹⁴¹ ¹⁴²

Noah implores a curse and a blessing:

"Curse be Canaan;
A servant of servants may he be to his brethren,
Blessed be Yahveh, the God of Shem;
And let Canaan be his servant.
God enlarge Japheth,
And let him dwell in the tents of Shem;
And let Canaan be his servant." ¹⁴³

In the book of Deuteronomy are presented a series of curses and blessings, for disobedience or obedience to God's commands. ¹⁴⁴

When David flees from Absalom, he is met by Shimei and the curse: "Begone, ~~begone~~, thou man of blood, and base fellow; the Lord hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned; and the Lord hath delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom thy son; and behold, thou art taken in thine own mischief, because thou art a man of blood." ¹⁴⁵

Job curses his birth-day with "Perish the day that I was born." ¹⁴⁶ "May it be cursed by those skilled in cursing the day." ¹⁴⁷

E. Confessional Prayers

One of the most eloquent proofs of the profoundness of Israel's religion is to be found in the prayers of confession. It was¹⁴⁸ accepted in Israel that "there liveth no man that sinneth not" and so forgiveness and confession was as necessary as food and victory. Confessions in the Bible are for breaches in the moral law. The confessions are collective--for national sins and not for personal guilt. The whole family of the sinner was involved in the doom. Till the days of Jeremiah, the individual was lost in the community.

Confessions of sin link the ages. "We have sinned against Yahveh our God, we and our fathers."¹⁴⁹ "We acknowledge, O Yahveh, our wickedness and the iniquity of our fathers."¹⁵⁰ "Since the days of our fathers," prays Ezra, "we have been exceedingly guilty unto this day."¹⁵¹ "They stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers."¹⁵² "For our sins and for the iniquities of our fathers...."¹⁵³ Sometimes the speaker includes his guilt with the general confession.¹⁵⁴

Confession is usually connected with calamity. When Israel was "sore distressed" she cried: "We have sinned against Thee."¹⁵⁵

Confession is for general sins: obstinacy, disobedience, rebellion, forgetfulness, idolatry. The worshippers confess that the "have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the ordinances....have cast the divine law behind their back."¹⁵⁶

In particular, Ezra confesses the sin of intermarriage. "Oh my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to Thee, for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our guiltiness is grown up to the heavens.....for we have forsaken Thy commandments....Behold we are before Thee in our guiltiness, for none can stand before Thee because of this." 157

Daniel confesses: "O Lord, the great and dreadful God, who keepeth covenant and lovingkindness with them that love Him and keep His commandments, we have sinned, and have dealt perversely, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even turning aside from Thy precepts and from Thine ordinances....Yea, all Israel have transgressed Thy law....therefore hath the curse been poured out upon us." The acknowledgement of God's greatness and the confession of sin leads to a petition for mercy. "Let thine anger and wrath be turned away from Thy city, Jerusalem....hearken unto our prayer....and cause Thy face to shine upon Thy sanctuary." 158

From the book of Lamentations: "We have transgressed and rebelled." 159

Job confesses:

"Behold I am of small account!
What shall I answer Thee?....
I know that Thou canst do all things....
Who can hide his thoughts from Thee?....
I have heard of Thee by report
But now mine eye hath beheld Thee.
Therefore, though I am wasting away.
I am comforted for my lot of dust and ashes." 160

Penitent Israel of the future makes a confession. "Return, O Israel, to the Lord thy God. Thou hast incurred ruin by thy sins. Take a lesson from Israel, and return to God. Speak to Him: 'Forgive our guilt altogether and we will pay the vows of our lips.' Assyria shall not save us; we will no longer ride on horses nor will we call any more the work of our hands our God, ~~for~~ in Thee the fatherless findeth mercy." ¹⁶¹

It was a concept of God as love (so beautifully expressed by Hosea) that led men to confess. A confession not only acknowledges sin, it acknowledges the justice of God and appeals to God's mercy and love. People ~~co~~¹⁶² confess in hope. "For we do not present our supplications before Thee for our righteousness, but for Thy great mercies' sake." People confess ~~but~~^{for} they feel certain that God pardons iniquity and blots out their transgressions as a thick cloud. ¹⁶³

We have said above that confession is usually for national sin. There is one exception of a confession of personal sin. David, after numbering the people, confesses: "I have sinned greatly in that which I have done." But now, O Yahveh, put away, I beseech Thee, the iniquity of Thy servant, for I have done very foolishly." ¹⁶⁴

F. Vows

This type of prayer--with its conditional elements--has a few examples in the Bible.

Jacob vows at Bethel: "If God will be with me, and will keep me in the way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, and Yahveh will be my God, then this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house; and of all that Thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto Thee." ¹⁶⁵

Israel vows: "If Thou wilt indeed deliver this people into my hand, then I will devote their cities to utter destruction." ¹⁶⁶

Before his assault on the Ammonites, Jephthah vows: "If Thou wilt indeed deliver the children of Ammon into my hand, then it shall be that, whatsoever cometh forth from the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, it shall belong to Yahveh, and I will offer it up for a burnt-offering." ¹⁶⁷

As she prays for a child, Hannah vows: "O Yahveh of hosts, if Thou wilt indeed look upon the affliction of Thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget Thine handmaid, but wilt give unto Thine handmaid, a man-child, then I will give him unto Yahveh all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head." ¹⁶⁸

Absalom vows: "If Yahveh shall indeed bring me again to Jerusalem, then I will serve Yahveh." ¹⁶⁹

G. Book of Jeremiah

We have left the Book of Jeremiah for a separate study because it contains the noblest prayers and secondly because there exists so great a misunderstanding of the personality of Jeremiah, that it demands our careful analysis.¹⁷⁰ Before discussing the confessions of Jeremiah, we wish to present the other prayers found in the book of Jeremiah--some by him and others by other hands.

Jeremiah offers an ideal confession of Israel. "Behold we have come unto Thee, for Thou art Yahveh our God. Truly the hills, the noise upon the mountains is deceitful; truly in Yahveh our God is the salvation of Israel....Let us lie down in our shame, and let our confusion cover us; for we have sinned against Yahveh our God, we and our fathers, from our youth even unto this day, and we have not obeyed the voice of Yahveh our God."¹⁷¹

Again there is a praise of Yahveh and a confession of national disobedience. "O Lord Yahveh, Thou hast made the heavens and the earth by Thy great power and by Thine outstretched arm." There follows a lengthy elaboration of God's kindness and deed--special reference to the exodus and the conquest of Canaan. "They came in and possessed it but they obeyed not Thy voice, neither walked in Thy law."¹⁷²

There are two prayers which are put into the mouths of the people. These are usually taken as Jeremiah's but a few remarks will make clear that this is impossible. "If our sins testify

against us, O Lord, do it for Thy name's sake, for our backslidings are many; we have sinned against Thee. O Hope of Israel, its saviour in time of need, why art Thou like a stranger in the land, like a wayfarer that turns in for the night? Why art Thou like a man that is dazed, like a helpless warrior? Yet Thou, O Lord, abidest in our midst. We are dedicated to Thee; do not forsake us!" 173

"Hast Thou rejected Judah....Why hast Thou smitten us, and there is no healing for us?...We acknowledge, O Lord, our wickedness and the iniquities of our fathers....Do not reject us for Thy name's sake...." 174

"Thou abidest in our midst" is convincing proof that the author of the prayer is not Jeremiah. In his Temple Sermon, he deprecated the theory that God dwelt in the Temple among the people. The next prayer is also by the people who believe that Yahveh's honor was at stake when trouble befell them. The similarity of the two prayers may be explained by the fact that Jeremiah wrote the prayer twice in different form, intending to choose one.

IV. Jeremiah

In Jeremiah we reach the heights of genuine prayer. He has rightly been described by Cornill as "the first man of prayer known to the history of religion."² Another has termed him "the father of true prayer."³ There is perhaps no Biblical character, whom we know as intimately as Jeremiah. He is the most intensely human of all the prophets. His prayers--human cries artistically wrought and carved out of anguish and persecution. If painful experiences produce great prayers, therein lies the answer to Jeremiah's greatness. Forsaken by man, condemned to die, driven into hiding, mocked and scorned, hurled into a miry pit--his life was a life of suffering and distress. His bitter experiences did not lead him into hatred or heresy, cynicism or reproach; instead "he found a higher fellowship, a surer solace, in the consciousness he acquired of God's nearness to him. His severe isolation served but to nourish and intensify his reliance upon God and to open his mind to the deeper spiritual significance of his mission. This saving sense of God's presence grew on the prophet until we find him exclaiming from a full heart, as the Psalmist later, "God is my strength and my refuge." Indeed, with this sense of communion with God, Heremiah's whole being became permeated and all his thinking surcharged."⁴

It is this intimacy, this personal relationship--so necessary to genuine prayer--between God and Jeremiah that makes the latter's

prayers so powerful. He addresses God with familiarity and passion. "I have not sat in the company of the merry ones and rejoiced; I have sat lonely because of Thy overmastering power, yea, Thou hast filled me with gloom. Why must gloom last forever? Why must my wound be incurable, ever refusing to heal? Thou hast been unto me a deceptive brook, as waters that cannot be relied upon." ⁵

He bemoans the fate of the prophet of God. "I have become a constant target for laughter; every one mocketh me....For the word of God but serveth to bring upon me insult and derision without end." ⁶

Because of this persecution and men's hatred, loneliness and suffering, God is all the more real to Jeremiah. God is all he has and to Jeremiah--"since God is with me, I triumph like a hero." ⁷ To him may be applied his own verse: "Blessed is the man who relieth on God, and whose trust is in the Lord." ⁸

His personal suffering brought him not only a deeper insight in God's plan and purpose, clothed him not only with faith and reliance, but with pity and love for his tormentors. They say that Jeremiah was vengeful and cruel. With such utterances?-- "My eyes must shed tears night and day, unceasingly, for great destruction will be dealt to the virgin daughter of my people." ⁹ "Oh, my innermost being! I writhe in anguish! My heart throbs violently; I find no rest." ¹⁰

"In those years of utter loneliness originated the confessions-- those dialogues in which the prophet pours out his soul to God, his human misgivings, his shrinkings from what he feels to be in-

evitable, his profound depression verging at times on despair, and on the other hand, voices the reassurance, the positive reasoning, the promises of strength and sustenance with which he feels his soul fortified and inspired after he has thus unburdened himself." 11

We have arranged the confessions chronologically. When Jeremiah has been condemned to death and escapes by hiding, he utters a bitter lament:

"Woe unto me, my mother, that thou didst bear me; a man of strife and enmity for the whole land; I have not lent to them nor have they lent to me; yet every one curseth me. Thou O Lord, knowest it, remember me and pay heed unto me; procure vengeance for me on my persecutors not according to Thy long-suffering--take me away (let me die). Know that I have borne shame for Thy sake. Yet when Thy words have offered themselves, I have verily devoured them; Thy revelation has been to me the joy and delight of my heart; yea, I am dedicated to Thy service, O Lord God of hosts. I have not sat in the company of the merry ones and rejoiced; I have sat lonely because of Thy overmastering power, yea Thou hast filled me with gloom. Why must gloom last forever? Why must my wound be incurable, ever refusing to heal? Thou hast been unto me a deceptive brook, as water that cannot be relied upon." 12

Verse 15 has usually been interpreted as an indication of hatred and vengeance. With the proper translation, the meaning becomes clear and the statement falls in line with the character of Jeremiah. He had just been condemned to death and so a vengeful mood was so normal and human and he asks God to avenge him. No sooner had he uttered this, than he regrets it and insteads asks that he die. It is a cry of anguish, momentary resentment, but followed by a conquest of baser qualities--it is Jeremiah at his greatest. Again in vv. 17-18 it is not his personal happiness that

that was concerned; his suffering and constant agony of spirit was due to the realization of the inevitability of the people's doom; his great heart suffered because of his people.

The second confession was also produced during the period of hiding.

"I know, O Lord, that man's way is not of his own making, that it is not in the power of mortal to choose and direct his way. The Lord is my power and my strength, my refuge in the day of need. To thee the nations shall come from the ends of the earth and confess: verily our fathers inherited but falsehoods, empty beliefs which are of no avail. Chastise me, O Lord, according to justice, but not in Thy overwhelming wrath, lest Thou reduce me to nothingness. Heal me, O Lord, that I may be healed; save me that I may be saved; for Thou art my glory..... But I have not grown callous as shepherd in Thy service, neither have I wished for the disastrous day--Thou knowest it; the utterances of my lips are ever-present to Thee. Prove not a terror unto me, but be my refuge in the day of evil. Let my persecutors be dismayed, but let not me be dismayed; let them be terror-stricken, but let not me be terror-stricken, when Thou dost bring upon them the day of evil, when Thou dost strike them with destruction a second time!" 19

It is a confession that declares that only spiritual things avail. The prophet affirms his reliance on God and his hope of the universal conversion of mankind. Ultimately, he hoped, his preaching would bear fruit; the destruction of the nation would lead to a spiritual rebirth. Of special interest is verse 18. Jeremiah does not wish the day of evil and the destruction of his persecutors; what he says is that the disaster is inevitable, and that the people, blinded by their false religion, will be bewildered by their fate.

There is a fragment of a confession. "Give heed to me, O Lord, and hearken to the voice of them that contend with me. Shall evil be recompensed for good? for they have digged a pit for my soul. Remember how I stood before Thee to speak good for them, to turn away Thy wrath from them." ¹⁴ The following three verses, brutal and hateful, contradictory to verse twenty, cannot be the work of Jeremiah. "In the same breath that he reminds God that he has interceded for the people and sought to turn away His wrath from them, he certainly could not give vent to such implacable and fanatic hatred toward them as is expressed in vv. 21-23." ¹⁵ We are most eager to mention these verses because so many commentators base their estimate of Jeremiah on them, forgetting the content of verse twenty and seeing only the later ones.

The next confession is a product of the suffering he endured during the reign of Zedekiah. His own clan threatened to take his life; every one hated him; he was thrown into the dangeon.

"But Thou, O Lord of Hosts art the righteous judge, who testest the reins and the heart; I shall see Thy vengeance on them, for unto Thee do I reveal my cause.... Absolutely righteous art Thou, O God, even though I venture to disput with Thee--yet of a question of justice I desire to speak unto Thee: why is the way of the wicked prosperous? Why are all faithless people at ease? Thou has planted them, hence they take root, thrive, even yield fruit; near art Thou to their mouth, but far from their heart. But Thou, O God, Thou knowest me; Thou seest me ever; Thou hast tried my heart which is at one with Thee." ¹⁶

Verse twenty of chapter eleven is not a plea for personal vengeance; it is a wish that he might be saved from the power of his tormentors.

In the following verses, Jeremiah presents his solution to God's ways. Real happiness is found in the strength and peace of soul that comes to him who leads a righteous life, who is in harmony with God.

The confession found in chapter twenty is written after Jeremiah had been thrown into the miry pit and rescued.

"Thou, O God, hast enthralled me, and I am enthralled; Thou hast seized and overpowered me. I have become a constant target for laughter; everyone mocketh me..... Since God is with me, I triumph like a hero. Hence my persecutors must exhaust themselves and accomplish nothing. They suffer great shame, because they succeed not; their shame will never be forgotten. Sing praise unto God; glorify God. For He has saved the soul of the poor from the hand of the evil-doers." 19

It is a confession revealing the secret of Jeremiah's power. God's presence enabled him to endure everything. Verse thirteen is a rejoicing over his rescue from death in the pit.

Lastly, we present a confession of great grief and bitterness, with no ray of hope, no comfort. It is not the wavering of faith; it is an expression of despondency and certainly Jeremiah's life and lot presented him with sufficient occasions.

"Cursed be the day that I was born! Let not the day that my mother bore me be blessed. Cursed be the man who brought the glad tidings to my father: 'A male child is born unto thee,' and filled him with joy. May that man be like the cities which God overthrew mercilessly.... Would that they had killed me at birth, or that my mother had been my grave, and her womb carried me for all time. Wherefore came I forth from the womb to see misery and woe, that my days should vanish in despair?" 20

V. Conclusion

With the lofty utterances and impassioned cries of him who lived a life of prayer, in constant communion with God, complaining, yearning, beseeching, we conclude our study. From the dying cry of Samson with a petition for physical strength and vengeance to the confession of Jeremiah, weeping for Israel, struggling with his own soul, conquering with God's trust and at one-ness with Him.

"As the mysterious linking of man with the Eternal, prayer is an incomprehensible wonder, a miracle of miracles which is daily brought to pass in the devout soul. We can only be a spectator and interpreter of the deep and powerful life which is unveiled in prayer: only the religious man can penetrate the mystery. 'There is nothing more powerful than prayer and there is nothing to be compared with it.'"

Notes

Chapter I.

1. Quoted in Fosdick, Harry E., The Meaning of Prayer (New York, 1929), page 9.
2. Fosdick, page
3. Heiler, Friedrich, Das Gebet (Munchen, 1921), page 491.
4. Deuteronomy iv:7.
5. "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures;
He leadeth me beside the still waters.
He restoreth my soul;
He guideth me in straight paths for His name's sake.
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil,
For Thou art with me;
Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me." (vv. 2-4).
6. Joshua vii:7-9.
7. 2 Samuel xxi:1.
8. 2 Kings xx:3
9. Judges xvi:28
10. Jeremiah xv:10, 15-21.
11. Deuteronomy iv:39.
12. Deuteronomy i:31. "....thou hast seen how that the Lord thy God bore thee, as a man doth bear his son...."
Psalm ciii:13. "Like as a father hath compassion upon his children,
So hath the Lord compassion upon them that fear Him."
Hosea xi:1. "When Israel was a child, then I loved him,
And out of Egypt I call My son."
13. Psalm lxxv:2. "O Thou that hearest prayer,
Unto Thee doth all flesh come."
14. Isaiah lix:1. "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save,
Neither His ear heavy, that it cannot hear."
15. 2 Chronicles xvi:9.
16. 1 Kings viii:39.
17. Exodus xxxiv:6. "The Lord, the Lord, God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth."
18. Deuteronomy iv:31. "The Lord, thy God, is a merciful God."
19. Genesis xx:17.
20. Numbers xii:13-14.

21. I Kings xvii:21-22.
22. I Kings xviii:37-38.
23. Genesis xxv:21.
24. I Samuel i:11, 19, 20.
25. II Kings, xx:3, 5.
26. Genesis xviii:14.
27. 2 Chronicles xvi:12.
28. Genesis iii.
29. Genesis iv.
30. Exodus iii:10.
31. I Samuel iii:4.
32. I Kings xviii:1.
33. Jeremiah xx:7, 9.
34. Jeremiah xxiii:18.
35. Amos iii:8.
36. Genesis xii:8.
37. Genesis xxi:13.
38. Genesis xxxvii:34.
39. Genesis xlv:28.
40. 2 Chronicles xxix, xxxv.
41. Genesis xli:16. "It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace."
Genesis xxxix:9. "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?"
Genesis xlv:5, 7, 8. "....for God did send me before you to preserve life. And God sent me....
So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God."
Genesis l:20. "And as for you, ye meant evil against me; but God meant it for good."
Our purpose in pointing out the absence of recorded formal prayers in the story of Joseph was done with no intention of belittling his character. Here is a man of the most splendid piety, interwoven with his life. As a compiler, we merely mentioned the lack of prayers.
42. Amos v:14, 15.
43. Micah vi:8.
44. Isaiah i:16.
45. Isaiah lviii:7, 9.
46. Hosea vii:14.
47. Jeremiah xxix:13.
48. Psalm lxvi:18.
49. Deuteronomy xxvi:12, 13.
50. Genesis xxxii:11.
51. 2 Kings xx:3; Isaiah xxxviii:3.
52. Job x:7; xiii:23. "It is borne in upon him that there is nothing

irreligious about revealing one's doubt and pouring out one's despair to God. On the contrary, the fact that he can speak out his mind to Him even now when bowed down under his mysterious affliction, proves how clear is his conscience, and how really close he is to God. So convinced is Job that his wrestling with God is a sign, not of estrangement, but of intimacy, that he now more emphatically than ever asserts his innocence." Battenwieser, Moses, The Book of Job, New York, 1922, page 51.

53. 2 Kings xx:3.

54. Ezra x:1. "Now Ezra prayed and made confession, weeping and casting himself down before the house of God."

ix:3. "And when I heard this thing, I rent my garment and my mantle, and plucked off the hair of my head and of my beard....

ix:5. And at the evening offering I arose from my fasting, even with my garment and mantle rent; and I fell upon my knees, and spread out my hands unto God."

55. Nehemiah i:4.

56. Joshua vii:6. "And Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face....he and the elders of Israel; and they put dust upon their heads."

57. Job i:20.

58. This attempt at sincerity and earnestness may sometimes assume dramatic proportions, wherein the prayerful mood is lost. The Baal priests frantically shout for hours and cut themselves with knives and lances till the blood gushes forth. (I Kings xviii:26,28). The degenerate worshippers of Hosea's time, in imitation of their heathen neighbors, "cut themselves for the grain and the new wine." (Hosea vii:14). ?

58. Genesis xxiv:26.

59. Nehemiah viii:6.

60. Nehemiah viii:6. I Chronicles xxix:20.

61. Joshua vii:6.

62. I Kings xviii:42.

63. Daniel vi:10.

64. I Samuel i:26.

65. I Kings viii:54.

66. Jeremiah xviii:20.

67. Exodus ix:29; xvii:11; I Kings viii:22.

68. I Kings viii:38; Psalm v:7; cxxxiv:2; xxviii:2; I Kings viii:22, 54.

69. Numbers xii:13.

70. Nehemiah v:19. This form is a favorite with Nehemiah.

71. Isaiah lxiii:7-lxiv:12. So usually in Lamentations.

72. Jacob prays to the "God of my father Abraham and the God of my father Isaac." (Genesis xxxii:9). Elijah invokes the "God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel." (I Kings xviii:36). Similar ex-

pressions include "God of our fathers," (2 Chronicles xx:6),
 "God of Israel," (Ezra ix:15).

- 73. Isaiah lxiii:16; lxiv:8. Jeremiah iii:4.
- 74. Psalm xciv:1.
- 75. 2 Chronicles xxx:18.
- 76. Exodus xxxiv:6; Deuteronomy iv:31; Nehemiah ix:17.
- 77. Nehemiah i:5-11; Nehemiah ix:6-37.
 I Chronicles xxix:10-19; 2 Chronicles xx:6-12.
- 78. Genesis xviii:23-31.

Chapter II.

1. "Prayer is the potent agency for obtaining power to live a religious life, the specific remedy for religious weakness."
Quoted in Heiler, p. 2.
2. "Where the prayer of the heart is wanting, there is no religion."
Quoted in Heiler, p. 1.
3. Fallaize, E. N., Prayer, Primitive, (Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, ed. Hastings), New York, 1919, vol. X, pp. 154-5.
4. Tiele, Cornelius P., Elements of the Science of Religion, New York, 1899, part II, pp. 127, 134-137.
5. Smith, Robertson, Religion of the Semites, second edition, pp. 54-55.
6. Fallaize, pp. 155-156.
7. Heiler, p. 41.
8. Ibid., p. 42.
9. Ibid., p. 42.
10. Ibid., p. 43.
11. Ibid., pp. 57-58.
12. Ibid., p. 71.
13. Deuteronomy xvi:16.
14. Heiler, p. 72. There is a type of sacrifice which is not an afterthought to prayer, with the purpose of adding effectiveness to the petition. Sacrifice, as a mystical communion, is of very early stage; originally, sacrifice was considered a sacrament. This type of sacrifice is not an outgrowth of prayer, but develops alongside.
15. Ibid., pp. 71-72. The word "atar" meaning to pray, originally means to sacrifice. This is based on Semitic sources and not on Biblical passages.
16. Isaiah i:11, 12, 15.
17. Amos v:21-23.
18. Heiler, p. 78. This statement is disproved by the presence of vows in Psalms 65 and 66 which appear very early.
19. Ibid., p. 89.
20. Ibid., p. 134.
21. Ibid., p. 224.
22. John of Damascus, quoted in Heiler, p. 229.
23. I Samuel iii:10.
24. Heiler, p. 231.
25. Psalm xxxv:3.
26. This section of our study is a digest of Heiler, pp. 248-409.
27. Psalm xxi:4.
28. Heiler, p. 256.

29. Heiler, p. 282. Heiler forgets that mysticism--even in Jewish sources--is older than the mystery religions. Heiler's entire discussion of prophetic religion versus mystical must be criticized in that his treatment of mysticism is narrow and confined. There is a mysticism--a vital, healthy mysticism--that produced the Psalms and prophetic enthusiasm, born not of the mystery religion but of man's spiritual yearning for God. Heiler's analysis of mysticism may apply to certain localities but does not apply to the mystical utterances of the Bible. Even Heiler finally admits that in the great prayers of the noble religious personalities, the two elements are found.
30. Ibid., p. 346.
31. A perusal of Deuteronomy xxviii or Leviticus xxvi illustrate the things which constituted a blessing and a curse and there is truth in the Bacon aphorism "that prosperity is the blessing of the Old Testament." Isaac prays that Jacob may possess "the dew of heaven, the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine." (Genesis xxvii:28). To Ezra, God's great goodness consisted of "a fat land, houses full of all good things, cisterns hewn out, vineyards and oliveyards, and fruit trees in abundance." (Nehemiah ix:25). "He will love thee, and bless thee, and multiply thee; He will also bless the fruit of thy body and the fruit of thy land, thy corn and thy wine and thine oil, the increase of thy kine and the young of thy flock.... Thou shalt be blessed above all peoples; there shall not be male or female barren among, or among your cattle. And the Lord will take away from thee all sickness; and He will put none of the evil diseases of Egypt, which thou knowest, upon thee, but will lay them upon all them that hate thee.. And thou shalt consume all the peoples that the Lord thy God shall deliver unto thee." (Deuteronomy vii:13-16).
32. Genesis xxxii:11.
33. 2 Kings xix:19.
34. Lamentation ii:20.
35. I Samuel vii:5.
36. 2 Chronicles xiii:4-12.
37. 2 Chronicles xiv:11.
38. Judges xvi:28.
39. I Samuel xxv:39.
Let it not be thought that there are no prayers for other things than bread and victory and gratitude for an enemy's death. Not by bread alone does man live (Deuteronomy viii:3). Solomon prays for wisdom and rejects riches and honor (I Kings iii:11); Ezra acknowledges that along with the manna "Thou gavest also Thy good spirit to instruct them" (Nehemiah ix:20). The psalmist prays:
"Create in me a clean heart, O God,
And renew a right spirit within me." (Psalm li:10).
There were men to whom the light of God's face was better than corn and wine (Psalm iv:6-8).

Habakkuk rejects all material blessings when he says:

"For though the fig-trees shall not flourish,
And there be no fruit in the vines,
Though the labor of the olive fail
And the fields yield no food,
Though the flock be cut off from the fold,
And there be no herd in the stalls;
Yet will I rejoice in Yahveh,

I will joy in the God of my salvation." (iii:17, 18).

40. Deuteronomy xxvi:6-10.
41. Numbers vi:24-26.
42. Numbers xxviii.
43. I Samuel i:3.
44. I Samuel ix:12, 13.
45. I Samuel xx:5; Isaiah i:14;
46. Deuteronomy xxvii and xxviii.
47. Genesis xviii:22 ff.
48. I Samuel vii:9.
49. Exodus x:18.
50. Exodus xxxii:31.
51. Numbers xii:13. This is an extremely good example of a very old prayer; it is short and uses the imperative.
52. Deuteronomy xxxiv:10.
53. Psalm cxxix:8; Ruth ii:4. "The Lord be with you. The Lord bless you."
54. I Samuel ii.
55. Isaiah xxxviii:10-20.
- 55a. Genesis xii:18.
56. Job xlii:8; I Samuel vii:9.
57. Ezra vi:21 f.
58. Genesis xxii.
59. "And thou shalt not give any of thy seed to set them apart to Molech."
60. "....whosoever he be of the children of Israel or of the strangers that sojourn in Israel, that giveth of his seed to Molech, he shall surely be put to death...."
61. I Samuel xv:22.
62. Heiler, p. 221.
63. Hosea vi:3.
64. Psalm cxli:2.
65. Amos v:24.
66. Micah vi:8.
67. Heiler, p. 224.
68. Jeremiah xx:7.
69. Exodus iii.
70. Heiler, p. 237.

71. Psalm lxxiii:25-28.
 "If I have but Thee, I ask for nothing in heaven or earth.
 Though flesh and heart, fail, yet God is my portion for ever....
 My happiness lies in being near my God."
 Psalm li:13.
 "Cast me not away from Thy presence,
 And take not Thy holy spirit from me."
 Psalm xxxi:6.
 "Into Thy hand I commend my spirit."
 Psalm lxxiii:2, 4-9.
 "O God, Thou art my God; I will seek Thee earnestly. My soul
 thirsteth for Thee, my flesh longeth for Thee, in a dry and
 weary land where no water is. Because Thy lovingkindness is
 better than life, my lips shall praise Thee. So will I
 bless Thee while I live, I will lift up my hands in Thy name.
 My soul shall be satisfied and my mouth shall praise Thee
 with joyful lips, when I remember Thee upon my bed, and medi-
 tate on Thee in the night watches. For Thou hast been my
 help and in the shadow of Thy wings, will I rejoice. My soul
 followeth hard after Thee: Thy right hand upholdeth me."
72. Heiler, p. 238.
 73. Psalm li:12.
 74. Genesis xv:6.
 75. Isaiah vii:9. "If you have not faith, verily you shall not
 endure."
76. Jeremiah x:10.
 77. Jeremiah x:10.
 78. Psalm cxxxvi:1.
 79. Heiler, pp. 263-265.
 80. Psalm li:6.
 81. Heiler, p. 267.
 82. Hosea xiv:2.
 83. Amos vii:2.
 84. Jeremiah i:6.
 85. Heiler, p. 350.
 86. Jeremiah xii:1. "Absolutely righteous art Thou, O God, even
 though I venture to dispute with Thee--yet
 of a question of justice I desire to speak
 unto Thee: Why is the way of the wicked pros-
 perous? Why are all faithless people at ease?"
- Habakkuk i:13. "Wherefore lookest Thou, when they deal treach-
 erously, and holdest Thy peace, when the
 wicked swalloweth up the man that is more
 righteous than he."
- Psalm xlii:13. "Why hast Thou forgotten me. Why go I mourning
 because of the oppression of the enemy?"
- Psalm lxxxviii:
 15. "O Yahveh, why castest Thou off my soul? Why
 hidest Thou Thy face from me?"

87. Jeremiah xv:18. "Thou hast been unto me a deceptive brook,
as water that cannot be relied upon."
Habakkuk i:2. "O Yahveh, how long shall I cry and Thou
wilt not hear? I cry unto Thee of vio-
lence and Thou wilt not save."
Lamentations ii:20. "See, O Yahveh, and behold to whom Thou
hast done this. Thou hast slain them in
the day of Thine anger; Thou hast slaught-
ered and not pitied."
Job xiii:24. "Why hidest Thou Thy face?
Why holdest Thou me for Thine enemy?"
Job xiv:19. "As water weareth away the stone,
And the torrent carrieth off the soil,
Even so dost Thou destroy the hope of man."
88. Psalm xxv:2. "O my God, in Thee have I trusted, let me
not be ashamed; let not mine enemies
triumph over me."
Psalm xl:15. "Let them be ashamed and abashed together
that seek after my soul to sweep it away;
let them be turned backward and brought
to confusion that delight in my hurt."
89. Psalm xvii:8. "Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide
me in the shadow of Thy wings from the
wicked that oppress."
90. Job xiii:23. "Let me know my transgression and sin."
91. Psalm xli:6. "O Lord, be gracious unto me; heal my
soul, for I have sinned against Thee."
Jeremiah xvii:14. "Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed."
Psalm xxv:7. "Remember not the sins of my youth, nor
my transgressions."
Psalm li:9. "Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean,
wash me and I shall be whiter than snow."
92. Jeremiah x:24. "Chastise me, O Lord, according to jus-
tice, but not in Thy overwhelming wrath."
93. Psalm cxix:33. "Teach me, O Lord, the way of Thy
statutes; and I will keep it at every
step."
94. Jeremiah xiv:7. "If our sins testify against us, O Lord, |
do it for Thy name's sake."
Psalm lxxxviii:11. "Shall the shades arise and give Thee
thanks?"
Joel ii:17. "Give not Thy heritage to reproach, that
the nations should make them a byword:
wherefore should they say among the
peoples: Where is their God?"
95. Psalm xxv:6. "Remember, O Lord, Thy compassions and
Thy mercies; for they have been from of old."
Psalm xxii:5. "In Thee did our fathers trust; they trusted
and Thou didst deliver them."

- Exodus xxxii:13.
96. Psalm xxvi:1.
97. Psalm lvii:1.
- Psalm li:1.
98. Isaiah lxiii:16.
99. Isaiah lxiv:7.
- Psalm li:5-6.
- Genesis xviii:27.
100. Heiler, p. 378.
101. Psalm xiii:6.
- Psalm xxxi:6, 15.
102. Job complains of his lot but becomes resigned, knowing that he is innocent. Jeremiah questions God's justice but is reassured that only the spiritual man has real happiness (chapter 12).
103. Psalm xxx; cxviii; civ; cxlv.
104. Psalm xlii:2.
- Psalm xvi:2.
- Exodus xxxiii:18; Psalm lxiii:2; Psalm lxxiii:25-28.
- "Remember Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to whom Thou didst swear....I will multiply your seed."
- "Judge me, O Lord, for I have walked in mine integrity."
- "Be gracious unto me, O God, be gracious unto me, for in Thee hath my soul taken refuge."
- "Be gracious unto me, O God, according to Thy mercy."
- "For Thou art our Father."
- "We are the clay and Thou our potter, and we are all the work of Thy hand."
- "For I know my transgressions; And my sin is ever before me. Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned."
- "Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord,--and I am but dust and ashes."
- "But as for me, in Thy mercy do I trust; my heart shall rejoice in Thy salvation."
- "Into Thy hand I commit my spirit. But as for me, I have trusted in Thee, O Lord; I have said: 'Thou art my God.'"
- "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God."
- "I have said unto the Lord: 'Thou art my Lord; I have no good but in Thee.'"

Chapter III.

1. Judges xvi:28.
2. 2 Chronicles xxiv:22.
3. 2 Chronicles xx:6-12.
4. 2 Chronicles xiv:10.
5. Lamentations i:9.
6. Lamentations i:20-22.
7. Lamentations ii:20-21.
8. Lamentations v:1, 19-22.
- 8a Lamentations iii:55-58.
9. Lamentations iii:59-66.
10. Joel i:19f.
11. Joel ii:17.
12. Genesis xxxii:11-13.
13. Genesis xix:19-20.
14. Judges x:10, 15. This is the only complete prayer. Reference to a similar situation is made in: Judges iii:9; iv:3; vi:6; 2 Kings xiii:4.
15. I Kings xviii:26.
16. I Kings xviii:36f.
17. 2 Kings xix:15-19; Isaiah xxxvii:16-20.
18. 2 Kings xx:3; Isaiah xxxviii:3.
19. Jonah ii:2-9.
20. Isaiah xxxii:2.
21. Numbers xvi:15.
22. 2 Samuel xv:31.
23. Nehemiah vi:14.
24. Genesis xxiv:12-14.
25. I Samuel xxiii:10-12.
26. Exodus xvii:4.
27. Judges xiii:8.
28. Genesis xliii:14. Another wish is found in I Samuel xx:42, in which Jonathan says to David: "Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the Lord, saying: The Lord shall be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed forever."
29. Genesis xvii:18.
30. I Kings xvii:20.
31. I Kings xvii:21; a similar situation is attributed to Elisha in 2 Kings iv:33.
32. I Kings xix:4.
33. Jonah iv:2, 3.
34. Job vi:8, 9. All translation from Job are taken from Battenwieser, Moses, The Book of Job.
35. Job vii:15, 16, 19, 21.
36. Job xiv:13.
37. Exodus viii:8.
38. Exodus x:18.

39. Joshua x:12.
40. 2 Kings vi:18.
41. Nehemiah i:5-11.
42. Nehemiah v:19.
43. Nehemiah vi:9.
44. Nehemiah xiii:22.
45. Nehemiah xiii:14.
46. Nehemiah xiii:29.
47. Nehemiah xiii:31.
48. Deuteronomy xxi:7, 8.
49. Jonah i:14.
50. Job xxxiv:31-32.
51. Deuteronomy xxvi:13-15.
52. Numbers x:35.
53. Numbers x:36.
54. I Chronicles iv:10.
55. Deuteronomy iii:24, 25.
56. Numbers xxvii:16f.
57. Isaiah lxiii:15-lxiv:12. Probably during the disastrous days of 344 B.C.
58. Genesis xxxii:27.
59. I Kings iii:7-9.
60. Proverbs xxx:7-9.
61. Habakkuk i:2.
62. Exodus xxxiii:13-16. A similar tone in Psalm xxvii:11.
63. Exodus xxxiii:18.
64. Exodus xxxiv:9.
65. I Kings viii:23-53; 2 Chronicles vi:14-40.
66. I Kings viii:56.
67. I Kings viii:57-61.
68. Exodus v:22, 23.
69. Numbers xi:11-15.
70. Joshua vii:7-9.
71. Judges xv:18.
72. Habakkuk i:2.
73. Habakkuk i:12f.
74. Battenwieser, p. 39. "We see him bewildered at God's inexplicable harshness, weighed down by his appalling afflictions... We see him passionately repudiating the suspicion cast on his integrity by the undeserved calamities with which God has visited him, proclaiming his innocence again and yet again.... We see him searching, reasoning, wrestling until it comes to him that in spite of all appearances he is not really cut off from God. We see him thus through the sheer force of his own moral sense rising to a larger conception of God....finding ever greater comfort in the reflection that in spite of his afflictions God is on his side....His trials are still with him, but what are physical suffering and material losses to him who has surrendered himself to the unfathomable wisdom of an infinite God?"

75. Job x:2-21.
76. Job xiii:21-xiv:6.
77. I Samuel vii:8; xii:19.
78. I Samuel xii:23.
79. Jeremiah xv:1.
80. Exodus viii:8; x:18.
81. Exodus xxxii:11-13.
82. Exodus xxxii:31f.
83. Numbers xiv:17-19.
84. Numbers xi:2.
85. Numbers xvi:22. It is this man of God, Moses, who is the greatest intercessor of the ages. As a final quotation, may we insert: "And I fell down before the Lord....forty days and forty nights; I did neither eat bread nor drink water; because of all your sin which ye sinned....Moreover the Lord was very angry with Aaron to have destroyed him; and I prayed for Aaron also the same time." (Deuteronomy ix:18-20).
86. Numbers xii:13.
87. 2 Kings vi:17.
88. I Kings xiii:6.
89. Amos vii:2, 5.
90. 2 Samuel xxiv:17; I Chronicles xxi:17.
91. 2 Samuel xii:16.
92. Ezekiel ix:8.
93. Ezekiel xi:13.
94. 2 Kings xix:4.
95. 2 Chronicles xxx:18f.
96. Genesis xx:7.
97. Genesis xx:17.
98. Genesis xviii:23-31.
99. Deuteronomy viii:10.
100. Deuteronomy xxvi:6-10.
101. Psalm cxlix.
102. Judges xvi:23f.
103. Exodus xv:1-21; Judges v.
104. Deuteronomy xxvi:6-10.
105. I Samuel ii. *vv*
106. Isaiah xxxviii:10-20.
107. Genesis xxiv:27.
108. 2 Samuel vii:18-29; I Chronicles xvii:16-27.
109. I Chronicles xxix:10-19.
110. Daniel ii:20-23.
111. Daniel vi:10.
112. Ezra vii:27f.
113. Isaiah xii:1, 2.
114. Isaiah xxv:1-5.
115. Job xxxiii:27f.

116. Goldziher, Ignaz, Abhandlungen zur Arabischen Philologie,
Leiden 1896, pp.26ff.
117. Numbers vi:24-26.
118. Genesis xxvii:28, 29.
119. Genesis xxvii:37.
120. Genesis xxvii:39, 40.
121. Genesis xxviii:3.
122. Genesis xlviii:9.
123. Genesis xlviii:15f.
124. Genesis xlix:28.
125. Deuteronomy xxxiii:7.
126. Deuteronomy xxxiii:13.
127. Deuteronomy xxxiii:23.
128. Deuteronomy xxxiii:24.
129. I Samuel xxv:32.
130. I Samuel xxv:39.
131. Ezra vii:27; I Chronicles xxix:10; Daniel ii:20.
132. Ruth i:8-9.
133. Ruth ii:12.
134. Genesis xiv:19-20.
135. Exodus xviii:10.
136. I Kings v:21.
137. 2 Chronicles ix:8.
138. Daniel iii:28.
139. Ezra vi:12.
140. I Kings viii:15.
141. Battenwieser, The Book of Job, p. 263 (note to xxxi:5ff).
142. Numbers xxi:11.
143. Genesis ix:25-27.
144. Deuteronomy xxvii and xxviii.
145. 2 Samuel xvi:7-9.
146. Job iii:3.
147. Job iii:8.
148. I Kings viii:46.
149. Jeremiah lxi:25.
150. Jeremiah xiv:20.
151. Ezra ix:7.
152. Nehemiah ix:2.
153. Daniel ix:16.
154. Daniel ix:20; Nehemiah i:6 "I and my father's house have
sinned."
155. Judges x:9, 10; I Samuel viii:6.
156. Nehemiah ix:26.
157. Ezra ix:6-15.
158. Daniel ix:4-19.
159. Lamentations iii:42.

160. Job xl:4, xlii:2-6.
161. Hosea xiv:2-4.
162. Daniel ix:18.
163. Isaiah xlii:22.
164. 2 Samuel xxiv:10.
165. Genesis xxviii:20-22.
166. Numbers xxi:2.
167. Judges xi:30-31.
168. I Samuel i:11.
169. 2 Samuel xv:8.
170. The veangeful note in Jeremiah is accepted by Heiler as part of Jeremiah's own work. Page 361.
The complaint "Why hast Thou smitten us and there is no healing?" is also considered a genuine Jeremiah utterance. Page 359.
171. Jeremiah iii:22-25.
172. Jeremiah xxxii:17-23. This prayer is not by Jeremiah.
173. Jeremiah xiv:7-9.
174. Jeremiah xiv:19-22.
- 175.

Chapter IV.

1. All translations of the Book of Jeremiah or comments to the passages are taken either from Dr. Bittenwieser's class notes or from Bittenwieser, Moses, The Prophets of Israel New York 1914.
2. Quoted in Heiler p. 237.
3. Wellhausen, quoted in Heiler, p. 238.
4. Bittenwieser, Prophets of Israel, pp. 80-81.
5. Jeremiah xv:17, 18.
6. Jeremiah xx:7, 8.
7. xx:11.
8. xvii:7.
9. xiv:17b.
10. iv:19.
11. Prophets of Israel, p. 81.
12. xv:10. 15-18.
13. x:23; xvi:19; x:24; xvii:14, 17, 18.
14. xviii:19-20.
15. Prophets of Israel, p. 112.
16. xi:20; xii:1-3a.
17. xx:7; 11, 13.
18. xx:14, 15, 16, 17, 18.

Chapter V.

1. Heiler, p. 495.

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Sacrifice", vol. xi. pp. 31-38.

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pp. 902-905.

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"Ancient prayers", pp. 1-41.