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### **MS-4787: Abba Hillel Silver Papers, 1902-1989.**

Series IV: Sermons, 1914-1963, undated.

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The God in whom I trust, 1934.

**ABSTRACT OF ADDRESS DELIVERED BY RABBI SILVER AT THE TEMPLE, ANSEL ROAD AND  
EAST 105TH STREET ON SUNDAY MORNING, APRIL 15, 1934.**

**THE GOD IN WHOM I TRUST**

Man's ultimate trust in life must be in a philosophy of life. The religious man puts his trust in a rational universe. He assumes that this complex and mysterious universe in which both matter and mind exist is the manifestation of a supreme creative mind. It is an assumption very much like similar assumptions which underlie all scientific theories. For science, itself, is not without its hypotheses, its inferences and its speculations.

Man is warranted in believing that God exists. Science itself has demonstrated that any mechanistic explanation of the universe is no longer tenable. Life and thought can not be explained in terms of chemical and physical reactions. The hope once entertained that the laboratory would yield all truth has been abandoned by science even as mankind is fast abandoning the hope that the machine will yield all good.

The God in whom the religious man believes sustains and guides the universe and therefore he sustains and guides man who is an infinitesimal and insignificant part of this universe. God's plan must embrace man's life.

The God in whom the religious man trusts is a good God, for evil is that which is imperfect, weak and maladjusted and imperfection cannot be ascribed to supreme intelligence.

The religious man sets himself in tune with God in whom he trusts through his efforts to eradicate that which is imperfect, weak and maladjusted in his own life and in the life of society. Human ideals are therefore the spiritual link between man and God. As men work for them and lose themselves in them, putting their complete trust in them, they become strong, confident and indefeasible and they are always spiritually rewarded.



Therefore the Bible frequently admonishes us not to put our trust in power, wealth, in our own self-sufficiency or in other men. They offer men no permanent security. To build one's life upon it is to build one's foundation upon shifting sand. Trust in God and in the eternal value and validity of universal ideals. Give us that strength which men need.



1/ One of chief functions -  
Trust & true

Sermon 468

In our search - roads - Most - Religion

2/ Our Bible echoes - Full - Aware

Numerous are the things - build upon foundations

Physical power - Force.

Man's security cannot rest -

Esp. true of men collectively - Nations.

There are nations to-day per - augmentation

Gospel - Youth - Canon.

There has not been a nation, however

(6) 1820 315 - 10102 311 252 311

3/ Exploitation - crushing their opponents -  
conquest - wiping out -

Life, to them, is a game of conquest  
must obtain victory regardless - Trample

They will cheat, rob, speculate, gamble

True of so many -

A discredited old man a fugitive,

but their trust in him of finance exploitation

1820 11 15721 (Kussin) 1820 11 15721 11  
but not vain hope in Robbers -



(4) Man is Warranted - in believing

(5) 12 p 624 134 - Always Return

12/ And here I believe that He sustains -

11/ The God in Whom I trust - is a Lord -  
In Evil -

14/ I can best realize myself + my trust  
"those efforts which put me in touch -  
with what I conceive to be the will. etc.

216 244

(1) What is good in human life?  
that which works against imperfection.  
weakness - maladjustment

That which develops - Ideals

13/ My trust is in these human ideals  
by which I see God

As I work for them, I am strong.  
They give us strength etc -

Sat - 224 244 244

4) Wealth - There is security - fortress - golden road  
look about you - sudden turn of fortune  
" What happened to this nation . Because  
forced to feed .

121 121 1212 1212

5) In themselves - knowledge - wisdom - power  
Committed, especially if successful  
Over-confident, Impatient.  
No sense of dependency, obligation.  
Look modestly + humbly.

Human intellect

AMERICAN JEWISH  
ARCHIVES  
1942-1943

121 121 1212 1212

6) In other men - esp. if powerful -  
Make their happiness dependent -

Some are worthy

In times of crisis -

Friends - Relations - Nearest-ones

1212 1212 1212 1212 1212

"Men of low degree are vain" - 121 121 121 121  
"high" are the - 121 121 121 121



7.) Lying words

- Lied into war

- Permitting ourselves to-day

- Jeremiah -  $\frac{1}{2}$  p. 10

With the whole world to be put in order

8.) No. men should not - wherein - clean  
216 p. 10 -  $\frac{1}{2}$  p. 10

Highest wisdom - Summary & substance

Two parts - Reprints in 2500.

Prof. Heber D. Curtis - (Quoted)

9.) "Assumption of" "Belief in". No Certainty!

① Science cannot give us food -

② Yet Sc. knows that mechanics  
The hope that laboratory

③ Rel. is based on Assumption - just as  
Sc. cannot do without its hypothesis

The Laws of Science

Sc. theories, Ess - matter & belief

Unknowable, infinite, transcendent

WRHS  
THE GOD IN WHOM I TRUST

By  
Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver

At  
The Temple  
On

Sunday morning, April 15, 1934.





One of the chief functions of religion, my friends, is to tell men what to trust in and what not to trust in. The word trust comes from the same root as the word true. In other words, it is the function of religion to tell men what is true, reliable and dependable and what is unreliable. In our search for happiness in life, for security, for honor, there are many roads open to us, many roads which seem to lead to these desirable ends. Most of these roads end in the wilderness. The function of religion is to advise us which road will lead us to the goal we set for ourselves. Unfortunately most men ignore the admonition which religion gives for the road to which religion points is a hard road and the gate which leads through that road is a narrow gate.

Our Bible echoes and re-echoes the word trust. It is full of admonition as to what is trust and what is distrust. And it is also aware that most men will ignore its counsel. There are numerous things, according to the Bible which men ought not to trust in, for those that trust in them build their lives upon foundations that are shifting sand. One of the things, according to the Bible which men should not trust in, is physical power, power, force. Men's security ought not to be placed in physical force. Men are sometimes inclined to do that, especially men collectively, that is, nations. There are nations today, for example, which pin their hopes in the future upon augmentation of their physical power, upon greater armies, upon greater navies. These gospels of salvation by sword have been pledged in many parts of the world today. The youth



of the world is being taught to believe that the glory and prestige of their nation depends upon this physical strength, militarism, air planes, tanks. There has never been a race however powerful that depended on physical force that did not ultimately go down into complete defeat. Our Bible has warned us: "Those that put their trust in chariots and those that put their trust in horses, they are bowed down and fallen!"

Some people put their trust in the exploitation of their fellow men and in conquest, in wiping out their competitors. Life to them is a game of conquest. They must obtain victories for themselves regardless of what is the cost to other people. They have no hesitancy in trampling over corpses to reach their goal just so that they can reach the heights which they set for themselves. They will cheat, rob and speculate with other people's money and gamble away the resources of other people. They will manipulate and will resort to all sorts of trickery in order to secure for themselves supreme power and control. This has been true of so many people in our own country in the last few years. That discredited old man, a would be fugitive from justice, is now on his way back to this country which he dishonored and betrayed to receive, we hope, the punishment due him. That man in company with so many other business men put their trust, their supreme goal, the ambitions of their lives upon a lie, the lie of financial exploitation which brought ruin upon themselves and upon thousands of their fellow men. Therefore the Bible admonishes us in that Psalm 66 which I read this morning. "Do not put your trust in exploitation and in robbery, but in your faith."

There are people, many of them whom you know, who put their trust in



wealth, riches, money. There is no security without money. Money is their fortress. Wealth is their golden road which will lead them to their happiness. You look about you and see how that trust has been broken in the last few years, how many people who put their trust in wealth and amassed fortunes have been discovered, how a turn of fortune left them bereft and defeated and defenseless.

This is true not only of individuals but also of nations. Look what happened to this nation whose wealth seemed almost inexhaustible. Because justice and righteousness did not control our major economy, did not fairly apportion our wealth, because greed and avarice permitted that wealth to be accumulated in the hands of a few, suddenly, over night as it were, this wealth of the people disappeared, the many and the few were suddenly impoverished, and the wealthiest nation on earth was plunged into sudden poverty and forced to feed one-fourth of its population with doles and charity. Admonishes the Bible: "He who puts his faith in his wealth solely, that man will fall."

Some put their trust in themselves, in their own knowledge, in their own wisdom and in their own capacity and their own judgment. They are conceited especially if they happen to be successful. They are over-confident and are impatient of other people's opinion. They are intolerant of other people's criticism. They have no sense of dependency on others. They do not realize the simple truth that most of what a man is and what a man has is given to him by others. They lack modesty.



They lack humility. They are over trustful in themselves. And the Bible admonishes again : "The man who trusts in himself too much is a fool."

Some people trust in other men, especially if other men happen to be powerful. They make themselves dependent upon the good will or favor of other people. That, too, is a mistake because some people are worthy of our trust and most people are unworthy of our trust. In times of crisis when you most need other men, when you need that individual in whom you trust, in times of crisis men become selfish and they become self-centered seeking first their own security and welfare. Friends often times betray. Relatives become as unstable as water. The nearest and dearest very often turn out to be very slender reeds upon which to lean for support. Therefore the Bible again admonishes: "Cursed is the man that trusts in man and makes flesh his aim." And again: "The men of low degree upon whom you count are vain and the men of high degree are unreliable."

Then, too, many people, in fact most of us put our trust in lying words and slogans, incatch-words. We were led into the World War by lying words and by the slogan "A war to make the world safe for democracy." We were ready to sacrifice our lives for a slogan. Men know that it wasn't a war "to make the world safe for democracy" but a war made by bankers and international capitalists. It was a war made by munition makers. We put our trust in an illusion. Men today are



permitting themselves to put their trust in lying words; in nationalism, patriotism, racialism, preparedness. In most instances these lying words are deceptions, propaganda by individuals who stand to profit by misleading the masses for selfish reasons. Yet men are so ready to put their trust in them.

.....

And so throughout the Bible, my friends, as you read its immortal pages and listen to its spiritual doctrines, you have constantly this admonition: "Put not your trust in power, in wealth, in exploitation, in yourself, in other men." To build your life on it is to build your foundation on shifting sand.

What shall man put his trust in? And to this the Bible is crystal clear, positive, repetitious, insistent. Put your trust in God and do good. Put your trust in God and do good. There is the mandate. There is the challenge. There is the crystallization of all human wisdom, of the fundamentality, of the substance of religion. There are two parts to this mandate, both belonging to the same central unity. Trust in God and Do Good. This definition from the Bible was written down, I suppose some twenty-five hundred years ago. If a man were to write a definition of religion today I am sure he could write no better and no more comprehensive one than this. Let me read to you a definition of religion written by Professor Heber D. Curtis, an eminent scientist. He writes:



"There are hundreds of excellent definitions of religion, and doubtless a different definition of the term would be given by each reader, -- definitions which would in each case show radical variations from that given by one's neighbor. Yet in all such definitions there are certain elements in common, so generally accepted, so axiomatic, if I may be permitted to use that term, that the individual differences may be passed over as unimportant. Pantheist, theist, deist, Christian, Buddhist, or Mohammedan, -- all have at least two common factors, namely,-- the assumption of, or belief in, some concept of a Higher Power of Mind over and above the material universe, combined with a personal effort to put one's self in tune with the plan, wish or will of this super-cosmic entity."

Every definition of religion you may write and reduce to its common denominator you will find these two factors: trust in God and the doing of good. I refer to those two phrases, "assumption of" and "belief in" a superior mind. There is no certainty to the belief in God. There is no finality to it. One's belief in God cannot be scientifically demonstrated. No great religious thinker has ever attempted to demonstrate scientifically the existence of God because science is a body of knowledge of things known. Science cannot give us God. Science has demonstrated that the old mechanistic conception of the Universe is no longer tenable. Science has demonstrated that you cannot explain the mystery of life and thought, that you cannot explain mind in terms of chemical and



physical reactions. The hope that the laboratory would one day yield us all truth has been abandoned by science even as mankind is abandoning the hope that machine will some day yield all good, would someday make all men happy. That hope too has been proved vain in our day.

Religion is based on assumption, and strangely too, science is based on assumption. Science recognizes today the element of the transcendental, the infinite in the Universe. Science cannot do without its hypotheses and its inferences, so no laws of science today are regarded as fixed and certain but are regarded by outstanding scientists as laws of uncertainty, probability, rather than as axioms.

Man is warranted in believing in God, that this complex and intricate and mysterious Universe in which there is matter and mind is a manifestation of an infinite mind who guides and controls. That is the most reasonable explanation of the phenomenon of religion because it is the most reasonable, the most satisfying, the most enduring.

I put my trust in a Universe of God and I put my trust in this God and in his management of the Universe. Any mental groping and intellectual searching somehow always bring me back to this inescapable fact of God. And because I believe in God and that he sustains this Universe, I believe that he sustains me, because I am a part, infinitesimal though not insignificant, but nevertheless a part of the Universe which he sustains and he rules. This is my God in whom I put my trust.



And I believe that this God is a good God because evil has no reality of itself any more than darkness is a reality of itself. To be evil is to be imperfect, maladjusted, weal, and I cannot apply these imperfections to an omnipotent God. And because I believe that God is good I believe that I realize myself in my effort to realize what he conceived to be his will, his wish, as far as human life and the human soul is concerned; in other words in my efforts to eradicate imperfection in social life, in my struggle for a human ideal, for justice, for truth, for liberty, for freedom, for peace. I put my trust in the absolute goodness which I conceive to be the very nature of God. Therefore I do not have to put my trust in physical force or in wealth or in myself or in other men, in deception. My trust is in these ideals by means of which I approach deity and as I work for these ideals and as I love myself in them, I become enriched, strengthened.

That is not a difficult philosophy of life to conceive of. It is difficult, of course, to practice. The wise men, my friends, those who have the key to real human happiness understand this philosophy completely and try to live accordingly.

"He who puts his trust in God will be saved." It is regrettable that in our day this implicit trust in God has passed out from so many lives and because it has passed out so many people are desperately trying to pin their trust in someone else. Most people have no philosophy of life. They expend their energies along



numerous veins which yield no satisfaction. Once a man realizes that he lives in a Universe in which God dwells, that God controls this Universe, that there is an unfolding plan and that he, the individual, however small and insignificant, is nevertheless part and plan of this Universe -- once the individual sets about linking himself with this plan, his life assumes a richness, a purposefulness, a meaningfulness which nothing else can give him and all else takes on a secondary and negligible importance. Then life becomes clear and meaningful after he brings himself in the eternal enterprise of the Universe, in goodness, justice, in the seeking of truth. That unfortunately, my friends, is a philosophy which so many in our day especially the younger people of our day are not striving hard to understand and to take into their lives.

Our forefathers trusted in God. Because they trusted in God, they were able to overcome the trials and tribulations of all their exiles, tribulations, pogroms, ghettos. They had some one in whom in to trust. They knew that ultimately victory would be theirs because God was the "Guardian of Israel."

Today we are facing some of those trials that they did. I wonder whether we are facing them with the same faith and trust they faced it with. We have no reason not to face it with the same faith. God is still with us and truth will conquer in the end. The important thing for us to keep in mind is ~~that~~ faith and ~~that~~ belief in God.



1. One, the chief function, R. is to tell us what to trust in and what not to trust in. Trust > True: Function to tell us what is true and dependable in life. What is false and unreliable.

(1) For an search for happiness, security and esteem there are so many roads which we can take. Most, then, lead to the wilderness. Only a few lead us appreciably nearer our goal. R. has sought to guide men to the desirable ends - but men have frequently quarrelled it. For the road it pointed too was not as easy as the others. (The path, which opens it is a warren path.)

2. Our Bible is full echoes & reaches with the word trust. It is full, admonitions as to what to trust and what not to trust. It is also certain that most men will not heed its counsel. It is certain that at long last, men creased, the paths & desires, then, will return.

(1) Numerous are the things which men should not trust. For those who build their lives on things built upon presentations of physical power - in physical strength - men should not put their trust in power - in physical strength. Man's security cannot be set on force - for force can be overcome by greater force. This is esp. true of men collecting - nations. There has not been a nation, however powerful, that comes or lasts and is so down to utter defeat. There are nations to-day that are forming their high hopes for the future upon the argumentation of their physical power - armies - navies. The gospel, salvation by the sword is preached - Yahweh is taught to believe that glory & prosperity, their nation depend upon military strength. Tanks, tanks, airplanes will insure the perpetuation of their people. Against this false trust in force - our Bible warned men long ago.

1/5/11 1877 1111 - 10102 1111 200 111

Those who trust in chariots - and in horses  
They are bowed down and fallen!



3. Some put their trust in exploitation, crushing their opponents,  
in conquest, in wiping out their competitors. Up to them  
is a game, conquest. They must obtain victory regardless  
of who their victims are and how many they are.  
They will trample over corpses to reach their goal.  
They will cheat, rob, speculate with other people's money.  
They will gamble away the revenues of other people, in  
their lust to reach supreme power and control.  
This has been so tragically true, so many American  
individuals in our land. A disabled brother  
old man, ~~is now~~ a fugitive from justice, is now  
on his way back to this country - which he  
betrayed and dishonored - to <sup>appear</sup> face, we hope the presentment  
due him; He, together with so many <sup>other</sup> ~~other~~ <sup>some are even acting</sup> ~~other~~ <sup>men</sup> -  
put their trust in the line of financial exploitation  
and conquest.

"Trust not in oppression"

"And put not vain hope in robbery"

- P'lor In G'ra H'

יְהוָה יִשְׁמַר אֶת אֲמֹנֵת הָעָם



3. Wealth - So many people put their trust in money. That is their security - Their fortress - That is their golden road which will lead them to happiness and tranquillity.

Look about you and see what has happened to these people. A sudden turn, fortune - which they could not foresee - which they could not avert - toppled their strong hold to the ground - left them helpless, broken and defenceless.

Look what happened to this nation whose wealth seemed almost inexhaustible, because justice and righteousness did not fairly afflict them that wealth, her great guardian covered it to be removed in the hour, the few - the many & the few were suddenly impoverished - and the wealthiest nation on earth was plunged into sudden poverty - forced to feed its population with state rations -

שִׁדּוֹן הָאֵלֶּה הַזֵּה נִכְלָה

4. Some put their trust in themselves - their own <sup>knowledge</sup> wisdom, their own power, their own experience. They lack modesty and humility.

They are conceited, esp. if they have been successful.

They are over-confident in their judgment and understanding.

They are impatient of others' opinions, intolerant, egotistic.

They feel no sense of dependence on other men - no sense of obligation or indebtedness to others. They do not realize that nearly all that a man has is due to other men.

הַיָּדְיוֹן הַזֶּה הוּא שֶׁהָאִישׁ הַיָּדְיוֹן הַזֶּה נִכְלָה

(1) What is human intellect

5. Some put their trust in other men - esp. if they be powerful men. They make their happiness dependent upon the good will or favour



of other men. Some many are worthy / not trust. Many are not.  
In times of crisis men become self-centered, seeking first their  
own security and welfare. Friends often times betray. Relatives  
prove unstable as water. The nearest and the dearest prove  
slender reeds upon which no man can rest for support.

"... 1815 212 p11 p3112 n 611 211 222 111  
"Cursed is the man that trusts in man and makes flesh his arm"  
"Men of low degree are vanity" p311 112 122 11  
"Men of high degree are a lie" 111 112 252

6. ~~No, men should not put their trust in power, exploitation,  
wealth, in ones self, in other men. Where should one  
put his life's trust?~~

b. Men often put their trust in lying words, in slogans,  
in catch-words -

(1) We were led into the world-war - lying words. "Make no deal  
with the devil" - War was made by inter. capitals,  
and munition makers. We were deceived.

(2) Men are permitting eyes to be deceived now. Nationalism  
hatred, racism, preparedness, - <sup>not always true</sup> ~~all~~ lying  
words in mouths of knaves who wish to use  
bad names for selfish reasons -

(3) Jeremiah - "Temple, the Lord"

111 112 252 111 222 111 222 111



7. No, men should not put their trust in power, exploitation, wealth,  
in our self, in other men, in big self delusions  
Wherein should one put his trust.

(1) Bible is clear, precise, unambiguous, in its message

~~30 138 1/2 100~~  
216 211 - 1/2 100

(2) This is biggest wisdom! Summary statement of  
all religion!

(3) Note the 2 parts, the mandate (1) Trust in the  
Lord (2) also good. Irreparable parts of the  
one true definition of R. & one true purpose  
to life.

8. This definition - 2500 yrs. ago.

Prof. Heber J. Curtis, <sup>famous</sup> astronomer, 2500 yrs. later -  
(1) God (2) doing good. 216 211 1/2 100

9. "Assumption of" "belief in". No certainty! No finality!  
No demonstrable proof! 1/2 100. Trust that  
God exists! and then trust in Him!

(1) Science cannot give us God, for science is the only  
thing known. Science itself cannot do without its  
hypotheses and its inferences. The laws of science  
are to-day regarded not as fixed & sure & certain laws  
but rather as the "laws of uncertainty" - "the laws of  
probability" -



Science knows now that the mechanistic explanation, the universe is untenable, that life and thought cannot be understood in terms of chemical & physical actions and reactions. The hope once entertained that the laboratory would yield all truth has not been abandoned by science - even as manhood is just abandoning the hope that the sci. machine will yield us all good. "Sci. theories themselves are largely matters of belief" - <sup>and they change from generation to generation</sup> "When science speaks of cause and effect" it is in no more sense than when the religious man speaks of "purpose and end". In science that or in religion that there are the untenable, the unjust, the transcendental

(2) Man is warranted in believing in God - <sup>in belief</sup> that this complex, intricate, mysterious universe, matter and mind is the manifestation of a creature of God. - It is the most reasonable explanation available.

(3) לֹא אֶחָד יִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לְעוֹלָם. "This is the god in whom I trust." This is the god to whom my mental superior H.P. Lovecraft always returns — He is irresistible.

十

10. And here I believe that 16 minutes of your the universe  
I ~~trust~~ <sup>am</sup> <sup>confident</sup> that the " " " " we, who are  
an infinitesimal, the not unimportant, part in this universe.  
His Plan must embrace my life - for I am part of  
His universe -

11. I believe that He is a great force - for evil is all that is very great is imperfect, weak, maladjusted, and I cannot apply these imperfections to an omnipotent God.  
Evil, like darkness, has no reality of its own.



12. I can best realize myself in "their effort which put  
me in tune with what I conceive to be work as well  
as good - names - 216 אלול

(1) Produce in human life is that which contributes to  
my mental & sp. development along with my neighbors -  
my community - my fellowmen - <sup>that which waits for</sup>  
<sup>the evolution, the imperfect</sup>  
<sup>to work, unadapted</sup>

(2) Miracles - doing further, being more, working humbly.

13. My trust is in not power etc -  
but human ideals: freedom, equality, justice, peace, brotherhood  
As I work for them, and lose myself in them, I  
am strong, confident, independent. - and always re-  
warded

They put <sup>us</sup> in strong th. They enrich <sup>us</sup> us. They put <sup>us</sup> in our  
confidence when I trust myself, as are betrayed by  
men. They save <sup>us</sup> us from delusions and lying  
words. They guard <sup>us</sup> us against exploiting my fellowmen.

. 226: 22 2261

He who puts his trust in the Lord shall be safe!