



Abba Hillel Silver Collection Digitization Project

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The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives

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

Series IV: Sermons, 1914-1963, undated.

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New Year's Eve, 1918.

[illegible]

I have seen much in the last few weeks
to try my faith severely. I have seen much that
has put a streak of grey in my horizon which I fear
neither wind nor rain will clear away. — and I have
known the unspeakable anguish — The first graves I
saw at M. etc. etc. I stood at Kerdun where I walked
+ seemed to feel a happy glow a shadow of the light
the quivering room — and God seemed very distant
from me then — but then it all — to that evening God
reigns —
a. M. at Kerdun —

2. A new Heaven & a new earth are being formed.

the sea of God. He regains! He Endures!

And as the molded, frizzled leaf that had
chanced to fall into my hands - I read the
message of the greater faith. I caught the vision
that transcends the moment - the hope that
builds upon ^{the} ruins!

II. And to you, my friends, at this sacred solemn hour of the
new year, I would bring this very message, etc.
(p. 5.)

III. Even ~~in~~ ^{this} terrible slaughter God's plan is unfolding
itself. And God Himself is revealing Himself
to the eyes of men - ~~to reveal for the first time~~ to
men who knew Him not and to those who knew Him as He
is not.

I Barnes. - France is undergoing a religious revival, a
reawakening. It is not the sort of rel. revival that
expresses itself in wishy-washy. altho the rel. work
will profit by it. For they will have ^{to} ~~will~~ have response to
actual need. The rel. revival will find expression
in idealism, in liter. & art things with the year
1870. - said a Fr. abbe to me: but she is ^{prophetic} ~~prophetic~~ now!

II. Lieut Gnappe. - who ~~to~~ wounded - who told me
that he was never so home sick for God as in
the early days of the war - when he was fighting
around ^{Haut Marais} ~~Haut Marais~~ looking his native city
of Colmar - when at night he could turn
in the direction of his home and murmur
the words of German sentimental song which
were familiar to him - 'Lead kindly'

stumps.

c. I saw past them the country from
Chateau Thierry to Fismes on the River Vesle
and saw the battlefield still gaping with
the wounds of recent conflict. ^{28 Jan 1918} ~~that I shall~~
never forget - not of any as a line - ~~the wounded~~
brought in stunned, & delirious, or groaning
or silently suffering - ^{but in} on the flow of the
in the field hospitals. I was with them
wounded in the operating room ^{with the}
dressings ^{and I remember} ~~rooms~~ ^{though I applied for the hours}
it - the brutality of it - ^{the Viennese} ~~it~~ -
the deadly & awful monotony of it - And
the one sustaining ^{WRHS} ~~that~~ ^{was} that it is all
worth while -

d. I remember walking one day thru the little
village of Mandres. - a kilometer or so from the
front. It was a beautiful day & the village which
was in complete ruin was bathed in the golden
mellow sunshine which is characteristic of the beauti-
ful land of France. We had been wandering idly among
the ruins when we came to the old church of Mandres.
^{about the only building standing in the village} ~~the ruins~~
We went. ~~asked us if we would~~ ^{to go to the rear of}
the church to see the ~~grave cemetery~~ ^{grave cemetery} and there in
the green shadow of the old church ~~under some~~ ^{my eyes}
behind two rows of little mounds - each
bearing a small white cross at the head and - an
American flag. It was the first Am. grave I had
seen and it is difficult to describe the sensation that
surged thru me. I passed down the rows of little



minutes - studying the inscriptions upon the small
discs until I came to one grave that had
no cross. In its place was a plain board
tablet and some kind hand had drawn in
pencil the figure of the Virgin Mary - upon it.
I had come upon the ^{grave} ~~first~~ Jewish grave of a
Jewish lady! —

Jewish ladies. —
 I stood long in that cemetery and a great sorrow
 came upon me. "So here they sleep, the ladies, in
 the frightened shadows of this old church. Nothing to
 mark their grave but a plain white cross or board & a
 drooping flag. Nothing to tell of their life, but the tale
 of their death. Many a league of land and sea his
 twist them and their homes. The loving hand of wife
 or mother to lay a wreath of flowers upon them — no
 eyes & weath'ant to drop a tear of tenderness upon
 it! — And yet — the thought the for a while shelled in
 the web of sudden ^{sorrow} ~~agony~~ — I came back to
 comfort me.

Careful me.
 These boys are not far from home. They are at
 home. They sleep in France and France is
 home for all who love God's greater gifts of freedom.
 These boys are not dead. Their souls are marching
 on in the victorious ~~movement~~ ^{procession} of their all conquering
 ideals. They left the pattern of home & took
 the rays of that sacred statue with their souls
 and set out to bring that light to the dark
 corners of the earth - That light is not

darkened. In death they lurched it a
thousand fold. Their souls are ^{burning} ~~flaming~~
in the flaming torch of progress held
high by a mighty nation whose mar-
tyred lives they are.

Proudly I defuted the dead.
Humbly I ~~listened~~ the sacred
precepts of the heroic dead —

II. Friends - it is a message of hope & faith
that I bring ~~you~~ ^{you} ~~from~~ ^{from} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~dead~~ ^{dead} ~~where~~ ^{where}
hope & faith ~~are~~ ^{are} ~~dead~~ ^{dead} ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~flowers~~ ^{flowers} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~world~~ ^{world}
are beginning to bloom. Men are calling
God into their hearts & their fellow men to
their bosoms. ~~The purpose of the great~~
~~let us remain~~ ^{let us remain} ~~head fast in our~~ ^{head fast in our}
firm resolve to break the rule of might
everywhere forever. let us feel ourselves
to the great trials that await us in the
coming year - for they shall be many & heavy
but they shall be the last. For it is my
firm belief that the next new year
will see ~~our~~ ^{our} ~~would~~ ^{would} ~~returning~~ ^{returning} ~~to~~ ^{to} ~~peace~~ ^{peace}.
~~for ever~~