



Abba Hillel Silver Collection Digitization Project

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

Series V: Writings, 1909-1963, undated.

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Harvard University, 1945.

On Heavenly Father. You all who are gathered in this
Sanctuary to worship Thee we invoke Thy Blessing
Bless them and their dear ones ^{wherever they are} at home or away in
distant places and in perilous ways at the ^{best of} ~~best~~ ^{and in} ~~of~~ ^{fulfillment}
duty and service. Bless our country, ^{now} at ~~work~~ ^{work}. May
you ~~return~~ ^{return} to it speedily with balm on its wings,
and to an weary and distraught world.

May we have the wisdom to turn to Thee, Master
of the Universe, in our sorrow ^{as well as} in our gladness -
when the lines are fallen unto us in pleasantness,
or when the ~~strings~~ ^{cords} of danger and death encompass
us. ~~Often we are up without wisdom or patience we~~ ^{Often we are up without wisdom or patience we} ~~forget Thee in our~~
~~prosperity and reject Thee in our adversity.~~ ^{And}
nations, ~~which~~ ^{which} waxing mighty in wealth and
power, turn away from Thee, seeing we know us
need the Almighty. They condemn Thy Holy
law, ~~and~~ ^{and} so ~~that~~ ^{that} lawlessness and of war and
destruction come upon the world.

Teach us, O Lord, to set Thee always before us;
to find in Evil a challenge to our spirit, and
in ~~our~~ prosperity a reminder to ~~show~~ ^{be} helpful-
ness and humility. Forgive the doubts which be-
set us when we are overwhelmed by ~~the darkness~~
of violence and wickedness. ~~stand us - For Thou~~ ^{stand us - For Thou}
knowest the limitations of our ~~best~~ ^{best}. Send us Thy
light and Thy truth to guide us - Amen
Bless all endeavors, ^{wherever made} to lift up the
fallen, to heal the broken hearted, to break the chains of oppression
and to bring light to them who dwell in darkness
and in the deep shadows - Amen

1/ 2 Versions Ps 14 = 53. - Theme - "The fool says in his heart - there is no God" - conceituous - lacks wisdom
"Fool" - ignorant - the man who jumps at conclusions - makes hasty generalizations.

Why does not a man arrive at his conclusion: "There is no God"?
The second half of that verse gives the answer: "Men act badly, they do atrocious things. There is now that does right."

And the 3rd verse: "All have strayed from the path, their souls are all rotted. Not a man does right - not one!"

① It is: the evil, the world, the gross injustices everywhere, the abominable things which are commenced ^(in Society) that impels the sp. impatient & rel. ignorant man to say: "There is no God!"

② Men become atheists, b.c. they cannot reconcile the existence of Evil with the existence of a Just God.

3/ This acute sp. problem exists, of course, for the good man, ^{rather?} ~~not~~ for the wicked.

The wicked man, as the Ps. says in an earlier Ps. "in the pride of his countenance does not seek God. All his thought is: 'There is no God.' He rejects God! He moves forward in his mischief, his deceit and his violence, ~~is~~ 'singing the praises of his own deeds', and confident that there is no God who will find him out and punish him. - as Job as-

But the good man - the pious man - is frequently troubled by the fact that the righteous so often suffer, and ~~are~~ the wicked triumph over them. Over and over again in the Ps. we hear ^{such} plaintive cry: "My tears have been my meat day and night - while they continually say unto me 'Where is thy God?'"

(Job)
3) "Wherefore do the wicked live, because old, are mighty in power?"
Neither is the rod of God upon them... They spend their days
in prosperity... yet they say: ~~unto God: "we do not know
his ways"~~ "Who is the Almighty, that we should serve
Him?"

Complaint also of Jeremiah

50/3 ps 73 8/31

4) This Ps. 14 - however, does not lose faith in God, because the
righteous suffer, & the wicked prosper. He does not rush
to hasty conclusions! He is aware that his evidence is
fragmentary and incomplete. He, finite, mortal man, is
able to see only a fragment of reality, and only a partial
part of the arc of human experience. What perspective
can he have on the total life of humanity? How far ^{can} ~~his~~
his vision extend? How deep ^{can} ~~it~~ it penetrate?

@ Could ~~the~~ society really exist, as it has existed for
thousands of years - of evil always triumphant? or if the
worst, Evil were greater > of good? Evil is in essence
Destruction, disruption. It ~~seeks~~ works for anarchy &
chaos. But mankind has been steadily, ^{albeit painfully}
~~the~~ emerging from chaos - constructing ^{various higher} social forms &
organization & ways of cooperative life; ~~what~~ These are
frequent setbacks and disastrous lapses. But ~~the~~
never fatal enough to ~~stop~~ permanently the
Advance - forward and upward! ~~At~~ Humanity has
steadily ^{achieved} ~~built~~ higher forms, organization. But the heart
of all progress must be the principle of Good! ~~It~~ is
Good which is finally triumphant!

(3)
② Therefore, the Ps. his faith unshaken, seeing in the evolution of human society evidence that depravity and corruption do not triumph in the end, is able to reply to the man who is hastily driven to the conclusion - "There is no God" - "Verily God is with the righteous ~~same~~ generations. - The End is the refuge, the weak!"

(c) The Universe is a planned Universe - physically and mentally Nature, as well as human society, have their ^{one common} source in God!
- God is their common architect! ~~He~~ ^{He} defines their ~~end~~ ^{end} does the eternal laws of ~~growth~~ ^{growth} and change which control them.
- The laws operate in such a way as to sustain the Universe - not to destroy it. God intended the world of men to be inhabited, but human life to improve & develop.
- Inherent in the fact of progress & improvement is the fact of evil, inadequacy, want, ~~from~~ ^{from} which human life is to move forward. Human suffering, physical and moral, is thus part of the plan determined by an all-wise God for the progress of man - without which progress itself would have no meaning. All that has shed lustre on human life - and given dignity to human existence, science, art, education, discovery, invention, have been successive triumphs of man over ignorance, fear, superstition, disease, want and drudgery - Evils all, then!

5). The religious man; bears patiently the afflictions which ^{may} be visited upon him - bec. of his Faith in a just & wise God! He may not see God's ways may not at all times be comprehensible to him - but he does not in his ignorance & bitterness - "There is no God!"

He will regard the ~~evil~~ Evil, Crime, Poverty, War - not as punishment (9)
of God's infirmities or his non-existence - but as first challenge to
them - as God's summoning - to wisely effort to overcome that
evil!

He will look upon personal sorrows & tragedies not as evidence
of God's indifference, or ~~the~~ cruelty - but as testing, as fitting
on spirit, then trials, as purging our drums in the
fiery furnace - ^{thus} The Ps. was able to say: - "I thank Thee,
O Lord, that "It is good for me that I was afflicted,
that I might learn thy statutes" וְיֵשׁוּעַ אֶת הַיְדֹאֲשִׁים
וְיֵשׁוּעַ אֶת הַיְדֹאֲשִׁים. "I knew, O Lord, that thy judgments
are right - and that in good faith has Thou afflicted me!"

- 6) World today. War ravaging the earth. Slaughter & terror & brutality.
So many innocent lives destroyed. So much labor & money
squandered & wasted. So much plagues & ruin & chaos -
- So many inclined to say - Surely, there is no God!
- But, strangely enough, those who are closest to the
heart of this devastation, to the darkest shadows & death
of war - are best of all men inclined to cry out - "There
is no God!"
- Rather - It is for God, that they cry out! - for his
help, his warmth, his comfort, his sheltering arms.
- They need God!
- For the greater the shadows & terrors & tribulation of
our lives - the more we need our Faith in God.

7) Faith is not a luxury! It is a desperate need for men involved in great undertakings, in mighty enterprises, in experiences which try their ^{very} heart and reins. ~~For~~ Faith is Power! - There are many forms of faith - the most fundamental - faith in God but no significant living or undertaking or adventure is possible without Faith. (Justa p64). Pres. Lowell, Harvard.

8) And the more man responds to the challenge of the Evil in the world - the more he gives himself to the struggle, repulses, the science, the more keenly does he become aware that there is a God! For he ^{comes to feel} that ~~God~~ ^{God} has sought him out! Then the best that is in us - then our noblest aspirations do we become conscious of ^{the reality} of God -

For then - the most convincing proof for the existence of God - is the goodness in man! the qualities of selfless devotion, love, sacrifice, pity, forgiveness - the qualities which ~~are~~ ^{transcend} the physical in him and ~~reach~~ ^{touches} divinity.

It was Immanuel Kant: "Two things filled him with awe: the starry heavens above and the moral law within"

Man have found God in Nature - in the arrangement, order, majesty of Nature. He 3122 p10000 pencils

But even more so can man find God - ~~the~~ ^{the} testimony of his being - in the release, the moral energies - ~~the~~ ^{the} in the doing of things great and good - for the power which

they will then experience, and the exultation, & the freedom, ~~and~~
and the manner in which they will rise above pain,
and suffering and frustration and defeat - will give them ~~the~~
the full answer ~~for those who~~ taunt them saying - Where is
Your God?

9/ If the existing wickedness, the unsense - & great suffering were
sufficient to make men atheist - the Jews should be the
most atheistically-minded people on earth - For what people -
- And yet - thruout all centuries of persecution - they extolled
& magnified God's name! They justified His ways at all
times: Did not say WE are unworthy! JUL 31 1937

They needed God - & the power of faith to survive! - and
by that faith men were saved
- Need it to-day. Millions slain! Synagogues destroyed!
Reaffirmation! Re dedication.
A challenge in it for us. - The Evil - The Threat!

HARVARD UNIVERSITY
THE MEMORIAL CHURCH



Order of Worship at the Sunday Morning Service

HYMN, "OLD HUNDREDTH,"

Unannounced, the Congregation standing

All people that on earth do dwell,
Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice,
Him serve with fear, his praise forth tell,
Come ye before him and rejoice.

For why, the Lord our God is good,
His mercy is forever sure;
His truth at all times firmly stood,
And shall from age to age endure.

SENTENCES FROM SCRIPTURE

INVOCATION, AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

in which the Congregation joins

HYMN

3

The Congregation standing

RESPONSIVE READING

21

The Congregation standing

ANTHEM

LESSON FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT

ANTHEM

LESSON FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT

RESPONSES FOR MINISTER AND CHOIR

Minister: The Lord be with you.

Choir: And with thy spirit.

Minister: Let us pray. O Lord, show thy mercy upon us.

Choir: And grant us thy salvation.

Minister: O God, make clean our hearts within us.

Choir: And take not thy Holy Spirit from us.

PRAYER

HYMN

The Congregation standing

SERMON

PRAYER

HYMN

The Congregation standing

BENEDICTION

ORGAN POSTLUDE