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Sub-series D: Writings, 1915-1963, undated.

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216

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80

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51

Religion in a Changing World, reviews, 1930-1931.

Cleveland, Ohio
Inside, Talks on Books, Council Bluffs, Ia.
Hemelick Review

November 10-4-30

The first popular book from the pen of Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver of The Temple, Cleveland, is to be issued early in November by Richard R. Smith, Inc. The book comprises a series of related addresses on the central theme, "Religion in a Changing World."

The Road to Culture (Funk and Wagnalls), is an illuminating and alluring guide into the treasures of literature and art which furnish this interior wealth. There is a technique in their appropriation about which Gray is very wise. He is a sound critic, his advance covers a wide front, he is both stimulating and suggestive. Culture is always a nebulous word—he gives it content and practical application.

Culture belongs, possibly, to the marginal solitariness of life; religion belongs to our central loneliness. This is the secret of its timeless significance and its power to reassert itself above any change or confusion. Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver's *Religion in a Changing World* (R. R. Smith) is far more than a defense of religion; it is such an affirmation and interpretation of its enduring values as our own time needs above almost anything else. In making

The New York World 12/6/30

This is not the message of a pessimist. Neither is Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver of Cleveland without hope because he happens to be preaching in a materialistic world. Rabbi Silver has just written an inspirational book called "Religion in a Changing World," which is published by Richard R. Smith, Inc. He believes that life holds out happiness in the recognition of growth and improvement. Joseph W. Krutch, measuring the modern temper, held that nothing but despair confronted the intellectual, who must come to realize that all human effort ends in dissolution. Rabbi Silver finds strength and joy because he can "feel continuously the steem and thrust of expanding life within one's soul, the thrill of new ideas, the throb of new purposes, the stir of revelation and new insight." To him it is not important that some men are richer than others, or live longer than others. What counts is "Do they grow?"

Thus we may say that Rabbi Silver has also revealed the satisfaction that lies in what the poet called "the wages of going on." And he warns us that the new life which breaks with all conventions is not new at all but only an acceleration of the old rhythms. Soon or late we fall back on fundamentals, which do not change. "The new life is not a new excitement but a new exultation—not a stimulant but a satisfaction. We renew ourselves not by indulging our appetites but by improving our tastes. We enter new worlds through the gates of aspiration."

Rabbi Silver speaks with the words of a sage rather than the thunders of the preacher. He does not denounce, he explains. His book makes satisfying reading in these days when the way is hard and filled with distractions. I am glad to find in his book, as in that of Henri, recognition of the glory and usefulness of living, of using our energies for our own day rather than for a day that is past.

this its January selection the Religious Book Club set its hallmark on sterling silver.

"It is still the role of religion," says Silver, "to proclaim fearlessly as of yore its ancient burden of God, . . . cherish and safeguard the vital and indispensable hopes of the race," nurture the spirit of hopefulness among men, and conserve the time-tested values of life. He develops all this with a fascinating brilliancy of style, a sureness of insight, and a power of practical application which make his book an outstanding contribution to contemporaneous religious thought.



Book Reviews

Cleveland Jewish Review } Dec 6, 1930

"Religion In a Changing World" by Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver—Richard R. Smith, Inc., New York.

A series of ten related essays, entitled "Religion in a Changing World" is the latest volume from the pen of Dr. Abba Hillel Silver, spiritual leader of The Temple.

Dr. Silver, a gifted speaker, distinguished for the forcefulness and clarity of his English when in the pulpit, carries these same qualities into this brilliant series of essays dealing with several of the most important questions of modern times.



RABBI A. H. SILVER

In his first essay, which gives the key to the series, Dr. Silver maintains that religious thought in this day is characterized by timidity and diffidence. Placing the blame on the religious liberal forces who for the past ten years have been wasting their energy attacking orthodoxy, Dr. Silver shows how they now find themselves confronted with the enemies of all religion, enemies that attack liberal and orthodox alike, materialism and atheism. The results are that in the place of a solid religion there is an anarchy, confusion and humanism.

The relative position of religion and science is reversed today, he asserts. "Today Science is autonomous and imperial and religion stands before its throne timid, apologetic and confused. Under corrosive acids of critical research venerable facts turned out to be fictions and self-evident truths were disclosed to be self-evident fancies. As a result, the religionist is now possessed by a fear complex."

"But the patient and sober religionist will not be stampeded and will quietly and courageously carry on. He knows that nothing has transpired in the world of thought to shake the foundations of religion," Dr. Silver concludes.

According to the writer, religion has four roles in the world: To proclaim fearlessly as of yore its ancient burden of God, of the universe as the manifestation of divine thought and purpose; to cherish and safeguard the vital and indispensable hopes of the race, expressed in creed and moral code as long as they serve the advancing needs of human life; to nurture the spirit of hopefulness among men; and to resist change which is unintelligent, uninformed and which religion knows, through past experience, to be hurtful.

There is a significant paragraph on family life. Rabbi Silver says: "The purity of family life is disappearing, man and women are demanding the right of self expression though most of them have nothing to express but the most common place hankings after the most primitive satisfactions."

On the "revolt" of modern youth: "A revolt implies a moral upreaching . . . more self-indulgence . . . mere lack of restraint may be revolting. They are not revolt."

On the so-called conflict between science and religion, he says, "Science is the response to the human need for knowledge and power. Religion is the response to the human need for hope and certitude. One is the outreaching for mastery, the other for perfection . . . Once religion becomes reconciled to its own bounded domain, and its domain is co-extensive with the far flung end of man's spiritual life . . . it will no longer need to hover about in deep apprehension outside the door of every scientific laboratory."

"When the great intoxication of scientific achievement will have passed, and men will discover how much of an aching void there still remains in his life, and how little mechanism and invention contributed to his spiritual contentment . . . he will return humbly . . . his soul thirsting for God."

There is hardly a page in the entire book of two hundred pages which does not contain several illuminating thoughts in defence of religion as opposed to materialism and atheism. It is a book that will open up new avenues of thought to every thinking person, religionist, atheist or agnostic.

SILVER'S BOOK ON SALE

Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver's new book, "Religion in a Changing World," will be published Wednesday, it was announced today by Richard R. Smith Inc. of New York, publishers.

May 6, 1930

Book Case

By FRED A. R. BIENSTOCK

Dr. A. H. Silver of the Temple at Cleveland is undoubtedly one of the foremost rabbis in the country. His fame is national, his ability as a rabbi and scholar unquestioned, his social mindedness and liberality a joy to the enlightened which is, you must admit, high praise, but with this all he has another talent—that of writer. In "Religion in a Changing World," a recent Richard R. Smith publication, Dr. Silver has proved again that he is a writer of rare talents, a writer who is fearless in expressing himself. In this present book he points out with force and clarity that religious thought in this day suffers and is characterized by the utmost timidity and diffidence. Placing the blame squarely on the religious liberal forces who for the past 10 years have been wasting their energy attacking Orthodoxy Dr. Silver shows how they now find themselves confronted with the most pernicious enemies of all religion—enemies that attack Liberal and Orthodox alike—materialism and atheism.

It is obvious that Dr. Silver stands ready to oppose this order of things. He contends that the function of religion is to resist precipitate change. He asks people to distinguish critically between the novel and the new and to conserve regardless of cost the rich spiritual heritage of the past. You will find in the pages of this book no wild ranting by an old greybeard gagging and gnawing on the bones of the past but a modern minister asking for nothing more than that you use intelligence and thought before you throw overboard a faith that has stood the test of the ages.

Dr. Silver, whose avocation is the study of Jewish mysticism, is the author of "Messianic Speculation in Israel," regarded as one of the standard works on the subject.

Book Britb Messenger 12/12/30

RABBI SILVER SIFTS ATTACKS ON RELIGIONS

Writes Counter-Offense in His
Book on Beliefs "In a
Changing World"

By ELRICK B DAVIS

The Press Literary Editor

IN the world of thought as truly as in war, the best defense is a good offense.

On that principle Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver of the Temple meets the diverse attack—scientific and humanistic, agnostic and atheistic—upon religion.

His counter-offense, brilliantly heartening to all those who realize his cause needs fresh defenders, appears in a series of incisive papers called "Religion in a Changing World" (Smith, \$2.50).

He recognizes that, for all the stout denials, the defenders of religion are lately, so far as success in controversy goes, in a bad way. Not only Harry Elmer Barnes is demanding a new religion and the Rev. Dr. Potter setting up a new church which defies sociology.

Rabbi Silver surveys the situation swiftly. The fact is that "in the face of the widely heralded new world of the scientific mold and temper, religious thinking, especially of the liberal type, has become diffident and panicky.

"Heretofore, the religious liberal was engaged rather pleasantly in attacking orthodoxy," Rabbi Silver says. "In that onslaught he could command all the battering rams of modern science.

"He had a fairly easy time of it—at least in the realm of ideas; and he felt secure and a bit smug in his numerous triumphs over the discomfited creeds and dogmas of orthodox belief. But the battle suddenly swept far beyond the fundamentalist-modernist sector.

"The main position of religion itself, of all religion, the liberal's included, are now attacked by the ancient and bitter and powerful enemy—materialism and atheism.

"And this time it is the enemy who is in possession of the weapons of modern science."

What to Do? 1930

NOW the orthodox religionist is in a stronger position than the liberals who once kicked him about. Entrenched "in a supernaturalism against which the attacking waves of skepticism hurl themselves in vain," the orthodox "is bulwarked behind revelation and tradition."

Denied this protection, what is the liberal religionist to do? With science boasting how every decade it is changing the world, how is religion to keep up with the change? If its old foundations have been moved out from under it, how is it to find new without denying its very self?

The answer, argues Rabbi Silver, is that religion owes nothing to science and so has nothing to fear. Materialism is not science, but an interpretation of science. Modern science has given the anti-religionist no new arguments which were not known to the atomists of ancient Greece or to the materialists of all times—arguments which thru the ages religion has successfully met.

The mythologies over which religionists are twitted are paralleled by, and served the same purpose as, the superstitions of science's history.

The very scientific concepts which now cause such a pothor about change in the world—ideas of matter, energy, time, space, cause, effect, the atom, the electron, etc.—are not "truth" but only useful fictions, artifices of thought—not realities.

"As soon as the scientist attempts to construct a metaphysical system on the basis of his scientific knowledge, he leaves the realm of strict science, and his credentials are no more imposing than those of the theologian."

"Far less imposing than that of religion. Religion has frequently anticipated science; has in discovering all the basic truths."

RELIGION IN A CHANGING WORLD

(By Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver, Richard R.
Smith, Publisher, \$2.00)

Rabbi Silver of the Temple at Cleveland is undoubtedly one of the foremost Rabbis in the country. His fame is national, his ability as a Rabbi and scholar unquestioned, his social mindedness and liberality a joy to the enlightened which is you must admit high praise, but with this all he has another talent—that of writer. In "Religion in a Changing World," a recent Richard R. Smith publication, Dr. Silver has proved again that he is a writer of rare talents, a writer who is fearless in expressing himself. In this present book he points out with force and clarity that religious thought in this day suffers and is characterized by the utmost timidity and diffidence. Placing the blame squarely on the religious liberal forces who for the past ten years have been wasting their energy attacking orthodoxy, Dr. Silver shows how they now find themselves confronted with the most pernicious enemies of all religion—enemies that attack liberal and orthodox alike—materialism and atheism. The results are plain and in the place of a solid religion there is panic, confusion and humanism.

It is obvious that Dr. Silver stands ready to oppose this order of things. He contends that the function of religion is to resist precipitate change. He asks people to distinguish critically between the novel and the new and to conserve regardless of cost the rich spiritual heritage of the past. You will find in the pages of this book no wild ranting by an old greybeard gagging and gnawing on the bones of the past but a modern minister asking for nothing more than that you use intelligence and thought before you throw overboard a faith that has stood the test of the ages.

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American Jewish World 12/19/30

Unchanging Religion

Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver, of the Cleveland, Ohio, Temple, one of the leading Jewish congregations in the United States, is author of "Religion in a Changing World," Richard R. Smith, a stimulating series of addresses. The rabbi has been active in many social movements of his time and writes with more clarity than is to be found in the average religious book. He is a conservative in religion, holding that the function of religion is to resist precipitate change, to distinguish critically between the novel and the new, and to conserve the religious heritage of the past. He holds that the liberal religious forces, which have been engaged in an attack on orthodoxy, now find themselves confronted by a common foe of conservatives and liberals in religion—to wit, atheism and materialism. JOHN CHESTER.

News Times - S. Beach, Ind
12-28-30

This is not the message of a pessimist. Neither is Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver of Cleveland without hope because he happens to be preaching in a materialistic world. Rabbi Silver has just written an inspirational book called "Religion in a Changing World," which is published by Richard R. Smith, Inc. He believes that life holds out happiness in the recognition of growth and improvement. Joseph W. Krutch, measuring the modern temper, held that nothing but despair confronted the intellectual, who must come to realize that all human effort ends in dissolution. Rabbi Silver finds strength and joy because he can "feel continuously the teem and thrust of expanding life within one's soul, the thrill of new ideas, the throb of new purposes, the stir of revelation and new insight." To him it is not important that some men are richer than others, or live longer than others. What counts is "Do they grow?"

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Rabbi Silver
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WORLD-
TELEGRAM
12-6-30

Thus we may say that Rabbi Silver has also revealed the satisfaction that lies in what the poet called "the wages of going on." And he warns us that the new life which breaks with all conventions is not new at all but only an acceleration of the old rhythms. Soon or late we fall back on fundamentals, which do not change. "The new life is not a new excitement but a new exultation—not a stimulant but a satisfaction. We renew ourselves not by indulging our appetites but by improving our tastes. We enter new worlds through the gates of aspiration."

Rabbi Silver speaks with the words of a sage rather than the thunders of the preacher. He does not denounce, he explains. His book makes satisfying reading in these days when the way is hard and filled with distractions. I am glad to find in his book, as in that of Henri, recognition of the glory and usefulness of living, of using our energies for our own day rather than for a day that is past.

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WORLD-
TELEGRAM

12-6-30

Christian Leaders 1/31/31 Boston & Chicago

Temple Tediungs
Newark, N. J.

Temple Israel, Boston.

Harry Levī.

A Monumental Work

"Religion in a Changing World," by Abba Hillel Silver; Richard R. Smith Co.; \$2.00.

There are some books that afford their reviewers the most extreme pleasure. Such a book is "Religion in a Changing World," a series of sermons welded into a volume that will eventually take its place among the classics; a book that is the product of a great mind, couched in the most glowing terms and reaching out toward those few thinking people who are striving to understand the reasons for the chaotic conditions existing in our present civilization; reaching out to those who are not only attempting to understand but to find a solution to these problems.

Abba Hillel Silver is not pleading for the adoption of religion without thought. In fact he does not even recommend it. The purpose of his book is to find a permanent place for spiritual things in a world that is constantly changing socially, politically and economically. He does not advocate Judaism, Christianity or any other religion. After all, the purpose of religion is to furnish man with a beautiful goal—to nourish his dreams—to inspire him—to take his mind off of the drudgery and drag of daily values and satisfy the hunger of his soul with things that are good and beautiful. All religions offer these spiritual foods. All religions are essentially alike. They seek the true, the good and the beautiful. They have embodied the spirit of all of these finer things in a personality called God. By searching for the joys of truth and justice we are ultimately elevating ourselves to those heights of spiritual achievement where man assumes God-like qualities.

the reality of truth, beauty and justice. It cannot depart from its ideal without complete abatement. It offers also to our changing world its ancient moral idealism, which points to the twin ideals of freedom and responsibility, and imitates human nature with-

piercing and which demands that we should have objectives not only for ourselves but for the world. It is the call of the church to our highest priest-

service; our ultimate goal; our ultimate and understanding.

our past fruitful life has been a bed of future striving upon a path of pain and we feel that of mind and soul of us—keener perceptions, sounder loyalties, then the greatness and and we may be the children of

when and that never has so religion of been so lucidly pattern—pressed. It is a of per-ice, or twice, but times; a source of knowledge older generation, a real to the younger; a book es, yet transcends the final the world's philosophy.

The Modern View - Dec, 1930

Granted that we shall never know the beginning or end of things. Granted that our span of life is short and checkered. We ever be subject to accident, sorrow, As long as there is delight in creative joy in comradeship, happiness in triumphantly through the very path, singing the proud song of man's an carve out of the jungle gleaming schools and gardens, as long as he s, fashion sound into music and clay e can refine his instincts into ever ize his world after higher patterns ng may he feel free, privileged and

Man's world is circumscribed, to be sure, but it is also luminous and intriguing, rich in opportunities for magnificently interesting enterprises—a world of song for the poet, beauty for the artist, discovery for the explorer, invention for the scientist, meditation for the philosopher, research for the scholar and work for everybody, a world teeming with problems and adventure, full of exhilarating, challenging tasks on all sides—ignorance to be eradicated, disease to be conquered, wars to be outlawed, poverty to be stamped out—a whole new kingdom of finer human values to be established by human hands. The stout of heart and the strong of faith need never want for combat, zest and romance in such a world.

Abba Hillel Silver, *Religion in a Changing World*.

The Calendras - University Church of Disiples Chicago 6-14-31

1-1-31

Dr. Silver makes some very piercing remarks about our institutional churches. He emphasizes the fact that most people confuse religion and the institutional church. The church is forever preaching about its sanctity, about peace on earth, good will to men; about the moral lapse of its younger members; in fact about everything wrong in the universe. Yet they seem to be able to do nothing by way of remedy; and when the occasion arises, they forget peace on earth and send in their chaplains to shrive the fallen heroes of war. They speak about morals, but they do not offer the younger generation the example of love and truth and beauty unadulterated by grosser values.

Dr. Silver believes implicitly that the role of religion in our ever changing life is as follows:

"To our changing world then and to every changing world, religion offers the same basic thought pattern—the reality of God, the reality of per-



Granted that we shall never know the beginning or end of things. Granted that our span of life is short and checkered. Granted that we shall forever be subject to accident, sorrow, old age, death and decay. As long as there is delight in creative effort, sustenance in hope, joy in comradeship, happiness in love, human life may advance triumphantly through the very valley of the shadow of death, singing the proud song of man's ascent. As long as man can carve out of the jungle gleaming cities of homes, temples, schools and gardens, as long as he can hew order out of chaos, fashion sound into music and clay into beauty, as long as he can refine his instincts into ever nobler motives, and organize his world after higher patterns of truth and justice, so long may he feel free, privileged and rewarded upon this earth.

Abba Hillel Silver, *Religion in a Changing World*.

sonality, the reality of truth, beauty and goodness. It cannot depart from these postulates without complete abdication. It offers also to our changing world its ancient moral idealism, an idealism which points to the twin goals of freedom and responsibility, which sublimates human nature without falsifying it, and which demands loyalty to distant social objectives not yet attained. It evaluates mores and transcends them. It is the call of prophecy."

He believes that our highest priesthood is in social service; our ultimate peace in education; our ultimate happiness in growth and understanding.

"If we have made our past fruitful and our present a seed-bed for future growth; if we are ever striving upward through labor and pain and struggle; if every year we feel that an added measure of mind and soul ripening has come to us—keener perceptions, finer discriminations, sounder judgments, deeper loyalties,—then we are alive, and the greatness and glory of life are ours and we may be called blessed among the children of men."

We are confident that never has so splendid a conception been so lucidly or so beautifully expressed. It is a book to be read not once, or twice, but many, many times; a source of knowledge to the older generation, a real inspiration to the younger; a book that includes, yet transcends the finest fruit of the world's philosophy.

Religion in a Changing World

"Primary Role Is to Proclaim Fearlessly Its Ancient Burden of God"

By RABBI ABBA HILLEL SILVER

NOTHING has transpired in the world of thought to shake the foundations of religion. No newly discovered knowledge necessitates the abdication of religion. Modern science has given the anti-religionist no new arguments which were not known to the atomists of ancient Hellas or to the materialists of all times—arguments which religion has through the ages countered with, equally potent arguments. The mythologies which religion was forced to surrender were only the base degrees by which it rose to the higher levels. Science, too, has but recently sloughed off its own dark superstitions of astrology, alchemy and quackery.

In our day, as in the days of Democritus and Lucretius, the struggle is still between two opposing opinions—neither scientifically demonstrable—the spiritual versus the materialistic conception of the nature of the universe. It is the immemorial and everlasting struggle; and it will forever be man's privilege and dread responsibility to place himself on the side of the one or the other. Either opinion can be competently championed and defended. Religion champions the spiritual view of the universe. Materialism is no more scientific than theism—and no less. It is certainly not the last word in philosophy. In fact, it is the first and the most obvious. He who believes that the universe is a Personality, an intelligent Will expressing itself in infinite variety, need not feel that his belief is any less scientific than the belief of him who holds that the universe is a Thing, mere blind matter in senseless agitation, that life is only a chemical process and thought only the fortuitous concurrence and inter-play of unthinking atoms.

When materialism, which is not science but only an interpretation of science, will trace for man the successive stages by which insensate units of energy combine themselves through motion and organization into the pattern of Aristotle's or Plato's mind, when it will demonstrate by what unbroken process of continuity lifeless and mind-less clay evolves into a being, thinking, aspiring man, and how a universe devoid of personality and will can give rise to personality and will in man, then there will be time enough to consider the relinquishment of a spiritual interpretation of life.

THE modern religionist will not be discouraged by the fact that inherent in his thinking are hypotheses which cannot be scientifically established. He will recall that inherent in all truth, even scientific truth, are not only hypotheses which may or may not be found true, but fictions which are demonstrably false, but which are nevertheless indispensable to thought and action. The scientific concepts of matter, energy, time, space, cause, effect, the atom, the electron, classification, etc., are not truth but only artifices of thought, convenient summaries, not realities. The religionist will, therefore, not look to the scientist to verify his faith; for as soon as the scientist attempts to construct a metaphysical system on the basis of his scientific knowledge, he leaves the realm of strict science, and his credentials are no more imposing than those of the theologian. The religionist is pleased when the scientist agrees with him, though such agreement is not indispensable.

Nor will the modern religionist be impressed by the argument of the humanist that inasmuch as there is no scientific certainty in any interpretation of the universe, the whole problem should be ignored. One should cultivate an attitude of detached scepticism towards the

enclaving universe and center his attention entirely upon the cultivation of his own life in society. One should play and enjoy the game of life regardless of "whether he saw the thing as comedy or high tragedy or plain farce."

But the problem cannot be thus cavalierly dismissed. It has a way of intruding itself even into our most heroic moods. Life wants to know its terms of reference to the universe. Men who vibrate to the force of ideas and who are sensitive to their implications will not live contentedly or joyously, or struggle for an ideal sacrificially, when they become convinced that life is nothing more than a plain farce. No idealist ever died upon the cross for a cause which he knew to be a stupid comedy, and no man will ever bear the crushing burdens of a life-long defeat for truth's sake or goodness' sake or beauty's sake, believing at the same time that all life is mean and cheap and meaningless.

LIFE is not a game and men cannot be summoned to the high disciplines of life by an appeal to sportsmanship. For the very idea of sportsmanship is predicated upon the conviction that the game is fair, and the rules of the game just and reasonable, and that a man has a chance to win. But if life is known to be without purpose or intelligence or fairness or justice, and man is unalterably doomed to defeat, then it is preposterous to summon him to valor and nobility on the basis of sportsmanship.

The builders of the earth, the teachers, the prophets, the fashioners of the new truth and the new beauty require for the driving impulse of their enterprise an overwhelming faith in the essential relatedness of their world of values to the world of universal existence. They must believe that they are co-creators in a purposeful and intelligent world, linked up with an advancing cosmic life and not mere farceurs, comedians or tragedians in an empty, darkened theater.

Thus the first rôle of religion in our world is to proclaim fearlessly as of yore its ancient burden of God, of the universe as the manifestations of divine thought and purpose and of man's at-homeness in it. "Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations" is still the supreme theme of religion.

RELIGION has frequently anticipated science. An eminent American scientist recently declared that science has made two momentous contributions to modern thought. It has revealed to man a universe of extraordinary and unexpected orderliness and it has informed man of the vital rôle which he himself can play in it. And yet thousands of years before the scientist arrived at his conclusions on the basis of his researches and experiments, religion arrived at them on the basis of intuitive groping and deductive reasoning. Ages ago religion declared that the universe is cosmos not chaos—"The Lord hath in wisdom founded the earth. He hath established the heavens in understand-



Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver, distinguished minister of The Temple, Cleveland, is author of a volume bearing the above title, just published (Smith). Therein he eloquently discusses half a dozen inter-related problems of vital consequence to every thinking human being. The article here printed is an abstract of the initial essay, specially prepared by Dr. Silver for "The American Hebrew"

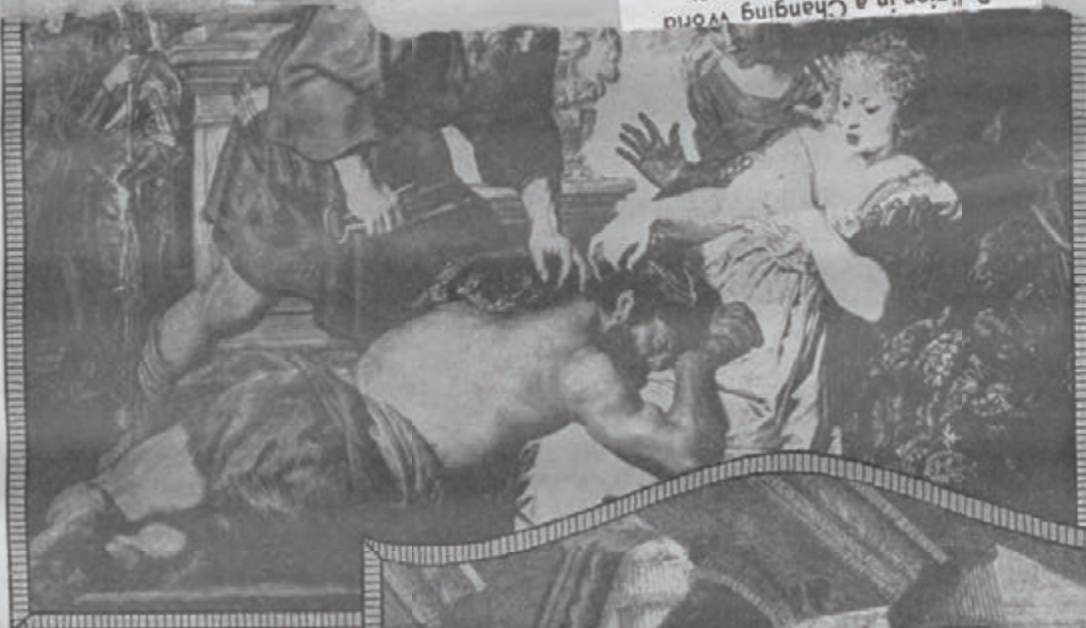
ing." Ages ago religion declared that man was not mere flotsam and jetsam in the river of life, but co-worker of God, a co-creator, "a little lower than the angels."

Mankind could not wait—and cannot now wait—until the slow accumulation of verifiable knowledge shall give it warrant for a desperately needed philosophy of life. Each generation must live its life—and its life is short. It cannot wait until all the facts are in and all the data collected. Therefore the spiritual emergencies of the race long ago voiced themselves in mighty postulates, some of which science has now been able to substantiate. It may be found in future times that religion has anticipated many other scientific conclusions in the realm of psychology, sociology and economics. Thus religion has a second rôle to perform in the modern world; to

cherish and safeguard the vital and indispensable hopes of the race, expressed in creed and moral code, as long as they are not controverted by surer knowledge, and as long as they serve the advancing needs of human life.

RELIGION'S third rôle in the modern world is to nurture the spirit of hopefulness among men. A scientific age, reared in materialism, may and frequently does, become a pessimistic age. A materialistic metaphysics leads first to stoicism and then to cynicism and finally to despair. Our modern pessimism is based not on the belief that knowledge will not increase, but on the belief that increased knowledge will bring us decreased happiness, nobility and self esteem. A trawful of mechanical toys, of engines and motors and radios and airplanes is no adequate compensation for the irrevocable loss of idealism and hope and human pride. Every new scientific discovery seems at first to lower man's position in the universe and to demoralize man's spiritual pride and faith. This happened in the past when science destroyed man's geocentric physics and his homocentric philosophy, and, more recently, when the theory of biologic evolution dragged man down to an unwelcome kinship with other species of animal life. As these sciences, however, are amplified and assimilated they are found to have elevated man to higher levels of dignity rather than degraded him. But in the flood-tide of new scientific revelations this fact is generally forgotten and men, given to generalizations, are saddened by the apparent loss in human prestige.

And perhaps not the least of the rôles which religion should perform in the modern world is to resist change—change which is unintelligent, uninformed and which religion knows, through past experience, to be hurtful. In the sea of human change there are waves and tides. The waves toss. The tides carry. It is notorious that in the realm of ideas changes are very rapid and frequently move in circles. For a time certain ideas lose caste. Society chooses a group of ideas more in harmony with its dominant interest or mood of the moment. When this interest is (Continued on page 221)



"Samson and Delilah" (above) by Anthony van Dyck. This painting by the Dutch master is replete with contrast, realism and power. A true work of inspiration, it is one of the finest we have from the Netherlands



"The Death of Samson" by Paul Gustave Doré. The most triumphant of all Samson pictures is Doré's masterly engraving. With magnificent virtuosity Doré set down here once and for all time the grandeur of the triumph of Samson in death

"Samson's Marriage Feast" by Rembrandt. This remarkable canvas has a richness, a mellow beauty, a tang of adventure, conviviality, and reality, which render it a masterpiece worthy of its creator



Masterpieces
that
Immortalize
the Biblical
Samson and Delilah

Religion in a Changing World

(Continued from page 208)

superseded by another, a new ideologic orientation takes place. The old ideas are displaced and new ones come into vogue. Thus recurrent oscillations in idea-cycles take place. That a certain age prefers one group of ideas to another is no vindication of the ideas accepted and no refutation of the ideas rejected. That age has simply voiced its dominant interest. Another age will speak differently.

But religion is, in a sense, a summary of the basic spiritual interests and needs of all ages. It is concerned with what is timeless and fundamental in human experience. It cannot be expected to adjust itself to the shifting moods of every epoch. It should not. Social changes may be changes for the worse as well as for the better. If religion is to keep pace with every change, it loses its value to society. It will then trail human life instead of guiding it. Religion must not become a frail bark, tossed about on the surface eddies and cross-currents of a day or a generation. Heavily freighted with the wisdom of the ages, it must ride the deep channels of time. One of its greatest opportunities is to tide mankind over its periods of confusion and uncertainty, to "stay put," as it were, when all about is roiled and seething, to act as a balance-wheel for the race when new theories throw it into vast intellectual commotion and to admonish society not to confound that which is novel with that which is new.

A Liberal Jew Speaks to the World

RELIGION IN A CHANGING WORLD. By Abba Hillel Silver. Richard R. Smith, \$2.00.

MANY men have a prejudice against reading books of sermons. I suppose that this is due to the fact that it is really difficult to find a volume of sermons that presents much that is new, or that clothes that which is old in attractive and unique form. There is much truth in the accusation that the church has lost some of the most brilliant minds just because the ministry has so little to offer. But as a matter of fact there are brilliant minds in the pulpit; the pulpit still has much to give, and even brilliant lay minds may still learn from the ministry—if not at every church service, at many of them.

I have before me a volume entitled, "Religion in a Changing World," by Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver of Cleveland. The book is composed of ten sermons, or better, perhaps, religious addresses. I have never read a volume of pulpit utterances that express in a finer manner, with a clearer enunciation, with greater force and with a better philosophical understanding, the problems with which organized religion, especially liberal religion, is now faced. While the addresses are primarily directed to the Jews, they are applicable to all liberals; for the problems that they deal with, the approaches that they present and the remedies they suggest, apply alike to every liberal denomination.

The book takes its name from the first of the sermons, which deals with the apparent conflict that now faces religion. Materialism, agnosticism and atheism are all arrayed against it. In former times religion could defend itself behind the fortresses of supernaturalism, revelation and tradition. Against these, skepticism surged in vain. Now the liberal has discarded these, and to add to religion's discomfiture, science has come to the apparent aid of the enemy rather than of religion itself. Science has achieved tangibilities, religion must still deal with the imponderables. Science has enabled man "to see farther, travel faster and communicate more speedily. It has taught him to investigate intelligently and experiment creatively in chemical, physical and medical laboratories." Religion still deals with ancient verities. The result is that every one is talking about a "changing world" and the "religionist does not know just what is expected of him in order to keep pace with the changing world." Science looks at facts and demands proofs, and the weakness of religion is that it cannot prove its hypotheses "scientifically." And the thinking world applauds the scientific attitude because it seems sure and cer-

The Christian Century 1/7/31

tain. And because of this apparent certitude, the three enemies of religion mentioned above find in science a willing servitor.

In this and other of the sermons, Rabbi Silver appeals to the religionist not to be affrighted at the fact that "inherent in his thinking are hypotheses which cannot be scientifically established." Science has its hypotheses, too, which have not been demonstrated. The scientific concepts of "matter, energy, time, space, the atom, etc., are not truth, but only artifices of thought, convenient summaries, not realities." He pleads with the religionist, first, to proclaim fearlessly the burden of the God of the universe; second, to watch and safeguard the moral life and the vital hopes of the race, as long as they serve an advancing society; and third, to fight against the hopelessness of materialism and atheism, and to encourage and nurture the spirit of hope in man. Even though this be a changing world, no discovery has proved that the spiritual values of life are worthless, and the religionist must continue to offer, in order to save the changing world from itself, "the reality of God, the reality of personality, the reality of truth, beauty and goodness."

The addresses also deal with the dispute between science and religion, a dispute which is "more apparent than real." The conflict, he says, has "always been between superstition disguised as religion, and materialism disguised as science, between pseudo-science and pseudo-religion." This statement is a very pregnant one, but I am not certain that Dr. Silver can maintain his position with regard to the "always." His attack on the nationalistic policies of the churches during the war, is courageous and truthful. His insistence that the church lift its voice against injustice, misery, social inequalities is prophetic; his plea that the church become international, not in its opposition to nationalism, but in "overleaping" it, is fiery; his appeal for a mutual appreciation of each other's religious beliefs and racial characteristics is as fine as anything that I have ever read.

Space does not permit detail. But if you want to read a thought-provoking, keen analysis of the modern religious struggle, and a philosophic, optimistic and helpful exposition of how liberal religion may meet it, read this little volume. One may not agree with the author in every respect. All the more exhilarating is it.

G. GEORGE FOX.

RELIGION IN A CHANGING WORLD, by Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver. (Richard R. Smith, New York, 1930. 204 pp. 5 x 7½ in. \$2.00).

Charles Clayton Morrison, in the Christian Century Pulpit for January, selects this as "the Book of the Month." It is worthy. Rabbi Silver is a young man. He was ordained rabbi at the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati in 1915. Since 1917 he has been rabbi of The Temple, Cleveland, Ohio, which has become under his leadership one of the largest and most influential Jewish congregations in America.

The book contains a series of addresses, the first, which gives a title to the volume, having been delivered before the Religious Education Association in April 1930. The reviewer was fortunate enough to hear the rabbi deliver this address and has read with profit and pleasure the rest of the series.

They are Jewish and not Christian. They are liberal to an extent that many will not appreciate. But they are deeply and soundly religious. The first role of religion in our world is to proclaim fearlessly as of yore its ancient burden of God, of the universe as the manifestation of divine thought and purpose and of man's at-

Auburn Seminary
Record - 1-10-1931

WILLIAM
SMITH



Among recent books there is one on *Religion in a Changing World* by Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver (Richard R. Smith, Inc.). Dr. Silver is a leader in liberal Judaism. Obviously his statement will differ in many ways from that of Christianity, but there is a vigor, and even a prophetic touch about his work, that is stimulating. He begins with a challenging statement: "Much of our religious thinking in recent years has been characterized by nervousness and timidity" (p. 1). This is true; there has been too much apologizing and too little apologetic. Or again: "Religion is not a demulcent theosophy, an escape from reality. It is the indefeasible optimism of the race which sustains itself on the conviction that the universe of which man is a part, is the dwelling place of life not of death, of reason not of insensibility, of goodness not of evil. 'The Lord is with me, I need not fear.' Religion is at heart messianic. It alone can proclaim in our day the dogma of human progress and the value of human ideals." (P. 16.)

Rabbi Silver takes a firm stand also on the relation of religion to ethics. The reason why our moral standards are failing is not because the old morality has been found wanting,

homeness in it. 'Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations' is still the supreme theme of religion." And he is fearless whether he is dealing with ancient dogma or with modern scientific hypotheses. "There is not a single scientific fact which has undermined a single religious truth . . . Religion need not fear the menace of scientific theomachy. . . . The doctrinaire scientist today is inclined to be a bit purse-proud and to exhibit some of the uncommendable qualities of the *nouveau riche*. . . . The man of faith will not be discomfited either by the venerable character of his own truths or by the spick and span modernity and amazing prolixity of scientific achievements."

The rabbi is social-minded and deals frankly and fearlessly with such topics as "The Church and Social Justice . . . The Widening Horizons of Social Service . . . The Church and World Thy Face . . . What Is Happening to the American Home . . . Education and the Good Life . . . How Shall We Measure Life?" One religious. "in his firm stand for the monogamous and permanent marriage as 'setting his face against the sexual laxity which has flourished manifestly rankly since the War, refusing to admit that quick and easy divorce is a solution of the problem. He sees a restoration of the sanctity and permanency of the home here in America demanded by the findings of biology and social science. "Here again science is confirming the intuitive postulates of religion which long ago raised marriage to a sacrament and declared monogamy to be the ideal union upon which to build the noblest family life."

To the busy pastor, whose time is so full and whose purse is so slim, the reviewer might whisper that he will find in the rabbi's pages the genesis of many excellent and much-needed sermons. Not agreeing with all the positions taken by the author, one is yet strengthened in many of his own positions and helped forward to some new ones.

WILLIAM TAIT PATERSON.

258 THE BIBLICAL REVIEW

"but because of a general weakening of moral fibres caused by increased wealth and ease and luxury and self-pampering and by the wild tempo of a furiously acquisitive civilization. Homes are disintegrating. The purity of family life is disappearing. Men and women are demanding the right of self-expression, though most of them have nothing to express but the most common-place hankerings after the most primitive satisfactions. Religion is asked to sanction this neo-paganism, to give its approval to all new experiments in marriage and divorce, to companionate marriage, to trial marriage, and to all forms of experimental sex promiscuity. And all in the name of the Great God Change. But religion had met these aberrations before and had waged relentless war upon them. It refused to be changed by them. It set about changing them. It must do so again." (P. 21.)

What we like about a statement of this kind is that it shows a man of convictions, who is prepared to maintain them. So

RELIGIOUS BOOK CLUB SELECTION

For
January

RELIGION IN A CHANGING WORLD

By
Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver

This is a statement of supreme interest and importance on the place of religion in the life of the modern world. One of the most gifted speakers and writers of our day sets forth with charm and emphasis the legitimate claims which religion can make on the allegiance of a generation distraught by materialism and the presumed implications of science. Rabbi Silver points out, and with rare force and clarity, that religious thought in our time is characterized by the utmost timidity and diffidence. The liberal religious forces, having disported themselves for a decade in an attack upon orthodoxy, now find themselves confronted with the real foe of all religion, liberal and orthodox alike—materialism and atheism. The result is panic, confusion and—humanism. Setting himself squarely against the tendencies of the day, Rabbi Silver contends that the function of religion is to resist precipitate change, to distinguish critically between the novel and the new, and to conserve at all costs the rich spiritual heritage of the past. . . . It is this contention which he presents so clearly and commandingly in a series of brilliant and related addresses. Few men have spoken with such force and authority on the place of religion in our world. Those who for any reason wish to know whether the modern minister has anything convincing to say on religion will find a great part of the answer here. \$2.00

The Baptist Jan 10, 1931
RICHARD R. SMITH, Inc.

12 East 41st Street • New York

RELIGION IN A CHANGING WORLD



Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver

*Destined to be the most widely discussed
book of 1931*

FOR the past decade Liberals have been disporting themselves in an attack upon orthodoxy. They have had a great time of it. Now, however, the battle has suddenly swept far beyond the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy and Liberals find themselves confronted with the common foe of all religion, liberal and orthodox alike—materialism and atheism . . . To a generation weakened by compromise and distraught by the presumed implications of science comes an utterance as providentially timed as the theses of Luther. RELIGION IN A CHANGING WORLD will take its place among the great books of our day.

The Jew Speaks to American Religious Leaders

Rabbi Silver of The Temple, Cleveland, has ever been to the fore in the battle for tolerance and social righteousness. He is a Liberal. Yet, what is more important, he is a prophet, and he emphasizes with the depth and training of Jewish thought the common and complex task which faces all religions in a world clamorous for change.

" . . . Religion cannot be expected to adjust itself to the shifting moods of every epoch. It would then trail human life instead of guiding it. Religion must not become a frail bark tossed about on the surface eddies and cross-currents of a day or a generation. Heavily freighted with the wisdom of the ages, it must ride the deep channels of time. . . . It must carry mankind over its periods of confusion and uncertainty; it must admonish society not to confound that which is novel with that which is new . . . "

Some Advance Comments

"We have never read a volume that expressed in a finer manner, with a clearer enunciation, with greater force and with better philosophical understanding, the problems with which organized religion is now faced . . . If you want to read a thought-provoking, keen analysis of the modern struggle, and a philosophic, optimistic, and helpful exposition of how religion can meet it, read this volume."—*The Christian Century*.

"A book to be read not once, or twice, but many, many times . . . a book that includes, yet transcends the finest fruit of the world's philosophy."—*The Modern View*.

"Rabbi Silver speaks with the words of the sage rather than the thunders of the preacher. Satisfying reading in a day of distraction."—*New York World*.

"Refreshing, positive, and constructive."—*International Journal of Religious Education*.

"Analyses the present spiritual situation with amazing clearness."—*Church Management*.

RELIGIOUS BOOK CLUB SELECTION FOR JANUARY!

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Search. Herald

Jan. 13/31

"RELIGION IN A CHANGING WORLD" by Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver. Publishers, Richard R. Smith.

Rabbi Silver of the Temple at Cleveland is undoubtedly one of the foremost Rabbis in the country. His fame is national, his ability as a Rabbi and scholar unquestioned, his social mindedness and liberality a joy to the enlightened which is, you must admit, high praise but with this all he has another talent—that of writer. In his book, Dr. Silver has proved again that he is a writer of rare talents—a writer who is fearless in expressing himself. In this present book he points out with force and clarity that religious thought in this day suffers and is characterized by the utmost timidity and diffidence. Placing the blame squarely on the religious liberal forces who for the past ten years have been wasting their energy attacking orthodoxy, Dr. Silver shows how they now find themselves confronted with the most pernicious enemies of all religion—enemies that attack liberal and orthodox alike—materialism and atheism. The results are plain and in the place of a solid religion there is panic, confusion and humanism.

It is obvious that Dr. Silver stands ready to oppose this order of things. He contends that the function of religion is to resist precipitate change. He asks people to distinguish critically between the novel and the new and to conserve regardless of cost the rich spiritual heritage of the past. You will find in the pages of this book no wild ranting by an old greybeard gagging and growling on the bones of the past but a modern minister asking for nothing more than that you use intelligence and thought before you throw overboard a faith that has stood the test of the ages.

Dr. Silver, whose avocation is the study of Jewish mysticism, is the author of *Messianic Speculation in Israel*, regarded as one of the standard works on the subject.

RELIGIOUS BOOK CLUB

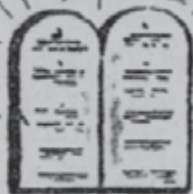
Rabbi Silver of Cleveland, whose talks over the radio many of you have enjoyed, has had his new book "Religion in a Changing World" chosen by the Religious Book of the Month club as their January selection. In this book Rabbi Silver says fearlessly that religion must stand against materialism and atheism—the two dominant tendencies in the world today. His book is not addressed only to Jewish readers, and will be appreciated by people of all religions.

The Jewish Advocate 1/13/31

*Herald 1-5-31
Lorain*

January Choice Religious Book
Club

RELIGION IN A CHANGING WORLD



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Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver

"We have never read a volume that expresses in a finer manner, with greater force and with better philosophical understanding, the problems which face religion today."—*Christian Century*. "He speaks with the words of the sage rather than the thunders of the preacher. A satisfying book."—*Harry Hansen in The New York World*.

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The Christian Register 1/22/31

to see what change it resists, and why. They will suspect that there is a superstition in the worship of the great god Change. All conservatism is not bound for the scrap heap. Some of it is established by changes. Rabbi Silver shows that religion resists change, because it is, in a sense, a summary of the basic spiritual interests and needs of all ages. It is concerned with what is timeless and indestructible in human experience. "Religion is called upon to cast the mantle of its respectability over agnosticism and atheism, and from a faith to turn itself into a sociology. Religion has refused to do this in the past. It must refuse to do so now. It must refuse to lend its name to all schools of ethical speculation which ignore God even though seven humanist women shall take hold of it saying, "We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel; only let us be called by thy name: take thou away our reproach".

The fine thing about this book is that it has as forward a look in its type of conservatism as any progressive who claims to be the whole push. The author knows as well as anyone what changes are going on, and values them. But he values them according to their worth, not according to their novelty. While so much wealth has come to science, he is not content that "religion shall remain a poor relation. The ten commandments remain forever the digits of civilization". "The sex realism of much of our literature to-day is, of course, not liberalism but exhibitionism". "The worst forms of economic tyranny, organized bigotry, social exclusiveness, and racial conceit, thrive under the most advanced political democracies. A man can be a blackguard even in Utopia".

On no topic is Rabbi Silver more invigorating than on that of church unity. He has no liking or desire for any mush of concession. Toleration, he knows, is no compliment to anyone. Unity in religion with him is based on mutual respect and independence, not on mutual agreement. Churches can get together, not by agreeing together, but by respecting, and learning from each other. Their groups must have enough common conviction to be efficient groups. One cannot imagine Rabbi Silver a creedless theological hermaphrodite. His basis of union is a deeper one. It is based on vigorous and explicit assertion. "I cannot conceive of a religion in a vacuum". "I am what I am. I wish to remain what I am. I do not wish to take on the livery of any man in order to enjoy the privilege of being in his retinue. I wish to be myself. Any other basis of good will is spurious".

The purpose of a review of a book is to help one to judge whether he wishes to read it or not. It is counsel and provocation, a taste that provokes appetite. Anyone who reads this book will thank the reviewer who inclined him to do so. J. W. D.

RABBI WRITES ON RELIGION IN CHANGING WORLD

N.Y. Telegram - 1-23-31
Silver One of Brilliant Liberals

—Rothschild Book Buttress
to Babbitt.

... reputation as a preacher and apostle of social justice. We have had numerous books on the present religious crisis by liberal Christian ministers, but assessments of religion today by liberal rabbis have not appeared in any number.

Dr. Silver may be fairly classed as a devout modernist, comparable to Dr. Fosdick in the Christian faith. Like the other devout modernists he gets himself into many a logical snarl.

What Science Has Not Done.

The author quite rightly asserts that the atheist cannot prove that God does not exist, but the religionist can hardly settle the issue merely by glibly asserting:—"There is a God and therefore human life cannot be worthless." In another place (p. 46) he goes on to say:—"There is not a single scientific fact which has undermined a single religious truth. Science has not demonstrated that all life is at bottom physical. Science has not explained life and consciousness and mind and will in terms of subtle matter in motion. Science has not proved that man is a mere automaton reacting to external stimuli. Science has not proved that nothing of a qualitative nature distinguished man from other living animals." Quite true, but neither has nor can religion prove the opposite.

Dr. Silver proclaims that modern religion has three main functions:— (1) to proclaim the existence of God and the universe as His handiwork; (2) to cherish and safeguard the vital and indispensable hopes of the race, and (3) to nurture a spirit of hopefulness among men.

Other Chapters Enlightening.

We may grant the validity of the last two functions, but the God question opens up a debate which cannot be gone into here. And at times the author assigns a function to religion which usurps the fields of psychology and psychiatry (p. 37) and of philosophy (pp. 53-4). With the highest respect for Dr. Silver, the reviewer believes that the theological sections of the book are a fair proof of his assertion that "In this major attack upon religion the orthodox religionist finds himself in a stronger position than the liberal."

Fortunately the theological material occupies explicitly only two chapters out of ten. The remainder of the chapters dealing with social justice, social service, world peace, liberalism, the home, education and philosophy are inspired and enlightening. They are a splendid summary of the social message of liberal religion today. They are a credit to this forceful modern prophet, and in no serious way stand or fall with the debatable theological propositions in the earlier sections of the work. The style is eloquent, and the book

'Religion In a Changing World' Challenging, Penetrating Study

Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver Calls Americans Economically Conservative, Politically Orthodox, Religiously Indifferent and Morally Cruising

RELIGION IN A CHANGING WORLD

—By Abba Hillel Silver, D. D., Litt. D.; Richard R. Smith, Inc., New York; \$2.

It is extremely interesting, and curiously significant, to find Rabbi Silver, one of the eminent Jewish scholars and preachers of the day, and the Christian Mr. Chesterton, an ardent convert to the Catholic faith, expressing precisely the same opinions, and again and again voicing those opinions in almost identical words and phrases, upon the subject of the present-day attitude toward religion. In the first of the ten essays making up the present volume, Rabbi Silver speaks word for word with Mr. Chesterton as his public utterances have been reported in the daily press within the past month. "Modern science"—writes Rabbi Silver—"has given the anti-religionist no new arguments which were not known to the atomists of ancient Hellas or to the materialists of all times—arguments which religion has since the ages counted with equally potent arguments Materialism is no more scientific than theism It is certainly not the last word in philosophy. In fact, it is the first and the most obvious." And again—"religion is, in a sense, a summary of the basic spiritual interests and needs of all ages. It is concerned with what is timeless and fundamental in human experience. It cannot be expected to adjust itself to the changing moods of every epoch. It should not. Social changes may be changes for the worse as well as for the better. If religion is to keep pace with every change, it loses its value to society. It will then trail human life instead of guiding it."

Later in the same essay Rabbi Silver writes—"To be sure moral standards are changing in our day. In fact they are breaking down; but not because of any profound, searching critique of the old morality, which our age has made, but because of a general weakening of moral fibers caused by increased wealth and ease and luxury and self-pampering and by the wild tempo of a furiously acquisitive civilization Men and women are demanding the right of self-expression, though most of them have nothing to express but the most common-place bankings after the most primitive satisfactions." And yet again—"We suspect that this Revolt of Youth has been over-played by middle-aged moralists and lecturers. Our young people are no more critical

or radical or intellectual than their elders. The American people today is economically conservative, politically orthodox, internationally narrow minded, religiously indifferent and morally cruising. And so are the young people. If this generation of young people were truly revolutionary in thought and mood, it would give evidence of it in its attitude towards the economic problems, the social problems, the political problems and the international problems of our day Our young people are criticized for being too free. Actually they are not free at all. The freedom of moral bravado is, after all, only another and grosser form of servitude. In matters that really count, in political, economic and social thinking, in questions of social justice, war and peace, nationalism and patriotism, they are as orthodox, as unimaginative and submissive as the most hide-bound Babbitts of their day A moral revolt implies a moral upreaching Mere self-indulgence and the sowing of wild oats, mere lack of restraint and the vulgarization of speech, manners and conduct, may be revolting. They are not a revolt. The flaunting of conventions, unaccompanied by a critical appraisal and by a readiness to substitute for them still higher conventions is far from being an unquestioned sign of moral advance."

From these excerpts may be realized the general trend of Rabbi Silver's admirably intelligent, enlightened, and reasonable argument; his "Religion in a Changing World" voices, whether or not the reader is in full accord with his basic postulates, some of the most incisive, penetrating comment on the tendencies of the present day that has so far been uttered. Other essays in the volume are, Science and Religion, The Church and Social Justice, The Widening Horizons of Social Service, The Church and World Peace, The One and the Many, Liberalism at the Crossroads, What is Happening to the American Home, Education and the Good Life, How Shall We Measure Life? One and all they preach what may be termed a practical idealism; they denounce materialism, they sound a stimulating call to the higher ethic of humanity.

A powerful, supple, and finely trained intelligence radiates from this notable book, the impress of the author's dominating individuality is strong upon it. "Religion in a Changing World" is a book to challenge the respectful attention of every thinking man and woman throughout the country.

3. Religion in a Changing World, by Rabbi ABBA HILLEL SILVER, comes to us from America to declare in clear trumpet tones that religious thought in our time is characterized by the utmost timidity and diffidence. The liberal religious forces, having disported themselves for a decade in an attack upon orthodoxy, now find themselves confronted with the real foe of all religion, liberal and orthodox alike—materialism and atheism. Rabbi Silver we know as a brilliant orator—he writes no less brilliantly.

Jaw 25-1931
Covant. Hartford, Conn.

Jewish
American
Review, Eng.
1-26-31

Challenging Progressive

RELIGION IN A CHANGING WORLD. *By Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver. New York: Richard R. Smith, Inc. \$2.00.*

A book to make one sit up and take notice. Anyone who thinks from the title that he is likely to read what he has heard before, will think differently. He will surely think, for the writer deals in no worn commonplaces. This Cleveland Rabbi speaks not to a congregation but to a public. It is refreshing to find one who in a changing world does not think it incumbent on him to be a chameleon. Dr. Silver knows the world is changing, and he keeps up with it. But he knows a changing world does not change everything, and he has not only the courage but the intelligence of his convictions. His is a book of wholesome outlook, good for people depressed by the defeatists. People who think religion is doomed because it resists change, will have to look closer

"Christian Register"
Boston - 1/22/31

Religion in a Changing World.
ZIONIST RECORD Jan 29, 1931
A Review of Rabbi Hillel Silver's Book.

The author is one of the most noted orators among our American Rabbis. He is a preacher and the book probably represents the substance of his message from the pulpit. Rabbi Silver writes very pleasantly, his ideals are unexceptionable, and many of his sayings are noteworthy.



RABBI SILVER.

But I must confess that his world seems to me unreal, and his peculiar standpoint ineffective. He hardly mentions the words Jews or Judaism, but addresses himself to the Churches (which include the Synagogue) as though they represented one standpoint, and as though the Old Testament (which he often quotes) represents their joint product and programme.

Rabbi Silver preaches peace, and social morality as the highest end of religion, and an education which produces both knowledge and character. But the mightiest agencies working in these directions are often secular, and so far as Churchmen co-operate in this work, they do so rather as representatives of our common civilisation than as members of the Churches as such. Rabbi Silver seems to think that the future of religion depends upon the future of the Churches. If we are to wait for the day when the Christian Churches shall be united, and shall have overcome the forces of materialism and atheism, and are in a position to present to the world as their programme the Hebraism herein presented, we fear that the League of Nations, and the social morality of the world, and the new education will be in a bad way, that is in so far as they depend upon the Churches. Rabbi Silver does not present his social morality as the essential content of Hebraism. He speaks as if it were equally the vital content of Christianity, though in truth Christianity is essentially ascetic and other-worldly. In urging the Synagogue specifically to stand for world peace, he does venture very, very gently to mention that the Jewish position the world over is so tragic that the support of international peace under present conditions may be used by our enemies to create fresh martyrdom for us.

I miss sadly here the true Hebraic spirit, the fierce moral indignation of our genuine prophets, the denunciation of the savage anti-Semitism which the Churches do nothing to alleviate. How then are these bodies to overcome race hatred and all the evils that spring from hatred and prejudice and uncharity of all kinds. We think that the task of Church reformation should be left to the Churches themselves. Let Rabbi Silver speak as a Jew and address his own brethren, point to them the authentic sources of Jewish inspiration in our literature, and seek to make our own institutions truly representative of the Hebrew Idealism which he seeks to expound as though it were the common property and uniting bond between all the Churches. As for preaching to the nations, I am reminded of a saying of the late Rev. Singer that in the old days one sermon converted three thousand people, but to-day three thousand sermons will not convert one person. And has not Jabotinsky just reminded us of the same fact? I fear that the still small voice of Rabbi Silver's Liberalism will represent only a voice crying in the wilderness. Lo Zu Haderech! Notwithstanding these criticisms, Rabbi Silver's book is written with much charm, and will be read with much pleasure.

M. I. C.

Religious Book Club BULLETIN

Published by RELIGIOUS BOOK CLUB, INC., 80 Lafayette Street, New York

January, 1931

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The January Book

A volume of exceptional timeliness by a spiritual leader of modern Jewry is the primary selection of the Editorial Committee for the present month.

RELIGION IN A CHANGING WORLD

By RABBI ABBA HILLEL SILVER

204 pages. \$2.00

We believe that the members of the RELIGIOUS BOOK CLUB will appreciate this opportunity of gaining an insight into the best contemporary Jewish thought.

Other significant volumes are also announced and reviewed on the following pages.

RELIGIOUS BOOK CLUB

RELIGION IN A CHANGING WORLD

By RABBI ABBA HILLEL SILVER

THE function of religion in a changing world is to *resist* change, or at least to guard the spiritual heritage of the past against too precipitate change—this is the clear-cut thesis of the brilliant young rabbi-author.

It is a thesis that will be rather surprising to those who have been emphasizing the necessity of religion's making radical readjustments to the changing environment.

Himself regarded as a liberal figure in modern Judaism, the author will nevertheless be hailed as an unexpected ally by Christian thinkers who have begun to feel that "modernism" is merely drifting with the passing winds and has no firm hold on the great realities that remain the same for religion in every age.

In fact, Rabbi Silver regards present religious thinking of the liberal type, whether Christian or Jewish, as in "a mortal funk." Heretofore, it was engaged

Tom S. O'Leary

merely in attacking orthodoxy, but now it is confronted with its real foe—"the Apollyon of materialism, agnosticism and atheism." And, face to face with such antagonists, the age-long fundamental questions, not simply the temporary issues, press to the fore again.

Religion must, of course, be open-eyed to new truth, but, still more important, it must always be "a summary of the basic spiritual interests and needs of all ages"—this is what Rabbi Silver would have us never forget. Change may be for the worse instead of the better; religion should therefore be cautious about making too easy adaptations to the shifting moods of any particular epoch.

The first role of religion, Dr. Silver contends, is exactly what it has always been—"to proclaim fearlessly as of yore its ancient burden of God, of the universe as the manifestation of divine thought and purpose, and of man's at-homeness in it." This sets him squarely against the humanists. Unless the universe can be regarded as having ultimate spiritual meaning, the very heart of religion is gone. Gone also, in the long run, is any sustained idealism; for "no idealist ever died upon the cross for a cause which he knew to be a stupid comedy, and no man will ever bear the crushing burdens of a life-long defeat for truth's sake or goodness' sake or beauty's sake, believing at the same time that all life is cheap and meaningless."

So the second role of religion in this modern world is to "cherish and safeguard the vital and indispensable hopes of the race, expressed in creed and moral code, as long as they are not controverted by surer knowledge." And its third role, accordingly, is to nurture the spirit of hopefulness among men, as against the cynical mood that every form of materialism inevitably engenders.

As for religion and science, the author claims that if only they recognize their legitimate spheres and methods there is no real conflict. "Science investigates. Religion interprets. The method of science is observation, that of religion contemplation." When the scientist begins to construct a philosophy, he leaves the realm of strict science, and then

"his credentials are no more imposing than those of the theologian." Moreover, modern science is held to have produced no new arguments against religion which were not known to the atomists of ancient Hellas or to the materialists of all times. And materialism, Rabbi Silver incisively points out, is not science but merely one *interpretation* of science, and an interpretation which has never yet explained how spiritual personality could be produced.

Against this general background Rabbi Silver discusses such specific questions as the function of the Church with reference to social justice and world peace, and the religious attitude toward family life and education. In each case, his point of view represents a prophetic outlook combined with a passion for conserving the ethical and spiritual gains of the past.

Of special interest to many will be the rabbi's attitude toward Christianity, even if they hold his view to be inadequate. "Quite apart from the question of the divinity of Jesus, it is an indisputable fact that the personality of Jesus has been a luminously radiant fact." Jesus is even spoken of as a "unique personality"; but the author does not think that Jesus can have the same value for peoples brought up with a different heritage that He has for Christians. What is urged, accordingly, is not one religion for all mankind but reverence for all religions.

Rabbi Silver is one of the foremost of the younger liberal American Jews, rabbi of The Temple, Cleveland, Ohio, a large and influential synagogue. A talented speaker, he is also a careful student, the author of two scholarly books, "Messianic Speculation in Israel" and "The Democratic Impulse in Jewish History."

(Signed) S. PARKES CADMAN
HARRY EMERSON FOSDICK
CHARLES CLAYTON MORRISON
HOWARD CHANDLER ROBBINS
MARY E. WOOLLEY

(On account of absence in India, Bishop McConnell was unable to participate in the selection.)

Jewish Criterion 2-6-31 - Pittsburgh, Pa.

"News" Greenboro, N.C. - 12-13-30

I have just read Rabbi Abba Silver's new book, "Religion in a Changing World." If that book had come from the pen of a Dr. Harry Fosdick or a John Haynes Holmes it would be hailed as one of the illuminating and penetrating analyses of the religious thought of the day and it would probably rank among the leading "best sellers" in the non-fiction field. But the "people of the book" do not rush so quickly to the book marts to procure their own leaders' opinions on the subject. Dr. Silver writes extraordinarily well, which is rather uncommon in one who speaks so eloquently. One of his most striking phrases is "Religious thought has become a bewildered pedestrian irreverently jostled and knocked about in the rush of modern life." He points out that the liberal religious forces, having disoriented themselves for decades in an attack upon orthodoxy, now find themselves confronted with the real foe of all religion, materialism and atheism. The result, he claims, is panic, confusion and humanism. He deals with such subjects as "Science and Religion," "The Church and Social Justice," "The Widening Horizon of Social Service," "The Church and World Peace" and "Liberalism at the Crossroads." It is a book well worth the investment of any one's time to read and re-read. The word "brilliant" is pretty much overworked, but it is the only one that should be used in describing this work of Dr. Silver's. Jewish organizations and study groups who spend all too much time with literature of doubtful value will profit greatly by reading and discussing Dr. Silver's views as presented in this most interesting volume.

After having written the foregoing paragraph, I discovered that Dr. Silver's book had been chosen as the January choice of the Religious Book-of-the-Month Club, whose editorial committee among others consists of Dr. Harry Fosdick, Dr. Samuel Parkes Cadman and Bishop Francis McConnell, which confirms my opinion as to the value of the books.

This is not the message of a pessimist. Neither is Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver, of Cleveland, without hope because he happens to be preaching in a materialistic world. Rabbi Silver has just written an inspirational book called "Religion in a Changing World," which is published by Richard R. Smith, Incorporated. He believes that life holds out happiness in the recognition of growth and improvement. Joseph W. Krutch, measuring the modern temper, held that nothing but despair confronted the intellectual, who must come to realize that all human effort ends in dissolution. Rabbi Silver finds strength and joy because he can "feel continuously the ebb and flow of expanding life within one's soul, the thrill of new ideas, the throb of new purposes, the stir of revelation and new insight." To him it is not important that some men are richer than others, or live longer than others. What counts is "Do they grow?"

Thus we may say that Rabbi Silver has also revealed the satisfaction that lies in what the poet called "the wages of going on." And he warns us that the new life which breaks with all conventions is not new at all but only an acceleration of the old rhythms. Soon or late we fall back on fundamentals, which do not change. "The new life is not a new excitement but a new exultation—not a stimulant but a satisfaction. We renew ourselves not by indulging our appetites but by improving our tastes. We enter new worlds through the gates of aspiration."

Rabbi Silver speaks with the words of a sage rather than the thunders of the preacher. He does not denounce, he explains. His book makes satisfying reading in these days when the way is hard and filled with distractions. I am glad to find in his book, as in that of Henri, recognition of the glory and usefulness of living, of using our energies for our own day rather than for a day that is past.

Okahonaw - 3-8-31

Wheeling Register 4-26-31

Status of Religion In Changing World

RELIGION IN A CHANGING
WORLD, by Abba Hillel Silver.
Richard R. Smith, inc. \$2.

In the midst of our depressions, spiritual as well as economic, it is heartening to find a writer who believes something deeply, states it forcefully, all without argument or exhortation. Silver believes in "the universe as the manifestation of divine thought and purpose and of man's at-homeness in it." He thinks the function of religion is "to cherish and safeguard the vital and indispensable hopes of the race, as long as they are not controverted by surer knowledge, and as long as they serve advancing needs of human life." Our prevalent pessimism is based upon our feeling that although knowledge may increase, it "will bring us decreased happiness, nobility, and self esteem." All of our boasted machinery is a poor substitute for "idealism, hope, and human pride." "Religion's third role in the world is to nurture the spirit of hopefulness among men."

The two things which lend hope to man are that despite his circumscribed life he can achieve greatly and have the assurance that about his finite life "there is the everlasting life of God in Whom all human aspirations find their surety and consummation."

For Rabbi Silver religion and science are two hemispheres of thought. The function of science is to give man knowledge and power. The function of religion is to give him hope and certitude. Science is a reach for power while religion is a reach for perfection. Both are man made and expand with the onward march of the race.

The last three-fourths of the book is given to an appeal to the church to take the lead in establishing social justice, creating world peace, deepening the sense of worth in the individual, and making richer group life.—Nick Comfort.

A Rabbi Speaks

RELIGION IN A CHANGING
WORLD. Abba Hillel Silver, R.
R. Smith, Inc., N. Y. A Mono-
graph. by Leo Wolf.

Rabbi Silver has long qualified as one of the world's outstanding orators and with his first written volume, "Religion in a changing World," he will be readily recognized as a consummate litterateur.

Come all ye doubters whether agnostic or atheistic answer the postulate as laid down by Rabbi Silver. You will need astounding knowledge of science, sociology, metaphysics and philosophy, and then your answers will be unsatisfactory and inconclusive unless they be predicated on religious truth.

This volume will give renewed confidence to the wavering, the sceptical and that immense mass of mankind in a state of flux who are harried and uncertain as to their exact status. There is no substitute for religion, just as there is nothing to fear if you have positively accepted the omniscience and omnipotence of God.

Religion In A Changing World

By ABBA HILLEL SILVER. New York: Richard R. Smith. 1931. \$2.00.

One wonders if this brilliant book is not in part at least a confession of a religious liberal. Nowhere have we seen such a complete expose of the consequences of liberal theology. Having discarded the supernaturalism of orthodox religion, the liberal finds himself unequally joined in conflict with his real foes—materialism and atheism. "He has no heaven. He cannot give men either bread in this world or nectar and ambrosia in the world to come." Rabbi Silver challenges materialism to produce something noteworthy in the realm of mind or personality before insisting upon the relinquishment of a spiritual interpretation of life. He defies the atheist to create a new religion with satisfactions not found in the old; he offers to the changing world the great basic facts—"the reality of God, the reality of personality, the reality of truth, beauty and goodness." With vision and courage worthy of his distinguished forbears, the young Rabbi applies the principles of organized religion to the ever-multiplying problems that cluster around science, social justice, social service, world peace, democracy, the home, and education. His language is as forceful in spots as that of Isaiah; his philosophy suggests very strongly the ethics of the New Testament; his logic confounds as it rebukes and arouses. Typical of the striking sentences with which the book abounds is the one showing the relation of the church to the last war, "The pentecostal wail of a perishing world pleading desperately for peace found the church a recruiting officer and its priests camp followers." Radical? Well, at least provokingly disturbing. Those who do not object to thinking will revel in this volume; they will find themselves more often in harmony with the versatile author than in disagreement with him; they will turn from these pages with a fresh realization of the irrelevance of the church in world affairs, and maybe with a determination to make religion vital.

"Monthly Book Talk" Baptist - May-1931
Sunday School Board - Nashville, Tenn.

Religion, Mother of Progress

Russia—not the people but the government—is declaring to the world today that “religion is the opiate of the people.” Soviet leaders are not alone in such a view. There are plenty of writers in our own land who seek to convince the public that religion was always and still is an obstacle to human progress.



The fundamental blunder of all such persons is that they observe superficially and utterly fail to distinguish between religion as a spiritual force and some organization or establishment—a church—in which religion becomes institutionalized. It must be admitted by every honest observer that frequently some organized church has assumed an attitude which temporarily blocked, or which sought to block, what from our wiser “hindsight,” was evidently a forward movement. But, on the other hand, the evidence all goes to show that every advance in welfare for the race had its origin in what can be fairly described only as religious sentiment—an unselfish longing or desire or purpose to further the good of man.

A recently published book goes much further. It sees religion as presenting “the ultimate social idealism of the race” and it is full of inspiring thought about the place of religion in this rapidly changing world. Indeed, it is one of the most stimulating and discriminating of recent publications and deserves the attention of all Christian leaders, particularly because it comes from the pen of a young Jewish rabbi.* In support of the assertion made in the preceding paragraph, Rabbi Silver points out that “in religion all the arts and sciences originated and under its aegis they flourished for a very long time.” He continued as follows: “The first architecture of mankind was religious architecture—the temple. The first poetry of mankind was religious poetry—the hymn. The first drama of mankind was religious drama—festival pageantry and ritual. The first science of mankind was religious science—magic, astrology and priestly therapeutics. All government was originally theocratic. The ruler was either himself the high priest or was ruled by the high priest. All law was religious law. All social custom was religious custom. There was no separation between the sacred and the profane. Religion enswathed the whole life of man as with an element.”



Of course, the preceding summary of how all that is worth while in our civilization grew out of the religious attitude is based upon the true concept of religion as a quest after God, which means the highest and the best. The author quoted is prompt to admit that “as religion was institutionalized it became extremely conservative, set in its ways and jealous of its prerogatives”—the prerogatives of an *institution*. There followed several great struggles because the church sought to quench new enlightenment. In each struggle, as Dr. Silver tersely summarizes the result, “the church lost but religion gained.”

*Religion in a Changing World. By Abba Hillel Silver. Richard R. Smith, Inc., New York. Pp. 204. \$2.00.

PRESBYTERIAN ADVANCE
NASHVILLE

1-29-31

Religion, Mother of Progress

It was not good for religion for the church to retain its political power, for "political power inevitably corrupts religion." In like manner the free development of religion needs the free development of science and, again quoting Dr. Silver, religion was "tragically handicapped" while "tied to the dead body of antiquated scientific notions."

When men thus make a clear distinction between religion as a spiritual force and the various outward forms and organizations through which this spiritual force expresses itself, they will be able to see more clearly how it may be truthfully asserted that religion is the mother of progress. Perhaps at first religion was nothing more than a vague "feeling after God"—and without any definite notion of what was meant by "God." It was at least an urge to attain to something morally and spiritually higher, a sincere and unselfish desire to win for mankind the highest and best. Such an aspiration, purpose, or whatever we may call it lies at the basis of all human progress. Where would mankind have been without it?

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In spite of what some would have us accept as true, no thinking man can conclude that man's progress can be attributed to the physical matter and forces round about him. This same material and these same forces were here many thousands of years ago when man was little more than a brute in the jungle. Indeed, all of the physical substances and forces which we of America make such use of today were just as abundant before the white man found the new world. And the Indian was here too. Yet thousands of years passed and these two—the Indian and great material resources—accomplished together practically nothing toward the elevation of the human race. It took something else, something in man—a spiritual something—to bring to pass the progress witnessed in America in a few hundred years.

And what is it that gives Science its great chance today? How does it come to pass that, all over the world, in perfected laboratories which cost millions, men of ability are supported by other millions while, "free from worldly cares and avocations," they devote themselves to research? It is because most men of today in civilized countries have an earnest desire to further human welfare and, traced to its origin, that strong desire, expressing itself in so many ways, will be found growing out of a religious motive.

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Whence came all of the complicated modern social effort for the relief of the poor? It may be traced back to such a custom as that which prevailed in early Israel and which provided that the poor might gather the grain in the corners of the field. And that custom originated where? In the "law of God"—the conviction that God would have men thus show mercy and the purpose to live in accord with the will of God. Yes, "pure religion and undefiled" may fairly be called the mother of progress.

PRESBYTERIAN ADVANCE
NASHVILLE 1-29-31

Rabbi Silver's Message

RELIGION IN A CHANGING WORLD, by Abba Hillel Silver. Richard R. Smith. 204 pp. Price \$2.00 postpaid of The Survey.

ABBA HILLEL SILVER is rabbi of The Temple, Cleveland. He is also one of the most vigorous, liberal, and respected of modern Jews. He is a powerful preacher, a protagonist of every good social movement, and a sincere student of both Judaism and Christianity. He is also an excellent non-technical Christian. This volume of ten essays, is exactly what one might expect from such a man. He has retained his racial heritage of deep mysticism but counters it with a thorough scientific knowledge. He has no hatred in his heart—only a hunger for deeper understanding—his message is almost exclusively positive in tone. About the only religionists who arouse his scorn are the half-hearted Modernists, who are prone to feel that all change is progress. How does he stand on the conflict of religion with science? "There is no fundamental issue between them. The conflict has been largely one of trespassing, and resulted from the attempt of one to poach on the preserves of the other." In the matter of social justice? "The first great service which the church . . . can render the cause of social justice, is to galvanize by education and inspiration the will of men so that they will seek justice and pursue it. . . . But it must cry aloud . . . against . . . unemployment . . . injustice . . . greed . . . lust. . . ." Has he practical knowledge of social service? "Organized charity has passed through two stages . . . is in the third stage. The first stage . . . was nothing more than collective almsgiving. . . . The second stage was prevention, the attempt to anticipate disaster. . . . The third stage is . . . adjustment. The vast number neither need nor request material relief . . . but mental and spiritual adjustment. Into such a family the social worker goes as a diagnostician. . . ."

This man knows what he is talking about and he would be completely at home in a score of Protestant pulpits known to this reviewer, for he preaches the doctrine of love of God and love of man, like another Jew who lived a long time ago to whom this man refers as a "unique personality." You'd better read the book.

CHARLES STAFFORD BROWN

Colorado Springs, Colo.

"Monthly Book Talk" Baptist. Nov-1931
Sunday School Board. Nashville, Tenn.

"Religion in a Changing World" (Smith, \$2), by Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver, is one of the best of the religious books of the winter. The chapters are addresses made from time to time in the Temple, Cleveland, O., before one of the largest and most influential congregations of Reformed Judaism in America. Their interest will be at once felt by Christian and Jew alike, for Rabbi Silver speaks with a breadth of concern that includes all religion. He takes to task the timidity and difference that characterizes the religious thought of the day, contending that the function of religion is to resist precipitate change, to distinguish critically between the novel and the new, and to conserve at all costs the rich spiritual heritage of the past. His problems concern science and religion, the Church and social justice, the widening horizons of social service, the Church and world peace, liberalism at the crossroads, the American home, education and the role of religion in a changing world.

Public Ledger Phila. Pa. 2-7-31

Rabbi Silver's New Book

❧ Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver has recently published a brilliant book entitled "Religion In a Changing World." The following is an excerpt from the first chapter. ❧

IN our day, as in the days of Democritus and Lucretius, the struggle is still between two opposing opinions—neither scientifically demonstrable—the spiritual versus the materialistic conception of the nature of the universe. It is the immemorial and everlasting struggle; and it will forever be man's privilege and dread responsibility to place himself on the side of the one or the other. Either opinion can be competently championed and defended. Religion champions the spiritual view of the universe.

Materialism is no more scientific than theism—and no less. It is certainly not the last word in philosophy. In fact, it is the first and most obvious. He who believes that the universe is a Personality, and intelligent Will expressing itself in infinite variety, need not feel that his belief is any less scientific than the belief of him who holds that the universe is a Thing, mere blind matter in senseless agitation, that life is only a chemical process and thought only the fortuitous concourse and inter-play of unthinking atoms.

When materialism, which is not science but only an interpretation of science, will trace for man the successive stages by which insensate units of energy combine themselves through motion and organization into the pattern of Aristotle's or Plato's mind, when it will demonstrate by what unbroken process of continuity lifeless and mind-less clay evolves into a being, thinking, aspiring man, and how a universe devoid of personality and will can give rise to personality and will in man, then there will be time enough to consider the relinquishment of a spiritual interpretation of life.

The modern religionist will not be discouraged by the fact that inherent in his

Cheré Amman
thinking are hypotheses which cannot be scientifically established. He will recall that inherent in all truth, even scientific truth, are not only hypotheses which may or may not be found true, but fictions which are demonstrably false, but which are nevertheless indispensable to thought and action. The scientific concepts of matter, energy, time, space, cause, effect, the atom, the electron, classification, etc., are not truth but only artifices of thought, convenient summaries, not realities. The religionist will, therefore, not look to the scientist to verify his faith; for as soon as the scientist attempts to construct a metaphysical system on the basis of his scientific knowledge, he leaves the realm of strict science, and his credentials are no more imposing than those of the rheologist. The religionist is pleased when the scientist agrees with him, though such agreement is not indispensable.

• 1-31-31

To our changing world then and to every changing world religion offers the same basic thought-pattern—the reality of God, the reality of personality, the reality of truth, beauty and goodness. It cannot depart from these postulates without complete abdication. It offers also to our changing world its ancient moral idealism, an idealism which points to the twin-goals of freedom and responsibility, which sublimates human nature without falsifying it, and which demands loyalty to distant social objectives not yet attained. Its morality is more than social mores. It is at peace with some social mores and at war with others. It evaluates mores and transcends them. It is the call of prophecy.

Religion in a Changing World. By Abba Hillel Silver. Richard R. Smith, Inc., New York. Price, \$2.

In speaking of books it is easy to use superlatives indiscriminately, but when one deals with a work like "Religion in a Changing World," it is hard for him to express himself adequately in any other way. At the outset I venture to express the opinion that this work by Rabbi Silver of The Temple, Cleveland, Ohio, is one of the highly distinguished books of the year. It deserves a wide reading, and both its thought and language can be truthfully described by the somewhat everworked word brilliant. Rabbi Silver is a figure of international reputation among people of his own race and has recently been rapidly coming to the forefront as one of the most eloquent speakers upon the American platform. The reader of "Religion in a Changing World" can very readily see why its author is in such demand for addresses upon religious and social subjects.

Rabbi Silver discusses the more significant aspects of the life of our day with clarity, force, and prophetic power. The first chapter, which has to do with "The Role of Religion in a Changing World," is diagnostic. It challenges the reader at the very beginning: "Much of our religious thinking in recent years has been characterized by nervousness and timidity. In the face of the widely-heralded new world of the scientific mold and temper, religious thinking, especially of the liberal type, has become diffident and panicky. Never was liberal theology in such a mortal funk as it is to-day. For it has finally come face to face with its real foe—the Apollyon of materialism, agnosticism, and atheism." Starting here, he continues to elucidate the thought that the fight for the religious liberal has moved far beyond the fundamentalist-modernist sector, that it now has to do with forces vitiating to any spiritual interpretation of life whatever. The chapter has a fine discussion of the place for religion in modern life. This section of the work could be readily outlined, but it is not the function of a reviewer to give the public material which would serve as a substitute for the reading of the book itself.

Among the other chapter headings are "Science and Religion," "The Church and Social Justice," "The One and the Many," "Liberalism at the Crossroads," and "What Is Happening in the American Home." The last chapter, which is entitled "How Shall We Measure Life?" is, like all of its companions, good reading, but it seems a little out of coordination with the rest of the book. "Education and the Good Life" is an especially incisive and luminous treatment of a theme of the widest ramifications. It is to be hoped that many teachers will come into contact with it. The book as a whole is an exceptionally effective antidote to the pernicious teachings of Bertrand Russell and an army of lesser fry.

Of the theories like trial marriage, companionate marriage, and free love Rabbi Silver says: "They are atavistic hankerings after lower forms of human relationships with which the human race experimented centuries ago and which were finally rejected because they were found wanting. . . . Far from rendering the lives of men and women freer and happier, as it is fatuously assumed by some in our day, these loose forms of association were found to cheapen and embitter life, to rob it of its dignity, to reduce sex to its lowest common physical denominator and to endanger the spiritual education of the offspring."

L. H. C.

Pittsburgh Christian Advocate 2-5-31

"RELIGION IN A CHANGING WORLD"*

THE changes that have been going on the last few decades, and are still going on, present a most perplexing situation. The rapid and threatening changes in the industrial world bring consternation even to the thoughtful. Changes in the world of moral sentiments and standards have brought confusion and dismay, if not despair. Changes in the world of science lead to uncertainty and to unsettlement of principles in our thought about the nature of the universe. All of these changes affect our everyday life, and so religion. Religion has always been subject to attacks from skeptics and atheists. These attacks have been directed mostly against the untenable positions of orthodoxy; and in the name of advanced science the so-called liberal theologians have joined with the infidels in this hostility. But now the liberal theology itself is on the defensive against a new foe, the foe of naturalism and rationalism strengthened by the assumptions and the speculations of the scientists. The consequence is, the increasing tendency of settled religious principles and convictions to disappear.

In the book before us we have an analysis and an interesting discussion of these conditions; and the discussion is especially interesting from the fact that it is by an educated and well-informed Jew. Being a Jew, the author is the better able to take an objective view of the general religious situation, and to discuss it without being so much involved in the parties concerned. It is significant that his observations and analysis are in close agreement with those of other well-informed critics, such as Walter Lippmann and H. Emil Brunner, whose results have been discussed in previous issues of this REVIEW.

**Religion in a Changing World*. BY ABBA HILLEL SILVER, D.D., LITT.D. New York: Richard R. Smith, Inc. 1930. 204 pp., 8vo. Cloth \$2.00.

Perhaps the key-note of the book is given in the opening paragraphs, in which the case is so well stated as to make it worth while to reproduce them here.

Much of our religious thinking in recent years has been characterized by nervousness and timidity. In the face of the widely-heralded new world of scientific mold and temper, religious thinking, especially of the liberal type, has become diffident and panicky. Never was liberal theology in such a mortal funk as it is today. For it has finally come face to face with its real foe—the Apollyon of materialism, agnosticism, and atheism.

Heretofore, the religious liberal was engaged rather pleasantly in attacking orthodoxy. In his onslaught upon the crumbling citadels of orthodoxy, the liberal could command all the battering-rams of modern science. He had a fairly easy time of it—at least in the realm of ideas; and he felt secure and a bit snug in his numerous triumphs over the discomfited creeds and dogmas of orthodox religion. But the battle suddenly swept far beyond the fundamentalist-modernist sector. The main positions of religion itself, of all religion, the liberal's included, are now attacked by the ancient and bitter and powerful enemy—materialism and atheism. And this time it is the enemy who is in possession of the weapons of modern science.

In this major attack upon religion, the orthodox religionist finds himself in a stronger position than the liberal. The orthodox entrenches himself in a supernaturalism against which the attacking waves of skepticism hurl themselves in vain. He is bulwarked behind revelation and tradition. The liberal, however, must fight in the open, and with weapons which, he suspects, are not as strong or as modern as those of the enemy.

The author goes on to develop the contrast between the religious and the scientific point of view, and he reduces the issue to that between the spiritual and the materialistic conception of the universe; between the view that the "universe is a Personality, an intelligent Will expressing itself in infinite variety," and the view that "it is a thing, mere blind matter in senseless agitation."

The author, however, is mistaken when he takes materialism as the worst enemy of religion. The worst enemy of religion is naturalism, not materialism. Materialism as a philosophy of the universe is easily refuted; Berkeley's refutation was complete and final in its principles and in its

main features. But naturalism goes deeper, and beyond materialism; for it includes mind as well as matter. Materialism is the orthodox philosophy of the physical world. Its failure is conspicuous in the fact that it has never succeeded in bridging the gap between matter and spirit, or body and soul. Naturalism takes in both mind and matter; for it nature is not merely the material universe; it embraces the universe of mind as well, and when pushed to the wall it recognizes an absolute dualism; it admits that there is no way of passing in thought from matter to mind, or from mind to matter. In the language of Professor James, the relation between body and mind is that of a "blank correspondence." Naturalism is the deadliest foe of religion because it claims to cover the whole field of psychology, the whole field of human experience, and yet denies the existence and the possibility of the supernatural. This denial does away with the existence of God, the existence of the spiritual world, and the Bible as the Word of God. In these denials the entire basis of religion is swept away, and religion itself is consigned to the realm of fanciful imagination and of myth-making. The formidable character of naturalism is due to its support from a wide-embracing rationalism, a rationalism which assumes to cover the whole field of existence, when in fact it is restricted to the world of nature. It ignores the spiritual world except as the world of human minds in bodies of flesh; and so it substitutes humanistic ethics for religion.

The book contains much wholesome criticism, many admirable summaries, many penetrating observations, and occasional brilliant phraseology; but in constructive effort it is sentimental, rhetorical, and vague. The author lacks clearly-defined religious principles. His thought moves for the most part outside religion, and in the field of naturalistic humanism. The following extract seems to be his comprehensive and exhaustive declaration of faith:

Science is the response to the human need for knowledge and power. Religion is the response to the human need for hope and certitude. One is an outreaching for mastery, the other for perfec-

tion. Both are man-made, and like man himself, are hedged about with limitations. Science can only see those things which man is equipped to see—and his equipment is sadly deficient. Man cannot transcend his own humanity. Science, vitiated by the constricted agencies of human cognition, and by the definitive organization of the human brain, cannot lay claim to an order of truth which is objective and absolute; nor can religion lay claim to perfect and final truth on the authority of some supernatural revelation. All truth comes to man by way of his mind-groping and the compelling needs and experiences of his life. (P. 34.)

This is a significant passage from the metaphysical, psychological, and religious point of view. According to it man's knowledge depends upon the organization of the brain in such a way that he cannot have knowledge of any objective truth, or reality; this implies that for him there is no objective reality. This raises the question as to the nature of knowledge and as to the meaning of objective reality. It would seem that the author is a subjective idealist. If religion cannot claim perfect and final truth on the authority of revelation, what kind and degree of truth can it claim? If all truth comes to man by way of his mind-groping, and if there is no revealed truth, how does it appear that truth comes to man at all, rather than that man produces his own truth by his own effort,—and thus revelation is done away with altogether? This conclusion seems to be confirmed by an earlier statement:

Science compelled religion to surrender, reluctantly enough, one by one, the myths which clustered around it, the myths of revelations, miracles, resurrections, divine books, glamorous eschatologies, and fanciful cosmologies. (P. 4.)

If the phrases "myths of revelations" and "divine books" here are meant to include the Bible, the author seems to relegate the Hebrew Bible to the realm of early tribal fancies, or deliberate forgeries. In both of these extracts we have the language of pronounced and unqualified rationalistic naturalism; and the use of such language shows how firmly this naturalism is fastened upon the leaders and the thoughtful men of our day.

The author makes use of the terms "religion" and "God" in the traditional sense, apparently for rhetorical effect; but the way he uses them raises questions as to what he really means by "religion" and "God." Here he seems to be vacillating and inconsistent. His nearest approach to a precise definition of religion is in contrasting morality with religion. He says:

Morality is concerned with the relations of man to his fellow men. Religion is concerned with the relations of man to the Universe and to ultimate reality. (P. 53.)

If by "universe" here he means the material universe, and that the material universe is all there is, then man's relations to the universe exclude any relation to God, for in that case obviously God has no existence. On the other hand, if by "ultimate reality" he means some form of universal substance which underlies all existing things, or if he means the Idealistic Absolute, or the ineffable and unknowable "One" of Plotinus, then man's relations to ultimate reality do not include any relation to God in the religious sense of the word. Such a formula would fit into the scheme of materialism, naturalism, or atheism; but only with much question and explanation could it be fitted into the Christian religion with its personal God, known and worshipped as such. Some religious philosophies may reduce God to a universal substance,—the object of speculative thought, but not of worship. Actual religions are characterized by the worship of a personal God.

In another context, religion has a somewhat different meaning. The author is arguing for religious tolerance, and against the idea of one religion for all mankind. He maintains that there is no true religion and no false religion. Some "are out of alignment with contemporary thought," in that they "have carried over from the past a number of obsolete and discarded scientific notions."

But every religion in so far as it conceives of the universe as the manifestation of personality and beneficence, and in so far as it impels human beings to a maximum of moral idealism, is a true religion. (P. 112.)

This statement is meant presumably to express the liberal and tolerant view of religion. But if there is no true religion and none false, there is no alternative as to true or false, and where there is no alternative there is no choice; so we are landed in the indifferentism which the author elsewhere denounces. The view that all religions are more or less true and more or less false would explain much of the liberal and tolerant sentiment in vogue at the present time; it may also explain the indifferentism towards religion, and the fact that now so many renounce religion altogether, either in conviction or in effect. For the author, however, the test of the truth of any religion is that it conceives the universe as the manifestation of personality and beneficence, and that it impels human beings to a maximum of moral idealism. Just what is meant by the universe as the manifestation of personality and beneficence is a question; and how the notion of personality can be of the universe or in the universe is also a question. Early Greek thought was crudely hylozoic, and this may have suggested Aristotle's idea of the universe as alive.

The Christian doctrine of creation implies that the universe is in origin and throughout spiritual, or perhaps personal; but this is another way of saying that the conception of the universe as the manifestation of personality is revealed. There is no evidence that any examination of the universe outside of man would lead to an idea of personality. It is true that we do observe order in the universe. Bodies move and events occur uniformly and in sequence. Some bodies move and some events occur under the impulse and direction of personality, some mechanically, some to all appearance spontaneously. The stars and planets move regularly, but mysteriously. Order implies plan, and plan implies thought; thought is a function of personality. For our present knowledge, however, there is no conceivable connection between the movements of the planets and any personal impulse and direction. The thought of personal direction or manifestation comes, not from observing the

behavior of bodies, but from revelation, from which we have the doctrine of creation. In the case of our own bodies, there is a matter of fact connection between mind and body; but in our knowledge and thought the connection is a blank correspondence. In short, to make the conception of the universe as a manifestation of personality the test of a true religion is either to accept revelation or to rest on a metaphysics which is so complicated and undeveloped as to lead to no positive results. On the other hand, to make the character of impelling human beings to a maximum of moral idealism the test, is to leave the field of religion altogether, and to fall to the merely moral level.

We have selected these points and discussed them at some length to show that the author's mind, in spite of his use of the traditional religious vocabulary and ideas, works distinctively on the plane of naturalism, and that he has no clearly defined principles with which to steer the course of religion through a changing world.

The author discusses "The Role of Religion in a Changing World," "Science and Religion," "The Church and Social Science," "The Widening Horizons of Social Service," "The Church and World Peace," "The One and The Many," "Liberalism at the Crossroads," "What is Happening to the American Home," "Education and the Good Life," and "How Shall We Measure Life?" These subjects are handled in an interesting and helpful way on the conventional level. There is good sentiment, good thinking, and stimulating suggestiveness. But there is a lack of clear and consistent religious thinking; religion is too much confused with humanism. In this respect the book belongs to the general class of infected popular expositions.

Religion in the present changing world must combine at least three indispensable features: clear and consistent thought of God; of Revelation; and of Man. The historical idea of a personal God must be clarified by new knowledge of the nature of God, and must be given its proper place in the body of modern thought. The historical acceptance of

the Bible as the Word of the Lord must be justified by new knowledge of its spiritual meaning, and of its character as a body of revealed truth about man as a spiritual being, and about his relation to God. The historical view of man as essentially an immortal spiritual being must be developed in terms of new knowledge of his metaphysical, psychological, and spiritual nature. This new knowledge we derive from the revelations given through Swedenborg, where it is concentrated in his doctrine and philosophy of love. The place of love in life and in philosophy needs to be more fully known and more completely understood, before we can meet and solve the problems of modern thought, and before we can steer the course of religion through the mazes of this changing world.

LEWIS F. HITE.



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RELIGION IN A CHANGING WORLD



Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver

For the past decade Liberals have been disporting themselves in an attack upon orthodoxy. They have had a great time of it. Now, however, the battle has suddenly swept far beyond the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy and Liberals find themselves confronted with the common foe of all religion, liberal and orthodox alike—materialism and atheism. . . . To a generation weakened by compromise and distraught by the presumed implications of science comes an utterance as providentially timed as theses of Luther. **RELIGION IN A CHANGING WORLD** will take its place among the great books of the day.

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INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RELIGIOUS ED.
DANIEL A. POLING.

January Choice Religious Book Club

RELIGION IN A CHANGING WORLD has been selected by a committee composed of Harry Emerson Fosdick, Charles Clayton Morrison, Francis J. McConnell, S. Parkes Cadman, Howard Chandler Robbins, and Mary S. Woolley as the best book of the month for January. No book since *The Impatience of a Parson* can claim so completely the attention of the religious world.

At All Bookstores

RICHARD R. SMITH, INC.

\$2

12 East 41st Street New York



Religious Education Feb 1931

Religion in a Changing World. By Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver, D.D. 204 pp. \$2. Richard R. Smith. New York.

Every religion today is feeling the effects of secularism, atheism and agnosticism have made inroads everywhere. It is not surprising, therefore, that with the present drift from the synagogue Rabbi Silver of Cleveland, Ohio, distinguished for his books on Jewish mysticism, gives an apology for theism to the youth of today. He stands firmly against the tendency of materialism and atheism, and holds

great ne... that the function of religion is to re-
 sist the tide of infidelity. The book
 consists of a series of brilliant ad-
 dresses on such subjects as Science
 and Religion, the Church and Social
 Justice, the Church and World Peace.
 He uses the word church in its widest
 sense and naturally does not consider
 its head. For Jewish youth of
 today, however, the book should prove
 of great value, as it puts emphasis on
 the real values of life—holiness, not
 happiness as the goal of existence.
 The author says that for Moses, Jere-
 miah, Jesus, Angelo, Lincoln there was
 no visible relationship between mag-
 nificent living and happiness.

We can not endorse the statement
 of the writer that "one religion for
 the whole of mankind is neither neces-
 sary nor desirable." We believe that
 the religion of Jesus Christ is neces-
 sary and sufficient for all men.

S. M. Z.

PASTOR LUCCOCK PRAISES RABBI SILVER

Editor, ISRAEL'S MESSENGER

DEAR SIR,—May I call your attention, and
 perhaps through your paper, to the attention
 of your fellow countrymen, an exceedingly
 valuable book that has recently been published
 from the pen of Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver, of
 Cleveland, Ohio, U. S. A.? Anyone who is at
 all acquainted with religious literature is well
 aware of the world's unpayable debt to your
 people, and anyone who has been at all con-
 cerned about the best interests of the United
 States during the last twenty five years
 understands that the spiritual insight and
 leadership of your Rabbis has been indis-
 pensable. This latest book by Rabbi Silver,
 which is called "Religion in a Changing World"
 is by all odds the most exciting and helpful
 book that I have read in the last five years,
 and I am sure that you will not regret reading
 and recommending it to others.—Fraternally
 yours.

Addresses by a Rabbi

The first popular book from the pen
 of Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver, of The
 Temple, Cleveland, is to be issued early
 in November by Richard R. Smith,
 Inc., 12 East 41st Street, New York.
 The book comprises a series of related
 addresses on the central theme "Re-
 ligion in a Changing World." The
 title address drew national attention at
 the time it was presented before the
 meeting of the Religious Education
 Association in Cleveland last Fall, and

other chapters in the book consider
 present-day economic conditions, the
 status of the American home, the re-
 lation of the church to social prob-
 lems, the rage of utility education,
 and other phases of changing Ameri-
 can life. One deals with the timely
 subject of "Liberalism at the Cross-
 Roads." Rabbi Silver has within the
 course of a few short years risen to a
 place of commanding importance in
 the religious and intellectual life of
 modern America. He has written
 authoritative books in the field of
 Jewish history and religion, and all
 the while he has been constantly as a
 speaker before religious and university
 gatherings. His new book presents the
 addresses which have made him as well
 known to the laity as he is to scholars.

Shanghai-China 2-28-31

Times" Trenton, N.J. 9-28-30

Rabbi

DEAN WILLARD C. SPERRY of the Harvard Theological Seminary, writes of Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver's book, "Religion in a Changing World," as follows: "It is the soundest statement of the dilemma of the Liberal and the opportunity open to the Liberal I have ever read."

ARRON TIMES 2-15-31

RABBI ABBA HILLEL SILVER of Cleveland, is author of a volume of penetrating essays on "Religion in a Changing World." The brilliant minister of the Temple speaks with compelling force and clarity on this timely theme.

AMER. HEBREW 12-5-30

I HAVE JUST read Rabbi Abba Silver's new book "Religion in a Changing World." If that book had come from the pen of a Dr. Henry Fosdick or a John Haynes Holmes it would be hailed as one of the illuminating and penetrating analyses of the religious thought of the day and it would probably rank among the leading "best sellers" in the non-fiction field.

But the "people of the book" do not rush so quickly to the book marts to procure their own leaders' opinions on the subject. Dr. Silver writes extraordinarily well, which is rather uncommon in one who speaks so eloquently.

One of his most striking phrases is "Religious thought has become a bewildered pedestrian, irreverently jostled and knocked about in the rush of modern life."

He points out that the liberal religious forces, having disported themselves for decades in an attack upon orthodoxy, now find themselves confronted with the real foe of all religion, materialism and atheism. The result, he claims, is panic, confusion and humanism.

The word "brilliant" is pretty much over-worked, but it is the only one that should be used in describing this work of Dr. Silver. Jewish organizations and study groups which spend all too much time with literature of doubtful value will profit greatly by reading and discussing Dr. Silver's views as presented in this most interesting volume.

AMERICAN ISRAELITE
2-5-31

I have just read Rabbi Abba Silver's new book, "Religion in a Changing World." If that book had come from the pen of a Dr. Harry Fosdick or a John Haynes Holmes it would be hailed as one of the illuminating and penetrating analyses of the religious thought of the day and it would probably rank among the leading "best sellers" in the non-fiction field. But the "people of the book" do not rush so quickly to the book marts to procure their own leaders' opinions on the subject. Dr. Silver writes extraordinarily well, which is rather uncommon in one who speaks so eloquently. One of his most striking phrases is "Religious thought has become a bewildered pedestrian, irreverently jostled and knocked about in the rush of modern life."

He points out that the liberal religious forces, having disported themselves for decades in an attack upon orthodoxy, now find themselves confronted with the real foe of all religion, materialism and atheism. The result, he claims, is panic, confusion and humanism. He deals with such subjects as "Science and Religion," "The Church and Social Justice," "The Widening Horizon of Social Service," "The Church and World Peace," and "Liberalism at the Crossroads." It is a book well worth the investment of any one's time to read and re-read. The word "brilliant" is pretty much overworked, but it is the only one that should be used in describing this work of Dr. Silver's. Jewish organizations and study groups who spend all too much time with literature of doubtful value will profit greatly by reading and discussing Dr. Silver's views as presented in this most interesting volume.

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After having written the foregoing paragraph I discovered that Dr. Silver's book had been chosen as the January choice of the Religious Book-of-the-Month Club, whose editorial committee among others, consists of Dr. Harry Fosdick, Dr. Samuel Parkes Cadman, and Bishop Francis McConnell, which confirms my opinions as to the value of the book.

Religion in a Changing World. By Abba Hillel Silver. New York: Smith, 1930, pp. 204. \$2.00.

An excellent example of modern liberal Jewish preaching, with a strong social strain, and face to face with the problems of modern life in America at the present day.

ANGELICAN THEOLOGICAL REVIEW
JAN. 31

Religion as the Social Idealism of the Race

RELIGION IN A CHANGING WORLD. By Abba Hillel Silver. 204 pp. New York: Richard R. Smith, Inc. \$2.

IT is with a challenging, assured and ringing voice, but still a persuasive one, that Rabbi Silver, of the Temple, Cleveland, sends forth his message to a world in upheaval, bearing testimony to the necessity, the efficacy, the inevitability of the essential principles and ideals of religion. The book consists of a collection of ten papers, which apparently have been addresses or sermons, on as many different subjects. But they are all so closely related in theme and so similar in purpose that they make a complete whole fitly captioned by the title. The ten papers present as many phases of the part religion can take in the inspiration, the guidance and the betterment of a changing world.

But Rabbi Silver has his own conception of what religion is, an exalted conception, liberal, practical, spiritual, that has little in common with what a great majority of people conceive it to be. It is not the traditional religion, but something very different, something that is broadly based and deeply rooted in human needs and hearts, that is vital, enriching, timeless. His book is full of eloquently phrased definitions and attributions of the qualities of this religion, and its values for mankind. It "represents the

NYT 2-22-31
ultimate social idealism of the race"; it is "the indefeasible optimism of the race which sustains itself on the conviction that the universe of which man is a part is the dwelling place of life, not of death, of reason, not of insensibility, of goodness, not of evil"; its domain "is the personality of man and its eternal value to man is that through religious experience he can develop and enrich his personality"; it "affirms that the universe is essentially not a machine but a personality, and that the primary facts in nature are life, thought and purpose"; it "is, in a sense, a summary of the basic spiritual interests and needs of all ages." (Perhaps this paragraph expresses as compactly as anything in the book Rabbi Silver's conception of religion.)

When religion on the strength of its own postulates speaks to men of God and the moral order of His universe, when it sets about unifying and ennobling human life by giving it a central motif, when it reaches down to the mainsprings of human conduct, which are our elemental wishes and desires, and sets about directing them into socially beneficent channels, when it utters its prophetic burden of justice and love and holiness and peace, then its voice is the voice of eternal spiritual truth, irrefutable and invincible.)

The idea of religion and its service to man, which Rabbi Silver sets forth, has nothing to do with churches and creeds and tradition-

al beliefs. There is a chapter on the conflict between religion and science that is likely to make both the denying scientist and the asserting churchman wince and open his eyes. For the author speaks frankly of the faults, the desire to dominate, of both, and shows science as now trying to play the rôle which religion formerly took and as being likely to work as much evil by its imperialistic temper, if it does not learn wisdom in time, as did the other. (Both of them

are man-made and hedged about with limitations. Science is the response to the human need for knowledge and power. Religion is the response to the human need for hope and certitude. One is an outreaching for mastery, the other for perfection.)

In the chapters on the church and social justice, on social service and on the attitude of the church toward world peace, Rabbi Silver shows what a very practical rôle the kind of religion he sets forth should play and the beneficent force it could make of itself in the sorry modern world. (Religion as a unifying, harmonizing possibility is set forth in a paper on the dividing, discordant factors of civilization, the antagonistic creeds, races, nations. In religion Rabbi Silver finds an ally for liberalism and in America he sees liberal tendencies most in evidence in religious thought.) The three enemies against

which the liberal must wage incessant warfare in the modern world are, he thinks, the usurping state, the usurping class and the usurping machine. When he comes to his inquiry as to the changes going on in the American home he deals with the subject frankly and brings out the convictions of religion "touching the basic sanctities of human life."

Rabbi Silver speaks with courage and with keen observation when he discusses briefly the much-asserted "revolt of youth," which has been so much talked and written about that most people have come to believe in it. But he skeptically suggests that the theme has been "overplayed by middle-aged moralists and lecturers." (It is his conviction that

in matters that really count, in political, economic and social thinking, in questions of social justice, war and peace, nationalism and patriotism, our young people are as orthodox, as unimaginative and as submissive as the most hidebound Babbitts of their day.)

The volume is, indeed, a challenging, dauntless sort of book. Not in a long time has any one come forward in such exalted and at the same time practical spirit to question the tendencies of the modern world and to offer for its healing with such absolute conviction the ideals and purposes of religion. FLORENCE FINCH KELLY.

New York Times Book Review 2/22/31

Religious Best Sellers

February, 1931

Nine Stores of Methodist Book Concern

Jesus and the American Mind—*Luccock*
The Issues of Life—*Wieman*
Speech Made Beautiful—*Stockdell*
The Problem of God—*Brightman*
Sin and the New Psychology—*Barbour*
Two Years of Sunday Nights—*Smith*

Fleming H. Revell Company New York

Streams in the Desert—*Cowman*
God in the Slums—*Redwood*
Boy To-Day—*Abbott*
The Inner Sentinel—*Jacks*
Humanity Uprooted—*Hindus*
Living Issues—*Speer*

Methodist Protestant Book Concern

Religion in a Changing World—*Silver* ✓
Streams in the Desert—*Cowman*
Doran's Ministers' Manual—*Hallock*
Easter Meditations—*Candler*
The Light Shines Through
—*Huget and Others*
India Looks to the Future

Religious Book Club

Which Way Religion—*Ward*
The Flight from Reason—*Lunn*
The Invisible Christ—*Rojas*
The Morals of Tomorrow—*Sockman*
The Lord's Prayer—*Rittelmeyer*
Humanism—*King*

Association Press Book Store New York

Helping People Grow—*Fleming*
Which Way Religion
Thinking Straight—*Dodge*
Basis of Belief
Larry—*Foster*
Our Economic Morality—*Ward*

Methodist Publishing House Richmond

Religious Experience of St. Paul
—*Rattenbury*
Men of the Great Redemption—*Stidger*
Advertising Jesus—*Bratcher*
The Lesson Round Table—*Dodge*
Winston's Simplified Dictionary
Religion in a Changing World—*Silver* ✓

Pilgrim Press Book Store Chicago

Religion in a Changing World—*Silver* ✓
The Master—*Bowie*
How Can I Learn to Teach Religion?
—*Carrier*
Larry—*Foster*
The Hero in Thy Soul—*Gossip*
He Took It Upon Himself—*Slattery*

Presbyterian Book Stores

Religion in a Changing World—*Silver* ✓
Solving Life's Everyday Problems—*Gilkey*
Adventures in Philosophy and Religion
—*Pratt*
Morals of Tomorrow—*Sockman*
Science and the New Civilization
—*Millikin*
Christ and Culture—*Covert*

Morehouse Publishing Company Milwaukee

The Episcopal Church—*Atwater*
The Atonement—*Burton*
Paul of Tarsus—*Mackay*
The Life Abundant—*Bell*
True Values—*Conkling*
Calvary Today—*Fiske*

The Study Table

The Church in the Social Order

Before me are the writings* of two modern ministers, leaders in their respective faiths. Preachers both of them, they have carried—to a greater or lesser extent—their ideals from the cloister and pulpit to the harder arena of the market place and workaday world. They may not therefore be dismissed by the cynically critical as mere theoreticians and visionaries, completely out of touch with the stubborn and grim facts of our industrial society.

Aside from the similarities mentioned, it should be noted that both of them are members of the American Civil Liberties Union, and that both these books were chosen one after the other as the choice of the Religious Book Club. After these likenesses are mentioned, the crossroads are reached, and in following them on their journey through the pages of their books—to say nothing of carrying out their preachments—I find myself being escorted along two radically different religious paths; as radically different as the liberal and radical are from each other.

Dr. Silver, treating of the relationship the church should maintain toward the state with regard to our economic order and system, says, "The church cannot, of course, align itself with a propaganda for one specific economic system as against another. . . . The church is not concerned with systems but with the safeguarding of principles which each age must be challenged to work into such a system as will best meet its economic needs." (Page 60.)

Dr. Ward, contrariwise, probing to the roots of our social system, sees clearly the perils of the situation which ". . . limits the utterances of the pulpit of the church bodies to general principles, and leaves details to the laymen . . . when they attempt to decide what forms of property are not justified by the ethics of the gospel, then the war is on . . . if there is no actual grappling with existing institutions . . . its capacity for transforming civilization is impaired." (Pages 23, 25.)

Silver himself is witness to the wisdom of Ward's insistence on the need to deal in particulars and concretions, and this is on the question of Peace. As Silver urges the church to endorse the World Court, he is illustrating the truth of Ward's dictum that the church is refusing to come to grips with the Frankenstein monster capitalism, though it is by now, after the sad and disillusioning experience of the World War, willing to grapple with the other Frankenstein war. Ward illuminatingly points out that "the demands of the churches for a warless world . . . have moved away from vague, pious sentimentality toward practical concreteness. . . . Nor is it likely that a pragmatic ethic alone will carry us over these intrenchments of passion and prejudice." (Page 91.)

I have already called attention to Ward's superior insight into the entanglement and alliance of the church with the state, in the matter of our economic and industrial order. He is as masterly and courageous with regard to the whole menace of war and militarism. His star shines so much brighter as it impinges on

the darker background of Silver's optimism and romanticism. "Education is, in the last analysis, mankind's surest irenicism. . . . Until the nations of the world are assured of a competent international agency which will protect them against unjustified aggression, they will not, they cannot, they *should* not disarm. The church will be in a position to create a real temperament for peace, a peaceful frame of mind, a will to peace. Peace is not altogether a question of economics. Nations do not make war or establish peace solely for economic reasons." (Page 91.) So Silver! Ward minces no words in coming out directly and telling how "our new militaristic nationalism is after all only an aspect of a larger fact—our economic imperialism. . . . The demand for preparedness reduces finally to the simple idea that we are now a very wealthy people living in a very wicked world which will take our possessions away from us unless we can defend them. . . . Underneath is the unseen force of our new billions of paper wealth, with its legal claims to income concentrated in a fraction of the people but scattered around the earth." Ward, in giving due weight to the economic interpretation of history, "has the jump" on Silver. Ward is the realist as he recognizes the roots of war in our economic order. Silver is the optimist and impractical visionary as he puts his trust in a state of mind that the church is to inculcate. It remains for Ward to point out the menace in the National Defense Act and its activities of military training in high schools and colleges, R. O. T. C. and Boy Scout organizations.

An appreciation of Soviet Russia is as surely the measure of a man these days as any other one thing. Silver carefully and conveniently keeps as far away from this subject as possible, though he does, at a few sudden moments, dash in stealthily and deal the Soviets a quick blow. The tone of his references to the "red gospel of Russia," the "red fraternity," "the Bolshevik Russia today," which he says, "is the proletariat class which is playing the old game of usurpation," show him to be far from friendly to that regime. Surely he shows a lack of those very qualities of faith and loyalty to the ideal which he claims is the special province of the religionist, when he is unable to discern on the horizon the classless society of Socialism, that will usher in the universal brotherhood of man in religion. Ward establishes his right to the company of the geniuses and prophets of our age by his vision and understanding with regard to Soviet Russia. Ward has these prophetic words to utter on Russia: "It is a religion of action. . . . It is in Socialism that we find the real religion of Science. . . . And it is among the communists, the militant wing of the Socialists that we find the full development of the religious elements in that movement. . . . In Russia with a clean field before it, Communism has developed into a new state religion. . . . It stands as one of the greatest bits of human engineering ever achieved. . . . Behind it is one of the most powerful religions ever developed by man. . . . The Messianic hope has thus become communized. . . . What is clear is that Communism stripped of its dogmatic glorification and use of force—in common with Socialism—gives us the religion of humanity."

So, to the prospective reader of the books under

*"Which Way Religion?" by Rev. Harry F. Ward. New York. The Macmillan Company. \$2.00.

"Religion in a Changing World," by Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver. Richard Smith, Inc. New York. \$2.00.

(over)

review, I can say only this. If you want to read for the unadulterated joy of reading, if you want to be charmed and soothed by flowing, fluid oratory as were the congregants of the silver-tongued Rabbi, then you may turn eagerly to the popular volume by Rabbi Silver. You may rest assured he will charm and enchant you with his vivid verbal imagery—"the modern scientist is like a child who suddenly finds himself in a new and marvelous toy-shop." He will entertain you with some choice legends that unavoidably bob up in the course of a stirring sermon. He will treat of the whole gamut of human society and institutions that are listed in the table of contents; of science, social justice, social service, liberalism and education. Attractive, isn't it? And so it is! But all that glitters and glistens is not "silver." I found nothing but the same dull balderdash that is to be had at all our institutions of liberalism and pragmatism, that never plumb the depths of our tragic and cruel civilization—with its economics realities, its privileged and dominant class and its rule of propertied interests. Of course a book like this would be a best-seller, and therein is its consolation. A year from today, will it be remembered? It is my guess that its popularity is an ephemeral one, fated to disappear quickly as it deserves.

And of the other book what can I say? But it is hardly fair to call it a book, with that term being bandied about so loosely and indiscriminately. Not given to enthusiasm easily, nevertheless I find myself turning these pages in a humbled and worshipful mood. For there speaks through these pages, as in the writings of a Tolstoy and a Gandhi, the voice of a prophet. No mincing of words here, no flinching at taking a resolute and dangerous stand. Which Way Religion? The question narrows down "to the role that it will play when the next stage of economic organization is being ushered in. . . ." And that stage is amidst us now. "It is the weakness also of the intellectual movement in Protestantism that it is apart from the life and needs of the common people." No pious platitudes

here, but in its place, hard unpalatable truths. No avalanche of rhetoric and oratory, though his feelings and sentiments are at such a white heat that you are reminded of Theodore Dreiser, with his quality of infinite compassion for human suffering tied together with the same overt ability to do something about it. And don't think Ward is hard to read! His social passion and profound insight has lent a fluidity and ease to his writing that makes it most readable.

As Ward brings to a spearhead the question of the role of the church in our industrial society, he actually may be said to be vested in the mantle of the prophet—and not of the school of the prophets either! Ward sees clearly and unmistakably that the fate of the church hinges on its relationship to our economic order of capitalism, and its intricacies of militarism and imperialism. The labor movement is at present inert, if not reactionary, in the United States, and the part the church will play in the battle between capital and labor will be decisive. Ward sees the church in the embarrassing position of having to make a definite choice, and not in abstractions or generalizations. If it throws in its lot with our iniquitous capitalistic system, then organized religion in America will go down with the ship when it sinks. Ward has thrown down the gage to the church, whether it shall survive or perish.

NATHAN ESSELL.

Note

Dr. J. T. Sunderland's widely read book on India, entitled "India in Bondage," has just been forbidden publication in England. The great English publishers, Allen, Unwin & Company, London, had received the revised manuscript and were setting type when the order came stopping the work. The book, published in America and France, was barred in India on its first appearance. The truth of Dr. Sunderland's testimony about British rule in India is abundantly attested by this record of events.

Correspondence

Citizen No. 1 or Jesus as He Was

Editor of UNITY:

The cooperation of the Jew is essential to a real understanding of Jesus by a Christian. For many years I have hoped that the Jew and the Christian would come to discuss Jesus together. Jesus for many, many centuries has been shrouded in unreality because of a lack of such cooperation. Within the last month two articles written by Jews on the subject of Jesus have appeared in UNITY. On January 11 appeared an article by Rabbi Louis L. Mann, entitled: "What Christmas Means to a Jew," and on January 18 was published an article by Rabbi Louis I. Newman, entitled: "If I Were a Christian."

In the article by Rabbi Mann, the sentence which has made the most powerful effect on me, and which seems to go to the root of the problem, is the following:

"The time has come, I firmly believe, when the crucifixion story must be retold so as not to make the Jew the villain in the drama of salvation. That the Jews did not kill Jesus every scholar knows."

Personally, I should like to hear a little more along that line from Rabbi Mann. Can he retell the crucifixion story? If Rabbi Mann believes that the Jews did not kill

killed Jesus, certain Jews in Jerusalem were cooperating with the Romans to bring about the death. Each proposition here must be looked into with the most extreme caution. We must get our facts right, otherwise we shall never be able to "retell" the story of the crucifixion. We must not try to retell this story either in favor of the Christians or in favor of the Jews. We have a new object before us, to get a picture of Jesus as he was.

My general conception of Jesus is that he was in some way or other a founder of civic rights, in a world where civic rights practically did not exist. Once in England, I heard Jesus referred to as "Citizen No 1." That seems to be about right.

Rabbi Newman, in his article speaks as follows:

"If I were a Christian, I would seek to place Jesus of Nazareth in his rightful place in the line of religious leaders. I would consider him as a Rabbi in Israel, a patriotic young Jewish champion, who lived, suffered and died as a Jew. I would apply to the story of his life the strictest canons of literary and historical criticism."

The thought comes to me that if we apply these canons, we must reserve judgment, at least until we finish both as to whether Jesus was a "rabbi" or a "religious leader."

Chris-

Status of Religion In Changing World

*RELIGION IN A CHANGING
WORLD, by Abba Hillel Silver.
Richard R. Smith, inc. \$2.*

In the midst of our depressions, spiritual as well as economic, it is heartening to find a writer who believes something deeply, states it forcefully, all without argument or exhortation. Silver believes in "the universe as the manifestation of divine thought and purpose and of man's at-homeness in it." He thinks the function of religion is "to cherish and safeguard the vital and indispensable hopes of the race, as long as they are not controverted by surer knowledge, and as long as they serve advancing needs of human life." Our prevalent pessimism is based upon our feeling that although knowledge may increase, it "will bring us decreased happiness, nobility, and self esteem." All of our boasted machinery is a poor substitute for "idealism, hope, and human pride." "Religion's third role in the world is to nurture the spirit of hopefulness among men."

The two things which lend hope to man are that despite his circumscribed life he can achieve greatly and have the assurance that about his finite life "there is the everlasting life of God in Whom all human aspirations find their surety and consummation."

For Rabbi Silver religion and science are two hemispheres of thought. The function of science is to give man knowledge and power. The function of religion is to give him hope and certitude. Science is a reach for power while religion is a reach for perfection. Both are man made and expand with the onward march of the race.

The last three-fourths of the book is given to an appeal to the church to take the lead in establishing social justice, creating world peace, deepening the sense of worth in the individual, and making richer group life—Nick Comfort.

Oklahoma City 3-8-21
Oklahoman

Religious Tempest Rages in "University Teapot"

Considerable excitement was recently stirred up in Canada by publication of the statement in the "Varsity", the Toronto university newspaper, that the majority of undergraduates are "practical atheists".

It is a serious question whether the average university student's half-baked ideas on the fundamental problems of the universe ought to be received with anything but an indulgent smile.

Society betrays nerves every time it hears pert university youth demolish the fundamentals with neat phrases. Abba Hillel Silver, a member of the National Hillel Commission, in a striking book, "Religion in a Changing World", just published, has this to say about our university youth:

"Our young people," he writes, "are no more critical, radical or intellectual than their elders. If the generation of young people were truly revolutionary in thought and mood, it would give evidence of this in the attitude toward the economic problems, the political problems and the international problems of our day.

"We venture the assertion that there is no more stand-pat young man in the world than the raccoon-coated homo sapiens of the American campus.

The Hillel Call - Univ of California

*RELIGION IN A CHANGING WORLD. By
Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver. Richard R. Smith,
Inc. \$2.00.*

"There is no more conservative, stand-pat man in the world than the racoon-coated 'homo sapiens' on the American campus . . . We suspect that this Revolt of Youth has been over-played by middle-aged moralists and lecturers. . . . Never was liberal theology in such a mortal funk as it is today. . . . But [the patient and sober religionist] knows that nothing has transpired to shake the foundations of religion. . . . Nor will [he] be impressed by the argument of the humanist. . . .

"The conflict between Science and Religion is more apparent than real. . . . Man cannot live by facts alone. . . . The need of God is as real as the need of food. . . . The doctrinaire scientist today is inclined to exhibit some of the uncommendable qualities of the *nouveau riche*.

"The religious man will be more than moral. . . . He will be a moral pathfinder. . . . In the face of these things [unemployment, etc.] the Church cannot, dare not remain silent . . . must not wait until the flotsam and jetsam of social wreckage come drifting to its doors. It must anticipate disaster. . . . Can the Church survive prosperity?"

And so on. Here is a book without a single dull page. It faces with a critically-intelligent and sympathetically-constructive attitude the major areas of life-problems today. No one concerned with its theme can fail to enjoy it nor come away unrewarded.

WILLIAM E. KROLL.

The Intercollegiate Nov-1931

Minister Tells What's Wrong With Religion

Religion in a Changing World—Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver—Richard R. Smith.

An attempt to stir modern religious thought from its timidity and diffidence is made by Rabbi Silver in this series of addresses which was chosen as the January selection by the Religious Book Club and as February selection by the Jewish Book of the Month Club. Rabbi Silver, who lectured in Minneapolis last month under the auspices of the Council of Jewish Women, sets himself squarely against the tendencies of the day to contend that the function of religion is to resist precipitate change, to distinguish critically between the novel and the new and to conserve the rich spiritual heritage of the past.

Some of the chapters are: "The Role of Religion in a Changing World," "Science and Religion," "The Church and Social Justice," "The Widening Horizons of Social Service," "What Is Happening to the American Home."

Rabbi Silver is president of the Bureau of Jewish Education and vicepresident of the Zionist Organization of America. He was decorated by the French government. For those who would know the tenets of a modern minister this is an illuminating book.

JOURNAL
MINNEAPOLIS 3-8-

Religion In a Changing World. By RABBI ABRA HILLEL SILVER. New York: Richard R. Smith. \$2.

THE thing that strikes me about Rabbi Silver's book is his amazing awareness of what is going on in the world about him and the clarity of his vision as to the part religion must play in it.

Here are ten chapters, addresses perhaps, or essays, and in the course of them he puts his finger on most of our modern social and religious problems, and sounds never a false note. Not that his treatment of every subject is exhaustive. It isn't; but it is always vital, thoroughly informed, with adequate backgrounds and truly religious—we had almost written truly Christian.

Without intending to do so, *Religion in a Changing World* becomes almost an irenicon of Judaism and Christianity, both at their best. The author's sense of the abiding significance of the spiritual heritage of the past is refreshing. There are so many present-day prophets whose presumptions are against anything older than the end of the nineteenth century that it is heartening to find one who rather bluntly insists that a theory needs something in addition to novelty to make it conclusive. The author is able to do this in a style that makes a book easy to read and hard to stop reading once we have begun.

Rabbi Silver is of the lineage of the prophets. There are pages where one can almost hear Amos in 1931, talking as this book talks; and there are pages where the figure of Amos fades out and it is the voice of Hosea we hear. We can think of no more stimulating exercise for a Christian preacher who has carefully preserved, indexed and catalogued his old sermons for use in his next pastorate, than to sit down with this book from the pen of a Jewish rabbi and make the disquieting and saving discovery of how very dead a sermon must be that was preached ten years ago—or even five.

WALLACE H. FINCH.

Mount Vernon, N. Y.

The Methodist Review - Mar-1931

The Most Widely Discussed
Book on Religion

RELIGION IN A CHANGING WORLD

Abba Hillel Silver

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sage to a world in upheaval. . . . It is
a dauntless book. Not in a long time
has anyone come forward in such an
exalted spirit to question the tendencies
of the modern age and offer for its
healing with such absolute conviction
the ideals and purposes of religion."
—New York Times

"The chapters dealing with social jus-
tice, world peace, liberalism, the home,
education and philosophy are inspired!
The book is eloquently written through-
out."

—New York World-Telegram

"He speaks with the words of a sage
rather than the thunders of a preacher.
His book makes satisfying reading in
an age of distraction."

—Harry Hansen

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RICHARD R. SMITH, Inc.

12 East 41st Street New York

Silver, Abba Hillel. Religion in a
changing world. N. Y. R. R.
Smith, 1930. 204p. \$2.

These religious addresses are pertinent
comments on the problems that churches face
today, as well as an optimistic exposition of
how liberal religion can face the dilemma.
The author, who is rabbi of the Temple in
Cleveland, is a brilliant thinker and able
lecturer, whose interest in the social serv-
ice of the church is indicated in these
lectures. *Contents:* The rôle of religion in
a changing world—Science and religion—
The church and social justice—The widening
horizons of social service—The church and
world peace—The one and the many—
Liberalism at the crossroads—What is hap-
pening to the American home—Education
and the good life—How shall we measure
life?

Does Religion Change?

BELIEF UNBOUND.

By William Pepperell Montague . . . *New Haven: Yale University Press . . . \$1.50.*

RELIGION IN A CHANGING WORLD.

By Abba Hillel Silver . . . *New York: Richard R. Smith . . . \$2.*

Reviewed by
JOHN HAYNES HOLMES.

MR. MONTAGUE, in this small book of large importance, is convinced that religion is a changing phenomenon, or at least must change if it is to survive. In its Christian doctrinal forms religion today is under ferocious attack. Certain phases of Christianity—its authoritarianism, its asceticism and other-worldliness, its metaphysics of supernaturalism—are utterly repugnant to the modern mind and must be abandoned. Even its sanction of morality cannot longer stand, for "true morality is without sanction." But out of "the welter of usages" such as these religion "leaps out to meet us and challenge our minds and our hearts." It calls for reinterpretation in the light of the new day.

Religion in its essence Mr. Montague describes variously, and yet always to the same end. It is "the possibility that what is highest in spirit is also deepest in nature." It is "the faith that there is in nature an urge or power other than man himself that makes for the kind of thing that man regards as good." It is "the belief in a power greater than ourselves that makes for good." Whether this belief is true or not is to Mr. Montague a matter of vast importance. He sees a momentous possibility at stake. For "It is a question not of the validity of this or that theory as to the nature of the physical world or as to the origin and destiny of the human race, but the question whether the things we are for most are at the mercy of the things we care for least."

2-8-31
Herald Tribune

Mr. Montague admits that we cannot be sure of anything. Religion, even when unbound of its dogmatic fetters, is "neither certainly and obviously true, nor certainly and obviously false, but possibly true." Upon this possibility, however, he stakes everything. He finds his faith shaken at the outset by the problem of evil, which he concedes must invalidate the affirmation of an omnipotent God. But he cannot get away from the coincident problem of good, which he insists must invalidate the negation of some kind of a God. "Nature makes altogether too many winning throws for us not to suspect that she is playing with dice that are loaded—with life and mind and purpose. So we are confronted with a God, or something very like a God." Coming to a final formulation of his faith, Mr. Montague declares that God exists as "an infinite, all-inclusive cosmic life, whose will to good is single, pure and finite, one force among many in that chaos of existence which God finds within Himself and which is the world He would perfect." The old God is like the old dead Zeus. This new God is like Prometheus, who, in the unforgettable language of H. G. Wells, "fights through men against Blind Force and Might and Non-Existence; who fights with men against the confusion and evil within us and without, and against death in every form; who loves us as a great captain loves his men, and stands ready to use us in his immortal adventure against waste, disorder, cruelty and vice."

Mr. Montague gives us a superb gesture of pragmatic, humanistic faith. But this book is more than a gesture. It is a construction, grounded on reason and buttressed by knowledge, of the new religion which is destined to meet the needs and justify the hopes of minds that are at once intelligent, informed and free.

2-19-31
Congregation and

Religion in a Changing World, by Abba Hillel Silver (Richard R. Smith, \$2.00). Rabbi Silver's prominence in American religious life in itself would give significance to this book, but it is to be commended above all for its intrinsic worth. The Religious Book of the Month Club has chosen it as the book of the month for January, but we predict that it may become the book of the year. In a series of related addresses Rabbi Silver comes to close grips with the problems of religion in a changing era, speaking with all the passionate earnestness of the great prophets of his race and with no small measure of their rhetorical beauty and strength of utterance. There are passages that fairly glow with spiritual vision, while others in their clearness and incisiveness reveal truth in something of its elemental beauty and cut through sham and pretense with keen effectiveness. We can think of few books that have appeared in recent years more calculated to hasten and deepen that revival of religion for which many have been looking—a revival that will not be an emotional revamping of old religious moods, but a re-manifestation of faith, with its bold and fearless application to the problems of an age of cynicism and despair. For Rabbi Silver, it should be said, sets himself squarely against the tendencies of the age. A liberal in the deepest and truest sense of the term, ignoring for the most part any distinction between Judaism and Christianity and discussing the Church and its problems as a vital part of that whole world of spiritual values in which he profoundly believes, he brings his plain challenge not only to materialism and atheism, but also to that humanism which he regards as an expression of the panic and confusion resulting from the loss of faith in the Eternal. On the whole, however, it can hardly be said to be a controversial book. It is positive and constructive, and destructive of weakness and falsity, not so much by attack as by its own dynamic contrast of strength and truth. Perhaps the Rabbi's most mordant example of

critical relentlessness is in the remark that "the sex realism of much of our literature today is, of course, not liberalism, but exhibitionism"—but that penetrative aphorism is hardly typical of the book as a whole, which is more patiently expository in its methods. To the preacher who has gone stale in his preaching, who has lost faith in himself, in his Church, or even in his Christ, we say, get this book by a Jewish Rabbi and read it. If it doesn't produce a quickening of faith, a revitalizing of religion, a new passion to preach, and teach, and lead, possibly also a new capacity to endure and suffer, we should say that the case is hopeless. We should advise the man unmoved by it to get out of the ministry. The average layman will be well advised to get this book, to read it himself, and pass on a copy to his minister.

Rabbi Silver views religion as a static rather than a changing force. Thoroughly liberal and enlightened in his ideas, he yet sees the world as a moving panorama, with religion standing unshaken as of old. He writes of science, social justice, world peace, the American home, the good life, and emphasizes in them all those eternal spiritual verities which change not with the changing years. Courageous yet conservative, Rabbi Silver gives us eloquent and fervent reminder that each latest fashion of thought and conduct marks not necessarily, nor even probably, the end of what the fathers knew.

The Prophetic Message of
Israel is Not Dead!

RELIGION IN A CHANGING WORLD

ABBA HILLEL SILVER

No book in our generation has attracted so much favorable attention from so many unusual sources. It bears the endorsement of over 100 Protestant leaders; it was the January Choice of the Religious Book Club and the February alternate choice of the Jewish Book Club! It has been accorded recognition in the secular press—through such mediums as The New York Times—altogether uncommon for a book on religion. Jews, Catholics and Protestants vie with each other in acclaiming its message for our day.

Some of the Comments

PROTESTANT:

"The finest thing in its field. He is a worthy successor to the Prophets of Israel". *Daniel A. Poling*. . . . "Few books have appeared in recent years more calculated to hasten and deepen the revival of religion for which all of us are looking". *Congregationalist*. "We have never read a book that expressed in a finer manner, with a clearer enunciation, with greater force and better philosophical understanding the problems with which religion is faced". *Christian Century*. . . . "It represents the best in both Judaism and Christianity". *Bishop William F. Anderson*. . . . "It is a great book . . . Dr. Silver knows how to write English that is full of music". *Bishop Edwin D. Mowson*. . . . "A wonderfully strong book". *Halford E. Luccock*. . . . "Out of 204 pages I have marked and turned down over 100 pages". *William L. Stidger*. . . . "A brilliant piece of work". *Charles R. Erdman*.

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CATHOLIC:

"I may say in sober truth and earnestness that I have never read a book of such superabounding worth in a long reading life of more than five and sixty years". *Archbishop Frederic E. J. Lloyd*.

SECULAR:

"Not in a long time has anyone come forward in such exalted and at the same time practical spirit to question the tendencies of the modern world and to offer for its healing with such absolute conviction the ideals and purposes of religion". It is with a challenging, assured and ringing voice, but still a persuasive one, that Rabbi Silver sends forth his message to a world in upheaval". *The New York Times*.

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SECULAR:

"Rabbi Silver speaks with the words of the sage rather than the thunders of the preacher. Satisfying reading in an age of distraction."—*Harry Hansen in the New York World*.

PROTESTANT:

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12 East 41st Street
New York

Christian Century - March 15, 1931

Federal Council Bulletin - March, 1931



Must the Church Become Socialistic?

Editor of UNITY:

It is with interest that I read in UNITY Mr. Nathan Essell's review of my book "Religion in a Changing World." Its interest for me lay not in its intemperate style, (a style to which theologians are fairly well accustomed) but in its relentless attitude toward the liberal in economics.

Mr. Essell's ultimatum is clear and absolute. The church must become socialistic or it will perish. This refrain is being taken up by not a few of the younger men in the ministry, some of them in complete sincerity, others because it is now the dashing thing to do. As long as parliamentary socialism was the ultimate expression of radicalism in American economic thought the progressive clergymen indulged in the cautious daring of being a Liberal. Now that Bolshevism is the ultimate and fearful fact, he may indulge in a moderate, petty, bourgeois socialism without seriously compromising himself. For the socialism of the Norman Thomas brand is now quite "safe," even for a clergyman. It is really too late in the day to call a clergyman who turns socialist, a prophet. . .

It is amusing to note that as soon as a liberal turns socialist he employs the same vehement and hysterical language in characterizing his erstwhile colleagues as the Bolshevik employs in characterizing the "right" and "centre" socialist.

Mr. Essell calls my liberalism and all liberalism "dull balderdash," and "romanticism." Lenin said of the "centre" socialists (Cheidse, Tseretelli, Kautsky, Haase, Morris Hillquit, etc.): "The centre Socialism is the heaven of petty bourgeois phrases, of lip internationalism, of cowardly opportunism, of compromise with the social-patriots. . . The members of the centre group are routine worshippers, eaten up by the gangrene of legality, corrupted by the parliamentary comedy, bureaucrats accustomed to nice sinecures and steady jobs." Lenin jeered at their "atrophied Marxism." He put Victor Berger in the category of the class-enemies of socialism. Mr. Essell calls my writing "flowing, fluid oratory." Lenin spoke of "the uncontrolled phrasemongery" of the Social-Revolutionists and the "babbling" of the left Mensheviks.

All of which prompts me to ask Mr. Essell one or two questions for the sake of clarity.

With what form of socialism should organized religion identify itself? With parliamentary socialism, whose exponents have been described by the real, "business-like" socialists of Russia, as "miserable masters of the phrase and poltroons in action" and who are charged with being not only ineffectual but the greatest obstacles in the way of socialism? Or with the socialism of the class-struggle, the proletarian revolution and dictatorship?

If the church is to cast in its lot with Marxian Socialism what becomes of the man who still believes in liberalism as a way of life and social progress? Is there no place for him in Mr. Essell's Kingdom? What of the man who believes with Mr. John Maynard Keynes:

"On the economic side I can not perceive that Russian Communism has made any contribution to our economic problems of intellectual interest or scientific value. I do not think that it contains or is likely to contain any piece of useful economic technique which we could not apply, if we chose, with equal or greater success in a society which retained all the marks, I will

not say of nineteenth-century individualistic capitalism, but of British bourgeois ideals. . .

"How can I accept a doctrine which sets up as its Bible, above and beyond criticism, an obsolete economic textbook which I know to be not only scientifically erroneous but without interest or application for the modern world."

Again, what of the man who though realizing that socialism is inevitable, still is not persuaded of all of its glamorous apocalyptic vaticinations, who suspects that life will have its tragic maladjustments and inequalities even then, and who wishes to keep religion free to function as critic rather than as apologist of a future socialist regime?

What of the man who believes that religion should keep itself "free from the shackles which in the past have tied it to the organism of the State" (page 91 of my "Religion in a Changing World"), to Nationalism (page 90) or to any given economic system (page 60) but should rather function as the eternal "opposition," the everlasting critic and censor of society (page 91) which at no stage in its development ever reaches the ideal?

ABBA HILLEL SILVER.

UNITY" Mar 28, 1931

remain an Anglo-Catholic." Much that is said is clearly and vigorously expressed, but is pertinent only to a question which does not interest Protestants, except in a mildly curious way, and does not interest Catholics at all.

M. G. KYLE.

RELIGION IN A CHANGING WORLD. By Abba Hillel Silver, Richard Smith, inc., New York, 1930. pp. 204. \$2.00.

One can hardly say too much for the brilliance of this book and it is as comprehensive as brilliant. Rabbi Silver is a great thinker who is able to draw in the very fringes of thought and illuminate them. Though a Hebrew and proud of the fact, he has set himself the difficult task of considering sympathetically not only and especially Christianity, but also the rather impossible task of so dealing impartially with all and every variety of cult that calls itself religion. He succeeds in his self-appointed task as well as any man can. Religion in its problem of meeting the tasks set by science, sociology, war and peace, and liberalism in politics, economics and religion is passed under the white light of his virile and brilliant rhetoric. With most of his views on these subjects the great majority of religionists will agree and, what is an equally good test, the irreligious and the Philistines will vigorously dissent. His honesty is refreshing. Himself a liberal in theology, he presents liberalism as in a blue funk; "Never was liberal theology in such a mortal funk as it is today. For it has finally come face to face with its real foe—the Apollyon of materialism, agnosticism and atheism." Perhaps he would have succeeded even better with the difficult task he set himself, if he took a higher view of religion. When he classes religion with music and architecture and science, all alike the creation of man, he surrenders his good broadsword in dealing with unbelief. Religion that is altogether of man, the creation of his own brain, is no better than man; it can do nothing for man; man does everything for it. True, he has recovered from the exorbitant claims of a pseudo-science everything but *objective revelation*, the one

BIBLIOTHECA SACRA APR 31

"Religion in a Changing World" is the title of a new book by the Rev. Dr. Abba H. Silver of Cleveland. The volume is made up of ten addresses dealing with religious themes. The style is charming, the diction poetic and the thoughts expressed are logical and philosophical. What we admire above all else is the fact that in the midst of such a busy ministry Rabbi Silver finds time to write and he does it so well! "To our changing world, then and to every changing world, religion offers the same basic thought-pattern—the reality of God, the reality of personality, the reality of truth, beauty and goodness," maintains the author. In discussing Science and Religion Rabbi Silver points out that the conflict has "always been between superstition disguised as religion and materialism disguised as science, between pseudo-science and pseudo-religion." "Religion in a Changing World" will be more than welcomed in the homes of liberal religionists, Jewish as well as Christian.

CANADIAN JEWISH REVIEW 2-18-31

THE first popular book from the pen of Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver of the Temple, Cleveland, is to be issued early in November by Richard R. Smith, Inc., 12 East Forty-first street, New York. The book comprises a series of related addresses on the central theme, "Religion in a Changing World."

Liberal's Opportunity

"Religion in a Changing World," by Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver (Richard R. Smith) wins this praise from Dean Willard C. Sperry, of the Harvard Theological Seminary: "It is the soundest statement of the dilemma of the liberal and the opportunity open to the liberal I have ever read."

"Men and Books," by Malcolm S. MacLean and Elizabeth K. Holmes (Richard R. Smith) of the University of Wisconsin, is a delightful anthology of what the great men of past and present literature have to say about their own field.

I notice that an organization of Jewish young people in Boston has arranged to debate on the subject of a Jewish University. This question of a Jewish University in this country is coming more and more to the front. When I suggested a few years ago a tendency in this direction the idea was pooh-poohed. But I have seen in my life-time other movements in Jewry pooh-poohed, but they arrived just the same. Whether we like to admit or not the Jewish student question in our universities is becoming more acute; this is especially true in the departments of law and medicine.

I have just read Rabbi Abba Silver's new book "Religion in a Changing World." If that book had come from the pen of a Dr. Henry Ford or a John Haynes Holmes it would be hailed as one of the illuminating and penetrating analyses of the religious thought of the day and it would probably rank among the leading "best sellers" in the non-fiction field.

But the "people of the book" do not rush so quickly to the book marts to procure their own leaders' opinions on the subject. Dr. Silver writes extraordinarily well, which is rather uncommon in one who speaks so eloquently.

One of his most striking phrases is "Religious thought has become bewildered pedestrian, irreverently jostled and knocked about in the rush of modern life."

He points out that the liberal religious forces, having disoriented themselves for decades in an attack upon orthodoxy, now find themselves confronted with the real foe of all religion, materialism and atheism. The result, he claims, is anic, confusion and humanism.

The word "brilliant" is pretty much over-worked, but it is the only one that should be used in describing this work of Dr. Silver.

Jewish organizations and study groups which spend all too much time with literature of doubtful value will profit greatly by reading and discussing Dr. Silver's views as presented in this most interesting volume.

Religion the Mother of All Progress

Far from Being the Opiate of the People, Every Science Is the Offspring of Religious Sentiment

From The Presbyterian Advance

A Review of "Religion in a Changing World," by Abba Hillel Silver, Published by Richard R. Smith, Inc., New York.



RUSSIA—not the people but the Government—is declaring to the world today that "religion is the opiate of the people." Soviet leaders are not alone in such a view. There are plenty of writers in our own land who seek to convince the public that religion was always and still is an obstacle to human progress.

The fundamental blunder of all such persons is that they observe superficially and utterly fail to distinguish between religion as a spiritual force and some organization or establishment—a church—in which religion becomes institutionalized. It must be admitted by every honest observer that frequently some organized church has assumed an attitude which temporarily blocked, or which sought to block, what from our wiser "hindsight" was evidently a forward movement.

But, on the other hand, the evidence all goes to show that every advance in welfare for the race had its origin in what can be fairly described only as religious sentiment—an unselfish longing for desire or purpose to further the good of man.

Mother of Art and Science

A recently published book goes much further. It sees religion as presenting "the ultimate social idealism of the race" and it is full of inspiring thought about the place of religion in this rapidly changing world. Indeed, it is one of the most stimulating and discriminating of recent publications and deserves the attention of all Christian leaders, particularly because it comes from the pen of a young Jewish rabbi. In support of the assertion made in the preceding paragraph, Rabbi Silver points out that "in religion all the arts and sciences originated and under its aegis they flourished for a very long time." He continued as follows:

The first architecture of mankind was religious architecture—the temple. The first poetry of mankind was religious poetry—the hymn. The first drama of mankind was religious drama—festival pageantry and ritual. The first science of mankind was religious science—magic, astrology and priestly therapeutics. All government was originally theocratic. The ruler was either himself the high priest or was ruled by the high priest. All law was religious law. All social custom was



religious custom. There was no separation between the sacred and the profane. Religion enervated the whole life of man as with an element.

Political Power Corrupts Religion

Of course, the preceding summary of how all that is worth while in our civilization grew out of the religious attitude is based upon the true concept of religion as a quest after God, which means the highest and the best. The author quoted is prompt to admit that "as religion was institutionalized it became extremely conservative, set in its ways and jealous of its prerogatives"—the prerogatives of an institution. There followed several great struggles because the church sought to quench new enlightenment. In each struggle, as Dr. Silver tersely summarizes the result, "the church lost but religion gained." It was not good for religion for the church to retain its political power, for "political power inevitably corrupts religion."

In like manner the free development of religion needs the free development of science and, again quoting Dr. Silver, religion was "tragically handicapped" while "tied to the dead body of antiquated scientific notions."

The Quest for God

When men thus make a clear distinction between religion as a spiritual force and the various outward forms and organizations through which this spiritual force expresses itself, they will be able to see more clearly how it may be truthfully asserted that religion is the mother of progress. Perhaps at first religion was nothing more than a vague "feeling after God"—and without any definite notion of what was meant by "God." It was at least an urge to attain to something morally and spiritually higher, a sincere and unselfish desire to win for mankind the highest and best.

Such an aspiration, purpose, or whatever we may call it lies at

the basis of all human progress. Where would mankind have been without it?

Futility of Force and Matter Alone

In spite of what some would have us accept as true, no thinking man can conclude that man's progress can be attributed to the physical matter and forces round about him.

This same material and these same forces were here many thousands of years ago when man was little more than a brute in the jungle. Indeed, all of the physical substances and forces which we of America make such use of today were just as abundant before the white man found the New World. And the Indian was here, too. Yet thousands of years passed and these two—the Indian and great material resources—accomplished together practically nothing toward the elevation of the human race.

It took something else, something in man—a spiritual something—to bring to pass the progress witnessed in America in a few hundred years.

The Religious Motive in Science

And what is it that gives Science its great chance today? How does it come to pass that, all over the world, in perfected laboratories which cost millions, men of ability are supported by other millions while, "free from worldly cares and avocations," they devote themselves to research?

It is because most men of today in civilized countries have an earnest desire to further human welfare and, traced to its origin, that strong desire, expressing itself in so many ways, will be found growing out of a religious motive.

The Origin of Philanthropy

Whence came all of the complicated modern social effort for the relief of the poor? It may be traced back to such a custom as that which prevailed in early Israel and which provided that the poor might gather the grain in the corners of the field. And that custom originated where?

In the "law of God"—the conviction that God would have men thus show mercy and the purpose to live in accord with the will of God. Yes, "pure religion and undefiled" may fairly be called the mother of progress.

RELIGION IN A CHANGING WORLD. By
ABBA HILLEL SILVER, D.D. Richard R.
Smith, Inc., New York. Price, \$2.

In his opening paragraph Rabbi Silver utters the keynote of his volume: "Much of our religious thinking in recent years has been characterized by nervousness and timidity. Never was liberal theology in such a mortal funk as it is today; for it has finally come face to face with its real foe—the Apollyon of materialism, agnosticism and atheism." And it is a real fight. But it is an old fight, and those who contend in behalf of vital religion need have no fear as to the outcome. The inroads that science is alleged to have made upon the forces of religion are apparent rather than real, and need not alarm anyone, although some timid saints are greatly disturbed thereat. We are reminded that "materialism is no more scientific than theism—and no less"; that "he who believes that the universe is a Personality, an intelligent Will expressing itself in infinite variety, need not feel that his belief is any less scientific than the belief of him who holds that the universe is a Thing, mere blind matter in senseless agitation, that life is only a chemical process, and thought only the fortuitous concourse and interplay of unthinking atoms." Of course this is always to be kept in mind by the modern religionist, that "inherent in his thinking are hypotheses which cannot be scientifically established"; and that he need not to "look to the scientist to verify his faith, for as soon as the scientist attempts to construct a metaphysical system on the basis of his scientific knowledge, he leaves the realm of strict science, and his credentials are no more imposing than those of the theologian." Religion has a distinct and necessary place in the scheme of human affairs and is not to be diverted from the fulfillment of its divine mission by any of the apparently hostile animadversions of science. It must "proclaim fearlessly its ancient burden of God"; it must "cherish and safeguard the vital and indispensable hopes of the race, expressed in creed and moral code"; it must "nurture the spirit of hopefulness among men"; for "religion is not a demulcent theosophy, an escape from reality, it is the indefeasible optimism of the race which sustains itself on the conviction that the universe, of which man is a part, is the dwelling place of life and not of death, of reason, not of insensibility, of goodness, not of evil." Let the religious man hold fast to his faith, take courage, buckle on his armor, and face the enemy with confidence, for he has these two convictions that will deliver him from utter despair—that "even within the framework of his circumscribed life he is privileged to achieve greatly and win a measure of happiness, and that beyond and about his finite life there is the everlasting life of God in whom all human aspirations find their surety and their consummation."

A book which calls for the utmost

RELIGION IN A CHANGING WORLD



respect and thoughtful reading is **Religion in a Changing World**, by Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver (Richard R. Smith, \$2.) The author, who is Rabbi of the Temple in Cleveland, Ohio, has written an earnest treatise on the trend of the times in the religious world, which Dr. Poling is reviewing at the end of this article. I will not go into detail but I do want to say that this is no book to be scanned hastily and laid aside. While I have gone over it once, I am looking forward to taking it up again when I can give more time and thought to its plea to conserve the spiritual heritage of the past.

RELIGION IN A CHANGING WORLD. By Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver, Richard R. Smith, N. Y. \$2.50.

Rabbi Silver points out that religious thought in our time is characterized by the utmost timidity and diffidence. The liberal religious forces, having disported themselves for a decade in an attack upon orthodoxy, now find themselves confronted with the real foe of all religion, liberal



Rabbi Silver Speaks For Religion

A Review by William H. Leach

Religion in a Changing World, by Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver (Richard R. Smith, \$2.00) interests me for two reasons. First I am interested in the evident ascendancy of the Hebraic mind which more and more is contacting our Christian thought. Here is a young Jewish Rabbi, with spiritual and social passion, who analyzes the present spiritual situation with amazing clearness. It is not a lone instance. Just a few months ago a volume from the pen of another young Rabbi was the best seller in our religious book stores. The second reason for my interest is the argument of the book, itself.

Those of us who live in Cleveland have learned to appreciate Rabbi Silver. He has made his temple a spiritual and intellectual center. He has become a civic figure. We know that when great moral or social principles are involved that Rabbi Silver will speak. And usually he speaks rightly. He is always on the side of humanity. While Christian ministers are debating among themselves whether or not it is good strategy to speak out in labor disputes, Rabbi Silver speaks, and the city listens.

In this brilliant volume he has given an exposition of the present situation in religion which will call for very

thinking person. Himself a liberal, he sees liberalism halting and limping. He points out that for some years liberalism has had the rather pleasant task of annoying the fundamentalist. But now he is placed on the defensive by atheism and behaviorism and he stumbles in the defense. An inferiority complex has been revealed in liberalism.

Rabbi Silver does not stumble in his statement of the case. He stands four square for the legitimacy of the spiritual appeal and the validity of religion. He insists that the battles of science and religion have been sham battles and have not touched the vital principles. "The conflict has always been superstitious as religion and materialism disguised as science, between pseudo-science and pseudo-religion."

He cautions deliberateness in the face of change. Religion, he feels, is to tread carefully as new experiments are undertaken by human kind. And throughout the continual change the function of religion is to stand firm for the unchangeable values. The chapters of this book deal not alone with the title address but also with social justice, world peace, the American home and the spiritual measure of life. We are glad to commend for your consideration this new book on religion by Rabbi Silver.

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APRIL 1931

Church Management

Christian Herald Apr. 1931

Feb. 1931

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Christian Advocate 2-19-31

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The Churchman

and orthodox alike — materialism and
atheism. The result is panic, confusion
and—humanism. Rabbi Silver is one of
the most brilliant and influential of the
liberal rabbis in this country. His book
gives a splendid summary of the social
message of liberal religion today. E. W. M.

"World Unity"
Mar. 1931.

HUMANIZED RELIGION

by

JOHN HERMAN RANDALL, JR.

Department of Philosophy, Columbia University

IN TWO recent books a scholar and a preacher look at religion, each from his own point of view, and try to sketch its function and its promise in our distracted world.¹ Neither proclaims himself a religious humanist, in any of the senses of that much-abused term; the scholar does not employ the word, and the preacher inveighs against those who would reduce religion to mere "sociology." Yet fundamentally both alike picture and counsel a humanized religion adjusted to the temper and needs of the present day, a religion that is man's devotion to the highest, the adventure of the human soul, the supreme human art. Religion is an age-long quest for that which is highest and therefore divine. Neither scholar nor preacher raises the philosophical question of the being of God. The former is content to allow men their human Gods; but religious fellowships will not cluster about metaphysical tenets, he insists, for religion is not a body of beliefs, but a psychic power and social instinct of man's nature. The latter does indeed proclaim "the ancient burden of God;" but he proclaims it because he feels that man must continue to hope in "the essential relatedness of his world of values to the world of universal existence," and four-fifths of his book is concerned with values basically human and social, to whose discussion God is apparently irrelevant.

Nothing could more clearly illustrate, if that be still necessary today, the essential humanization of the religious life effected by those who have embarked anew upon the process of adjusting themselves to modern thought and modern social

¹Nathaniel Schmidt, *The Coming Religion*. Macmillan. 262 pp. \$2.25. Abba Hillel Silver, *Religion in a Changing World*. Richard R. Smith. 204 pp. \$2.

experience. Here is nothing supernatural, nothing otherworldly, no separate realm of spiritual values to which man must attain. Instead, the concern of this religion is with the "redress of ancient wrongs, the removal of long-entrenched evils, the abolition of harmful institutions, and the reform of intolerable conditions," manifesting themselves in the spread among men of justice, mercy, and peace. It is measured by the growth of mind and soul in the discovery of beauty, the reverence for truth, the love of man, the sympathy for human sorrow and joy, the casting off of fear, in inspiration and courage and social idealism. Whatever remnants of traditional symbol such religion may retain, in tolerance of the ingrained habits of the average man, its heart obviously lies with these human values, not with the groping spirit in quest of the Eternal. For it is in these values, this sweet, sad music of humanity, that multitudes of sensitive men now discern the highest, not in the Ancient of Days, nor yet in his attenuated metaphysical ghost.

Any candid observer of liberal Protestantism or Judaism today must admit this increasing humanization of the religious life. This cardinal fact far overshadows the minor question raised by the professed "Humanists," whether the term "God" shall be retained innocuously, and perhaps reinterpreted, or be banished entirely from the religious vocabulary. Such a latter course has perhaps much to be said for it in the interest of intellectual clarity, provided the forbidden term does not take with it the genuine human values for which it has stood. But intellectual clarity, if again we may take these books as illustrative, is not highly regarded in the life of liberal religion, which places an art, a quest, a devotion, an adventure, far above a searching philosophy. Liberal religious leaders will doubtless continue in the main to employ God as an element in the techniques of worship and devotion, and of evoking ecclesiastical loyalty. But in formulating and seeking to realize the Highest Good, they will increasingly find, as these two writers do, that the concept of God hovers as a homeless ghost from the past far above their genuine religious concerns. Any closer determina-

tion of this metaphysical element they will leave to the physicists, at present so eager to find God lurking behind every equation. It is surely too much to expect that men will ever rest content to leave metaphysical truth in the hands of metaphysicians.

Nathaniel Schmidt is Professor of Semitic Languages and Oriental History in Cornell University, but he has taken all humane learning as his province, and has mastered in particular all that pertains to what he terms "theology," the science that aims at the accurate description of the phenomena of man's religious life. His aim in *The Coming Religion*, as befits his scientific interest, is to analyse what religion has been in the past as a basis for forecasting "the more distinct probabilities" in the future. His is not the fiery voice of the prophet, proclaiming what is needful, but the calm and measured conclusion of the scholar reporting in lucid and simple language what has been found out about religion as a great human enterprise. On the many points which still vex the learned, he offers his own position, generally balanced and moderate. The reader will find in his volume an excellent account of the general course of religious development, down to the "fall of Pan" and the emergence of Christianity, and chapters on the relations between religion and science, art, morality, and the state. Throughout his discussion of ancient faiths he has continually endeavored to see in the shifting currents of what to us is magic and myth the matrix of man's spiritual development.

What is religion? "It cannot be monotheism, for some religions are polytheistic. It cannot be theism, for some religions are atheistic. Not only are there primitive religions that have not yet developed a god-conception, but there are advanced religions that have abandoned it. Buddhism and Jainism do not admit the existence of a deity; and of the six leading systems of religious thought in classical Brahmanism only two, Yoga and Vedanta, consistently proclaim a belief in a godhead, while four reject it. Religion expresses itself sometimes in polytheism, sometimes in monotheism, sometimes in pantheism, sometimes in atheism. It may exist without any definite belief concerning

the nature of ultimate reality. Belief in the immortality of the soul, or even in the existence of a soul, cannot be the *sine quâ non* of religion.

The gods, even the One God, have, in fact, had a history. They have been born, at a late date, after earlier stages of "animatism" or *mana* religion, and animism, and they have suffered euthanasia at the hands of theologians and philosophers. "Whether the name is preserved or not, the new conceptions to which searching inquiry has led have little in common with the idea of a god. No personal relations are possible with 'the infinite,' 'the absolute,' 'the élan vital,' 'the ultimate reality;' and sacrifices, ceremonies, prayer, and intercession cease to have any urgency or meaning. Yet in modern thought, when the idea of a limited, created world gives place to that of an infinite, uncreated universe, and the idea of an individual god yields to that of a cosmic order, implying a spiritual ideal, the gradual unfolding in man's experience of its nature and demands may still be called a revelation."

The definition which Professor Schmidt finds satisfactory is, "Religion is devotion to the highest." Devotion implies an intense direction of thought, will, and feeling, an emotional experience, an active desire, a will to live in a particular way, a mode of behavior, a special trend given to thought. "It is the direction of the mind toward what is conceived as the highest truth, of the will toward the highest duty, and of the heart toward the highest beauty, the most complete harmony and satisfaction. It is the elative faculty, the force that drives man upward, the tendency that impels him, not only toward the better, but toward the best." It is an individual experience, but it is also a product of social life; it is that social factor which reveals itself in devotion to the highest.

Religious history has been the deepening of insight into the nature of the highest. Each stage has added something to man's heritage of ideals. "The religious effect of the tabus derived from the totemic principle has been very great. They have paved the way for the conception of the inviolability of man's life and

the sacredness attached to his sexual relations. The significant thing about manaism in all its expressions is that it raised man above himself and directed his thought, will, and feeling toward what to him was a realm of the highest realities. Germinating in various forms of the primitive mana-conception, the belief in a soul and its existence after death, in spirits and gods, has blossomed forth and borne fruit for the nurture and healing of man's nature. Whatever its aberrations, it has enriched and refined his sentiments, forced his mind to face the problems of existence, and supplied his will with motives for deeds of valor, endurance, and unselfish devotion. A magic act looked upon as effective *ex opere operato* may assist the growth of devotion to what is conceived to be highest. Mysticism is an expression of such devotion, though its value no doubt lies, not in anything actually gained beyond the bounds of rationality in a pathological state, but in the stimulus it may afford to intellectual exertion, moral purification and exaltation of the feelings. Allegory permits a great latitude of freedom, independence of thought, moral discernment, and spiritual insight. On the other hand, a conscious break with the past may be the result of what is sincerely regarded as revelation. Vicarious suffering exists and may produce rich spiritual results. The prophet's death as well as his life may exercise a profound moral influence. Dissent, like assent, is essential to the permanence and growth of religion."

Professor Schmidt's discussion of the relation between religion and the other human enterprises summarizes the position of liberal thought without transcending it. There can be no conflict between science and religion, nor between science and theology, for the latter is now nothing but the general study of religion as a human phenomenon. Science has both illuminated the highest and devised techniques for achieving some measure of good. It has clarified the nature of religion, destroyed dogmatism, and engendered a new feeling of solidarity with the past and the future, and with other peoples. "These effects accentuate the essential harmony between science and religion. Both are concerned with knowledge. But science seeks it in

every field, for its own sake, without regard to its applications or effects, and by purely intellectual processes. Religion seeks it in the realm of what is felt, desired, and conceived of as the highest, for the purpose of acquaintance with an adequate object of devotion and service and the establishment of a satisfactory relation; and its processes are not only intellectual, but also conative and emotional. Under the influence of science men of strongly religious nature have become more modest and more truly reverent."

Art and religion owe much to each other. Religion must be independent of the state, yet there is nothing with which the state can be more deeply concerned. Morality and religion are distinct in origin and function, the one concerned with relations between men, the other with relations between men and the object of their devotion. Yet they purify and exalt each other. Ethics is a science which seeks to generalize principles of conduct. "It is in the nature of science that no such generalization, no such reasoned standard by which customs and ideas relative to conduct may be judged, can have the attribute of finality, but is always subject to improvement and restatement, as the data of the moral consciousness become more perfectly apprehended." Mere knowledge of varying mores can furnish no norm for conduct. An evolving nature brings forth a fuller but not necessarily a better life. Hedonism confuses the desired with that worthy to be desired. G. E. Moore and Felix Adler are coupled as outstanding ethical scientists, and the spiritual ideal of the latter is judged not necessarily bound up with his philosophic idealism. Yet "only in proportion as morality has been informed by the religious spirit, its utter devotion to the highest, has it attained its widest reach and deepest intensity. Morality must become religious, as religion must become ethical, if each is to perform its supreme function."

All this is the record of a prevalent state of mind; Professor Schmidt lays no claim to prophetic insight. It is the body of opinions current among religious liberals; whether so labeled or not, it is an expression of a widespread humanistic religious

temper. It is open-minded, intelligent, generous, and humane. But it is informed with no philosophic facing of ultimate issues. It has no well-considered conception of the nature and function of science in human life, nor of the rôle of life in the universe. It does not touch upon the deeper problems of ethics. Nor has it clarity as to the nature of that highest to which religion is devoted. There is surprisingly small concern with any standards within religion; rather the emphasis lies on the value of all forms of religious life. What Professor Schmidt has omitted is precisely what present-day liberal religious thought in its humanistic temper leaves out; and the thoughtful reader will lay down his book with the same perplexities and doubts, the same desire for further clarification, with which those fragmentary and oft reiterated assertions leave him.

In predicting future probabilities, Professor Schmidt can afford to be the mere observer. Present organizations will continue, with diminishing proportions of adherents. Efforts at unification will be made, and may succeed within Protestantism. Cooperation for moral ends will be compatible with the multiplication of sects. Fresh inspiration may come from a return to the personalities of religious founders. Religious leadership will be humanized; men will not look for perfection in their prophets. A violent break with the past, provoked by some moral crisis—another war, perhaps—is a possibility. Secular religions of genuine consecration will win wider allegiance. Yet it may be doubted whether such quests can adequately meet the spiritual needs of those who have broken with tradition. There are signs of a great revival of religion. This coming religion will be scientific, undogmatic, esthetic, and ethical, and will express itself in new types of religious fellowship, on the basis of great social crusades. The spiritual impulse will be wholly humanized. It will establish a republic of fellow workers, not a kingdom of God. One wonders.

The book of Rabbi Silver reflects the same humanistic temper, with less of apparent learning and more passionate devotion to the moral and social needs of our changing world.

Dr. Silver enjoys a high reputation, far beyond the limits of his own people, as a scholar, philosopher, and preacher. It is not unfair to say that this volume affords an adequate measure of his ability only in the last rôle. Much may be forgiven a volume of sermons—indeed, much has to be. Here Dr. Silver preaches upon social justice, upon preventive social work, on world peace, on social and political liberalism, on the American home, on education, on how to measure life. Sermons upon such themes must appeal to familiar and accepted principles. They can hardly be novel explorations of difficult problems. They cannot afford to wound their hearers by descending to particular cases. They may denounce the acquiescence of the churches in wartime, and call for education in the will to peace, and machinery to effect it, but they must naturally reject pacificism. They can call upon religion to look with benevolence on all programs of social amelioration, kindle a crusading zeal for a kingdom of this world, and maintain the eternal principles of human rights; but naturally they cannot align the church with any one specific economic system, nor tempt it to fritter itself away by injecting itself into every minor economic wrangle of little social significance. They can proclaim like a trumpet the need for social reconstruction; but they must remember the tragic situation of the liberal preacher, so well expressed by Dr. Silver: "It is not so difficult after all to be a voice crying in the wilderness. It is far more difficult to be a voice—clear and courageous—crying for justice amid the pomp and splendor and costliness of a Temple or a Cathedral, which is built and supported by those who must often become the very target of the voice's invective."

Within the limits imposed by the public ministry of the preacher, Dr. Silver has said much that is fine, courageous, and effective. His hearers must have thrilled, and his readers may well rejoice, to find so well ordered and so lucidly expressed the tenets of liberal doctrine. Dr. Silver's appeal is not limited to the Jews, nor to Theists; it is broad enough to include all men touched by the fire of secular social idealism. Indeed, eight out of the ten sermons included would rank very high in any humanist anthol-

ogy. He proposes a ringing creed of faith in Man on which liberals of all religious belief or none might easily unite. Here is socially-minded humanism at its best.

Dr. Silver is most courageous in opposing current moral tendencies. For in ethics he is a convinced traditionalist. "Little that is really new can be added to the basic inventory of religion and morality. We may discover a better technique for the realization of these maximum ideals, but we have nothing and can have nothing to add to their quintessential truth. Progress in this field consists not in discovery but in fulfillment. There can be no new Ten Commandments for no new Ten Commandments are necessary. They remain forever the digits of civilization. Religion refuses to be impressed by the heathen ragings of our day. Its wisdom is the cumulative wisdom of the ages. Its moral theses have been tested by time and are grounded in the millennial experiences of the race. In a world of shifting standards, religion proclaims today, as of yore, its few simple, strong, unalterable convictions touching the basic sanctities of human life." With the courage of the Pope, therefore, Dr. Silver opposes the neopaganism of modern marriage, which is "simply the muddy backwash of the saturnalia of war." Indeed, his courage is far greater, for the Pope has a tremendous organization behind him, while Dr. Silver has only a Hebraic tradition from which he has already removed so much that it takes true strength to save the remnant. Fortunately, as he reminds us, "The millions of American homes are still sound."

Indeed, this he perceives to be the true problem of the religious liberal. To attack orthodoxy was easy, with science as an ally. But to face the real foe today—materialism, agnosticism, and atheism—without that ally, and without supernatural bulwarks, is far harder. The liberal has no other-worldly heaven to offer. "Religion finds itself a slow pedestrian irreverently jostled and knocked about and bewildered." His only recourse is to cease walking and climb upon the rock of faith. Science has discovered nothing new since Democritus to shake the foundations of religion. Materialism is no more scientific

than theism—and no less. The religionist will therefore not look to the scientist to verify his faith. "God's universe is perfect and our destiny is part of His perfection—even our tears and all our broken hopes." Religion must therefore resist change; it is concerned with what is timeless in human experience. It cannot turn itself into a sociology.

The reader may be puzzled at this vigorous reaffirmation of the eternal God, when he remembers that the concept finds no place in the socialized and humanistic religion which fills four-fifths of the book. His bewilderment disappears when he finds that God himself has been humanized in Dr. Silver's hands. God means that "materialism" is rejected, that men can find hope in their social programs, that human life is not worthless, that man's world of values is related to the world of universal existence. In other words, God means that the nightmare of the Alien Universe that haunted late Nineteenth Century thought is perverse. Such a God can well fit into the humanist religion Dr. Silver preaches; for modern naturalistic and anti-theistic philosophy maintains all these theses, which are indeed the postulates of humanistic thought. But philosophic clarity is perforce excluded by the very function of liberal preaching. There are, however, as Dr. Silver well points out, "men who take ideas very seriously and who react to them more sharply than to external forces. There are men whose peace of mind depends upon the finding of a satisfying philosophy of life." But there are not enough of them to fill liberal churches.

Such men, however, can well admire the nobility and clarity of Dr. Silver's address on the One and the Many. This appeal for World Unity in Difference is moving and profound. "Clearly the task is not to superimpose an artificial uniformity upon all peoples, races, and creeds. Its aim should not be to force all people into one common mold, so that they will all emerge looking and acting and thinking alike. The task of civilization is not to constrict all groups into a Procrustean bed of uniformity, but to discover their common human needs, and to organize them into voluntary cooperative efforts to meet

these needs. Civilization should cherish the inviolability of personality in individuals and groups and should not desecrate it by some enforced and unnatural amalgamation. One religion for the whole of mankind is neither necessary nor desirable. ~~There is but one text~~ but each religion has its own commentary. In place of one religion for all mankind, civilization should foster one reverence for all religions, for all religions have a providential mission to perform in the world. There is no true religion and there is no false religion. For religion is not a science but an art—the supreme art of mankind. To ask of the Jew to surrender his unique religious dogma for the sake of a universally acceptable compilation of theologic abstractions would be to rob him of that which is the most precious and magnificent quality of his faith. Religion is failing to play its proper rôle in society today not because there are too many religions in the world but because there is too little religion in any of them. There are people who would like to acquire goodwill through assimilation. They know that intolerance, in the last analysis, is due to the existence of differences—religious differences, racial differences, cultural differences. They would therefore do away with intolerance by obliterating these differences. But that is paying too high a price! The thing gained is worth less than the thing surrendered. It is when a believing Jew, who is profoundly moved by his faith, and a believing Christian, who is profoundly moved by his, discover a common basis for goodwill, that a significant event is consummated." On such a basis of mutual reverence and common endeavor theistic and atheistic humanist can work shoulder to shoulder. But should both be brought to face the Living God—a genuinely spiritual vision of life—the task were not so easy!