

United Hebrew Schools.

The Chairman and Parents' Committee in connection with the Committee of the United Hebrew Schools, were "At Home" to parents of pupils attending all branches of the above schools at the United Torah Hall on Sunday night.

Mr. J. Gitlin was in the chair. He welcomed all present but expressed regret that parents did not show more interest in the work of the schools. The progress in all branches was amazing and he read extracts from the recent report of the examiner referring to the excellent work done in all subjects at the Morning School. It was surprising to find of this, that parents should still have to be persuaded to send their children to the school. Rabbi M. Morgenstern, Chairman of the Parents' Committee, referred to the excellent work done and paid a tribute to the Principal and staff for their devoted services. It was a colossal task to imbue children with a love and understanding of Jewish tradition and learning. He appealed to parents to do their utmost to keep the light of Judaism burning.

Mr. A. Birnbaum said that the very essence of the war waged by the Maccabees against the Greeks was that it was a war to defend the Torah, spiritual heritage of the Jewish people. From that time up till the 19th century there was only a Jew who could not read and write Hebrew. It was something to be proud of. To-day there is a lack of knowledge of matters Jewish all over the world. All who took an interest in Jewish affairs should endeavour to improve this situation.

He believed the bulk of the Jewish people would like to see their children grow up with an active interest in Jewish matters. Yet they did not want to burden their children with Hebrew. A knowledge of Judaism must be acquired in the normal course of education. It was important that from the child started his secular education he should start Hebrew as well. He appealed to the parents to help the teachers by showing the children they took an interest in the subjects taught in the Hebrew school. In the morning school Hebrew was on the same level as other subjects. The custom of ending Hebrew education with the Mitzvah must be done away with. The best reason against anti-Semitism was the study of the Torah—the child must know what Judaism is and learn to be proud of his heritage.

Mr. Z. Avin, the Principal of the United Hebrew School, said he was optimistic about the schools generally and proud of the Morning School. The situation was not far off when the classrooms would be full and parents would beg for their children to be admitted. The children loved the school and their studies. He thanked the teachers, who were devoted to their work. Several of the children named in the school had become teachers. A few were soon leaving for Palestine to continue their studies. He wished them every success.

Mr. Gitlin associated himself with the words of well to the teachers going to Palestine. He thanked the speakers, Mr. Avin, Mr. Abitz, and other members of the staff.

During the evening Miss Ruth Rome rendered fortunate solos and Mr. B. Rome songs, which were very much appreciated.

(Continued from Third Column).

Almighty Himself—may the blasphemy be forgiven them—is considered by not a few as their venerable property!

If we are to save our victory, our generation the future of mankind, we must, like the Maccabees, cleanse our temple and hallow it in the name of the God of universal love. We must purge the world of its cancerous egotism. Our spiritual purview must be enlarged to embrace all men. Even as the good citizen is necessarily a spirited, a good neighbour, so must the patriot become a lover of all humanity, the friend of all peoples. The test of true patriotism is not: Is my people getting from others all it can give? but: Is my people contributing to the weal of humanity all it can give? A world created by such a spirit need never fear the atomic bomb: It would never be thrown! A world created by such ideals would for ever banish the spectre of war and oppression, fear and want. The old Maccabean heroes resolved on two things: 'to live or die nobly.' Let the memory of these brave souls, who in our day 'died nobly,' inspire us to 'live nobly.' So shall their sacrifice be in vain; so shall future generations never be called upon to make such sacrifices. Let the Menorah Lights shine on, brightly, universally, and the entire world be irradiated with the Light of God."

Chanukah Military Service.

SERMON BROADCAST BY PROF. RABBI I. ABRAHAMS.

The following sermon was broadcast by Prof. Rabbi I. Abrahams, Chief Rabbi of the Cape Town Hebrew Congregation, from the Great Synagogue, Cape Town, at the special Chanukah Military Service held on Sunday, 2nd December, 1945.

"This is the first Chanukah to be celebrated since V-Day. This week the Menorah Lights—those ancient beacons of the Jewish spirit—will be shining once again in every part of the world, wherever the descendants of the Maccabees may dwell. They will be kindled even in Germany, even in the remaining concentration camps. Perhaps their gracious radiance will help to bring the Light of God to some of the darkened Nazi hearts, too!

"It is well that our Menorah should shine brightly and universally, particularly at the present juncture of world history. For Chanukah is essentially a V-Day celebration; these little flames are, in the truest sense, Lights of Victory. Throughout the year of war and tribulation they inspired faith in millions of hearts that the day of salvation would come. In the words of our benediction: 'Bayyamin Hahem Bazzeman Hazzeh.' We believed that just as miracles of redemption were wrought in days of old, so they would again be vouchsafed by the God of Righteousness to save the suffering downtrodden peoples of the world. Inspired by this undying Maccabean faith, some ten thousand Jewish Springboks fought valiantly against the modern German Antiochus, and helped to discomfort his evil, tyrannousordes. Inspired by the same ancestral faith, hundreds of thousands of their co-religionists throughout the world (totalling a million, probably, in all) gave equally heroic account of themselves on every battle front. And it is surely not without significance that the great British war-time leader, Churchill, exhorted his martyred people in the hour of crisis to manifest 'the Maccabean spirit.'

"This faith, it must be stressed, was no blind, unreasoning belief. It had been tested numberless times in the crucible of Jewish and world suffering, and had never been found wanting. Repeatedly history had proved that there were values in life that could not be destroyed, or long suppressed. They were spiritual ideals, and not all the forces of darkness and tyranny could ever uproot them. They were immortal and invariably triumphed in the end, because they were God-given. It was these ideals which gave man his imperishable soul, yea, made him a creature fashioned in the Image Divine.

"Our generation can bear fresh testimony to this abiding verity. Like our ancestors, we have every reason to proclaim: 'Hannérot Halalu Kodesh.' These lights of Chanukah are holy: they are radiant with heavenly truth. The Divine trust they inculcated for over two thousand years has again been vindicated. Our own eyes, as it were, have witnessed the wondrous saving acts of the Lord. In the days of the Maccabees, it was Beth Horon, Emmaus Bethsura; in our day, it was—let us say—Dunkirk, Stalingrad, the Air Battle for Britain. Separated by two millenia, we fought for similar ideals. Living in totally different ages and circumstances, we were saved by the same God—the God of the Hasmoneans, the God of the Bible.

PERTURBING QUESTION.

"But, my friends, at this moment when we celebrate the triumph of yore and rejoice over the victory of to-day, a perturbing chilling question inevitably presents itself. How stands it with our victory? Have we won peace as well as victory? To our infinite sorrow it must be confessed that wherever we turn we see signs of retrogression. We seem to be losing ground; our achievements are slipping away from us. Allied unity has given way to ever-widening divisions and growing disensions. Confidence has turned into distrust, comradeship into hostility. The entire international scene shows signs of disintegration; while on the national level, there is hardly a people in the world without internal troubles and upheavals. Where will it all end? What is the root cause?"

"If we are to diagnose the world situation, fraught as it is with all the terrifying possibilities of a third world war, which must surely prove fatal to civilisation, if not to the human species itself, we must go back to first principles. We must rid ourselves of the confusion of party cries. We must have the courage to face up to the hard and painful truth with all its implications and obligations.

"Like the Hasmoneans, we did not fight men, but their ideas. Our quarrel was not with the

Germans, Italians or Japanese as such, but with Nazism and Fascism. We defeated the men; unfortunately their pernicious ideas live on. We fought an ideological war, but we did not proceed to build the peace on the ideals for which, ostensibly, the world was almost bled white. The cessation of hostilities brought not so much a relaxation of international tension as of principles. That, in a nutshell, is the tragedy of the post-war world.

"During the six agonising years of struggle, we knew that we were fighting the Herrenvolk heresy. Any intelligent school child could have told us that. Yet to-day we find that vicious racial doctrine all around us. Here a racial group claims to be superior to every other branch of God's children; there an economic class clings avidly to its vested interests and grinds the face of the poor.

JUSTICE.

"We fought for freedom. By freedom we did not mean freedom for the strong, the rich or the influential to do as they please. We meant justice for the underdog, the defenceless, the submerged classes, the little peoples, the unprotected minorities. But the old pre-war pattern of life remains largely unchanged. The weak, be they nations, communities or individuals, are thrust to the wall. Because Might remains the great arbiter in human affairs, Fear stalks in all the habitations of men. 'Shall I be strong enough, in the time of danger, to fight and beat my neighbour?' is the great question exercising the minds of all nations. A new scientific discovery has heightened this widespread sense of fear. The atomic bomb has introduced a fresh, all-pervading anxiety into the world. Overnight, so to speak, it changed the character of war and the shape of the future of international relations. It shattered Japanese resistance almost instantaneously; but at the same time it undermined San Francisco and the burgeoning hope of the brotherhood of man. Feverishly scientists are seeking an answer to atomic fission—a defence against it. But the hope of finding physical protection from its cataclysmic powers of destruction is dwindling. Man has become the slave of his own science: he and the glory of his civilisation are at the mercy of an infernal machine of his own invention.

"This is a brief diagnostic sketch of the present world position. It is a mere outline; it is full of lacunae. But it is not the details that are all-important. What matters is that we understand the nature of the malady and seek to discover a remedy. How can we help the world to secure peace? How can we save man from himself before it is too late? Those are the vital questions confronting us to-day.

"If fundamentally the diagnosis is correct, the remedy follows inevitably from it. We won a 'Maccabean Victory'; we must also have a 'Maccabean Peace.' You will recall that the little band of Hasmonean victors were not content with the military defeat of the enemy; they were not satisfied merely to proclaim a public holiday and celebrate V-Day. They proceeded humbly to their desecrated Temple. They repaired the ruins, rebuilt the altar, ejected the idols, and rekindled with pure oil the Lamp of God. 'Chanukah' means Dedication: the Maccabees dedicated their Sanctuary anew to the God of their saving ideals.

VICTORY INCOMPLETE.

"That, my friends, is the great duty we have thus far failed to fulfil. We have not yet rededicated our temple to God. Our victory is incomplete; it did not have its true sequel; consequently our peace is in jeopardy. And let it be clear to us that God's sanctuary is, au fond, not a material one: it is not made of brick and stone and mortar. Either God indwells our spirit, or we know not His Presence at all. The true fane of worship is our heart; the ultimate shrine is our soul. It is the human spirit that needs to be purified and reconsecrated to-day to its Heavenly Maker. We are full of idolatrous defilement. And the supreme idol—the abomination of desolation, as the Maccabees would have called it—is the ungodly self-worship in which we almost all indulge: the attitude that my class, my race, my nation, my culture, my sanctuary, is better than any other. Patriotism is inherently a virtue—it is family love wrote large—but we have vitiated it, paganised it, poisoned it with the Herrenvolk venom. We do not think of mankind as one big human brotherhood, all children of the one God, but we divide the world into superiors and inferiors, masters and servants. Even teachers of religion, one is pained to admit, have helped to foster this unbrotly conception. The earth, some would have us believe, is no longer the Lord's, but the perquisite of the chosen few: almost

(Continued in First Column).