

ABRAHAM'S CALL, AND WISDOM'S CALL

"And it came to pass after these things, that God tempted Abraham, and spake unto him, saying, 'Abraham,' and Abraham said '*Heenennee*,' (Here am I.)—And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife,—And 'the Angel of the Lord called unto him out of the Heaven, saying: 'Abraham, Abraham!' And Abraham said '*Heenennee*' (Here am I).

In the August number of "Distribution," edited in the interest of the Industrial Removal Office, our much beloved President, Mr. David M. Bressler, with his characteristic foresight, with his sound reason and broad mindedness has this to say, under the caption, "The fate of the Jews." Without pretending to forecast the future, it seems to us that history will repeat itself and that the immigration of Russian Jewry, (kindly add, "and Galician Jewry") to this country will remain for some time to come, their only source of economic and spiritual freedom. Time and again we urged. (It sounds very much like "Abraham, Abraham!") And up to this writing the march of events has not indicated any reason for minimizing our call, etc., etc."

That this call, coming as it does from the "Angel of the Lord," even if it is not from heaven, is a just call, a timely call, a humane and Jewish call, none of us can or dares to deny. It is, what I would call: "The call of Wisdom: 'Prepare for war in times of peace!'"

In this enlightened Twentieth Century we do not believe in the literal interpretation of the call of Abraham. With our understanding of a God-Head, we would consider it nothing short of blasphemy to ascribe to a just God the act of tempting his beloved son. To put a stumbling block, as it were, in anyone of his beloved children's path and the only way to reconcile the above quoted passage with our own reason, is to understand what we mean by God. And the best definition of that word is that it stands for that still small voice within our own hearts, which we, all of us, so often hear calling to us "Abraham, Abraham!"

These are the times in which every true Jewish heart bleeds for the misfortune that has befallen their brothers and sisters in

Europe and elsewhere. For how can we clog our ears to the bitter cry of the widow and orphan? Of the sick and destitute? Of the crippled and maimed? How can we shut our eyes, if there is truth in the reports which reach us from the warring countries, to the picture of murder, carnage, rape and rapine perpetrated upon our brethren, without feeling a sense of horror and indignation mingled with contempt?

Abraham answered the call, with "*Heenennee*," (Here am I) the children of Abraham, from time immemorial, were the first and the last to rush to the rescue of their persecuted brethren the world over. And, now, knowing "that history will repeat itself;" knowing that, while formerly we had to deal with the individual immigrant, our problem was but to establish him in some line of endeavor and he will, invariably, make this country his, and his family's home. He would, in a short time send for them and, by sending his children to the American schools, would raise worthy sons and daughters; after this war our problems will be whole families. If there is to be an immigration, common sense will teach us that the whole family will come together. And this Twentieth Century Exodus will be the largest and worst ever recorded. Will we withhold our proverbial "*Heenennee*?"

Solace yourself, my dear Mr. Bressler! It is true you had to call "time and again," but did not "The Angel of God from Heaven call Abraham, Abraham," before the answer came "*Heenennee*." I have all the faith in our Jewish workers. Their, as well as mine, hearts go out to our coreligionists, and as soon as the call will come from that still small voice, from their own hearts, if it has not come up to now, they will, each one of them, answer: "Here am I." We will not suffer the "call of wisdom" to go unheeded, and we will all stand "by the colors, as true sons of Abraham."

George Ellman.

Mr. Blank Resigns

Mr. David Blank, by reason of going into business, has resigned his position as superintendent of the Society of the United Hebrew Charities of Philadelphia.

INTERESTING BUT STARTLING

Edward Hochhauser

New York

Dr. Fisberg's paper is as intensely interesting as it is startling. He is an indefatigable reader and student, not content to complacently accept the beliefs of others, who enjoys jolting and challenging the drifting selfapplauding conservatives. When we analyze his paper carefully we find much that is suggestive, it seems to cloud, but really clears our views. There are many among us who feel that when the medical profession disagrees we must take the middle course, and steer safe. The lives and destinies of many individuals are in our hands. We are looked to for guidance and advice, and if we err at all it must be on the side of too great precaution. I take for granted that we have kept in touch with the progress in the tuberculosis field, and have long passed beyond the "don't spit" stage of the tuberculosis campaign.

"I wish I knew as much about tuberculosis today as I knew about it ten years ago when I was new in the work," was the attitude of one of the oldest workers in the tuberculosis field. In the beginning we were carried away by our enthusiasm, and many a slogan such as "No Tuberculosis in 1915, or 1920" was accepted. Now we realize that tuberculosis can not be treated or prevented by laboratory methods. Its control is as complex as modern civilization.

The air borne theory of germ infection has been pretty well exploded not only in tuberculosis but in all infections and communicable diseases. The new contagious disease hospitals have demonstrated that it is personal contact with neglect and filthy habits that are the chief avenues of infection. Just as they have demonstrated that it was the nurse who spread the disease in the New York Infant Asylum, which Dr. Fishberg cites. Of ten infants in one ward three reacted positive to the tuberculin test. A new attendant was placed in this ward for six weeks, after which time another *Von Pirquet* was made, and all ten reacted positive. This attendant was found to be tuberculous with a positive sputum. Here again through personal contact the disease was spread, for we read that all these children had stomatitis, and the nurse was entrusted with the care of their mouths.

The danger of infection is greatly exaggerated, although the ignorant are still careless and through neglect of personal hygiene spread the disease. As Dr. Fishberg points out there has been a "reaction" he calls it—stocktaking would be more correct. We found that tuberculosis was so easily cured that it was cured three and four times in the same individual. In other words we are just waking up to the waste of sanatorium treatment. Half of our patients discharged as improved or arrested relapse or die in two years after discharge. At the time when the patient needs most care, when he must readjust himself to economic life, we drop him.

Many charge the crusaders with combining with the ignorant and selfish in penalizing those afflicted with tuberculosis, and creating phthisiophobia. This exaggerated fear is a big obstacle in the campaign for better treatment for the sick and the control of the disease. All of us can understand why the "consumptive" lies about his condition, and tries to evade the Health Department. My own experience helps me to appreciate how hard is the way of the righteous "T. B. ite." I was invited to the home of a man I met while returning from a conference. The family was very kind, but when they learned that I was connected with a Tuberculosis Committee, they did not invite me again. Often we find the syphilitic boycotting the consumptive.

That tuberculosis is a communicable disease all are agreed. That bovine tuberculosis is transmissible to the human life is still denied by some, yet our province is quite clear. Until there is positive proof to the contrary we must make every effort to exclude the milk of tuberculous cows. That the most susceptible or rather most fatal period of infection is in childhood is now accepted; that few, or none, receive their primary infection after puberty is still an open question, hence we must control the patient who is a menace. That the open case with the positive sputum, who is careless in his personal habits, is a menace is clear, hence we must focus our attention on this case.