

antiochus' agents roamed the country, torturing and killing pious jews in a reign of terror, exceeded in viciousness only by an antiochus of more recent days.

slowly the jews began to fight back. led by judah maccabee, the hasmonean, son of an obscure village priest named mattathias, a small band of jewish farmers fanned the flames of the revolt. inspired by their faith in God, and after many hard, bitter battles, this band of common people succeeded in driving the imperial armies from their land. the temple in jerusalem was sanctified and dedicated anew, lamps and torches were kindled as a symbol of spiritual light and freedom, and a celebration of eight days ordained. hanukkah, the festival of dedication, is the anniversary of that event.

talmudic legend tells us that all the oil in the temple was polluted by the syrians, and that, upon extensive search, only one sealed cruse of consecrated oil—about a day's supply—was found by the hasmoneans. and yet, this scant supply, as if by a miracle, provided light for eight full days, just long enough to prepare and consecrate new oil.

the kindling of the lamps of long ago is

still recalled and reenacted in our day, when hanukkah candles are lit in each jewish home, starting with one light on the first evening and an additional light on each succeeding evening, until—on the last night of the feast—eight lights flame from the menorah.

the story of hanukkah, though very old, repeats itself in every age, and hence has meaning for our time as well. in every generation dark and irrational elements manifest themselves and wage a battle against all right and justice. by the very nature of their aggression they seem better armed than

those who love freedom—and all appears lost. still, in every age rise men who stand by their ideals against tremendous odds, who fight, though all seems lost, yet eventually triumph.

here then, is the message of hanukkah: a faith in God and in one's ideals which does not recognize defeat, a spiritual determination which persists in the face of all obstacles; young men and young women who eternally proclaim, as did emerson: "never mind ridicule, never mind defeat . . . up again old heart, there is a victory yet for all justice."

—ALEX SCHINDLER

