

France became again the silent Carthage.—Joseph Carey, in The Boston Pilot.

THE DELIVERANCE OF JERUSALEM

By John Hartley in Rosary Magazine

For the last seven hundred and twenty six years the entire Christian world has been praying that Jerusalem, the Holy City, the City of Peace, might somehow be wrested from the hands of the infidel Turk. During these centuries every Christian heart has been scandalized at the thought of the heart city of Christendom being defiled by the Moslems. Poets have tried to imagine the deliverance of Jerusalem and to portray what it would mean to the world. During the Middle Ages, when wars of continuous conflict, the capture of Jerusalem was held out by the Sovereign Pontiffs as an aim well worth striving for. For two centuries and more the ambition to rescue the city consecrated by the passing of the Master led countless armies from Europe to the Orient. And in our own times the nation which according to the prophecy of the Son of God was to be scattered all over the earth has, under the inspiration of Israel Zangwill, hoped and striven to recreate itself by gathering the richest Jews of the world into this central city of Israel. The Zionists believe to-day that the Jews of the world can somehow be brought to migrate to Palestine, and especially to Jerusalem, there to erect an autonomous kingdom.

The mighty cataclysm which has overwhelmed the world has brought with it tremendous surprises. Conditions which seemed absolutely unalterable have been completely changed in the twinkling of an eye. Amongst recent events in the East the capture of Jerusalem by General Allenby and the British forces may be one of the most far-reaching in its consequences. The victorious general himself can best describe what happened. Without any literary embellishment he tells us in a communication sent to the House of Commons on December 11, 1917, a story which until the end of time will form one of the most thrilling pages in history. He says:

"I entered the city officially at noon to-day with a few of my staff, the commanders of the French and Italian detachments, the heads of the political missions, and the military attaches of France, Italy and America.

"The procession was all afoot, and at Jaffa gate I was received by the Guards representing England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, Australia, New Zealand, India, France and Italy. The population received me well.

"Guards have been placed over the holy places. My military government is in contact with the acting custodians and the Latin and Greek representatives. The governor has detailed an officer to supervise the holy places. The Mosque of Omar and the area around it have been placed under Moslem control, and a military cordon of Mohammedan officers and soldiers has been established around the mosque.

"Orders have been issued that no non-Moslem is to pass within the cordon without permission of the military governor and the Moslem in charge."

It goes without saying that the Germans have sought by every possible means to conceal their discomfiture over the fall of Jerusalem. We can easily understand why the German Emperor was deeply shocked at the news of the capture of the city. The German Kaiser has all along gone on the assumption and has never tired of announcing that God was with him and his forces in a most special way. Now that the Holy City has fallen, it will be more difficult than ever for him to impress upon the world—and especially upon the Moslems—the conviction that the God of Battles is leading the Teutonic Army. Then too, the sympathies of the Catholic world, and for that matter the Christian world at large, must be with those who without so much as demolishing one of the historic and sacrosanct monuments of the Holy City has wrested it from the infidels who for seven long centuries have held it.

Nor is it true, as the German press would have us believe, that Jerusalem has absolutely no strategic or military value. On the contrary, history proves to us that from the earliest times it has been considered the key to Palestine. Situated as it is on an elevated, it commands a clear view of the land that stretches out between it and the sea. Behind it rises a mountain range which because of the barrenness of the country has ever proved an effective barrier to an invading army. It is just twenty-five miles from the sea-coast, with which it is connected by a railroad. Now, if General Allenby can succeed in taking the five cities which lie between Jerusalem and the railroad he will be in a position not only to control the adjacent territory but also to guard successfully the Suez Canal, which is a veritable artery between the two continents.

If the campaign in Palestine were not part of a concerted plan we might perchance believe at least a part of the German contention that the fall of Jerusalem is without great military significance. But, in fact, it is a part of a carefully thought out scheme of action, and even though the Russian campaign has for the present broken down, leaving the prosecution of the Oriental expedition almost wholly in the hands of the English and French, the capture of the Holy City must in the long run make mightily for the accomplishment of the aims proposed by the Allies. With an army operating in the East, and in a fair way to push its way to the coast, with German opposition there comparatively insignificant and the prospect of reinforcements very slight, the capture of Jerusalem would almost seem equivalent to the capture of Palestine. The fall of the city, therefore, is the premeditated working out in the Orient—on a small scale, of course, but none the less effectively—of plans that are being pursued with the most deadly earnestness in other parts of the world. And if for the time being the Allies have met with serious reverses in Italy and are merely holding their own in France, the success of the Oriental expedition is reassuring. For we must not forget that this is a world-war in every sense of the word, and just because it is so, news of victory is not expected from any quarter for many months. In one sector the result is not decisive, then positive gains in another must make for the general realization of the universal scheme.

The history of Jerusalem, which is inextricably bound up with the history of the Jewish race itself, dates back to the very earliest times. Placed as it is in a position of natural advantage, it has been the one city, since the days of the Crusades, to be the possession of which armies have contested most bitterly and constantly. Shortly after Constantine the Great had cleansed it and restored some of that order which always accompanied Roman administration, it fell into the hands of the Mussulmans. In the sixth century it was captured by Caliph Omar, after a four months' campaign. Fifteen years later—to be precise, in 638—the Persians were forced to surrender it to the Emperor Heraclius. In 637 it passed into the hands of another Omar, and a few years later into those of Abd-el-Malek, "the slave of the Lord," who built the Mosque of Omar, called the "Dome of the Rock," which is generally conceded to be one of the finest specimens of Moslem architecture in the world. We can easily understand why the followers of the camel driver of Mecca, whose hatred and disdain of all things Christian were implacable, soon busied themselves in effacing all vestiges of Christianity. The sacred places were defiled and in many cases ruthlessly pulled down. They seemed to delight in outraging Christian feeling by prostituting to their own religious practices those spots most intimately linked with both the Old and New Testament, choosing them in many instances as sites for their own mosques. The Mosque of Omar, for instance, stands on the exact spot of the Temple of Solomon, a spot revered alike by Christian and Jew. And many other places hallowed by the most sacred associations have been turned into Mussulman shrines.

As a result of popular preaching, especially the preaching of the members of the many religious orders, a mighty revival of Christian sentiment took place in Europe in medieval days. Christ and His Blessed Mother were no longer, as in the preceding Byzantine times, mere abstract figures without any real relation to life, but through the channels of art, literature and oratory became once more as in the early days of Christianity living realities in the Catholic world. Men tried to live in union with Christ, and consequently everything pertaining to His life became of supreme interest. Just because religious feeling was so intense at that time the Pope, at a council held at Clermont, was able without difficulty to rally the arms of Christian Europe to free the holy places of Palestine. So, when the cry went forth from France, "God wills it!" the Christian world rocked on its foundations with a mighty passion for the Crusades. The princes who had been doing themselves to death in petty wars of personal aggrandizement were adjured by the Holy Father to take a wider view—a world-view—of the functions of Christian government. The Crusades, which broadly speaking covered two centuries, did more than anything else in medieval times to establish that healthy internationalism which, whilst it did not destroy the aims of individual kingdoms and dukedoms, still made possible a certain political unity and solidarity under the eyes of one who, just because he was the Vicar of Christ, was the accepted arbiter and spokesman of the nations.

Ten years ago the Crusaders were incomprehensible to the modern world. They were looked upon by the average man as something belonging naturally to the "Dark Ages." Today, they are in a fair way of being understood and appreciated. Just because the United States is in arms at the present time for an ideal—the ideal of democracy for the world—men are able to understand why in medieval times Christian nations should have fought as for an ideal, and not as for religious ideas. To-day we see thousands upon thousands of our splendid young men gladly going forth as champions of democracy,

and so it is not so difficult for us to see why Europe, seven centuries ago, armed itself to the teeth to realize the sublime ideals elaborated and propounded by a succession of far-sighted and statesmanlike Pontiffs.

The approach of General Allenby to Jerusalem in many particulars resembled that of another Englishman who centuries ago almost captured the Holy City. Like Richard the Lion-hearted, General Allenby approached Jerusalem from the coast, where marching is easier and where supplies can be more readily brought up. It was in 1191 that Richard, at the head of his knights, captured Acre and Joppa. In a letter dated October 31, of that year, the King says:

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