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## News and Notes

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### The Issue at the Council of Nicaea.

IN view of the fact that in this and our previous issues there appear articles on the all-important yet difficult subject of Our Lord's Nature, we have thought that members of the League will welcome the reproduction of a First Prize essay on the subject written by a minister at home. It is by Rev. A. J. Burgoyne and appeared in the *Baptist Times* for August 13th as the result of a competition suggested by a phrase in Dr. T. R. Glover's most recent book. Dr. Glover, in a later issue of the *B.T.*, took the opportunity to champion Mr. Burgoyne's presentation in replying to a carping critic.

"The issue raised at the Council of Nicaea (convened in 325 by the Emperor Constantine) was concerned with the Person of Christ. How was His Nature to be described so as to conserve at once His Divinity and His Personality? Sabellianism, which thought of Jesus as a mere manifestation of God, had sacrificed His Personality, while Arianism, asserting the Logos to be the soul of Christ, and that He had been generated at a point in time, seemed to deny His Divine Nature. The problem was to find a formula that would exclude both errors. Was the Second Person of the Trinity "homo-ousion" or "homoi-ousion" with the Father?

"Cheap and easy criticism dismisses the distinction as hair-splitting, a quarrel about a single letter. But a single letter may mean much. There is only a difference of one letter between the best and the beast, between fulness and foulness, and in a similar way this "quarrel about a letter" had a very real significance. It was a controversy as to whether the Christ was of the *same* nature as God, His very Being (homo-ousios), or only something like Him (homoi-ousios). That was the issue at Nicaea.

"When I want ideal manhood, I find it in Jesus. When I want to formulate my ideal of Godhead, again I look to Him. How can that be put into words without confusion of thought?"

"Thou seemest Human and Divine." How are we to define that dual Nature? "The Highest, Holiest Manhood?" But that isn't enough. God made man in His own image, and the highest, holiest manhood might be only like God (*homoi-ousios*).

"It was at a point something like this that Athanasius came into the debate at the Council, in the dramatic way described by Dr. Glover. Eusebius of Cæsaræa had introduced the Creed used in his own Church, and had expressed the opinion that possibly it might satisfy all. The Arians were prepared to accept it, not perhaps because they liked it, but because it did not rigidly exclude their particular doctrine. Athanasius and his party, suspicious of this readiness to agree, wanted to know, in definite terms, Did the Creed mean that Jesus was of the very substance of God? "God of God, Light of Light, Life of Life, the only-begotten Son, the first-born of every creature, begotten of the Father before all the worlds, by whom all things were made:" did that mean "*homo-ousios*?" The Council was persuaded by Athanasius that it did not; and ultimately the definite words "Very God of Very God, begotten, not made, consubstantial (*homo-ousios*) with the Father," were inserted.

"The Creed in this form was finally adopted by the whole Council with but two or three dissentients (who were deprived of their sees and banished), and so became formative for the future of Christology.

"It may be doubted whether the Emperor Constantine had any real interest in the detail of the discussion. His interest was political, not theological; and he was probably more concerned with uniformity than with truth. No doubt he would have been content with the Cæsaræan formula if all had been prepared to accept it. And, indeed, the real significance of Nicæa is not in the Creed finally adopted, but that, for the first time, a gathering supposed to be representative of the whole Church was attempting to formulate Catholic doctrine. Henceforth Church history continually shows an accent on orthodoxy, and the right of private judgment and personal thinking is impugned. A dangerous heresy, it is true, was condemned at Nicæa, but that condemnation was at the expense of that freedom which is the inherent right of every believer."

#### KINDNESS.

There is power in the direct glance of a sincere and loving human soul, which will do more to dissipate prejudice and kindle charity than the most elaborate arguments.

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## The Christian Message and Islam.

**T**AST December, before we had conceived the idea of reproducing, in order, notes of the discussions in Cairo on the Christian Message to Muslims we inserted the findings of the group on *The Divinity of our Lord*. We ask the forbearance of our readers for venturing, at this juncture, to re-insert those notes in the present issue, as they form the first of a series on the presentation of *Christian doctrines*.

While we ourselves are thinking on this question it is well to have before us the views of workers in Egypt.

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1. The general conviction was that men come best to a realization of our Lord's Divinity from a study of His earthly life, as given in the Gospel narrative. Our Lord's birth, His character, His ministry of healing, His miracles, His sinlessness, His sufferings, His death, His resurrection and ascension, all point to a unique personality, in some way different from that of other men. Above all, it is difficult to read Jesus' claims about Himself, e.g., "I am the bread of life," "I am the resurrection and the life," "Before Abraham was, I am," "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father," without coming to the conclusion that He is more than man.

2. It was pointed out that our Lord's Divinity is but one element in that great body of Christian truth, which men can only receive through the illumination of the Holy Spirit. There must first be spiritual preparation and discipleship before anyone can begin to understand Christ's Divinity.

3. At the same time it is possible to point out to the Muslim that his conception of God, as a being totally different from everything else, makes God entirely unknowable. Also that just as He revealed Himself to Moses without detracting from His Divinity, so He could reveal Himself through Jesus. And that without God's revelation of Himself in Christ, we know very little about Him.

4. Reference was also made to certain proofs of our Lord's Divinity based on phrases found in the Quran and the Traditions. *It was generally felt, however, that these intellectual proofs are not very satisfactory.*

5. Some found it helpful to prove the possibility of God's indwelling in Jesus in a perfect way from our own experience of His indwelling in us. Others, again, based their proof on the influence of Christ (as contrasted with the prophet Muhammad) in the personal life of the believer.

6. In regard to the Divine "Sonship" of Jesus, it is necessary from the outset to point out how this indicates an essentially spiritual relationship. "Sonship" is the best word we can use to express a relationship which is entirely beyond our comprehension.

7. Evidence of Jesus' Divine Sonship may be found in the

prophecies of the Old Testament, and in the testimony to Jesus of God Himself, of the Angel to Mary, of Christ about Himself, and of the disciples about Him, not to mention the evidence of evil spirits about Him.

8. In referring to the Divine Sonship of Jesus, one must be careful to stress both the fact of the one essential nature of God the Father and God the Son, and also the fact of their being two separate persons. If the former truth is forgotten, there is danger lest God be represented as merely a stern Judge and Jesus as the loving Saviour. If the latter truth is overlooked, difficult problems arise regarding the divine power which upheld the universe during the period of our Lord's Incarnation.

### **A Short Course of Islamics held at Bhatara, Sylhet, June 1st to 19th, 1931.**

**U**NDER the auspices of the Christian Council of Bengal and Assam, a short course of Islamics was held from 1st to 19th June at Bhatara, a centre of the Welsh Presbyterian Mission in the plains, on the Kulaura-Sylhet Branch Line of the Assam-Bengal Railway. Seven missions working in Bengal participated in the work of the school and fourteen men joined the course. They were represented as follows:—

1. Swedish Mission 2, 2. New Zealand Baptist Mission 1, 3. English Baptist 3, 4. Church of Scotland Mission 3, 5. Church of God Mission 1, 6. English Presbyterian Mission 1, 7. Welsh Presbyterian Mission 3.

The staff was composed of Rev. D. K. Badshah, Mr. G. R. Biswas and Rev. D. A. Chowdhury, and the syllabus consisted of (1) The Quran, (2) The Life of Muhammad, (3) Muslim objections to Christianity and answers thereto, (4) Special doctrines of Islam, (5) Outlines of Islam, (6) History of Indian Islam and Modern Movements of Islam. Mr. Badshah gave a few talks on "How to preach to Muslims" and "How not to preach to them."

The thanks of the school are due to Rev. H. R. Ghose, B.D., and Mrs. Ghose for their active help and guidance in making the school a success. We are also grateful to Rev. J. W. Roberts and Mrs. Roberts for their kindly interest in the work of the school.

The Committee hopes that the course will be an annual event in future.

D. A. CHOWDHURY,  
*Convener.*

[The Editor regrets that through lack of space the above report had to be held over from our last issue.]

## Indian Muslims and the Reforms in Turkey.

COMMENTING favourably on an article by the President of Robert College, Constantinople, on the changes in Turkey as not intended to suppress religion in the new State, *The Light*, Lahore, says that this should remove the misgivings that have been caused by the misrepresentations of the Christian missionary and the Muslim *mulla*. The paper takes this fresh opportunity to pour scorn on the poor *mulla*. "This latter gentleman, with whom Islam is nothing more than a bundle of dead rites and rituals, is a hopeless case, past all cure. The slightest change from the established ruts is to him what a red rag is to the bull, and however much it may be to the good of Islam and Muslims, he is bound to fret and fume, and obstinately kick against it. It is obviously a hopeless task to convince him and that is why the builder of the modern Turkish State had to give the *hoja* (the Turkish equivalent of *mulla*) the short shrift he deserved.

"To all enlightened Musalmans, however, it must be a source, not of mere satisfaction, but of great joy to learn that Mustafa Kamal has had the courage to shear Islam clean of all the silly mediæval accretions in the face of the fury of fools and fanatics. Who can deny that such a campaign of reform has been long over-due, and (that) every Islamic country needs a Mustafa Kamal to purge it of all absurdities that pass for religion.

"Egypt is supposed to be a fairly advanced country but it seems that the ominous influence of the *mulla* is still going strong there. Just imagine these luminaries of the faith, allowing Christian translations of the Quran into Egypt, but putting a ban, first on the translation by Maulana Muhammad Ali and now on that of Mr. Marmaduke Pickthall, both Muslims! Who would not pray for the birth of a Mustafa Kamal to widen the outlook of Al Azhar magnates?"

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### THE NEW ATTITUDE TOWARDS HINDUISM.

The same paper commits itself to remarks such as these: "Were it not for the unfortunate communal struggle which stands in the way of a dispassionate study of Islam, we are sure an intelligent race like the Hindus would have acclaimed the message of Islam as the self-same message of Lord Krishna." The writer goes on to mention that Nanak, Ram Mohan Roy and Keshab Chandra Sen recognised the essential unity of all religions and that Islam was a true religion from God. In an endeavour to assure Hindus that they will find a warm welcome in the ranks of Islam, he asserts: "Krishna and other heroes of Hindustan are as dear to a Muslim as to a Hindu." (Shade of Mahmud of Ghazni!)

Truly times are changing for a Muslim editor to commit himself in writing to a statement such as this last. But one can understand and should sympathise with his attitude towards the *mulla*. The modern Muslim is only saying what the missionary has been declaring for more than half a century. Here is proof of progress for which we are and should be, devoutly thankful.

### Notes.

*Entrance of Islam into China.*—Mr. Isaac Mason, F.R.G.S., of the C.L.S. Shanghai (54, West End Gdns.) and Treasurer of the excellent quarterly *Friends of Moslems*, has been publishing in that paper a series of articles on *The Mohammedans of China*, which give evidence of a good deal of research work. From Part VII in the July issue we take the following paragraph: "We conclude that the earliest authentic accounts show that Mohammedans were first known officially in China in A. D. 651, when the embassy from Caliph Othman was received. It is not recorded whether the messenger came by land or sea. As the sea route had been used for a long time by traders, it is very possible that some of the merchants from Arabia, who had become Moslems, brought their religion with them to Canton and other coast cities at about the same period, or a few years earlier; but apparently they were not concerned with propagating their faith among the Chinese."

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'*God has no partner.*'—We are not surprised yet gratified to find that No. 3 of the tracts for Muslim women (appearing last month) is highly spoken of. A member asks for permission to translate it into Bengali. Such translation is the main purpose which the group of ladies producing them have in view; so that the more widely the tracts are used the happier they will be.

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*Urdu Qaidas for Zanana Women.*—Miss Chapman, Z. B. M. M. of Sholapur, who has been responsible for the issue of the four graded *Qaidas* noticed in a previous issue, has sent us the same, under one cover, done into English in bold clear type, calling it *Gospel Primer*. A sample of this can be sent free on application to the missionary in charge, Z. B. M. M. Sholapur. *Qaidas* at two pice each should be ordered from Meth. Publy. House, Lucknow, (postage extra). It seems to us that many women will be glad to know of the very-easy-to-read *Primer* in English.

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*Bangalore Hindustani Mission.*—This mission, which has led the way and given an excellent example to both Madras and Bombay cities, is, we regret to observe, in a bad way financially. The Treasurer, Rev. N. F. Silsbee, 'Goldburn,' Ali Asker Rd., Bangalore, actually reports in the current number of their little quarterly that *unless immediate help is forthcoming* it is possible that this united missionary effort in Bangalore may have to be discontinued at the close of the present year. When Madras is just inaugurating a similar mission and Bombay is contemplating some such project, it seems a great pity that Bangalore should fail for want of support. Membership involves a subscription of Rs. 3 a year. We venture to publish this note in the hope that some may be interested to link themselves up with the mission in thought and prayer.

## The Moslem World for October, 1931.

### Seekers after God among Mohammedans.

FOR twenty-one years the *Moslem World Quarterly* has been the active protagonist of missions to Mohammedans. In its Open Forum the editors and a list of distinguished contributors have pointed out, on the one hand, the inadequacy of Islam to satisfy the intellectual, social and spiritual needs of man, and on the other, the desire for closer communion with God as one of the characteristics of the Moslem faith.

The October issue of this Quarterly emphasizes these facts. In a long article on "The Rosary in Islam" by the editor, the earnest prayer life in Islam is shown to be one of the best points of contact with seekers after God among Moslems. A beautiful frontispiece gives examples of the Rosaries in use from the well-known Patton collection.

The Rev. J. R. Richards of Shiraz contributes an illuminating account of Bahaiism in Persia to-day and tells why it has lost its power. The author adds a full annotated bibliography. There are two excellent articles on India. One describes the variety and peculiarities of the smaller Moslem sects of South India where the influence of Hinduism is so strong; the other, on "Evangelism in Bengal," is by a distinguished Indian Christian, the Rev. D. A. Chowdhury.

Dr. John Van Ess of Busrah tells how he is educating the Arab in real Christian principles and ideals, avoiding controversy. Professor Walter A. Groves of Teheran writes on the *Students of New Persia* and their present-day problems, and Professor Cass Arthur Reed on the opportunity for the Near East Christian College. A Turkish Nationalist writes, anonymously, on the *Influence of Modern Literature* in the Turkish Revolution; the pen proved mightier than the sword in arousing youth by inculcating Western ideas of liberty.

The usual Book Reviews, Current Topics, Survey of Periodicals, an Index for the year complete the present volume of 438 pages, a veritable Year-Book on the World of Islam.

Published by the *Missionary Review Publishing Company*, 156, Fifth Avenue, New York City. 50c. a copy. \$2 a year. Agents in India.—The Association Press, 5, Russell St., Calcutta, Rs. 6-0-0 a year.

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## For Praise and Prayer.

PRaise for the success attending the efforts of those concerned to start a United Hindustani Mission in Madras; and prayer for Mr. R. A. Stephen, of Bangalore, a former student of the Henry Martyn School, who is to be their Evangelist; that God's blessing may rest upon him and the work of the mission. He is to commence work about 1st November.

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## NEW MEMBERS.

Rev. P. C. Kerslake,  
Mr. P. B. Means,

Boys' High School,  
M. E. Church,

Madras.  
Singapore.

(Our membership is now 403).

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Any notification of change of address, names of new members or remittance of subscription, etc., should be sent to the Superintendent, Orissa Mission Press, Cuttack, India, and *not* to the Secretary of the League. The annual subscription to the League is Rs. 2-0-0 (English 3s. od.).

Matters of interest to members of the League, items of news and requests for prayer should be sent (if possible, early in the month) to the Hony. Secretary:—

Rev. L. Bevan Jones,  
*5, Egerton Road,  
Lahore,  
Punjab, India.*

