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## News and Notes

A Monthly Paper printed for the private use of the  
Members of the Missionaries to Muslims League.

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1st August = 18th Rabi'ul-thani (4th mo.), 1353, A.H.

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### Editorial.

DEAR FRIENDS,

THE September number of *News and Notes* will be the last to be edited by me. I sail on September 15th from Bombay, and I much regret to announce that I shall not be returning to India. The doctors have decided that my wife must not sail again. Although her normal health is good, she gets so upset by sea voyages, and on this last occasion took so long to recover afterwards, that the risk of another couple of voyages is too great. I do not yet know what work awaits me in England; but I need hardly assure you that, whatever my post may be, I hope still in some measure to be able to co-operate with you all in work for the evangelisation of the Muslim world.

May I draw attention to the article on finance on page 61, and ask those who value *News and Notes* to try to get new subscribers, and to pay up any arrears of subscriptions?

L. E. BROWNE.

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### The Trinity or the Manifold Beauty of God.

I AM now going to try to set before you the doctrine of the Trinity. What I am about to say presupposes what I have said in previous articles about the unity of God. There can be no discussion of the Trinity until the Christian doctrine of the unity of God is fully grasped. It will readily be seen that the Muslim doctrine of the unity is the worst possible preparation for an understanding of the Trinity. For this reason it is impossible to satisfy the demand of a Muslim enquirer for an explanation of the Trinity at his first interview.

The Trinity is an attempt to explain three facts. The first fact is that instinct, revelation and philosophy all combine in asserting the existence of a spiritual Being who is the prime mover and originator of all things, and must, by the fact of being the author of all things, be greater than the things which have proceeded from Him.

The second fact is that Jesus Christ has revealed to mankind the character of this heavenly Being, the Father of all. Not merely has Jesus Christ spoken true words about the Father, but He is Himself a revelation of the Father. The extent of the revelation to us of God in Christ is limited by our own infirmities. We have not yet plumbed the depths of Christ, but as far as we have gone we find no limit to His perfect representation of the Father. Not only the love of God, but His majesty and power are fully revealed in Christ. Whatever St. Paul meant when he said that Christ "emptied Himself," (Phil. ii. 7), he could recognise Christ as "God's power and God's wisdom," (I. Cor. i. 24). Our failure to see the majesty and power of God in Christ is our own fault, because of our false ideas of what constitutes majesty and power. The assertion of the divinity of Christ tells us nothing about Christ, but almost everything about God that we know. It is the assertion that the unknown God is of the nature of Christ.

The third fact is the indwelling of God in man. This, like our knowledge of Christ, is a fact of experience. It takes many forms. The mystic is aware of the presence of God, and in certain cases is assured of his own unity with God. The righteous man may feel certain that he is acting under the guidance of God. The convert is certain that it is God who has taken hold of him and changed him from what he was to what he is. The prophet, in declaring the will of God, is certain that he is speaking as the oracle of God. All these experiences are found in different religions; but it is in the Christian religion that they are found most highly developed. Christians who have these experiences feel that the character of the God to whom the indwelling Spirit leads them, and the character of the human life to which the Spirit invites them, is the character of Jesus Christ.

The first stage then of our contemplation of the manifold beauty of God is to recognise Him made known to us as the source of all things, as Christ Jesus, and as indwelling Spirit.

Remembering our earlier arguments for the unity of God as based upon His holiness, we are bound to assert the unity of these three whom we were first aware of separately.

I am no scholar of Hindu philosophy, but I believe I am right in saying that the great conception of the Upanishads is that the all-soul, Brahman, and the soul of the individual, Atman, are in reality one. It was a great thought, which just missed the full truth through not being based on ethical considerations. It is not morally possible that I, the sinner that I am now, can be identified with the All-holy; though I may look forward to that consummation when my sins are

purged. The statement of the unity of the Father, of Christ, and of the Holy Spirit escapes this error, because it is based, as we have seen, on ethical considerations, on identity of character.

It is clear that we cannot leave the problem at this point. For though it satisfies our moral sense to assert the unity of the Father, of Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, the intellectual difficulty is so great that an intelligent man could hardly accept it unless the problem could be pursued further. The difficulty is that Christ is a man, with the status of a creature.

The early Christians got over this difficulty by their belief in the incarnation. They believed that the Word of God, who had existed from all time, was united with a human being in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ was in one sense the eternal Word, and in another sense He was a man who had His origin in time. When the early Christians spoke of the divinity of Christ they were thinking of the eternal Word. The earthly name Jesus was used in reference to Him as man, and it would have grated on their ears, as it would on ours, if anyone had spoken of a Trinity of the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. In speaking of Him as divine they used titles such as Christ, or the Son, or the Word, which drew attention to Him as a pre-existent being.

Pursuing the thought of the eternal Word of God, the early Christians thought of Him as the revelation or self-expression of the Father, and thus attributed the creation also to His agency, "through Him all things were made" (John i.3), "for in Him (*i.e.*, in the Son of His love) were all things created" (Col. i. 16). The thought of the Word of God as the agent of creation has been largely dropped in Christian thought, *e.g.*, in the Church of England Catechism the child is taught to say, "First, I learn to believe in God the Father, who hath made me and all the world. Secondly, in God the Son, who hath redeemed me and all mankind. Thirdly, in God the Holy Ghost, who sanctifieth me and all the elect people of God." Yet the bringing together of the self-expression of God in creation and in incarnation as the work of the Word of God is very fruitful, and is deserving of further study. A more accurate statement of New Testament teaching would be something like this, "I believe in one God, the Father of all, who revealed Himself by His Word, through whom He made the worlds. I believe that God through His Word became united with man in the person of Jesus Christ, and through Him redeemed mankind. I believe that God through His Holy Spirit dwells in the hearts of men, that they should be holy as the children of God."

Such a statement is not simple, but it certainly avoids the misconceptions which the simpler statement of the Catechism gives rise to. For not only does the Catechism suggest the existence of three Gods, but it attributes to each of the three a particular activity. The danger of so doing is realised at once if we follow St. John in making the Word of God, not only the subject of the incarnation, but

also the agent of creation. For what, then, would be left for God the Father to do? The answer, of course, must be that God the Father is the source of all things, of our creation, our redemption and our sanctification. The Word and the Spirit are the means of God's self-expression.

One of the earliest and most attractive of heresies was that of Sabellianism which attributed all things to God, and regarded the Son and the Spirit as temporary manifestations of His activity. It is true that our experience of the workings of God is limited by time, so that we can have no direct knowledge of any but His temporal activities. Yet our knowledge of the character of God forces us to declare that His will to reveal Himself is as eternal as Himself, for otherwise we should have to suppose that His character had changed. It is for this reason that Sabellianism, however attractive at first sight, must be condemned by the Christian conscience. The Word and the Spirit of God are indispensable to His character. It is certainly metaphysical reasoning which leads us on from our threefold experience of God to postulate His eternal threefold nature; but it is a metaphysics grounded on ethical considerations, on our belief in the character of God.

Before we pass to the final stage of considering the dispensation of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit towards mankind, we must face the Christological problem, *i.e.*, the relation of the eternal Word of God to the historical Jesus of Nazareth. The ancient Christians were correct in attributing to Jesus Christ the nature of God and the nature of man. Further than that they failed to go, because according to their philosophy God and man were separated by an impassible gulf. They could see no way by which the gulf could be bridged. It was their philosophy that was wrong, and it was wrong because it was not founded on Christian premisses. The truth is that the gulf is not impassible. I do not propose here to go into that question fully, and shall only state that the difficulty arose through a false conception of the creation. There is a real truth behind the metaphorical statement of Genesis that God made man in His own image. There is also truth in the mystic's experience of approaching to union with God.

When the notion of an impassible gulf is abandoned, it is possible to imagine the course of human evolution reaching a point in which a man, perfected according to the eternal purpose of God for mankind, may be equally well said to be God. It is not that He has two natures, a human nature and a divine nature, which once were separate, and then became linked together into one; but that His nature is divine because it is a perfect human nature. (This is not the same idea as that of the Monophysites of old, for, while they spoke of one nature in Christ, that one nature was a mixture which was neither fully divine nor fully human.) It must be admitted that we should never have dared to think of such a thing, if we had not known Christ. He has made possible syntheses which would not otherwise have been guessed. Before He came, the Jews had thought of a king Messiah,

and of a Suffering Servant of the Lord: they had not thought of a Suffering Messiah until they saw the Messiah reigning from the Tree. Somewhat in the same way, when once we have known Christ, we can recognise Him as in all respects a man and also in all respects God; but we should not have been able to predict such a possibility because it is through Him that we get our first clear ideas of what constitutes God and what constitutes man. The foregoing does not pretend to be more than an indication of the lines on which the Christological problem must be faced in our days. It might however be added that we can still use the traditional language of the pre-existent Word incarnate in Christ, because the divine as such has no beginning or end, so that Christ as divine may be spoken of as having eternally existed. The point however probably has not the importance that used to be given to it: the nature of time is beginning to appear as something very different from what was formerly thought; and endless time is not a very interesting conception.

Returning now to the dispensation of God towards mankind, we can picture the grand drama somewhat as follows. In the beginning God expressed Himself, or in other words limited Himself, by the creation of things out of nothing other than Himself. (This is a better expression than to say "out of nothing" which is almost meaningless.) The things He created were not static but endowed with powers of development, or, as we might say, of returning towards God from whom they proceeded. The creation is thus a self-expression (or Word) of God, which found its climax when He was fully expressed in one creature, our Lord Jesus Christ, or, in other words, when His Word was fully present in Jesus Christ. Yet the satisfaction of God cannot be complete until He is fully expressed in His whole creation; and the means of communicating the nature of Christ to the rest of mankind is the Spirit of Christ or of God, by whose indwelling in the heart "Christ is born within us" and we become sons of God. The Trinity is thus seen to be an expression of the character of God in His works, a character of love, which we naturally can only appreciate as love towards us.

I must apologise for the extremely concise form in which I have cast this article. At almost every stage there are points needing further elucidation.

It will be noticed that I have avoided the use of the technical terms "hypostaseis" and "personæ" for the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Although correct as far as they go, these terms have their drawbacks: "hypostasis" looks rather to the nature of each "person" of the Godhead as if it could be considered apart from its activity; while "persona" looks to the part played by each, and unduly emphasises individuality.

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## The League's Finances.

### A Serious Position.

**W**E have received a letter from our manager, and very good friend, the Superintendent of the Press responsible for *News and Notes*, about the present financial position of the League, which causes us grave concern. It is to the effect that he has only Rs. 150 in hand to carry us to the end of the year and that our expenses, in the interval, will be not less than Rs. 300. In other words, unless more money comes in we shall close the year with a deficit of about Rs. 200. We cannot recall any time during the last fifteen years when we had to face a deficit at all, and even now, as will be seen, we need not be in this position.

True, our membership is not what once it was. Four years ago it had dropped unaccountably from 622 to 458, and even then we were compelled to take the drastic step of deleting a further 65 names from our Foreign Mail List, because members, in spite of repeated requests, failed to pay up arrears for 4, 5 and even 6 years. At that time we suffered a loss, through writing off bad debts, of about Rs. 500, roughly £40! A League with an annual subscription of Rs. 2 (3s.) cannot be expected to survive repeated losses on that scale. A year later, in 1931, our membership stood at 389, and that is about our strength to-day.

It may be of course, that missionaries to Muslims in other lands are forming their own fellowships and that some of our former members have transferred their allegiance to these. We should not, and do not, regret such natural development. For example, formerly we had some 36 members, in China, but to-day 'The Society of Friends of Moslems in China,' claims those and many more, to the splendid total of 300. *But*, it is to be expected that those who continue to receive our paper should also continue to pay for it.

However, if all the members, *now on the Foreign List and still receiving News and Notes*, were to send in the subscriptions due from them this year and for 2, 3, 4, or more past years, then we should recover the sum which our manager tells us we require to square our accounts. In the hope that we shall recover the amounts due we have sent out an urgent appeal to such members, requesting them to send a remittance to Cuttack as soon as possible.

Should his appeal not meet with an adequate response the outlook for the League will be a serious one.

L. BEVAN JONES.

## Symposium on Fasting.

No. 7. By Miss M. T. Mouró, formerly S.P.C.K.,  
Cairo and Jerusalem.

**O**NE of the best remarks on fasting I have ever heard came from a Muslim, one of my Arabic teachers in Cairo. He had asked why Christians did not fast, or did not all fast. I think my answer must have been very lame, for he replied, "But if they do not fast, how do rich people among you Christians learn to feel for the poor?"

## Henry Martyn School, Lahore.

Extension Work, 1934.

**D**URING the first week of April the members of the Staff were together to conduct a short course at St. John's College, Agra. The Principal and his colleagues gave us a most cordial welcome. The main course was a series of fifteen lectures in English, and for these forty-three in all registered their names. The attendance, though poor at the start, steadily increased. Missions were represented thus C.M.S., 15; M.E.Ch., 4; B.M.S., 1; A.P.M., 1; others, including many Indian members of the Staffs of the College and Schools, 22. (23 women, 20 men).

Mr. Subhan gave an additional set of lectures in Urdu in the evenings to a group of Indian workers, who numbered at times as many as 40 (37 women, 3 men). Two public lectures in English had been advertised to be held in the College library, and were addressed by the Principal and Mr. Browne, but the attendance from outside was disappointing.

Literature, both in English and Urdu, was sold to the value of Rs. 116.

A longer course was conducted in Simla, at the Y.M.C.A. headquarters, from 21st May to 15th June. We are grateful to the Committee for the facilities they offered us, and to the Secretary and Mrs. Hindle for arranging an "At Home" at which fifty friends met, before the course commenced, to welcome the Staff. Mr. Browne addressed the meeting on "Islam to-day in East and West." For the convenience of those residents in Simla, arrangements were made whereby the two morning lectures were repeated each evening to another group in Christ Church Schoolroom. In this way a total number of thirty-eight persons registered: S.P.G., 6; Meth. Miss., 5; M.E.Ch., 4; B.M.S., 3; Z.B.M., 3; S.D.A., 3; C.M.S., 1; Ch. of Scot., 1; others 12; (27 women, 11 men).

In the closing week the Principal addressed a meeting of the Simla Missionary Conference on "The Use Muslims make of the Character of Christ." The gathering, which numbered 42, was presided over by the Rev. A. J. Revnell (Treasurer of the School) to whose enthusiastic support we owe much of the success of the course at Simla. The sales of literature amounted to Rs. 119.

Further courses of lectures are being given this summer as follows :—

By Mr. Subhan, in Urdu :—

**Saharanpur**, Summer School of Theology, July 15-30. Apply to the Principal, Rev. Dr. J. W. Bowman.

**Pasrur**, School for Christian Women Teachers, September 3-14. Apply to Miss D. B. Whitely, Girls' School, Pasrur.

**Benares**, School for Indian Workers, September 15-20. Apply to Rev. F. S. Briggs, Ghazipur, U.P.

By Mr. Browne, in English :—

**Oorgaum**. Kolar Gold Fields, in July and August, } For further parti-  
**Bangalore**, August or September, } culars apply to Rev.  
 } L. E. Browne, The  
 } Parsonage, Oorgaum.

### Prayer.

For a highly educated Muslim, who has been led to think deeply and to discuss the Trinity, since reading *The People of the Mosque*. (India).

### Correspondence.

To the Editor of *News and Notes*.

Dear Sir,

I shall be grateful if any of your readers can inform me whether the following statement (quoted from the Government publication *Tribes and Castes of Bombay*, Vol. III) is or ever has been true of the Musalmans of Bombay :—

“The dislike, almost loathing, with which an Indian Musalman looks upon divorce is so great, that his strongest oath is, ‘May she who has given me birth be thrice divorced if I do so and so.’”

Yours sincerely,  
V. R. B. J.

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### Notice.

Matters of interest to members of the Missionaries to Muslims League, items of news, and requests for prayer and praise, should be addressed to Rev. L. E. Browne, The Parsonage, Oorgaum, South India, not later than August 10th; after that date to Rev. J. W. Sweetman, Ram Katora, Benares, who is kindly taking over the editorship of this paper.

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 Editor. The annual subscription to the League, including *News and Notes*, is Rs. 2-0-0 (English 3 shillings).

