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LIGHT FROM THE EAST

OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 1952

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NO. 6

PATRIARCH'S TRIP

His Holiness, Mar Eshai Shimun, Catholicos Patriarch of the East has arrived safely in Cyprus, where he will visit the Patriarchal family. The re-union was very joyful. With the exception of his father and sister, His Holiness has not seen the family for thirteen years.

Before the Patriarch reached Cyprus he spent considerable time in England. His visit was given prominent notice in the London newspapers. On September 6, His Holiness was elected to an honorary membership in the Athenaeum Club. On this day he also visited Lambeth Palace and, in the roofless chapel, paid homage to the memory of Archbishop Benson, through whom understanding had been fostered between the Church of England and the Church of the East. Later in the day he was the guest of honor at a reception held by the Nikaeian Club at Church House, Westminster. His Holiness was accompanied by his cousin, Eshaya d' Mar Shimun. Sir Harry Luke, vice chairman of the club welcomed the guests. The Patriarch in reply referred with gratitude to past help by Anglicans to the people of his church.

On September 14, a service, unique in the annals of the Queen's Chapel of the Savoy, took place when His Holiness celebrated the Liturgy of the Apostles there. Before the liturgy the Patriarch ordained Eshaya d' Mar Shimun as sub-deacon. The Old Testament Lessons were read by Prebendary E. H. Williams-Ashman and the Epistle by Canon J. A. Douglas, who has an unrivalled knowledge of the Eastern Churches.

SERMON DELIVERED BY HIS HOLINESS, MAR ESHAÏ SHIMUN ON THE OCCASION OF THE CONSECRATION OF ARCHDEACON MANSOUR ELISHA DARMO, AS METROPOLITAN OF MALABAR AND INDIA, ON MAY 4, 1952, IN THE CHURCH OF MAR ADDAI SHLIKHA IN TURLOCK, CALIFORNIA. THE SERMON WAS BROADCAST TWICE ON THE LOCAL RADIO.

CULTURAL ENTERPRISE

The part played by the Church of the East in the cultural field is no less remarkable than that of its missionary enterprise. The famous college of Edessa which became the centre, diffusing knowledge and learning both East and West, was founded in the early part of the Third Century A. D. as a monastic institution. By the end of the Fourth Century its fame had travelled throughout the Christian world. Great saints and scholars such as Mar Aprem, Mar Narsai, known as the "harp of the spirit", were the product of this college and later became its principals.

The names and the fame of a host of other saints and scholars, trained in all the knowledge and sciences of the day, products of the college of Edessa, and that of Nisibin, and other equally famous colleges and monastic institutions of later date, have passed into history.

While Christianity in the West had immersed into the ignorance and superstitions of the Dark Ages, the Eastern Christianity had reached its cultural peak. Great philosophers and physicians such as Mar Eyob of Urhai (Edessa) Khunain Bar Iskhah, Sahda of Karkh, Abu Yahya Al-Batriq, Bohtisho, Gabriel, and many other renowned men of learning, were making their influence felt in the seventh, eighth and to the succeeding centuries upon the khalifate of Islam, and through its agency diffusing knowledge to the West. The famous University established by the Arab conquerors in Cordova, Spain, became the gateway of this learning in the West during the centuries of long Arab rule in that country.

Eyob of Urhai, Dean of the Medical School in Baghdad, who died in the year 830 A.D., was a man of profound learning, a theologian, scientist, and physician, all combined. He was the first to develop in detail, through a deductive method of reasoning based on natural phenomena, the idea of the elemental origin of the universe and of the different bodies comprising it. He was the author of many works now lost, except for one work dealing with all these sciences; a kind of encyclopedia of knowledge, and the only existing copy of which was discovered only a few years ago. As a philosopher he often criticizes Aristotle, rejects his thesis and corrects him where he considers him to be in error.

Various Western historians of more recent times, especially those belonging to Protestant Christianity, such as Edward Gibbon, Harnack, and others, have endeavored to throw light on the accomplishments of the Church of the East; but Arnold Toynbee, in his outstanding work "A Study of History", has come closer than all the others, in recognizing the part played by this ancient church as the missionary of Asia and the champion of the Syriac civilization, in which the Christian faith originated.

The author says: "We have observed that the germ of the creative power of Christianity, was not Hellenic, but of alien origin (in fact, of Syriac, as we can now identify it); by contrast we can observe that the creative germ of Islam was not alien from, but native, to the Syriac Society. The founder, Mohammed, drew his inspiration primarily from Judaism, a purely Syriac religion. and secondarily from Nestorianism, a form of Christianity in which the Syriac element has recovered its preponderance over the Hellenic."

What Toynbee, in fact, tries to bring out is that the Greek Christianity in its attempt to conciliate the purely spiritual teaching of Christ with the Greek metaphysical conception and mythologies, found itself, being drawn away farther and farther towards the Greek philosophy and away from the purely Semitic conception of the New Testament. The author also shows the influence of Christianity over the Mahayana of India, to which the Sinic is affiliated, and which undoubtedly was influenced by the Church of the East.

THE NEOLOGICAL SPLIT

The council of Ephesus, 428 A.D. marked the first split between the Eastern and Western Christianity, namely between the Apostolic and Catholic Church of the East and the Monophysite block, then comprising the Greek, the Latin, and the Egyptian churches. The Church of the East stood with St. Nestorius, Patriarch of Constantinople in its rejection of the new title given to the blessed Virgin, namely, "Mother of God" for the good reason that the term "God" implies, God the spirit, the Eternal Triune, which is not subject to birth and suffering. It held that the term was not scriptural and the church has no right to teach any doctrine that is contrary to the scriptures. In the words of St. Paul: "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any gospel to you than that which we have preached to you, let him be khrim (Anathema)". It places the blessed virgin above apostles and saints, but it never places her equal with the divinity. It gives her the scriptural title, Mother of our Lord, of our Redeemer, of our Saviour, but rejects the Title "Mother of God." On this point now practically the whole of the Protestant Christianity is in agreement with the Catholic Church of the East; likewise, on all dogmas which have in recent centuries been adopted in the West. Protestantism moreover shares with the Church of the East the freedom of all individuals to the reading of the Scriptures. But the Church of the East maintains that the church is the exponent of the Scriptures and not for every individual to interpret them according to his own way of thinking.

The Christological Doctrine of the Catholic Church of the East has been defined concisely and fully by Mar Bawai, the Great, one of the fathers of the Church: "In His Godhead, begotten of the Father without beginning before all time; in His manhood born of Mary, in the fullness of time; in a united body namely, human and Devine. Since the Church of the East refused to recognize the imperial decrees of the Council of Ephesus, it was promptly nick-named by its opponents "Nestorian", a misnomer by which it has been known in the West to this day.

In the meantime the imperial block of Ephesus itself, has long ago parted ways, the Western Christianity has been divided into numerous fractions and varying forms of beliefs; so that, Christianity today presents a very sad picture; and the prayer of our Lord to His Father: "That they may be one, even as we are," remains unfulfilled, and we all, as Christians, feel that we have failed Him.

Nevertheless, Christ whom we all adore and worship, as the Son of God, is one and the same and He is always seeking to bring His own into His fold, according to His holy promises.

THE CHURCH OF INDIA

The church of India, for whom the Reverend Archdeacon Mansour Elisha Darmo has been consecrated Metropolitan, adopting the Episcopal name of "Mar Toma" (Lord Thomas) the apostle, who first preached the gospel of Christ in that Sub continent has continued to be a part of the mother church all through its history. The present Metropolitan has succeeded the late Metropolitan, Mar Timotheus, of blessed memory, who toiled for nearly forty years in that field of Christ, and was called to his rest some seven years ago.

His Grace, the present Metropolitan, was promised by his parents to the service of God, and he grew up as a Nazarite from his childhood. He studied under various learned priests of the church, and completed his scholastic career in the church school in Mosul, Iraq. It is also befitting that the consecration should have taken place in the Church of "Mar Adai" who, as a fellow-apostle of Mar Toma, was the first to be sent by the former to the City of Urhai, and they worked together in the same field, Adai also gave us the liturgy in which the Qurbana is being celebrated and which is known as the liturgy of Adai and Mari. That faithful branch of the Holy Church has stood firm and witnessed the name of our Lord throughout the vicissitudes of its centuries of long history.

At times, it has been the beloved element among the subjects of the ruling Rajahs and yet at others, it has been subjected to violent persecutions; not from Hindus but from fellow Christians who in recent centuries appeared on the scene. Yet, despite all this, it has remained faithful to the end.

Among us this morning is a young Indian student, Mr. Jos. Thomakutty, who is in this country studying in the University of Chicago, and on this auspicious occasion, he is representing the Church of India. Mr. Jos is the son of Mr. Thomakutty, the Trustee of the Church of India.

On the other side of the Ocean, the faithful of the Church of India, both clergy and laity alike are looking forward with great joy and rejoicing to the arrival of the new Metropolitan in their midst. On this very day, they are also joining us on this sacred occasion by the celebration of Qurbana Qaddisha throughout the diocese, and their prayers are with us. Likewise, the rest of the Church is with us in prayer beseeching the Lord to be with the new Metropolitan according to his holy promise to His apostles: "I will be with you unto the end of the world," that He may be with him and guide and strengthen him for the difficult task which lies ahead.

THE BOOK OF TREASURES
Philosophy of Job of Edessa
Part Three
BIOLOGY, ANATOMY, PHYSIOLOGY

Job discusses many biological subjects. He defines clearly the distinction between genera and species of animals and plants. These are, as usual, traced back to the elements. According to him, the principal divisions among existing things were fixed at the beginning when the combination of the first elements brought them into being. Having preceded Pasteur and bacteriological experiments by more than a thousand years, Job believes the lower forms of life, such as fleas, lice and tapeworms, are derived from action of the elements in corrupted bodies, and that such lower forms of life do not procreate. Causes of individual differentiations within the species are clearly set forth.

Job's general knowledge, says Mingana, in connection with the three classes of animals "terrestrial, aerial and aquatic" and his insight into the method of growth and fruition of trees and plants, is often remarkable.

Weeping is physiologically explained as due to superfluity of hot and humid matter, which man possesses more than other animals, "owing to the diversity of his food".

Contrary to opinion of ancient medical authorities that the young emanate exclusively from the semen of the male, Job seems to imply that male and female elements combine to produce the embryo, which thus takes its qualities from both of them.

In this respect he is far removed from the notion that the mother is only, as Aeschylus makes Apollo say, "The nurse of the embryo" — a notion which had such far-reaching influence on the social position of women.

CHEMISTRY AND PHYSICS

According to Job, minerals are formed by different proportions of simple elements of the earth. No notion of an atomic molecular theory is found in the book. Minerals "could be an exception to the general principle that the origin of everything is to be sought in antagonism between the elements."

An ingenious theory is set forth concerning different flavors. Pleasant tastes are produced by well-balanced parts of bodies coming into contact with correspondingly well-balanced parts of our tasting organs. "All things", says Job, "that have well-balanced parts in all species are agreeable and are tested with pleasure.

"Life itself is sweet and pleasant through harmonious balance between the elements. Unpleasant tastes are caused by lack of such balanced parts."

MUSIC

According to Job, the main musical notes are four: First, the high or thin; Second, low or thick; Third and Fourth, two intermediate between these. Each of these four notes is divided into three relatively high notes.

“From these twelve notes”, says the author, “are derived the innumerable tunes found among all people. The art of composing music is not an easy one. All people possess naturally in themselves the faculty of composing tunes, in the same way every one of them possesses, from natural thought, the power of building a house; but artistic production belongs to the artist.

“Anyone can compose tunes, and believe he is composing in a masterly way, while only those of a musician are so.”

In a remarkable passage, he states: “When voices of animals and men come out in a natural way, they are not delightful to the ear, but on the contrary are jarring to it. Only the one which is divided into melodies is delightful, although the natural voice, being one and evenly balanced, should have delighted the hearing on account of this balance.

“But because like is pleasing to like, and because the body is composed on varieties of different parts, and its pleasure is caused by the harmony between them, so the body is delighted only by sounds which are formed through diversity of parts in a balanced harmony.”

All this was written about the year 828 A.D., at a time when the highest reach of education in Europe hardly attained the level of a second grade school of today!

MOUNTAINS AND SPRINGS

Treating of physical geography, Job explains the origin of mountains and springs as due to gases trying to escape from the earth when it was in process of formation through the hot seething produced by elements coming together to give birth to it.

Having no instrument to measure the temperature of water, and working only through the natural sense of touch, he believed water of springs to be essentially warmer in winter than in summer.

Salinity of sea-water he explained accurately enough -- as due to the effect of the sun in evaporation, and the admixture of some parts of the earth.

To be continued

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Shirley Bacus, Editorial Assistant

SAN FRANCISCO NEWS

A tea and kaddy affair was given by the Church of the East. Approximately 200 people attended, and the evening was a tremendous success.

NEW BRITAIN NEWS

The "Light from the East" wishes to extend its deepest sympathy to the family of Jonathan Benjamin who died on September 17, as the result of injuries suffered in an automobile accident the previous month in Syracuse, New York. The funeral was held on September 20 in St. Mark's Episcopal Church. Burial was in the St. Thomas Church of the East Cemetery.

Mr. Benjamin was a resident of New Britain for 35 years. He was one of the most faithful and loyal members of the Church of the East. Surviving, are his widow, Mrs. Alice (Moses) Benjamin; two daughters, Sarah and Mary Ann; two brothers, Gabriel and Israel; a sister, Mrs. Catherine Aziz of Yonkers, New York, and several nieces and nephews.

CHICAGO NEWS

The Church of the East is proud to announce that it has been successful in its building fund drive, and has raised the required \$25,000 down payment for the new church. Through the generous contributions of the church members and the diligent efforts of the building committee the goal was met before the October 31 deadline.

The church has been redecorated, and the altar is near completion. A great debt of gratitude is due the volunteer workers who gave so willingly of their time. Special thanks should be accorded Gabriel Sargis, who supervised the work, and allowed the use of his personal equipment during the two months of week-end labor. The whole project was truly a fine example of spirit and co-operation.

At a recent meeting the Youth Organization elected the following officers:

John Sargis	President
Jack Bookie	Vice-President
Pearl Warda	Treasurer
Kay DeKasha	Secretary

FLINT NEWS

The E.A.Y.G. Club held an ice cream social at the Church of the East on September 21. The organization membership consists of 25 young people. The group meets at members homes once a week. Two baptisms were performed recently by Rev. Baba Tamraz. They were Terry Renee Smith, granddaughter of Panna Koshaba Odishoo, and Richard Walker, grandson of Darmo Essa (sorry, but the names of the parents were not furnished).



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