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Notes Editorial and Critical

A Chicago contemporary has a suggestive skit touching one of the radical defects of this "literary age". Here it is:

"Bindleson says he always weighs his words before he speaks".

"If he does he cheats himself by giving light weight".

An intelligent listener once said of his preacher, that he "*Giving Light Weight*" could talk half an hour continuously, uttering beautiful sentences all the time, and yet say *nothing!* This ability—to talk or write without end, and without *thought*—seems to be the supreme aim of a large class of so-called "literary" men. They cheat *themselves* "by giving light weight". Sensible people usually "weigh" the men themselves, and make it convenient to avoid them!

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We have been startled by the latest outbreak of our closest neighbor,

Rev. Dr. Hallock, of
A Puzzling Utterance "Christian Work",
from whom we are
separated only by

an inch-board partition with a window in it. Here is the way he flies in the face of the "Four Hundred" with their exalted aspirations:

"It is said that the only obstacle to the marriage between the Duke of the Abruzzi and Miss Katharine Elkins, about which gossip has been so busy during the last fortnight, lies in the fact that Miss Elkins is a Protestant and does not want to be-

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come a Catholic. We would like to see some American girl who, title and man notwithstanding, would refuse to treat her religion as if it were something to be bought and sold".

What is to be thought of such a sentiment uttered in this "advanced" age? How can its utterance be accounted for by our Editor?

Does he feel free to say this because he is not a multi-millionaire? He would probably resent that; for he is just going to Europe for the rich man's "chief end", "a good time and a long vacation", and that, in these hard times, calls for an overplus of this world's goods.

Or is it because he regards the distinctions between the religious creeds as still worth keeping up? That seems quite impossible for any generous soul in this "liberal" age; and Dr. Hallock is known to be a whole-souled man and editor, who ought to have outgrown the old-fashioned, "narrow" notions!

Or is it because he has no marriageable daughter to dispose of in the foreign market to which he is going for a vacation? One seems to be driven back upon that as the only answer that will satisfy the high-class American mind of the present day. Shall we ever again see an "American girl" of the kind he desiderates? With money galore, with brain-cap a vacuum, with life aimless, with religion a sham? "Quoth the raven, Nevermore!"

“The Society of Biblical Literature and Exegesis”

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In the February issue of “The Bible Student and Teacher”, Rev. Dr. Munhall makes some statements that indicate misapprehension of the composition and objects of the Association bearing the above title.

1. *Concerning the membership of the Society.*

He states that the Society has 218 members, that only 25 or 30 were in attendance, and that not more than 50 persons were present at any time, although the sessions were open to the public; thereby suggesting that the Society is falling into decay. If this suggestion is correct, it requires to be stated that the Society does not aim at propagandism. It is an association of gentlemen who like to come together to compare their thoughts and investigations.

2. *Concerning the Personnel of the Conference.*

“Jews were conspicuous, and Unitarians were in evidence”. “Dr. H. P. Smith . . . participated”. “The members of the Conference were, without exception, I think, Higher Critics of the rationalistic school”. For accuracy, I give some facts: I am not a ‘High Critic of the rationalistic school’, but was present and read a paper; Dr. Albert T. Clay addressed the body; Rev. Dr. Willis J. Beecher was present the year before; some of the Princeton men are members.

The facts are, that any Biblical scholar is eligible to membership; that conservatives are admitted as

freely as others, and have the same opportunity to read and discuss papers; that at this time the conservative evangelicals are a small minority. Those of us who attend believe that this contact with scholars, and interchange of views even with those so far from our personal views as are Jews and Unitarians, is an advantage to us and to the truth. We do not believe that it will hurt us thus to study with these eminent scholars and courteous gentlemen, any more than it would hurt us to do business with them or to serve in the army or in Congress with them.

3. *Concerning the Atmosphere of the Conference.*

From what has already been said, it can be seen why the members of the Society do not pray together. Men who, like myself, worship Jesus Christ as God, and men who do not, can not pray together; but there are some things which we can do together.

4. *Concerning the Work of the Conference.*

“The Bible, in the estimation of the gentlemen composing this Association, is, in no real sense, the Word of God”. Dr. Beecher, of Auburn, Dr. Robt. Dick Wilson, of Princeton, and others who like myself love and revere the Bible as much as our Brother Munhall, are members of this Association. And certainly, in some of the papers read at the December meeting, it was not treated “as literature, merely”.

5. *Concerning Impressions of the Conference.*

"First, orthodox teachers and pastors . . . were conspicuous by their absence". "The men who are the real leaders in the work and scholarship of the Church place a very low estimate upon the importance and value of the work of this Association". And it is probable that most of the members, and most of the readers of papers, would agree that comparatively speaking the work of this Society is not of much importance; because the members of this club are but a small part of all the workers, and the work of this small club is but a small part of the work done by those who are its members. But such work as this Society encourages its own members to do, is *important*.

What is this work? The scientific study of the Bible. The American Bible League aims to promote the same sort of study; but its constitution, for satisfactory reasons, excludes all but conservatives from its membership. The Society of Biblical Literature and Exegesis admits conservative scholars and radical scholars. If the conservatives would join it and attend, in as large proportion as the radicals, they would control it. Some of them would thereby learn

some things of advantage to them. They would give to radical scholars and to the general public, what is so much needed, a demonstration, that conservative views and thorough scholarship are not inconsistent.

Permit a frank and kind word of protest against the tone of the article referred to. It is more likely to confirm gentlemen in their unfortunate persuasion that we conservatives lack scholarship and appreciation of scholarship, than to correct any error. An effort, not backed by learning and reason, to belittle Wellhausen—perhaps the most widely noted, and possibly the most influential, Biblical scholar of our times—can not but react in favor of him and his school. The way to meet such men as Wellhausen, and as the Jews and Unitarians of this Society, is to equal or to surpass them in scholarship and in industry, and to write the books that must be used as tools and consulted as authorities by Biblical scholars everywhere. Until we conservatives produce a better Hebrew lexicon than that of Brown and Briggs, a better Hebrew grammar than Harper's, and a better Bible Dictionary than Hastings', we can not afford to adopt the tone of the criticism referred to towards those men.

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Archeological Resources---A Ground of Confidence

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The impression prevails in many quarters, concerning Biblical Archeology, that *most of the things have been found*. Some ten years ago, when I was about entering upon archeological work, a very highly esteemed

friend, a scholarly man and a leader in theological education, though heartily in sympathy with my interest in the work, advised me confidentially not to take it up as a career, for the reason that "the argument