

# BLASPHEMY AND FOLLY.

## CHICAGO THE SCENE OF A PRETENDED NEW DISPENSATION.

To Fools the Pleasure is as Great of Being Cheated as to Cheat—The Very Ideal of a Charlatan—Impudent Absurdity—New Cosmogony—New Heavens, Earth, Lies, and Victims—The Press the Enemy of All Good—Ranting Nauseating Rather than Ridiculous.

"I am the Son of God come again."

Any one who chooses may hear this remarkable statement by going to the corner of Cottage Grove avenue and College place to a plain brick house, fantastically styled "The College of Life and Office of the Guiding Star." Inside the house a hundred people, more or less, will be gathered, listening with serious faces to the man who makes these remarkable statements—the seriousness of acquiescence. You may look around in vain for expressions of wonder, amusement, or disgust. The quick eye of the speaker may catch you doing so, and you will be reminded of the fact in trenchant words.

The man himself is Cyrus R. Teed, sometimes designated Dr. Teed, though the authority to claim the title is not clear. Perhaps he is a doctor of divinity. But he himself would be the first to disclaim the idea that his divinity needs doctoring. He is an unprepossessing man of 53 years of age, of wiry build and nervous temperament. His black hair is combed straight back and cut off squarely across the neck. He wears a mustache and Brother Jonathan chin whiskers that move with his lower jaw. He wears a black frock coat and a white lawn tie. Altogether he has the appearance of an ordinary man of not the highest grade of human origin, and his voice has a not altogether agreeable nasal tone, which completes the illusion that he is as other men.

Yet he claims to be the Son of God and that he bears a family resemblance to the



SOME OF DR. TEED'S FLOCK.

Almighty. If he does then we have reason to rejoice that the Creator of the universe remains invisible.

Naturally one looks for some brilliant utterances, something above the ordinary preacher who owns to being a worm of the dust, and one is apt to be disappointed. Except for this preposterous assertion with nothing particular to back it up with the "sermon" is not flattering to the average intellect. But it is curious to watch the man. His roving eye is all over the room. It is filled with suspicion and when he proclaims that Judas will soon appear you feel as if you were suspected and that he will draw a bolt of heaven or a seven shooter from his pocket and do something rash.

The idea suggests itself how interesting it would be to see "Cyrus" and the Rev. Geo. J. Schweinfurth pitted against each other. But though so near they never even refer to each other.

### New Words to Express New Nonsense.

About four years ago a fanatical doctor claiming to be a graduate of the Eclectic Medical College of New York came to Chicago to attend a convention of Christian Scientists, or psychic somethings. He came from Rochester, N. Y., or a village near that place. This was Dr. Teed. He acted sensibly except that he had some patent psychic and "pneumatic" ideas of his own which attracted some attention. Whether this fact turned his head or whether his head was turned already is not known, but he rapidly developed a taste for attention and elaborated his ideas so as to look as little like those of other men as possible.

### "Koreshan Science."

It was only a short time before the "Koreshan Science" was full-fledged; Dr. Teed had the permission of the State of Illinois to promulgate this theory and to issue diplomas of graduation. It now appears that for the sum of \$50 and a month's residence in the "College of Life" the diploma confers immortality on the recipient and the degree "Cyrus Disciple," and the one who bears all these honors is pledged to a certain manner of life, the surrender of all his worldly goods, and the dissemination of the teachings of "Koreshan Science" and proclaim the second advent as accomplished in the person of Dr. Teed.

The college was located on State street in the business quarter. A score of pupils or more attended these lectures and took up their abode with "Cyrus." A swell lunchroom was opened "for revenue only," and the women disciples were all Marthas. There might have been one Mary. There is a tradition of a woman who came from New York who was a sort of head angel in the establishment. She was immortal—that is, she would live in this body eternally, though it is now reported that she died last December.

### Food for Soul and Body.

For some reason the State street place was given up and the restaurant disposed of. The whole establishment was removed to the location now occupied, but the number of pupils remains the same. The revenue comes mainly from tuition fees and the profits of a printing office at 3619 Cottage Grove Avenue, where the women act as compositors on the *Flaming Sword* and the *Guiding Star*, which are edited by "Cyrus" himself.

In these publications he spreads himself, so to speak, and promulgates his "revelations." Anybody else would call them opinions or views. A Judge who heard them in court might call them something barster, for which a man could reasonably and humanely be shut up for awhile. The post-office authorities might take still another view of them, and the Czar of all the Russias would probably agree with the minions of Uncle Sam in the interests of society. But he calls these messages "revelations."

### Cyrus Interviewed.

Some weeks ago a Tribune reporter had an interview with "Cyrus." He doesn't like reporters. He gets up in the pulpit and says things about them that sound something like a blank space after a big letter. The mildest thing he says about them is that they are liars, thieves, cut-throats, murderers, and bad men. Knowing this, the Tribune man played he was a young woman for once and went in disguise, because he did not want to have his feelings hurt or to get Dr. Teed excited. The "Judas" or Cyrus is looking for will probably turn out to be a newspaper man.

So the reporter who went was a young woman in search of hysterical consolation of a new brand. She had tried all of them, one after the other, and none of them filled the bill. The Koreshan Science appeared to be the thing she was after. Would Dr. Teed please explain it?

"Cyrus, madam," he said, gently but firmly.

"That seems too familiar, to call you by your first name, but since you insist—"

"In the first place, I am the son of God. This is the second advent which I predicted. I am about to come into my new kingdom, my reign upon earth, which will be ushered in in 1891 with a chorus on Mount Zion of 144,000 perfect sons of God."

"Is this all there is to it?"

"This is the new dispensation. But I have a new system of religion that the world was not ready for when I was here before."

### In Short, a "Cut."

Briefly, and as intelligibly as the nature of the case admits, Koreshan Science is a com-

plete system of cult, universal in its scope, comprising the evolved and involved product of the Christians with all other dispensations. It comprises all knowledge and covers every phase and feature of mental and spiritual existence. All this and a little more, with faith-healing on the side and the "Kreutzer Sonata" on the half-shell. After giving the reporter a general outline he went into details.

All matter is interchangeable with spirit. Man will yet obtain a degree of development where the life supply will equal the waste; when that is reached he can never grow old. His body will be a perfect physical body, and he will have power to dematerialize and rematerialize at pleasure. Man then will be sexless; this perfect man will be a union of the souls and attributes of a man and woman. These men will be called sons of God. They will rule the world in the golden age. "The millennium will begin in 1891. It will be only a partial millennium—a sort of ushering in of the new order of events which will subsequently culminate in the personal rule of a personal Christ aided by 144,000 of the perfect sons of God."

"I am that Christ—the King of the world."

### Judas, a Reporter.

"Will a Judas appear?"

"Yes, I am looking for him. I expect to be translated by the hate of my enemies. I have been in Heaven many times and sat in spirit at the right hand of my Father. These 144,000 perfect sons of God will be like me."

"Capable of taking summer vacations in Heaven?"

"I must explain that I am the forerunner of a higher genus than the human. This genus proceeds from Deity and is clothed in a spiritual flesh that will be evolved not of man and woman, but from the Holy Ghost which is the pervading element of the Almighty. Understand?"

The reporter felt pretty tired, but nodded her head.

"You don't believe in marriage. The question is exciting interest now on account of Tolstoi."

But "Cyrus" can discount Tolstoi.

### Marriage a Failure.

"Marriage is the second curse of Genesis. The first was on the serpent, the second fell on the woman, making her a slave of the passions of men. God commanded her to people the earth in shame and sorrow. And she has been thinking all these centuries that it was love for which she took up the burden of marriage. But men knew better, and have laughed at her. In this College of Life we are celibates. The reward for the women who practice my teachings is that they will be the mothers of these sons of Gods."

"How many have you got of these sons of God now to begin on?"

Cyrus was not ready to give figures. And there are to be 144,000 by 1891 to start the chorus on Mount Zion! Time's short.

"There is another thing people don't pay guy attention to. There was a third curse pronounced on men—the battle between capital and labor which will come soon. Then will follow the chorus, and the earth will be ruled as it now is in the College of Life. Bellamy's system is not quite perfect because he does not provide for the new genus. We do not break up families, as has been claimed, but women and men, after hearing my doctrines, have voluntarily adopted a celibate life. Husbands and wives lived here in these new relations. My house is peaceable and I have never come in contact with the authorities, which is surely proof, when I have so many enemies who would injure me if they could."

### Once Indicted.

As to his never having been disturbed by the authorities, Dr. Teed is respectfully referred to THE TRIBUNE of the dates of Feb. 22 and 23, 1888, where it is related that he was once indicted by the grand jury for trying faith-healing on a Mr. F. Benedict, who died of broncho-pneumonia.

One of Dr. Teed's revelations was to the effect that this "world is hollow," though he did not wind up his announcement in the stereotyped fashion by saying that his doll



DR. TEED DELIVERING HIS TIRADE.

is stuffed with sawdust. O, dear, no! Dr. Teed is nothing if not original. He said "the world is hollow and we live on the inside of it instead of the outside as the astronomers suppose."

This is the way he disposes of the worthless theories of astronomers.

"The hollow sphere in which we live is about 8,000 miles in diameter with the sun at the center. A vertical line drawn from any point on this surface through the sun would strike the other side of the earth."

"This rather upsets the center of gravity," remarked an irreverent newspaper man.

"And the other theory if true would upset you," remarked "Cyrus" conclusively.

"The facts upon which the argument of the earth's rotund convexity is founded instead of proving its convexity proves its concavity, as the Koreshan argument easily establishes. If the earth's inhabitable surface is convex man always stands vertical, the foot of the perpendicular axis of his body being directed toward the center of the earth, provided the center of the earth is the center of gravity."

"Why does the top of a ship's mast appear first on the approach of a vessel at sea?"

If the reporter thought the doctor would be stumped for an answer and have to resort to the one given in the Elementary Geography he was mistaken.

### One Lie Supports Another.

"The appearance is an optical delusion. First it is a law of optics that when any object is seen through a reflected, refracted, or deviated line or ray of vision it appears in the direction of the course of the ray between the eye and the point of deviation. In the optics of Koreshan Science it is demonstrated that vision is curvilinear. The curve is upward from the surface of the earth, describing a lesser curve."

"How do you account for night and day?"

"The sun has a light and dark side and revolves on its axis. The light of the sun passes through seven focalizing atmospheres or mediums—seven strata of forces."

"The earth is a hollow shell. Its thickness is to the space within as an eggshell is to an egg. This shell consists of seven defined strata in this order: Iron, plumbum, copper, silver, mercury, gold, platinum. The surface of the earth has abnormal deposits from these metallic strata, but there are also mineral strata."

"Then this platinum-plated globe is the center, the sun of another system."

"Get a cross section of the whole concern and you would have a sort of Saturn."

But Dr. Teed frowned on anything that sounded like levity.

### At the Gate of the Garden.

The *Flaming Sword*, the official organ of "Cyrus," is unique. He claims it to be the channel through which the theocrasis is declared and made public. It keeps the way of the "Tree of Lives," etc.

"Cyrus" himself is explained as being from the Hebrew root *koor*—cherub. He looks it. The second identification is to dissolve in a furnace. Teed itself signifies torch; the initial letter means sign.

"This name comprises God's signature and confirmation of the instrument of his choice for ushering in his new dispensation."

More than that, he claims to be not only Christ reincarnated but also Buddha, and nearly every other founder of a system of religion.