



COLLEGE MEN AND THE BIBLE



A GREAT AWAKENING AMONG THE STUDENTS OF AMERICA
BY CLAYTON SEDGWICK COOPER

It is a matter of importance and peculiar significance that there has been of late a great revival of interest in the study of the Bible among the undergraduates of our colleges and universities. This has been mainly due to a concerted effort of the International Committee representing the Young Men's Christian Association of Canada and the United States. Of this Committee, Mr. Cooper has been and still is the Secretary, in special charge of the Bible work in educational institutions. In conjunction with this work, a federation is in progress with students of foreign lands, the development of which Mr. Cooper has recently inspected. This world-wide movement, which, outside of North America, includes 80,000 college men in eighteen different countries, will be the subject of other articles by Mr. Cooper to appear soon in *THE CENTURY*.—THE EDITOR.

IN the autumn of 1903, a West Point cadet, addressing a large company of his fellow-students, uttered the following significant words: "The cadets at West Point know comparatively little concerning the English Bible. The students of North America are planning to increase twofold the number of men studying this book the present year. We men at West Point should have a part, and we *will* have a part, in this enterprise." In less than two weeks there were two hundred cadets at West Point studying the English Bible. This number has been maintained and increased each subsequent year, and at present, despite the fact that these men have less than forty-five minutes to themselves each day, 260 students are meeting weekly for a practical study of the Bible. Colonel Larned, the dean of the West Point faculty, in speaking of this work said: "Judging from the results at the United States Military Academy, I am inclined to believe that this student uprising for the study of the Bible is one of the most profitable and strategic movements of our times."

WIDE SCOPE

THIS awakening of new interest in the Bible at West Point was coincident with



YALE

one of the great significant and influential enterprises in college life during the last decade. It is an undertaking of wide scope, including, last year, 539 institutions of the United States and Canada, which reported 32,259 college men who continued in their attendance upon voluntary Bible classes for two months or more. The follow-

ing report of attendance in Bible classes at a few institutions of varying types reveals the extensive character of this awakening:

NUMBER OF STUDENTS ATTENDING BIBLE CLASSES, 1908-09, AND NUMBER OF NORMAL CLASSES FOR THE TRAINING OF STUDENT TEACHERS

	Students	Classes
Yale University	673	7
University of Toronto	600	7
University of Texas	525	
Pennsylvania State College	500	3
Cornell University	458	2
Iowa State College	450	3
Tuskegee Institute	450	3
University of Illinois	426	2
University of Nebraska	400	
Harvard University	335	3
Princeton University	314	3
Dartmouth College	300	4
Vanderbilt University	250	1
Stanford University	223	1

STUDENT LEADERSHIP

THE work has been noteworthy because of its student leadership. It is peculiarly a student propaganda. Last year more than three thousand college men were engaged in leading voluntary Bible classes in the institutions of the United States and Canada, while hundreds of other students were actively interested in the organization and development of the work. The success of this student leadership emphasizes afresh the fact that the supreme influential force in college life is the college man. The student who lives upon the campus and engages in the same activities with his fellow-students is the deciding factor relative to any great change in the life of an institution.

ALL CLASSES OF STUDENTS

DURING the year 1904, seventy representative members of Greek-letter fraternities gathered in a room at the University of Michigan. The meeting had been called by a college man of that institution to consider the relation of the study of the Bible to the fraternity-house life of the university. After the nature and method of the study had been presented to the men, this student, who was at that time captain of both the foot-ball and base-ball teams of the university, said: "I have been at the University of Michigan for more than three years and, as you know, I have engaged actively in college life. I have never been known particularly as a religious man, yet I have come to appreciate that especially in fraternity life some of us must face seriously the problems and the temptations of our college days. It appears to me that these problems can be considered in connection with a sane and intelligent study of the Bible. I confess that I know little of the book myself, but I am determined to begin its study, and if there is no one else to do it, I will lead a group of athletic men in my own fraternity-house." The result was the formation of groups for the study of the Bible in fourteen Greek-letter fraternities at the University of Michigan.

It is significant that from this beginning in one institution there has grown a continent-wide interest in this book among fraternity-men. Last year 4939 members

of Greek-letter fraternities were studying the Bible with much interest and seriousness in voluntary groups in their chapter-houses.

When Professor Henry Drummond made his first visit to America, he addressed the students in professional schools in New York City. He wrote home to a friend in England that he had never seen a crowd of men who were more severely driven by their daily schedules, or men who were surrounded by fiercer temptations of every sort. As this plan for the study of the Bible increased in its comprehension of different classes of students, it was said that professional men would not be interested, nor would they have time to engage in such study. But it is of real interest to note that in the city of New York at the present time 115 professional students are meeting every week in little groups, using a series of studies upon the social and political teachings of Christianity. The interest among this class of students in New York is paralleled by a similar awakening among men in professional schools in other large cities.

Last college year three hundred and eighty-two North American institutions reported the following facts concerning the popular standing of the Bible among leaders in college life:

REPRESENTATIVE STUDENTS ATTENDING
BIBLE CLASSES—COLLEGE YEAR 1908-09

Prize and Scholarship Men	885
Editors of College Papers	696
Class Presidents	795
Members of College Glee Clubs . . .	1383
Members of 'Varsity Base-ball Teams	1271
Members of 'Varsity Foot-ball Teams	1445
Members of 'Varsity Track Teams .	958
Members of 'Var. Basket-ball Teams	535

At the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis the chairman of the Bible study committee is the first ranking midshipman at the academy. Through his leadership, 340 midshipmen are meeting weekly in Bible groups, while thirty-five of their number are acting as teachers, receiving instruction for their work from an officer of the faculty.

At the University of Wisconsin the student who has been specially influential this year in the Bible campaign is probably

the leading student in the university, being one of the most prominent men in the crew and on other athletic teams. An alumnus of Cornell, writing from Ithaca, recently remarked that last season in every Greek-letter fraternity at Cornell there was a group of men studying the English Bible. He added that this study was becoming a popular and permanent interest of undergraduate life. For two years an employed Bible secretary has been giving his entire time to the voluntary Bible work at Yale, while at Princeton, the University of Pennsylvania, the University of Michigan, the University of Illinois, and other institutions, the equivalent of one employed man's time has been devoted to this student interest. The development of this activity among the large State institutions of the South and West is also of striking importance. In 1908-09, ten State institutions in those particular regions reported an actual attendance of 3678 students in voluntary Bible classes, the superintending agency being the college Young Men's Christian Associations. This fact is a cause for reflection as one realizes that in most of these State universities no study of this nature is furnished in the curriculum.

BIBLE STUDY LITERATURE

THE introduction of Bible courses, reference-books, and literature suitable to student life and conditions, has had marked influence upon this movement. Many a college man, quite regardless of his beliefs, would study this book if he really knew how to begin. A committee of scholars was formed a few years ago for the special purpose of preparing outline courses adapted to student life. The demand for these books has increased continually during the last ten years, and in the college year of 1908-09, 41,799 books for the study of the English Bible, prepared by college professors and Bible experts, were purchased and used for systematic work among students.

Reference-libraries containing well-chosen books relating to subjects treated in these courses have been formed in 260 different institutions of the United States and Canada especially for the use of student teachers. These courses cover a wide range of subjects, and include books relating to all parts of the Bible, as well as

courses dealing with the practical application of Christian principles to modern life.

FACULTY COÖPERATION

THE assistance and advice of members of the faculty have been indispensable adjuncts to the success of this study. A council of thirteen prominent Bible scholars is supervising the preparation of biblical literature. In addition to this council, seventy-five college presidents, professors, and alumni are associated with different student sections, and assist in the intelligent and practical development of this vital branch of education. Last year, in 398 institutions, there were 1498 faculty men reported to be coöperating actively in the conduct of voluntary Bible study. Members of college faculties trained in 251 normal classes the hundreds of students who lead the groups. These men have brought to the movement the same logical, intelligent processes of study used in the securing of knowledge in other branches of collegiate education. This cause will depend increasingly upon the assistance of mature scholars both for teaching and for training teachers and for general counsel.

There was a time when it seemed proper for a college man to apologize for the study of the English Bible. This attitude has been very largely changed by the breadth of view which has characterized this interest in the colleges. In the majority of the larger institutions where literally hundreds of men are members of these groups, well-nigh every variety of belief is represented and in many cases a goodly percentage of students in the classes do not profess any religious opinion. I found this fact interestingly demonstrated at one large Eastern university. One of these classes was formed in a house where were living seven students who were accustomed to meet often for friendly discussion. Three of these students claimed to be pantheists, a fourth was an agnostic, there was one Christian, one Jew. As the last man could not easily be catalogued, he was called a vegetarian. I discovered that these men had been discussing almost everything in the heavens above, the earth beneath, and the waters under the earth, but did not know the first thing concerning the tenets of Christianity as outlined

in the Bible. This group of men began with real interest to study the Bible together, using as an outline one of the courses specially prepared for students.

THE PROMOTION OF FRIENDSHIP

THIS study is, moreover, closely associated with the sympathetic forces of college friendship. An educator who has given his life to students, in speaking to some undergraduates recently, said: "The man who has gone through college, and at the end of four years has not gained one true friend into whose face he can look and seriously say, 'I am thine,' and then hear the answer, 'Yes, friend; and I am thine,' that man has lost one of the chief assets of his college career." Charles Kingsley was once asked the chief secret of his success. He answered simply, "I had a friend." When Henry Drummond died, among his effects were found a great pile of small, soiled bits of paper containing scraps of experience, prayers, confessions—just half-open windows into the lives of hundreds of men. These bits of paper had been given to him in connection with his meetings with students. George Adam Smith called his life "a healing confessional" into which multitudes of students had crept to tell the story of their souls, and then had gone away strengthened and refreshed. Every group formed for this study is another chance for the expression of such sympathies.

Recently, at one of our universities, I met five men who were among the most representative students in the senior class. They told me that in their freshman year a certain upper classman had asked them to meet with him in his room for an hour once a week to take up a certain line of Bible study and to talk over personal and college problems. These men affirmed, however, that the class hour was only a small part of the value of this study. The upper classman became their friend. His interest extended to their entire life; he gave up his pleasures and at least one vacation because of his sincere interest in different members of the group. For two years this class was conducted in this fashion, and after the teacher was graduated, these five men, who held at least four of the highest positions in the gift of the undergraduate body, were each

in turn conducting similar groups. It is indeed true that this uprising of students finds its secret not simply in discussion of abstract principles, but also in the deep appreciation of those vast opportunities and privileges of a great college brotherhood. The ideal of these little groups is expressed in the words which appear in one of the courses:

Let me live in a house by the side of the road,

Where the race of men go by—

The men who are good and the men who are bad,

As good and as bad as I.

I would not sit in the scorner's seat,

Or hurl the cynic's ban;—

Let me live in a house by the side of the road

And be a friend to man.

The practical results of this college man's endeavor are variously apparent in nearly every institution in the United States and Canada.

EDUCATIONAL VALUE

THE educational value of this study is inestimable. Students have turned naturally and eagerly to a sensible and modern use of the Bible, knowing their ignorance of it. Readers of this magazine will remember the article by President Charles F. Thwing of Western Reserve University, published in *THE CENTURY* for May, 1900, in which he described the astonishing and lamentable results in certain examinations of students in Bible subjects. It is true that, as a certain professor in New England has said, this student ignorance of the Bible has been wide-spread and "complete." Many instances of this limitation of Biblical knowledge are still to be found. Indeed, there is still only about one fifth of the student population of the institutions of higher learning in the United States and Canada now engaged in this regular and systematic study. The movement for bringing the Bible to thinking men is really just beginning, and the needs, problems, and opportunities are equal to the present accomplishments. It is certain, however, that this present wide-spread tendency of college men to know the facts of the Bible will be increasingly

evident in the realm of general education. The increasing use of the Bible in the regular courses offered in the college curriculum is already generally noticeable. An understanding of the best English literature will be a part of the profitable resultant. Clear knowledge is being acquired concerning the meaning of the Christian religion. At one institution no fewer than three hundred students were studying the Bible last year with the general topic, "What is Christianity?" A successful principle of real scientific study has been well grounded, namely: the endeavor to find out exactly what the Bible says. The securing of this actual knowledge is having a decided influence not simply in changing certain opinions of students which have been too often based on second-hand testimony, prejudice, or inherited beliefs, but also in affording a clear and satisfying conviction relative to conduct and religion.

THOUGHTFUL HABITS

IN the last analysis, perhaps the most abiding benefit of college life is that influence which is crystallized into habit during these formative days: The college man may forget his college enthusiasms and his emotions. Much of the "college spirit," whatever that may be, of undergraduate days evaporates in contact with the practical and serious world. Habits of these early days, however, are persistent and usually permanent in after-life. These Bible studies now used by students are arranged with a view to assist college men in the formation of habits of daily study and meditation. As a reminder of the things that are most worth while, this habit has become valued by thousands of students. I was greatly impressed to find that one of the most representative leaders in an institution in the Middle West was rising at five o'clock in the morning in order to spend an hour a day in thoughtful meditation and study relative to one of these student courses. His room-mate said to me: "I attribute the splendid equilibrium and balanced judgment of this busy man to this thoughtful habit which he has practised for more than two years."

If chosen men could never be alone
In deep mid-silence open-doored with God
No greatness ever had been dreamed of done.

LIFE IN ITS TRUE PERSPECTIVE

To get the faculty of seeing things in right proportion is a real ideal for college life, and here study of the Bible is of use. A few years ago, the students of Japan, in a large conference, sent a cable message to a student conference in the United States which read, "Japan leading the Orient, but whither?" Frederick Paulsen in his "Introduction to Philosophy" presents the figure of a traveler coming down from a high mountain. At the base of the mountain he is lost for a time in the foot-hills; the mountain is temporarily obscured from view. Finally he moves away from the foot-hills into the plain, and again the great mountain returns to his vision, and becomes more clearly outlined as he travels away from the smaller hills. There are many currents in our modern life which tend to turn the student from the main stream of his right mission. He is quite likely to miss the invisible but very real world of spiritual values. Lord Beaconsfield said, "The man who is formidable is the man of one desire." It is no small task, however, for college men to achieve the ability to subordinate desire to desire according to right relative urgency and importance. A fanatic has been defined as a man who doubles his enthusiasm when he has lost his aim. There is such a thing as energy without liberty, efficiency without real power. There is a special demand among students for that "peace of mood" which makes possible the seeing of life whole. The ability to take one's latitude and longitude, the fine art of being able to accent one's life correctly, to deal with tendencies before they become hardened into conditions—these are some of the invisible accompaniments of this modern movement of college men. The truth of Wordsworth is very real for college men in these times:

The world is too much with us; late and
soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our
powers.

This perspective of real values is being gained by students through a quest for great principles in the Bible, studying for a whole year certain large topics in books or characters. It is one thing to com-

mit to memory certain verses or passages; it is quite another thing to study the Bible in the great sweep of its universal principles and personalities. Students are learning to discriminate, to analyze, to discover the central meaning of Bible truth. There has too often been a tendency to confine Bible study to the securing of a chain of mottos or brief texts taken from their context. But our times call not so much for formulas and creeds as for clear ideas in relation to practical living.

Yet while it is true that doctrinal discussions are less popular among thoughtful men to-day, it is also true that there is a very earnest search on the part of students for those leaders who are able to interpret religion in the vernacular of the twentieth century. Mr. Chan Po Ling, a very representative scholar and teacher of the city of Tientsin, China, recently accepted Christianity. He expressed to me his ambition to spend several years in becoming so proficient in the knowledge of the elements of Christianity, through the study of the Bible, that he might be able to translate into the Chinese language the central meaning of the Christian religion.

It is doubtful whether there was ever a greater demand than at present for truth that contributes to reality in life and service. Governor Charles E. Hughes, speaking to a company of men interested in this work, said: "As students come down to New York City the questions which we place before them are not simply, 'What is your college?' or 'What is your nationality?' or, 'To what church do you belong?' The questions of greater moment to-day are, 'Will you lie?' 'Will you steal?' 'Can we trust you utterly?'"

This tendency of student life of North America to go direct to the heart of the great truths is manifest in the method and spirit of this study of the Bible. In many institutions these small groups of men are discussing questions like these: "What is the true test of religion?" "What is the character of God as revealed in the Bible?" "What is the teaching of Christianity in relation to the use of wealth?" "What is the nature and the consequence of sin?" "How can we assist in bringing about higher moral standards in this institution?"

MORAL VALUES

THE moral and ethical life of college communities is being invariably affected wherever this practical study is introduced. There is probably no environment in which sham and pretense are more quickly and unerringly detected than among college men. The influence of the Bible, therefore, which has always brought into individual living the element of reality, is counted supremely valuable here.

Recently, a certain athletic leader was walking across the campus of a State University, when a bystander, who was watching him, said to one of the students, "What is the reason for the unquestioned leadership of that man among these three thousand students?" The student thought for a moment and replied, "It is not simply because he is a great athlete, nor is it because of his social and intellectual leadership; but I reckon we all stand for that student in this university because we are dead sure he is the real thing." At West Point a few years ago some one asked the question, What is a Christian? One of the men in the group replied instantly, "Oscar Westover." To that student, at least, Christianity was not a creed, but a personality; not a method, but a man. A college man told me that the greatest thing which he carried away from his four years in college was the vision of something he saw in his old college president's face at a time when the president was returning to his home after the death of his daughter. No stronger argument would be needed for the value of the study of the Bible than the presentation of the plain fact that it brings about this genuineness of character to which college men pay homage.

Already the power of this study is being felt in decisions at college as to life work. In its presentation of wide, unexplored fields of knowledge of the great careers of the pioneers of civilization it is assisting students to right plans for life work. It was reported that virtually every senior graduated at Yale last year had had, in considering the choice of a vocation, the benefit of the voluntary Bible classes led by Professor Henry B. Wright, the general subject of the study being "The Will of God and Life Work."

The influence upon the will which the Bible has always exerted is peculiarly im-

portant as a corrective of the natural tendency to an easy-going, drifting purpose attendant upon student life. Mr. Huxley once said that the true value of all education lies in its power to make a man do the thing he ought to do when it ought to be done, regardless of whether he feels like doing it or not.

As a force for creating moral reserve, this uprising is generally gratifying. The coach of one of our large athletic teams said recently that in his judgment there was a time in every great foot-ball game when the decisive factor of success or failure was physical reserve. A moment occurred when science and technical skill were quite powerless, and only that physical reserve which had been stored up through long months of practice decided the issue. In other words, no regiment in face of the enemy can make up for lack of discipline on the parade-ground. Last year 12,280 men were reported as practising daily habits of study and meditation in connection with this movement. One cannot but believe that the present daily habits of thousands of college students are to be strikingly effective in producing moral and spiritual reserve in the great crises of after life.

THE IDEA OF SERVICE

ONE of the most practical features of the present uprising of students lies in the fact that the Bible is being transferred from the region of dogmatic and theological conceptions to the realm of real life. The book is being rediscovered not simply as a store-house of mysterious and sacred information, but as a means leading to successful and normal human life. The Bible is taking its place among the serviceable books of the world. It is proving itself to be the first book for conduct, which Matthew Arnold asserts composes three fourths of human life; the simplest thing to know and the hardest thing as regards doing. A student coming out of one of these Bible groups was recently overheard to say to a friend, "I feel as though I had much to do in the world."

Students are more and more apprecia-

ting that the objective of Bible study is not simply to give spiritual thrills and religious ecstasies. The Bible is something more to college men than a book of comfort and a solace for the "sick and sorry." Furthermore, it is not considered enough to be able to say that 500 men are enrolled in the Bible groups of a certain institution or that twelve million Bibles were distributed last year by Bible societies, or that this book has been translated into more than 500 languages and dialects. It is not the final test of its value that a comparatively few scholars in Germany and the United States and Canada have found the vast intellectual and literary riches of this book. A greater question is now being asked and answered by educators and students, namely: How can educated men discover the Bible as a means to life service? This utilitarian view makes it the chief uplifting force in the college world. The students of Princeton are going out from these Bible groups to various kinds of social service through the community. Last year, one of the prominent institutions in the Far West was virtually revolutionized in its moral sentiment through the influence of one of these small bands of students who gathered weekly to discuss some of the problems of college life.

EXTENSION AMONG STUDENTS OF OTHER LANDS

THE influence of this North American student uprising has already extended to other nations. Last year 80,000 college men in eighteen different countries were engaged in studying this great book of the nations in an intelligent and voluntary fashion. National secretaries giving their entire time to this far-reaching enterprise are now leading the work in five countries, while national councils of scholars are devoting their thought to the preparation of literature appropriate to the needs of these respective lands. It would be difficult to predict the future results which must accrue from this world federation of college men around the Bible.





THE RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD

BY LE ROY TITUS WEEKS

ON a flaunting flag the red-wing swings,
 ("Onk-o-lee!")
And he dips and sways, and tilts his wings
To the rollicking south wind as he sings,
 "Ka-lonk-o-lee!"
 One, two, three,
Nestlings hid where none can see.
 Ka-lonk-o-lee!"

In a button-bush or a tussock deep,
 ("Konk-o-lee!")
Is the sly little nest where his babies sleep,
While sheltering reeds their vigils keep.
 "Ka-lonk-o-lee!"
 Blithe and free,
With June and sunshine I agree.
 Ka-lonk-o-lee!"

Oh, the blue is bluer when he comes,
 ("Lonk-a-lee!")
The bee in the maple blossom hums,
The field and the lark again are chums.
 "Ong-filla-re,
 The waking lea
Is sweet with the breath of Arcady.
 Ong-kulla-ree!"

The flags are aflame with his epaulet—
 ("Klong-kulla-ree!")
That sparkle of red on a jacket of jet.
Oh, he is the summer-time's gay cadet!
 "Ka-lonk-o-lee!"
 The spring 's a-gee,
From the Hudson down to the Oconee.
 Ka-lonk-o-lee!"

As sweet as the lover's sweetest theme
 ("Glong-go-lee!")
Are the shadowy pools in the loitering stream,
Or the pond where the water-lilies dream.
 "Ka-lonk-o-lee!"
 To Pan and me
The reeds have willed their melody.
 Ka-lonk-o-lee!"