

A SIGNIFICANT RELIGIOUS FORCE IN SOUTHERN COLLEGES—THE STUDENT SECRETARY.

BY RALPH M. HARPER.

THE Student Secretary is not sent to a college by the alumni to atone for their sins of old, neither is he secured by the faculty to police the campus, nor is he selected by the student body to serve as college pastor. The college pastor, like the college policeman, has failed to make good.

Perhaps the tide against the college pastor began to turn when Phillips Brooks refused the offer of college pastor at Harvard in 1881. The tendency today is to strengthen the local church and to secure clergymen from elsewhere to preach the college or university sermon each month or on special occasions. At our leading institutions today there is a Student Secretary, who "lives in a house by the side of the road," where he can be a friend of college men. He is selected by a joint committee of students, faculty, and alumni, through the recommendation of some travelling secretary who knows the man personally. Today there are twenty-two Student Secretaries in the Southern Colleges. This number will be increased by three or four next year. The secretary's salary is secured from the students, faculty, alumni, and the trustees. The trustees at Clemson College, S. C., last year appropriated \$500 for the Association work in that institution. Most of our Southern institutions, both state and denominational, having Student Secretaries, are helping to support the Association in amounts ranging from \$200 at Vanderbilt University to \$400 or \$500 at the University of Arkansas or the A. & M. of North Carolina. The trustees of the University of Alabama are planning to appropriate \$400 next year to help secure a Student Secretary at this institution which has such a splendid future on account of \$800,000 being added to its endowment during the last two months.

It is interesting to note that practically all of the Student Secretaries of the South are college graduates. In addition to this two have taken an A. M., two half their Seminary Courses, three part of their Medical Courses, one is a graduate of a Theological Seminary, and two are Ph. D. men.

What does the Student Secretary stand for and what is the significance of his work?

What I shall now say about the Student Secretary applies to any student Association leader who is up and doing. The same qualities of leadership and actual achievement, which the Student Secretary shows, were shown while he was taking his academic work. In fact, here is where he won his spurs. What applies therefore to those Associations having Student Secretaries applies to all those Associations which are delivering the goods. I use the Student Secretary because he, with his entire time, is apt to deliver more goods, and with his past experience is apt to deliver goods of a better quality.

I. Social Service in the College Community

The first significant thing for which the Student Secretary should, and in most cases does stand, is social service in the college community. Ask any thoughtful fraternity man or non-fraternity man what the social status of his institution is, and he will frankly tell you it is far from what it ought to be. Many fraternity men are arrogant enough to think that all the social life of college is wrapped up in the Greek letter fraternity. Many non-fraternity men are narrow enough to wonder if any good thing can come from an expression of the social impulses of one's nature. The result of this arrogance on the one hand and this distrust on the other has created a chasm in the college community. Many presidents and professors have eyes which see not. Ask them and they will tell you as a South Carolina professor told me, "My boys are pretty good, much better than in the average institution." Every institution, however has a few faculty members who are keenly alive to the momentous social life of the average student, even though it may not make for marks. A student at Trinity College, N. C., happily said to me recently, "It makes me tremble when I think how much Dr. Mims knows about me and the smallest happenings around the campus."

The Student Secretary living on the college campus, affiliated with no one student faction, and refusing any high seat in the faculty synagogue is enabled to know college men as they are and to use his influence and leadership in such a way that college life is brought closer together. The fellows thus know each other better—Oh this is the secret of a genuine college spirit, a good faith in all factions of college life and a great good will of every college man toward his fellows and toward the faculty.

To create this closer bond of friendship many Associations are furnishing several rooms which shall serve as a central home for college life. Five College Associations in the South today own Association Buildings, costing from \$5,000 to \$80,000. This college home, whether it is in one room as at Kentucky State college, costing \$400, or in a magnificent building as at the University of Virginia, costing \$80,000, is used for the Association meetings, for friendly intercourse between students and professors, for numerous stag socials, and for a homelike reception room for one's friends during commencement. The Student Secretary by thus being in this center of college life exerts an influence on the entire college. As Mr. A. C. Harte, of Mobile, has made his Association Building the central home for Mobile—how refreshed and restful one feels as he enters a real home—so the Student Secretary must make the rooms or building a central home for college life.

In the midst of this home the Secretary is a friend of men, and, after all, is not this what college men long for? As a friend of mine, Edmund McDonald, recently expressed it in "Association Men," "The more I see of men the less faith I have in handshaking. What men want is friendship."

II. Religious Education

The second significant thing for which the Student Secretary stands is religious education.

In the past men studied the Bible because it was inspired. The teacher used the thus-saith-the-Lord method, often identifying his own interpretation with the heavenly message itself. Under such a system there was no place for thoughtful discussion or high thinking. (This type of teaching is not yet extinct.) For our modern life times have changed. Men no longer study the Bible because it was inspired. They study the Bible because it is inspiring. The secret of the tremendous interest which college men are showing today in the study of the English Bible lies partly in the group method. Eight or ten students with a student leader—not lecturer—meet informally each week to gather up and discuss the systematic study which they have been doing separately each day. The group leaders in turn are coached by some Biblical scholar, usually a professor or minister. The personality of the leader is another secret of this tremendous interest in Bible study. How Christlike is this group system of religious education. Ten or twelve men walking with the Master over the Judean hills or over the plains of Galilee. Each morning they ascend to the mountain peak for the Transfiguration vision. What a power comes into their life as they descend to the plains below and conquer the sin which before this had knocked them down and out.

During the college year 1905-'06 there were 33,000 college men engaged in this daily, systematic study of the Bible. The number will probably reach 40,000 this year. Already plans are being made by which 50,000 college men of this North American continent will be engaged in Bible study during the college year of 1907-'08.

Group classes are also being utilized for the study of social problems at home and for an intelligent study of the modern missionary enterprises in every clime. The study of missions has reached such a development that a consistent member of a group class knows more about the wonderful progress of the kingdom of God than the most orthodox deacon or member of the Missionary Circle in the home church who used to look wise about everything which never was on sea nor land.

THE TAR HEEL

The Student Secretary is director of religious education. The following is a partial report of the Bible study at Clemson College. This significant work alone is enough to demand a Secretary's entire time.

From February to June, 1906, 18 classes were holding weekly meetings. Enrollment during this time was 164, and the average attendance was 105.

During the first ten days of school last fall about 200 students were enrolled in Bible study. This number has been steadily increasing, and now nearly half of the students in college are in Bible study. Thirty-eight classes have been holding weekly meetings, with an average attendance of 191. From Feb 1905 to Feb. 1906, there were 767 different class meetings, with a total attendance of 4,556."



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E. R. Walton J. L. Neill A. S. Johnstone

III. Religious Work Director

The third significant thing for which the Student Secretary stands is for the general direction of religious work. The following is a partial summary of a typical Secretary's work:

It is an outlined report of the work of the Young Men's Christian Association of the University of North Carolina from Sept. 1, 1906 to May 1, 1907.

WORK FOR NEW STUDENTS.

400 letters written to prospective new students. All trains met during opening days. \$250.00 worth of books exchanged without cost to students. 2 information bureau. 295 students assisted in registering.

BIBLE STUDY.

2 Rallies. 208 men enrolled in 18 classes. 2 normal classes.

MISSION STUDY.

90 men in 8 classes. 2 Missionary Rallies.

SOCIAL WORK.

350 students at College Night. 28 Student leaders, Ministers and Faculty attend Leaders Banquet. 1 Cabinet spread. 2 Stag socials. Apples, lemonade, toasts, stunts. Attendance 250 each.

BESIDES

29 men to N. C. Conference at Trinity College. 2 men at Wilmington. 6 Sunday Schools assisted. 2 meetings each week Tuesday and Thursdays. 750 souvenir Calendars. 5 entertainments with Lyceum Attractions. 2 Volunteers for Foreign Mission work. 2 Decisions for Ministry as life work. Permanent Conference Fund being established.

An attractive Association Building costing \$15,000 complete, and with the exception of the chapel, elegantly furnished.

The Secretary's part in this splendid work is well expressed in a recent editorial of "The Clemson Tiger:"

"To Mr. Ray Legate, the secretary, the power of the Y. M. C. is due. He is a college man who knows college men. His farsightedness and experience, his energy and enthusiasm, have had much to do with the making of the Y. M. C. A. what it is. In this connection should be mentioned also the band of willing workers who have co-operated with Mr. Legate so faithfully in carrying out the work of the Y. M. C. A."

In giving the significance of the Student Secretary's work I have said little about his personal influence. This personal element of Christlike character is what keeps the Association machinery from becoming a sounding brass or a clanging cymbol. The Secretary there-



THE SWIMMING POOL

fore is not a mere "go between" between the different factions, of college life, nor is he merely a wooden bridge to span the impassable gulf between the students and faculty. He is not merely superintendent of education nor a man of great executive ability only.

A thinking man, a man filled with life's enthusiasms, a man with a good faith in life and a great good will toward men the Student Secretary stands as a splendid challenge for college men to live the largest life with the spirit and in the name of the man Christ Jesus.

"These Associations are promoters of industry, sobriety and trustworthiness, and are therefore in close alliance with the best material interests of the country."—Hon.



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