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Religious Fads of To-day.—I. Millennial Dawn.

By Rev. A. E. Cooke

Perhaps there is no feature of the religious life of the North American Continent more to be deplored than the wide-spread ignorance of the Scriptures. By this is meant not simply ignorance as to the true meaning or interpretation of the Bible, but lack of knowledge of the contents of the Book itself. Never was there a time when there was such splendid equipment for thorough Bible study, never were Sunday Schools and Bible Classes so well organized or so numerous, never was the scholarship of the world so easily accessible to the average church-member or Sunday School scholar, yet never since the English Bible became the common property of the common people has it been to them such an unknown book. Whether it be due to the overwhelming output of the modern press at popular prices, or the gross materialism of the last quarter century, or the decay of doctrinal preaching in the pulpit, or a combination of all these factors, the fact remains that the average man or woman has not a much more profound knowledge of Biblical truth or Biblical facts than had Tom Sawyer when he named the first two disciples of Christ, David and Goliath.

And yet the hunger of the human soul for something more than mere bread has not yet been satisfied. It is still true that "man cannot live by bread alone," and even in the midst of the money-grabbing, materialism of the newest new world, we find thousands of men and women eagerly following every false prophet who arises to expound Scripture with much show of authority, and proclaims some new gospel "which is not another gospel." If the Prophet show a special fondness for dealing with eschatology, and mapping off the future ages in close detail, all the better is his chance of success. Hence the rise and progress, on American soil, of such modern heresies as Mormonism, Adventism, Shakerism, Dowieism, Christian Science and Millennial Dawn. The business acumen and dogmatism of the founders of some of these have been such that they have gained a following far