

# The Changing Scene and the Unchanging Word

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## The League of Evangelical Students



Dr. Machen

ON SATURDAY evening, November 30th, I had the pleasure of attending the banquet of the regional conference of the League of Evangelical Students in Philadelphia. One always gets the impression at these meetings that being a Christian is a joyous thing, and that this fine company of young men and young women is not a bit dismayed by all the opposition of the world.

The League of Evangelical Students is doing a work which is entirely unique. No other consistently Christian organization of national scope is even attempting to enter the field in which the League has been laboring during the last ten years.

That field is one of the most needy fields for Christian service to be found anywhere today. It is the field of the student world of America.

Have you ever stopped to consider what the present condition of the students of America is? Here are thousands upon thousands of men and women in these universities and colleges and other educational institutions. What is their condition from the point of view of the Word of God?

I tell you, my friends, it is a condition of really appalling need. There are great universities in this country, with hundreds in their faculties and thousands in their student bodies, where you could count on the fingers of one hand those persons on the campus who are giving any really clear evidence of being saved men or women.

Formerly there were Christian organizations in those universities, but those formerly Christian organizations have ceased to be Christian and are now either altogether quiescent or else are active agencies of unbelief.

The church colleges are often even worse from the Christian point of view than the large universities. At the large universities courses in "re-

ligion" are for the most part optional; but in the church colleges they are often required, and they are often used to undermine the faith of the students.

In this hostile environment, there are in many colleges and universities individual Christian men and women. But they have never been brought together, and each of them is often tempted to think that he or she is standing entirely alone. Who can form any adequate conception of the terrible loneliness which faces many a Christian boy or girl in many a college room?

They were brought up in Christian homes. They learned to read their Bibles; they learned to pray. But now they find themselves in an environment where public opinion is overwhelmingly against these things.

Perhaps you will say that because any real Christian ought to stand on his own feet, therefore he ought not to need the comradeship of other Christians. Well, you may say that, but the Bible does not say it at all. The Bible presents very strongly the need in which a Christian stands of the companionship of his fellow Christians.

It is that companionship that the League of Evangelical Students is helping to supply. It is saying to Christian students in the colleges and universities and other educational institutions of this country: "No, you are not alone; we are with you in holding that the Bible is true; and we hold furthermore that a man or woman does not have to cease to be a student in order to hold that belief, but that the truth of the Bible can be reasonably and triumphantly defended." Then the League seeks to gather the groups of Christian men and women in the individual institutions for the study of the Word of God, for prayer, and for Christian companionship and Christian service.

The work of the League is rendered possible through the work of the General Secretary. I want to say just a few words to you about him.

For a number of years the General Secretary was the Rev. William J. Jones, and splendid service did he ren-

der. The present General Secretary is Mr. Calvin K. Cummings. His office is at the Reformed Episcopal Seminary, 25 South 43rd Street, Philadelphia.

Mr. Cummings was educated at Lafayette College and Westminster Theological Seminary. He is a man of excellent intellectual gifts and intellectual equipment. Then, when he came up for licensure, he was rejected by the Presbytery of Baltimore, because he would not deny his Lord by promising a blanket allegiance to the Boards of the Church.

The Presbytery of Philadelphia, to its undying shame, adopted a similar attitude, and refused to receive Mr. Cummings. He had committed the unpardonable sin of speaking the truth about certain matters, and he would not put any human agency in the position of authority that belongs only to the Word of God.

I wonder whether all of you fully understand what these actions of presbytery meant to a man like Mr. Cummings. To enter the ministry had been the high ambition of his life. He had done long and faithful work in his preparation in college and at the theological seminary. He was well equipped. He was in full agreement with the doctrine of the church of his fathers. He was ready at last to enter the gospel ministry.

Then what happens? Does the presbytery receive him gladly and pray God to bless him in the work of preaching the gospel? Not at all. It closes the door in his face. I tell you, my friends, that is a bitter experience for a man in Mr. Cummings' position.

But God overrules the sins of men for His own purposes. The presbytery closed the door to Mr. Cummings. But God opened the door. As General Secretary of the League of Evangelical Students, Mr. Cummings has been doing one of the most notable pieces of Christian service which have been seen for many a day. It would be difficult to overestimate the blessing which has been brought to the students of many an institution of learning by this truly statesmanlike, truly clear-minded, and truly consecrated Christian man.