



"Speaking Volumes"

College and Seminary

SYDNEY T. YOUNGSMAN, Editor

STAND just inside this door with me and we shall soon witness an interesting modification in human nature. We'll not be required to wait more than a minute or two to point out what I am talking about. See that group of young people coming across the Calvin campus? They are conversing merrily and filling the air with pleasant chatter. They are heading our way. Listen and watch and mark what occurs as they walk through the door. Notice how all their clamor and haste ceases? Their voices drop to a faint whisper. They walk on tiptoes to the great hall of this edifice and become a part of this hushed and quiet place. You see, we are located in the entrance hall of our Calvin Library. We have heard shouting become silence so often that we can expect it and predict it. Those who enter this building instinctively respect the counsel of the poet who wrote:

Speak low! tread softly through these halls.
Here genius lives enshrined,
Here reign in silent majesty
The monarchs of the mind.

A mighty spirit host they come
From every age and clime
Above the buried wrecks of years
They breast the tide of time.

Here shall the poets chant for thee
Their sweetest, loftiest lays,
And prophets wait to guide thy steps
In Wisdom's pleasant ways.

It is an old observation, but worthy of repetition, that the library is the heart of an educational institution. A library on any campus is the center of academic life. Here we are surrounded

by messages from great ones long gone from this earth. Between the bindings of many of the 55,000 volumes on our shelves are thoughts which arouse us or teach us or comfort us. These quiet witnesses, lined up row on row, await our beck and call. They are the kindest of teachers to those who come to them for learning. As Richard de Bury said long ago, "If you approach them they do not hide; if you blunder, they do not scold; if you are ignorant, they do not laugh at you." So we can walk the narrow aisles of our book stacks and, by putting forth our hand, obtain the means to receive instruction and inspiration from Augustine to Zwingli; from Calvin and Kuyper of the past to the latest writings of Berkhof and Van Baalen. There is material here on every subject from agriculture to zoology in the field of nature, as well as thousands and thousands of books expounding God's special revelation in his work.

Now, let us step into the office of Prof. Lester De Koster, Director of the Calvin Library, for some specific answers. I would like to know and so would you whether the students really avail themselves of the services of our library. Here is what he says to our inquiry. "I should say they do. There has been a steady increase in all aspects of Library usage so far as we can gauge them. Reports from Miss Josephine Baker, our Reference Librarian, and Miss Willemina Twight, our Circulation Librarian, indicate that more students are making more use of the building and of the books now than was the

case a year ago. It is noteworthy in this regard that there are times in mid-morning when all available seating in the building is in use."

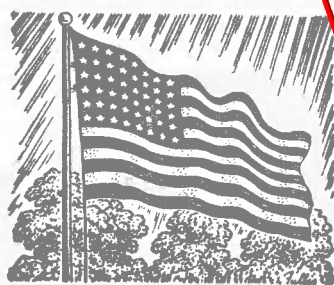
"One year ago, circulation stood at approximately 100 books taken out per day. The second semester of last school year it rose to an average of 134 daily. No record can be kept of use of open shelf reserve books, but each semester the number of such volumes increases and no doubt so does the use of them. In addition to our campus community, we serve graduates of the College and Seminary both in person and by mail. Not only that, but our Denominational Reference Service is increasing from season to season."

This last remark about a Denominational Reference Service caught my interest and I think all our readers should know more about it because it can be of real help to you. Here is the way it works.

Let's assume that you are asked to present a paper at one of your church societies' after-recess programs. Perhaps you decide to speak on "The American Middle Class" or "Arminianism" or "Dutch Art" or "Christian Stewardship." You may not find much about these subjects in your local library so you present your problem by mail to your Library of Calvin College and Seminary. Not long after that the mailman will deliver a package to your door which will provide you with enough material on your chosen subject

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PEOPLE



It is highly imperative that we all watch and fight against every undermining of prayer-life.

That was the point of attack by Daniel's deadly foes. He prevailed through courageous, high-souled, and unswerving loyalty in his devotional life.

There is no other way for us!



COLLEGE AND SEMINARY "Speaking Volumes"

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to give a small-sized course! You will be pleasantly surprised at the help you can receive from this institution. The Library staff will not answer questions that involve obvious debates. But they will provide you with articles, essays, and books on the subject of your choice. There is no charge for this service other than the pennies it will cost to return the material to the school.

I was curious to find out just how many religious books we have in our library. All the shelves on the second floor constitute the religious section. Right now the number of theological books is approximately 15,000 volumes.

Each year our Library purchases about 4,500 new books. All these purchases must be initiated by members of the Seminary or College Faculties. This means that the books purchased must meet the demands of our teachers to justify a place on the shelves.

One room of the Library is devoted to current magazines and newspapers which come to us from all parts of the globe. There are 461 different periodicals in this room, 168 of which are in the field of religion. You are cordially invited to enjoy a pleasant hour of relaxation, browsing through the many interesting magazines available in the Periodical Room. Our Library is open 73 hours per week during the school year and 45 hours per week during the summer. Promise yourself a visit to this splendid department of your school.

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Conspiracy Against Prayer

Corneal Holtrop

■ **DARIUS, THE MEDE**, who seized the Babylonian kingdom from carousing Belshazzar, is but a small figure on history's stage. He is chiefly remembered because he kept lions, and Daniel was not afraid of them, and God's angel muzzled them.

While the monarch is meager in stature, Daniel is really king-size: a statesman par excellence! His integrity and wisdom stood out so sharply that even he who ran could read.

Daniel had a *secret*; he was a *praying* leader. Thank God for such, also in our land. Let us all pray much *for* and *with* them.

But there were those—and powerful!—who were bent on destroying the great prime minister. Their envy burned at his preëminence. Their envious squirmed at his excellence.

With cunning they chose their point of attack: the salient of his prayer-life. We may call it a conspiracy against prayer.

Our mortal enemies still make that their objective. They would assail our prayer-life in order to destroy us. Ah yes, they storm us also at other points, but the plots and onslaughts against a healthy prayer-life are constant, subtle, and deadly.

Service life is especially a danger zone in this. Away from the healthy habits of devotional life in Christian home, school, and church, there is much that conspires to cool our ardor and dim our light in our personal communion with God. Notice a few dangerous factors.

"The fear of man bringeth a snare" (Proverbs 29:25). It tends to deter some from bowing the head in silent prayer at mess and from kneeling at the bunk. Doing so would single them out for special notice—yes, also by God!

"Your sins have hid his face from you so that he will not hear" (Isaiah 59:2). There are many in the service whose words and works encourage sinful compromise. Let us be on guard!

"... forgive, if ye have aught against any one; that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you..." (Mark 11:25). Yes, there are blustering non-coms and overbearing officers but, note well, roots of bitterness becloud the way to God.

"... he that cometh to God must believe..." (Hebrews 11:6). Firm, warm faith is basic to prayer. Let us feed it, exercise it, guard it!

The child's questions often spring from a natural spirit of inquiry. But just as often perhaps he asks, Why? because he wants to get his own way. This latter motive is also true of adults. Why may we not have our own preference in this or that matter? Often this in-rogation has in it an element of approach of authority. When we rebel against circumstances in our lives, there is in the back of our minds a thought of approach of the Power who has ordered these circumstances.

Our Christian educators have been faithfully warning us about the new creed that has arisen in our times by which little children are deliberately encouraged to have their own way. The idea is that you must not thwart a child's natural desires. Let him express himself! It is good for him to express his personality. Repression or inhibition may stunt him. The answer to that, of course, is that *there are elements in a child's human heart which must not be allowed to come to expression*. A wise parent understands that. He knows that a child who pouts over being denied his way will someday realize that these childhood restrictions were blessings in disguise. Let me say this to you young folks who are reading this article that your poutings and expostulations and all the angry why's written between the lines on your faces are exhibitions of your immaturity. They only prove *how much you need your parents*.

Of course, we must quickly add to this that even mature Christians often find it very difficult not to ask, Why? Our paths have some odd and unexpected constrictions and curves. So often we cannot see round the corner. But if God, who has arranged these turnings in our path, does not intend it to be so round the corners it must be for a good purpose—perhaps the saving of our faith. One thing is sure: *there is a rock-foundation under the feet of God's chosen*. If you cannot go forward immediately, you can at least stamp your foot on the rock. That is worth a lot. Remember the lines of *Whisper*:

The same old baffling questions,
As my hand, I cannot answer!
I have no answer for myself or thee,
Save that I learned beside my mother's knee:
That if God that is and is to be,
And God is good. Let this suffice us still,
Having in child-like trust upon his will
His power to his great ends, unthwarted by
The ill.

You can do nothing truly effective in the world of tomorrow unless you are yourself unreservedly to God and to grace in the world of today.