“Speaking Volumes”

SYDNEY T. YOUNGSMAN, Editor

College and Seminary

S T A N D 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 fade as their voices drop to a faint whisper. They walk on tiptoes to the great hall of this edifice and become a part of the hushed and quiet place. You see, we are located in the entrance hall of our Calvin Library. We have tried to make this library quiet and soothing, yet offer a place of refuge to those who seek solace and silence.

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 Twilight, 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 154 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 “Armenianism” 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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Conspiracy Against Prayer

Cornel 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 prince minister. Their envy burned at his preeminence. Their consciences 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, then, praise blistering moral corps 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!

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 5,400 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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