THE VIEWPOINT OF RELIGION

RICHARD HENRY, B.D.
KNOXVILLE, TENN.

FEW OF us, I am sure, can fail to be aware that this scientific assembly falls on a significant anniversary: the signing, five years ago last Sunday in this city, of the United Nations charter. Nor can we delude ourselves into thinking that the avowed purpose of that organization—to deliver future generations from the scourge of war—has not been seriously threatened by the storm clouds which have darkened the skies of international relations ever since. This anniversary suggests one of the larger perspectives within which we must see our own deliberations: In a very real sense, what takes place in this assembly must be oriented toward achieving, in some measure, the objectives of the United Nations charter. What we do here must be directed toward alleviating some of the tensions and misunderstandings which have helped to create an atmosphere of suspicion and fear between and within nations. Unless we can see our proceedings in this perspective, this assembly can have only a minor significance.

There is a somewhat narrower but still significant focus of our proceedings. It arises from the fact that the United States is one of the few countries—the only country of any size—which still aggressively defends the position that the "free enterprise" system is superior to any other form of economic organization. This is a fact of greatest import for the tasks which industrial medicine in the United States sets for itself. It influences in an important measure the methods and objectives of your science—or, should I say, your art.

Perhaps no other area—unless it be the area of race relations—is considered more vulnerable to attack by our ideological antagonists than this one. I think it can be said with realism that on its ability to make this "free enterprise" system work—on its ability by that system to provide the optimum benefits, material, emotional and spiritual, to its workers—will depend the ability of this country to win its case before the bar of world public opinion. And that means that you, as physicians in American industry, have a stake in the successful functioning of the system—not alone from a national but from an international point of view.

It would be eminently worth the while of industrial medical practitioners to devote a little spare-time research to the reasons for the failure of the "free enterprise" system in other countries of the world. I am convinced that such research would yield important data relevant to the tasks of industrial medicine in the United States. It would, among other things, indicate that the reasons for that

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Mr. Henry is minister of the Tennessee Valley Unitarian Church of Knoxville, Tenn.

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