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Series V: Writings, 1909-1963, undated.

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Western Paper Box Manufacturers Association, 1919.

Addresses delivered at the banquet of the Association, held at the Hotel Statler, Friday evening, January 24, 1919, President George J. Kroeck, toastmaster.

TOASTMASTER KROECK: Gentlemen, I feel highly honored to preside over you, but I just don't know what to say. I have attended so many meetings and banquets, I notice that as a rule the speaker or the chairman starts out with "This reminds me of a story," so I suppose that is the proper way to start out. I cannot tell you a story, but I can tell you some facts. You don't know that there was quite a joke on myself today, but I am going to tell you, now that the thing is all over with. You did not know that you had a President that had to sit on a high chair. (Laughter.)

Some time ago I heard a story of an Irishman who had died, Pat Finnigan. Pat's widow was very much broken up, and his friend Mike came over to see her. He said: "Mrs. Finnigan, I feel awfully sorry for Pat, he was an awfully nice man and I feel awfully sorry for you." She said: "Yes, he was a fine man, he certainly was a good husband to me. By the way, do you want to have a last look at him?" "Yes, I would like to see him." "Well," she said, "you had better go upstairs. He is up there." So he went up, and he finally came down and he said: "He certainly looks natural." She said: "He does that all right." So Mike started to go, and Mrs. Finnigan said: "By the way, Mike, did you close the door when you came down?" He said: "Begorra, I don't think I did." She said: "You had better go up and close it now because the cat brought him down three times last night." (Laughter.) He was a little fellow like myself. I was afraid the cat might be back there and try to haul me out. (Laughter.)

Our first speaker, ladies and gentlemen, is a man who was delegated by President Wilson to visit the battlefields of Europe during 1918, and I am very much pleased to introduce to you Rabbi Silver. (Applause.)

Western Paper Box
Mythos given
Cleveland Jan 24
1919

**ADDRESS BY RABBI A. H. SILVER, THE
TEMPLE, CLEVELAND** *from*
(minutes)

Mr. Chairman: I am indeed very happy that the Chairman, not knowing me, got part of the introduction straight. The last time I addressed a gathering I was introduced to the audience as Father Silver. (Laughter.)

I would like to say so many things to you business men, things that are uppermost in my mind at the present moment, that I feel might come with good grace from one who is not a business man himself. I know very little of business, and yet I feel that I can talk about it, just as that priest used to have a favorite sermon on the bliss of matrimony. (Laughter.)

Pat and Mike went to church one Sunday morning for a change, and the priest was scheduled to deliver a sermon on the bliss of matrimony. After the sermon, Pat and Mike left the church, and Pat, turning to Mike, said: "Mike, how did you like the father's sermon on the bliss of matrimony?" "Well," said Pat, "it was just great, it was just great. I wish I knew as little about married life as the father does." (Laughter.)

Even though I cannot justly be called one of your fraternity, I feel that after all we are all business men, each one of us trying to sell something to our fellow men, not for the price of coin or money, but for something which our fellow men can give us infinitely more valuable than money, a little bit of inspiration.

I am going to talk to you this evening on a few platitudes. Platitudes, however, that are luminous platitudes. I think the trouble with platitudes is this, that when people hear a platitude, they are mad, but they seldom shake their fists, and the real object of a platitude is that men should shake their fists and grow determined.

You know the story they tell of that platitude. Two politicians were discussing one evening the success of their talks to the people. One said to the other: "You know, last night I made this statement: 'I never paid a dollar for a vote.'" And the other man turned to him and said: "Well, what did the audience say?" He said: "Well, some of them applauded, but the majority seemed to lose interest."

The trouble with platitudes is, that men when they hear them seem to lose interest, when in reality platitudes ought to inspire and inspirit us.

You business men have all passed through a period that has tried and tested the fiber that you are made of. Yours has been the great privilege to live through the most critical period in the history of our land for over half a century, and I am proud to say with all the skepticism that is natural to men of my profession—I am proud to say that passing through the trials and through the fires, the American business man has not been found wanting. You have lived up to that reputation for service or sacrifice in behalf of your great cause; you have lived up to the ideals of American manhood, and you yourselves might justly be proud of it.

I was astounded to see how readily the American business man sacrificed his individualism, his prejudice for self-determination, his desire to control his own destinies, his resentment to outside interference; how readily the American business man sacrificed all these things. It showed that after all there is real and infinite good in the souls of the men who are actually guiding and determining the destinies of the American people.

This also showed to me one other thing, of which I have spoken in the past, and that is the remarkable efficiency of the American business man in war times. You know, when I was a boy at school, and later on when I went to college, I was a victim of that superstition on the superiority of German efficiency. That was a maxim of my childhood, and to say aught against German efficiency was regarded as almost a sacrilege. German efficiency, as I say, was held up as a justification for paternalism in government, and German efficiency was regarded as the justification of autocracy, the deadliest weapon in the hands of the enemies of autocracy.

Well, after I visited the work of our men over there, after I had seen the achievements of the American business man and professional man and laboring man, those men who suffered the devastating handicap of democracy; after I had seen the miles of docks and wharves which you business men built up over there on the ocean shore and the river banks; after I had seen the miles upon miles of railroad track, each foot of steel and each tie brought 3,000 miles; after I had seen our countless warehouses capable of holding supplies for millions of men; after I had seen our locomotive plants turning out 42 monster locomotives and sending them full steam ahead into France; after I had seen our yards, our depots, our stations, our training schools and our hospitals, all the achievement of American business men, American professional and laboring men, all, all the achievement of a few months, the briefest space of time, and all of it the achievement of men who labored under the terrible handicap of democracy, I knew the story of the superiority of German efficiency for the lie that it was. (Applause.)

I tell you, business men of America, you have come out of this great struggle which has tried the souls of men, with glory and honor, and I say furthermore unto you, that your real work is just

beginning, a work perhaps that will not have back of it the pressure of a public opinion or the pressure of a crisis, but work just as important and in a way more important, because it is more constructive. I want to say unto you that the future welfare of America, the type of our future industrial work, the peace of our future economic organization depends entirely upon you.

We are facing today the great question of reconstruction or revolution. Men have become terribly sensitive under the strain and agony of this war. Men are no longer content with past institutions and ancient customs of thought and action. The ambitions of men are today wonderfully liquid, wonderfully subject to influences. Men are beginning to demand greater freedom of opportunity in all walks of life. Men are calling for greater democracy, not only in political life, but in economic, industrial and in social life. Men have said to themselves, "We have suffered and we have died; we have been taken from our walks of life, picked up by an invisible hand and thrown into dirty, filthy, pest-ridden trenches for the sake of our country, for the sake of our nation, without our consent, and now we demand that the nation give something unto us, some greater beauty, some new environment, some greater freedom in life, because we were ready to give our all to the state, and what are you to say to a challenge of that kind? You will either say: "We know that you are right, and we shall co-operate with you in establishing a freer, juster order of things," or you will say to them in evil spirit, in anger and in heat: "We are going to restore, but not reconstruct. We shall return to where we were before the war." In other, you are going to say unto them, "We shall either reconstruct, or the other alternative is revolution."

I say, it will be up to you, because you men—and I say this not in a spirit of flattery at all—you men after all represent the brain, the intelligence, the leadership, the guiding spirit of American life. The poor working man has not had the education and training and position and culture that some of you may possess. You are controlling the destinies of this land, and the burden is upon your shoulders whether in the days to come we shall build a more beautiful and still more noble America, or whether we shall plunge our nation into that confusion and bloodshed which has come to some of the unfortunate peoples of Europe.

I have great confidence in the American business man, and I am supremely optimistic, and I therefore look to the days to come with a great deal of joy, because I believe that the most glorious chapter in American history has not yet been written, and this generation, I am convinced, will write it. (Applause.)

We have no room in America for class struggles. Class struggle is the root of all evil. Class struggle spells venom, hatred, and the rule of the minority and demagoguery. Class struggle makes of God's children wild, clawing beasts in a blood-soaked arena. The doc-

trine which we must preach from the housetops in the days to come is not the doctrine of class struggle, class hate, but the doctrine of co-operation between all men. Business men and laboring men, all men join in one common task to produce goods for the sake of society.

Society is not interested alone in the working man, and society is not interested alone in the employer. Society is interested in the general social welfare of all human beings, and the new point of view that must come to you, and the new point of view that must come to the laboring man is the social point of view, the point of view of service, that men live and work, not for the sake of money grubbing, not for the sake of self-aggrandizement, not for the sake of making themselves mean, petty, cheap creatures, but for the sake of developing themselves to the fullest of their capacity through their jobs, and through that particular service which they call their vocation.

Let me say unto you men that the time has definitely arrived in my mind when you must commence to regard your business as a profession, for business is a profession as much as law, or medicine, or the ministry. Each profession is a special utility and contributes to the sum total of social welfare. Business, like any other profession, science, art, music, literature—business must, like every other profession, engage not only in producing things, but producing spiritual values, which contribute to the sum total of the life exalted; and finally you must come to regard it as a profession, and the characteristics of a profession are these, and with this I shall be through.

A profession is first of all a vocation. I like the word vocation, it is a calling to do something. You are called, it is a consecration. It is your life work. Unless you look upon your business, or unless a working man looks upon his job as his life consecration to which he must contribute his energy, his love, his loyalty and his devotion, you are perhaps doing your work, but you are not a business man, you are not a laboring man of whom it was said, to labor is to pray.

First of all, your work must be unto you a vocation, and then it must be a discipline. You must find in your work that discipline which will help you to reach the highest point of development. Have you ever met the man who during business hours is a sour, dyspeptic, mean, unkindly, unscrupulous man, but after business hours, after six o'clock, he puts on high social graces, he becomes affable and refined and charming and even delightful. That dual personality is a betrayal of a lack of character. That man is trying to find all the charm of life outside of his business, and that is a mistake. The charm and the beauty and the glory and the sanctity of life must be found in your business and in your profession. That is where you must look for God and find him. You must say unto

yourself as you enter your office daily: "This is the house of God and this is the kingdom of Heaven." That is the discipline of business.

People who get nothing out of business but money have failed to get the real pleasure and power of business. That is why the child of the rich man invariably almost fails, because he gets the results of business and none of its discipline. You have the finest opportunity of any profession in the world to discipline yourselves. You have an opportunity to study men, to help men, and to be helped by them, and in that way it will give zest to your business.

One of the characteristics of a profession is that the goal is not sordid. Beware of the man who says, "Business is business." Beware of him. He has got the mark of Cain upon his forehead. Business is not business. It is what you make it. That is one of those phrases that are short cuts to hell. Business has the same standard of ethics as law or medicine, or the ministry. It must have it, or it is a bane and must be destroyed.

Your goal in life as business men I hope is not merely producing, not merely acquiring and aggrandizing, but serving yourselves and your fellow men.

A very wise man once said if a man applies for a job the first thing you ask him is not, do you know your job? But the first thing you ask him is: What is your philosophy? That sounds foolish, does it not? It is absolutely true. If a man comes to you with a wrong philosophy, if he comes to you in a spirit of hate, of suspicion, he cannot co-operate with you. Philosophy is the basic thing of life.

The true test of business is this: Does it make you happy? Do you find in your business that soul satisfaction, that whole-hearted contentment that makes you happy? If you do, you are where you belong. That is your vocation, if you are a man, that is your job. If it does not make you happy, it makes you sordid and mean, disliking everyone and disliked by everyone, if you do not like the people you work with and the people that work for you don't like you, you don't belong there, you have not made of your business a profession, because you have not found happiness therein.

To sum up, I have endeavored in these few words that I have addressed to you this evening, to bring home to you this: To my mind the keynote of the business world of tomorrow will be this, to elevate business, which to my mind has in America received the finest and highest expression yet known in the world—to elevate business to the dignity and to the grandeur of a profession, so that it will in very truth spell a combination of discipline, service and happiness. Each one of you has vast opportunities for service, because America needs you, America needs men of your caliber, your talent, your experience, your brain. We are going to build, if possible by the grace of God we shall try to build, upon the ruins of a dead world, drenched in blood, and human tears, a temple dedicated

to the finer and the nobler things of life. You are going to build this, we are all going to do it together, and to handle it most effectively if you will introduce in your own limited sphere that spirit of a profession, a dignity, a vocation, a service, a discipline. You will find as a result of it all that a reward will come to you which neither wealth nor position nor rank in life can give you, that reward which righteousness gives to men, namely, happiness. (Applause.)

TOASTMASTER KROECK: I will now introduce to you Mr. Vernon E. Blagbrough, Field Secretary of the Chamber of Commerce of the United States of America. (Applause.)

MR. BLAGBROUGH: I now understand a remark made by your President this afternoon, when he said he had been elevated to that position.

The Rabbi has taken the enthusiasm out of my speech, for he has taken all the fireworks, and I am to precede a man who knows more about every subject that I am interested in than I could begin to know. If you should ask anyone familiar with the doings at Washington for the period of the war for the names of the three men whom they thought had done most in the organization of industry for the substantial prosecution of the war, there are few who would not give the name of Mr. Otis. (Applause.)

I wish to speak a word in commendation of the successful efforts he made to organize industry.

Again, he knows more about the Chamber of Commerce of the United States than I know, for he is one of the Directors, so you can imagine how I felt when I arrived here and found that he was on the same program with myself. I was in his office this morning and I said: "I don't know what order we are going to come on in, but I hope that it will be so I can say something." He said: "Well, I will come last, say whatever you want, and I will say what you don't say." If my speech is not satisfactory, you know you have got a good one coming, but really I do not know just where I fit in; I feel like that story of the two young fellows who went across in our army, who were not very well informed as to conditions abroad or as to the troops with whom they would come in contact, and they observed a company of Scotch Highlanders coming towards them, and one of them said: "Who are those people?"

And the other one said: "Why, I don't know just what they are, but the Germans call them Ladies from Hell." And the other one said: "Well, that is probably what they are." Then as they got a little closer he said: "They may be ladies from hell, they have got skirts on, but they look like men," and the other fellow said: "Oh, I know. I have heard of those Middlesex troops, and those are probably it." (Laughter.)

READJUSTMENTS

The Problem of the United States and How We are Going to Meet it

The world is going through the throes of a new birth.

Destruction has marred the fair world and left ruin in her wake. At the moment the nations are as mighty giants who have entered the conflict and at last vanquished the evil forces in the world; they stand panting for breath, wearied, the stronger for their struggle, but all about them laid waste by their strife.

Countrysides, once blooming orchards and fields of bearded grain, are desert lands. Once prosperous cities and peaceful hamlets are now heaps of ruin, mute yet eloquent testimony of the might of the conflict. Such is the condition of the whole of Europe encircling the central powers. Within, the defeated forces, exhausted and overcome, are torn asunder and restive.

Nations close at hand and nations far across the seas have spent their all in meeting this force which threatened their safety. The whole energy of the world, physical, economic and moral, have been centered on destruction. An armistice has been declared, a peace conference is in session, but, as the first great attack on France through Belgium struck as a thunderbolt out of the blue, so the clear note of the trumpet sounding for the cessation of the strife came almost as a shock to troops now accustomed to the sound of cannon and to a world which longed for peace, yet could hardly believe it so close at hand.

Cannon ceased firing; troop ships turned back; the wheels of industry centered on war work stood still. The world, which has thrown all into a struggle of arms, must now revert to the pursuits of peace. The problems involved are legion. They are for the