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Organizing for service, 1923.

Organizing for Service

Address at Annual Banquet, N. A. P. A.

Convention, Cleveland, Ohio, May 17, 1923

By ABBA SILVER

SOME time ago I came across this quotation from one of Mr. Babson's letters to merchants, bankers, and investors. "The need of the hour", writes Mr. Babson, "is not more legislation. The need of the hour is more religion. More religion is needed everywhere — from the halls of Congress to the factories, mines and forests. It is one thing to talk about plans and policies, but a plan and policy without a religious motive is like a watch without a spring or a body without a breath of life."

Mr. Babson is not given to writing sermons. I wondered just what prompted him to say that the greatest need of the hour is more religion. A little later I read this brief editorial in the *Wall Street Journal*. The *Wall Street Journal* is not given to writing sermons, either. This is what the *Wall Street Journal* said, editorially:

"What America needs more than the railway extensions, and western irrigation, and a low tariff, and a bigger wheat crop, and a merchant marine, and a new navy, is a revival of piety, the kind that mother and father used to have — piety that counted; to stop for daily prayer before breakfast and right in the middle of the harvest. Religion — that is what we need now to clean this country of the filth of graft and of greed, petty and big; of the worship of fine houses and big lands, and high office and grand social functions. Religion, that is what we need!"

TO me these two quotations are rather significant. I am not of those who are given to futile cavil and criticism of commercialism and materialism. I believe in commercialism. I hope and work and pray for prosperity because without prosperity, without sound economic conditions, civilization and culture are impossible. And I am not one who is tantalized by visions of absolute perfection so as to become disgruntled and dissatisfied with certain deficiencies which of necessity must exist in this all too imperfect world of ours. I believe that life itself implies imperfection. Evolution is the process of passing from



RABBI ABBA SILVER
of Cleveland, Ohio.

one imperfection to another a little bit less imperfect. I know that we live in Rome and London and not in a fool's paradise. I know that we crawl and we do not fly; that progress is not a continuous ascent but rather like that old-fashioned English dance which consisted of three steps forward and two steps backward, three steps forward and two steps backward, until the dance was done. And I have no pet system to offer you. I don't believe in the divinity of any system, whether it be capitalism or socialism or communism. I believe an economic system is the expression, or should be the expression, of the vital needs of a people and should be maintained as long as it serves these fundamental and basic needs of life.

As soon as system has ceased to function, as soon as it retards or stultifies or incarcerates the onswEEPing life of man, so soon must that system be scrapped like so much debris; for the important thing is life, and movement, and growth, and progress. And I have no catholicon for all evils. I have no cure-all for the inequalities of life, and I have no quick lunch method for salvation.

But this thing is clear to me: The

system of private property and private ownership — our economic system — the system of capitalism, has been challenged in a most dramatic, gruesome and tragic way. There is a great land today which numbers close unto 200,000,000 of people, where our system is denounced and branded as a system of blood and corruption, where little children are taught to hate all that we regard as basic and true. And it seems to me that the reactionary today, the man who refuses to invite or to seek criticism — a standpatter, a chauvinist, the man who worships the god of things as they are — that man is not the most helpful man in this land today.

I often think that the reactionary is the father of the bolshevik. I often think that the Czar was the father of Lenine. The real sound, progressive thinker is the man who makes for stability, and peace, and order.

Our system has been challenged and those of us who believe in our present system feel ourselves in duty bound to analyze it, to search out its wants and its deficiencies, to see if there be anything which may be corrected or improved upon, to readjust, to reinterpret, to remove all that which is corrosive and destructive in our organization.

And in doing that we are guided by this one thought: That business must be subject to that same social utility to which every other enterprise or department of human life is subject. You will agree with me when I say that art must beautify life; that science must explain life; that literature must interpret life; that medicine must protect life; that religion must elevate and ennoble life — every human enterprise must perform a socially benevolent function or it is worthless.

THE great artist surely is not the man who paints a cheap picture and then, by producing millions of them and selling them, amasses a great fortune. The great scientist is not the man who invents some cheap little thing and then, by commercializing it, amasses great wealth. The great artist is the man who projects a new beauty



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The purchasing agent,
June 1923

into the world, that embodies for it a new glory. The great inventor is one who bequeaths something startlingly new and worth while to mankind. The great physician is not the man who treats the greatest number of people and makes for himself great wealth. The great physician is the man who brings perhaps a new healing doctrine into the world. And the great minister is not the man who has gained by currying favor the popularity and the acclaim of the masses. The great minister—the great teacher of religion—is he who has, by the burning passion of his life for truth and service and good, touched somehow the lives of a few men and women to higher aspirations.

Service—that is the test which we apply strictly; that is the discipline which we exact from every servant of humanity. Now, do we exact the same discipline, do we apply the same rigorous test to business? Until such time as we apply the test of service and not of profit, of man and not of money, of God and not of mammon, to the greatest, most touching cause, most comprehensive concern of men: their economic life, their economic interest, business—so long as we do not apply the same standard of value to business, so long will our economic life rest on a basis which any storm may overthrow.

Perhaps there are three things which we ought to keep constantly before us in our business life; we, who believe in our present economic organization.

FIRST of all, that industry must make for human happiness and that human happiness is meant for all. That is one of those simple but tremendous truths; that is one of those dynamic platitudes. Happiness is meant for all. There are no favorite children in the sight of God. The avenues leading to happiness, to comfort, to self-development and self-expression must be opened to all the children of God. They must not be shut through ignorance, through disabilities, through all kinds of restrictions, to any child of God.

And industry must make for happiness. Industry must make for happy homes and happy children and industry must make for self-respecting men. Industry must do that or it is an abomination in the sight of God and men. And industry which dooms millions of God's children to a deadening monotony, and industry which takes the human being capable of a thousand noble impulses and starves

him down to one pitiful small job and mechanism and makes him a victim of a machine, that industry is not a social agent and is therefore harmful.

That is the first thing I would have every business man keep constantly before him—the job must make the man. Industry must make for real happiness in society, and as a people we are not a happy people.

And secondly this thought, perhaps: That life is primary and sacred. The life of one working man is infinitely more worth while than the whole industry. Perhaps I am exaggerating, but to me it is gospel truth. The primary thing in life, in society, is the human being. Society's first concern is not production, but the development of human personalities.

I was never so convinced of the worth, the dignity, the holiness of human life until fate thrust me near the trenches during the war and then I realized the heights of sublimity that reside in the soul of every humble child of God. I saw over there the common man, the stevedore, the farmer lad, the truck driver, the boy with whom we rubbed shoulders, whom we choose to call average and ordinary and commonplace. I saw him over there, responding to the challenge of the moment, going over the top, plunging into the night to meet his fate, in such superb abandon, with such an uplift of spirit and consecrated loyalty, that I was humbled, truly humbled; and when I saw the same lads in the rear of the lines, in the field hospitals, on the dressing tables, submitting to the most excruciating agonies incidental to the dressing of fresh wounds, biting their lips and digging their nails into the palms of their hands but never a cry and never a groan to betray the hell of agony they were passing through, I knew that there is no common man—I knew that somehow a bit of divinity resides in the soul of the humblest and the lowliest of God's children.

FOR me, at least, this war has written a new epoch, the epoch of the common man; and a man is common only as long as the spark of divinity within him has not been struck into fire and has not been called into being. And I believe that industry—the shop, the factory, the job, the office—must strike that spark, must give that impulse, must send that thrill into that human being, so he will express himself, develop himself, gain for himself, a rich, abundant and colorful personality. That, to my mind,

must be the new note in our industrial life.

And lastly, the job is the man's school. Within the job man must find himself culture. Every man who labors must feel a certain pride or must be made to feel the pride of creation in his job. That is a difficult thing, you will say. It is a difficult thing, but it must be somehow achieved. Every working man, every man in your office, in your business, in your shop, in your mine, must feel that somehow he is part and parcel of a worth-while big enterprise; that he is not a cog in a wheel, unconsulted, dumb, uninterested, but that he is vital to the big process, necessary, essential.

The story is told of a man who walked down the highway and saw three people breaking stone. And he turned to one and said to him: "Brother, what are you doing?"

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And he said, "Why, sir, I am building a cathedral".

And he was. This humble stone cutter was in very truth helping in the building of a cathedral, for the vast architect tonic in the mind of the artist could never be realized unless this humble servant of man was there breaking stone for the cathedral.

If we can make every working man have that feeling toward his job or toward his task that what he is doing is not a blind, uninteresting piece of work, that he is concerned with the big, worth-while socially desirable service, we will send a thrill of life, of joy and pride into his soul; and this, I believe, is principally the function of the American business man.

I have faith in America. I believe in the decency of America, even if I am not a chauvinist. I believe, somehow, that this land of ours is the workshop of God Almighty. I believe that we have it within us to fashion here a new type of manhood and womanhood. And more especially in this day, when the old world is crumbling and old civilizations passing out in blood and tears and confusion, we have it within us, if so we will, to build upon these gracious shores, blessed by God with plenty and prosperity, a new type of social organization which will bring happiness to all and misery to none.

WE hear of a social surplus. Nobody's gain need be anybody's loss. No one need prosper at the sacrifice of anyone else. God has blessed us with riches and abundance and it seems to me that in this gathering place of the races of the earth into which the brain and the brawn, the genius and the passion and the hope of mankind have been poured, we can here, by constructive thinking, by honestly facing reality, and by a passionate religious zeal, so labor as to bring forth an economic condition which will bless every one and hurt no one. This is my faith for America.

During the heat and the strife of the

war, I was asked once to give my definition of America and I said to the men: "To me America is infinitely more than an aggregate of 110,000,000 men; to me America is more than a vast stretch of territory; to me America is all that the submerged races of the world wish to be and cannot; to me America is the concrete realization of what the ages have hoped for and labored for." That was my definition which I gave to them.

It is a definition. It is a creed. It is a challenge. God built a continent of glory, and filled it with treasures untold. He carpeted it with soft rolling prairies and pillared it with thunder-

ing mountains. He studded it with soft flowing fountains, and traced it with long winding streams. He graced it with deep shadowed forests and filled them with song. Then He called unto a thousand peoples and summoned the bravest among them. They came from the ends of the earth, each bearing a gift and a hope. The glow of adventure was in their eyes and the glory of hope within their souls. And out of the labor of men and the bounty of earth, out of the prayers of men and the hopes of the world, God fashioned a nation in love, blessed it with a purpose sublime and called it "America"!

The Industrial Importance of Canada

Address at General Session, N. A. P. A.
Convention, Cleveland, Ohio, May 15, 1923

By LT. COL. CHARLES R. McCULLOUGH

YOU should know as much about Canada as Canadians generally know about the United States. We Canadians have been rather careful students of the affairs of your great Republic. We know many of the shrines where you worship. We know the foundation stone of your Republic and that foundation stone was not inscribed merely in Philadelphia—there is another even greater stone than the one in Philadelphia, and that is Magna Charta. That is the great foundation stone of your liberties and of ours. And there is no wonder that the great Pitt—Lord Chatham—whose name is commemorated in this land of yours, who knew the springs of liberty better than any other man, knew that the fountains that were to play in the new Republic were to play with the same sacred tune that had played in the fountains of liberty of the long ago. Chatham knew it; and he said that if an armed band should invade America, and he were a citizen, he would not lay down his arms until every intruder was driven out.

We are indeed deeply interested in all that makes for the progress of this great United States. We cannot help being interested in every way in your progress. You can hardly begin any great movement, any great trade proposition, but what Canada comes into the picture, and it is going to come into the picture more and more as

the years go by, for Canada is going to maintain its position as a political entity on the North American Continent.

WE are joint heirs of the liberties of our fathers. We are interested in world problems, for in any country, wherever it may be, the iron heel of oppression should not be placed upon natural development. The United States is not really free if there is one oppressed child in all the world, for he who is really free must be free in his soul. So you, and we, cannot cheerfully withdraw to the other side of the road and pass by the bruised, beaten one who lies to our right as we pass. We must take cognizance, for that which eats away the foundations of the house will eat away the foundation of the state. The foundation of all states should be character—character is the thing that you insist shall be put into the goods, the ten per cent. over and above the mere value. Character is what we must put into all our efforts, whether they be material or spiritual.

It is not my purpose to boast about the political development of my country. I have not come to boast about the so-called illimitable resources of Canada. I have come to collaborate with you in the will to good will.

When, in 1917, you came into the World War, Lloyd George said: "This

gives the final approval to the morality of the cause in which we have engaged ourselves." Some thing has been said here today of the great power and influence of the United States throughout the entire world. We wish that this great United States would exert that tremendous power for good that she inherently possesses throughout the world. We want you in every great adventure to join with us heart and soul, when you are convinced in your heart and soul of the righteousness of the cause.

I know your politics, your foreign trade affairs and your tariffs—for we have felt the effects of your tariffs somewhat of late. I know the drawing power of your great Republic, that has drawn some of our best blood into its service—but I am not one of those who mourn over the fact that hundreds of thousands of my countrymen have come to the United States to make a way for themselves in the world. That is but one more guarantee of the good relations, the community of interests, the will to good will, that characterizes us. We have shown the world for a hundred years and more how to live as good neighbors—this next-door neighbor of yours to the north and yourself.

A PURCHASING agent is always interested in the figures of a customer, and I want to tell you about

ORGANIZING FOR SERVICE

Address at Annual Banquet N. A. P. A.
Convention, Cleveland Ohio, May 17th, 1923

By Abba Silver

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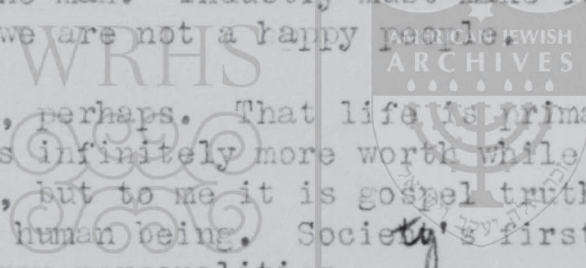
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