

Young:

*educating the  
creation*

Both in the economic and political and social, educational <sup>and</sup> ~~were~~ too, perhaps, were the honest men who do not know. Quickly saying that stupidity is doing more to prevent stabilization and peace than greed and ill attempt to which the exact populace usually falls back on, not knowing the facts themselves nor taking the pains to discover them.

He told a business gathering some years ago that "I propose ~~/we~~ change our policy in America. Let us investigate the concerns which do not make a profit, and let us find out why they use capital and labor, the supply of both of which is none too plenty, in enterprises which do not render service enough to the community to enable them to earn a profit. Let us right about face and demand the investigation of concerns that do not make a profit instead of the ones that do. If this political sport requires that somebody be attacked, society can best afford to disable the inefficient rather than the efficient."

Why is this suspicion of the strong in business characteristic of the man, that if he finds a conviction, an ideal in the mind of anyone, he does not content himself with denying it - railing at it, he will take it out and look at it - meditate on it as he walks about or sits of an evening smoking his pipe. The talk about the weak and strong business ~~has~~ came to him over the radio. The preacher has been talking about associations outside of the church - the interest men took in them. Among them he talked of trade associations with just a touch of suspicion. That is to Mr. Young

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that the speaker was not convinced that business men met for any really good purpose. What they discussed was not the production of goods of the best quality at the lowest price but in all probability to promote unjust profits, rather than present unfair practices.

He went through his usual process of cogitation. Why did many, he asked himself, go so willingly to these business associations/- get so much out of them apparently and why were they so lacking in going to church?

"I am not one of those who are inclined to rail about the things which large groups of right-minded men do or fail to do. The fact that they do some things and the fact that they fail to do other things are facts which have to be taken into consideration and need explanation. If men go to the Electrical Manufacturers' Club more regularly than they go to church, why is it? It is better for the church and for us to analyze that situation than it is merely to find fault with it.

¶ As I was thinking about it the other night after the sermon, it occurred to me that in the earlier days in this country, when the church was more largely attended in ~~percentage of population~~ than it is today, that the reason might be that in the early days when communities were small and businesses were largely localized, that the church itself performed the function, not only of the church, but of the trade association. When practically the whole business of the community was local business, even its manufactures, there was created in the church itself that acquaintance between

men doing business and that public opinion regarding business in the community which safeguarded their business methods. If a man made professions in church on Sunday which were wholly inconsistent with his business methods during the rest of the week, he lost caste in his community. That man only stood high who carried his professions to church and to his daily life, and his position in his own community was fixed by the public evaluation of his activities in relation to his professions. Then there came a change. Business no longer became local, <sup>was</sup> It was no longer simple, but became highly technical, but the church remained local. Men could go to church on Sunday, or attend their prayer meetings and make the greatest profession of honesty and uprightness and fair dealing. The other six days of the week, if their business contacts were outside of their own community, they could resort to any practices short of those prohibited by the criminal law without losing their standing at home. If their businesses were highly technical, ~~there was no way for the non-technical people to know whether the man performed honestly in his business or not.~~ In the old days a man who habitually sold in his own community a bucking or kicking horse for a gentle and willing one, was soon found out and soon had his reputation fixed for him. If that same man, however, sold a "spavined" motor to somebody in a town 100 miles away, especially to a non-technical buyer, it was hard even for the buyer to know that his motor was inferior, and it was easy for the man at home to continue his professions in church on Sunday and retain

his position in the community on the basis of his professions rather than his acts.

"It has occurred to me that as business extended itself away from home, as it became organized into large units in corporate form, the opportunity for the individual to do things unfair in business, but not unfair in law, increased. There was no public opinion which could act quickly enough or sharp enough to censor him. If he could retain his standing in his own community and make money quickly, there was a great temptation for him to do it. The early history of our corporation activities and the crimes that were committed in their name - actions which no single individual would have assumed responsibility for, but which in a group were accepted - give color to my hypothesis. Men in business came to understand that in their own interest, and in the interest of their business and their industry, certain unrestrained practices must be eliminated. A great feeling of protest grew up in this country, and an effort was made by law to reach these activities of corporations which men condemned. I suspect the trade association has primarily grown up to take the place of that restraint and check that which existed in the older communities. If a business were technical, and you wanted a public opinion which men engaged in the business would respect, it could only be had by an association of men engaged in that particular industry. They were the only ones who knew, or could know with certainty, whether an inferior product was being

put out, whether false representations were being made, whether unfair practices were being resorted to. So men conceived the notion that in these particular industries - in fact in our own - it was necessary for them to get together, to become acquainted with each other, and create within the industry a sound public opinion as to proper business practices. If this were done, individuals would no longer defy the opinion of their associates in business, after they had become their friends, by resorting to such practices. In other words, it was the restraint, again of the group opinion (influence) working at its best, upon the individual who was tempted to do an unsound thing which in the long run would not only hurt his own business, but that of his associates as well. I am inclined to think that that is the reason for the Electrical Manufacturers Club. I am inclined to think that through it we create a public opinion in the industry which appraises every member of the industry. Men value that appraisal, especially when their associates in the industry are their friends. After all, every man, I think, values more the good opinion of his friends and acquaintances than any money he can make unfairly.

"It is a fruitless thing for the law to endeavor effectively to reach the weaknesses in human beings of which I speak. It may restrain criminals and defectives so that they are not a danger to the community, but there is a wide gap between the criminal on one side and a good citizenship on the other. In that field the only effective restraint upon the weaknesses of human

beings is the good opinion of their fellows. We come here in this Club largely for the purpose of getting acquainted, largely for the purpose of becoming friends, and when we have become friends, we want to be very sure that we do no act which loses us the respect of our friends. The restraint of public opinion is a most effective restraint in human life. It exists everywhere in society. Many of us would do things which we now refrain from doing but for the penalty which that public opinion imposes. Every agency which stimulates men to associate together in such a way that their group opinion may be not only an effective restraint on their individual acts of wrong doing, but a real stimulus to them to do better things, is a trade association, but it is in the interest of society as a whole. Perhaps it is true that statistical service, that the interchange of technical information, that the unification of the industry for the purposes of contact elsewhere, are all the less important things in trade associations. It may be that the fellowship and the friendship, the personal contact between these men, all stimulate their ideals of service, and are the most effective agencies in making business as a whole function sanely and wisely and conscientiously in the interest of the public which it is designed to serve."

His reflections are interesting.