

**BUSINESS A PLAIN  
TALK WITH MEN AND  
WOMEN WHO WORK**

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Business a plain talk with men and women who work by Amos R. Wells

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# BUSINESS

A PLAIN TALK  
WITH MEN AND WOMEN WHO WORK



BY

AMOS R. WELLS

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## BUSINESS:

A PLAIN TALK WITH MEN AND WOMEN  
WHO WORK.

A BOY twelve years old, the unlearned son of an untaught Jewish carpenter, is found by his unlearned mother talking wisely with wise doctors of the law in the temple. When she upbraids him for deserting the home-bound party he answers—he, the untaught carpenter's son—"Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"

"Your father's business, lad, is not with books, but with benches; not with the law, but with the saw; not with men, but with matter."

"Wist you not, mother, that I must be about my Father's business?"

"Your father's business, strange boy, is

hammering nails into wood, not truth into the hearts of men. And he gets money for it, which is better even than the approval of these great scholars of the Bible."

"Wist ye not, neighbors, that I must be about my Father's business?"

"Is the boy demented, or has Joseph turned sage without our knowledge? Come, lad, back with your weeping mother to your father's shop; there help him as is your wont, and grow up to be as good a carpenter as he is. Don't get above your father's business."

So it was that Christ went up again to Nazareth, and was subject to his parents, until the Baptist had prepared his way, and he could enter in due course his Father's business.

*The American Noun.*

This first recorded saying of our blessed Lord contains the American noun. Do you know the American noun? It is "business." And the American adjective is "business-like."



Do you doubt it? Go into any city you please. On what errand are these hurrying thousands bent? Business. What fills the minds of most of them? Business. For six days in the week what fills their crowded daylight? Business.

Their evenings, even when wife and children bring in love and cheer--what lies beneath it all as a harsh, fretting, harassing undertone? Business. Their Sundays, even in the most sacred place—God's Word in their ears from singing choir and holy priest—what enters imperatively, and pulls the soul from its attitude of prayer, and holds the hands from their grasp on heaven? Business.

When they meet, what forms the staple of their talk? Their business. What occupies half their daily paper? Business advertisements. What question is most frequently asked of a man's character? "Does he attend to business?" And of a man's results? "Is he successful in business?"

It is held to be a reproach to a man if he

is not engaged in some business, and it is considered a matter to be proud of if the man manages his business successfully, and sticks to it till the funeral knell rings out from the belfry.

*Being Driven by Business.*

"Ah, but a man must drive his business," one says, "or his business will drive him."

You are quite of the mind of the man in Christ's parable, who could not go to the feast because he had to drive some oxen. That man thought he was driving his business—his oxen—but he wasn't; his ox-business was driving him.

That is a terrible thing to happen to any business man—to be driven by his business; it would be ludicrous if it were not so really terrible. Haven't you seen the transformation in scores of cases? The young man starts out with flashing eye and eager hand, proudly directing the ox—his business—in the furrow before him. But, ere many a year has passed, the erect back, that was at

right angles to the present and fronting the future, has become parallel to the present; goes down, down, down, toward the furrow—the rut. His eager, manly hand grows horny, hard; the fingers adhere, solidify—hoofs. His feet, that so proudly pressed the loam, are other hoofs—plod, plod, plod.

The pressure of the yoke upon the neck—a heavy yoke. The pressure of the harness against the sides. The pull of the plow as it wrenches its way through the tough soil. The stinging call of the driver lashing from behind. And that driver, alert, imperative, merciless, exacting, that driver is *the ox*. That driver is the business which the poor man flatters himself he is driving, but which is driving him.

#### *Are We in Harness?*

How can we tell when we are driving our business, and when our business is driving us? In the first place, let us ask ourselves, Is it easy to escape from our business? At night can we lock it up in our desks, bar it