

Does God Hate the RICH?

You've heard of "God's poor." You've heard that "money is the root of all evil," and that God hates the rich man, making it harder for him to get into God's Kingdom than for a camel to go through a needle's eye. But here's what you probably have not heard! Here's the astonishing TRUTH!

by Herbert W. Armstrong

EVERY big city has its Skid Row. Uncounted thousands of derelicts pass away lonesome, hopeless days and years in these districts of beaten men, where a 60-cent-per-night six-by-four cubicle covered with chicken wire is a luxury, with the privilege to sleep on a soiled, knotty mattress, perhaps damp, and without sheets or suitable covers.

Every city, except for a very few, has its slums and its blighted district adjoining or surrounding the downtown business center.

"The poor," Jesus said, "you always have with you."

WHY?

Who Pays for Finer Residences?

This is written on the train, en route to Washington, D.C. In the club car a Midwesterner returning from Los Angeles was exclaiming his amazement at the mile after mile of beautiful streets graced with large, costly homes in Southern California.

"Why," he exclaimed, "I never saw anything like it. You can drive an automobile hour after hour, and day after day and see nothing but large, fine beautiful homes in Beverly Hills, Bel Air, Westwood, Los Angeles, Pasadena, Altadena, San Marino, and other sections of Southern California.

"What I can't understand," he continued, "is, where did all these costly fine homes come from? Where did so many people get so much money?"

I explained that the Los Angeles district is the largest metropolitan district in the world in area, and, taken as an entire district, contains a population of approximately six million — larger

than the city of Chicago. And, in addition, thousands of successful families from all parts of the nation have retired and moved to this area.

"Yes," he reasoned, "for every one of these fine costly homes, there are probably a few dozen small and poorer homes, and those poor people have paid for these big fine homes for the few to enjoy." There was a touch of bitterness in his voice.

"Did you ever stop to consider," I replied, "that possibly it's just the other way around — that it is through the enterprise, and hard work, and application, and ability of successful men that a large portion of these poorer people are provided jobs?"

"What would happen to many of these people, if there were not a few leaders who had taken life seriously when they were young, who had spent their evenings in study and self-improvement while the majority were out seeking pleasure and good times, who had made the most of their opportunities, who had vision and enterprise, who slaved and worked long hours during hard years, planning and building a business which now provides employment for others — who spent sleepless nights carrying all the worry and responsibility of the enterprises so they could meet the payrolls, while those on the payrolls had their good times and got their sleep without any load of responsibility?"

"If some of these men had not fought their way through, past discouragement and seemingly impossible obstacles, and suffered, and sacrificed, and paid a price for success which those who work for them would never be willing to pay, where would many of

these others be today? Could they have created their own jobs?"

"Well, I never thought of it in that way," he replied.

Does God Hate the Prosperous, and Love Only the Poor?

There are a lot of false ideas in circulation.

One is that God is angry at the man who becomes successful and prosperous, and wants all people to be poor.

The common assumption about this thing we call "sin" is that "sin" is the forbidden fruit which is the sweetest and most desirable of all, but which an unjust God forbids us to enjoy.

This world is all mixed up and DECEIVED.

It is bewildered and terribly unhappy because it has accepted a false gospel, and heaped to itself teachers that would preach deceits and fables, and soft and smooth things, and hide from the people the PLAIN TRUTH.

It all revolves around the true GOSPEL of Jesus Christ. He preached the Kingdom of God — which means GOVERNMENT of God — God's government over our lives and our society. The laws of God's government are the ways of LOVE — of giving, rather than receiving — of serving, not "getting the best of others." The Ten Commandments summarize that Law.

THAT LAW OF GOD'S GOVERNMENT IS THE ONLY WAY TO PEACE, TRUE HAPPINESS, AND LASTING PROSPERITY. All the world's ills, all suffering, all inequality and injustice have come from transgressing that Law. Sin is the transgression of the Law (I John 3:4).

In other words, to transgress the ways that lead to prosperity, health, peace,

happiness and joy, is SIN! To sin, then, is to cause suffering, unhappiness, and death.

God Prospers Those Who Serve Him

Does God hate the successful and the prosperous?

"I wish above all things that thou mayest PROSPER and be in health..." says God through John (III John 2).

"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the council of the ungodly. . . . But his delight is in the LAW OF THE LORD [more properly rendered ETERNAL] . . . whatsoever he doeth shall PROSPER" (Psalm 1:1-3).

"And the Eternal was with Joseph, and *he was a prosperous man*. . . the Eternal made all that he did to prosper in his hand" (Gen. 39:2, 3). Joseph SERVED GOD! (Verse 4.)

"For the Eternal God is a sun and shield: the Eternal will give grace and glory: *no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly*. O Lord of Hosts, blessed is the man that trusts in thee" (Psalm 84:11, 12).

"The righteous shall FLOURISH like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon" (Psalm 92:12).

But God warns, through David, when we are prospered, against setting our hearts on the prosperity.

IF ALL MEN WOULD PUT THEIR LIVES UNDER THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD AND LIVE BY GOD'S LAWS, ALL MEN WOULD SOON BE PROSPEROUS! Conversely, then, poverty is the result, directly or indirectly, of transgressing God's laws.

Jesus, however, put the matter in its true relationship when He commanded us to *seek first* the KINGDOM OF GOD — that is, to submit our lives to the GOVERNMENT of God — to obey His commandments — to live the kind of life He directs in His Word. And He promised that when we have first done this, the material prosperity SHALL BE ADDED.

Finding the TRUE Riches

There is much more to it than this. But that will be deferred for another article another time.

What we behold in the world now, in fields of both labor and capital, as now organized, is organized competition

and greed. This has produced only friction. It has impeded progress, and robbed BOTH employer and employee of much material gain, as well as the real spiritual happiness they have vainly sought.

What's wrong?

Men are governed by HUMAN PASSIONS, and NOT BY GOD!

Happiness is something one cannot reach out and TAKE! It is something you have only by GIVING. It comes only by finding God's basic inexorable SPIRITUAL LAW — the way of LOVE — of GIVING — of SERVING — of DOING GOOD.

The true basis of happiness is SPIRITUAL, not material.

"Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God" — the GOVERNMENT of God — government in your life by the GREAT SPIRITUAL LAW of God!

If you do this, you will have to actually LIVE by every word of God — *by the Bible!*

If you do this, you'll be filled with a dynamic power *from without* — the very Spirit of God — the Spirit of LOVE, and of understanding and wisdom — of faith — of patience — of power for self-mastery! Your life will be energized, successful, full and complete — HAPPY!

You will STUDY, and USE YOUR GOD-GIVEN MIND — studying first, to show yourself approved unto God — to find the true way of life! You will devote yourself, secondarily, to your job or work or profession. What you set your hand to do, as God commands, you'll DO WITH YOUR MIGHT! You'll be industrious. If you work for a man, you'll serve him to the very best of your ability. If men work for you, you'll be as interested in *their* welfare as your own. You'll free your mind from all anxious concern and worry and fears, for you'll have the Spirit of FAITH — relying upon the guidance and help of God! You'll do your best, and TRUST GOD WITH THE RESULT; and you'll find real PEACE, HAPPINESS and JOY first of all, and to this will be added MATERIAL PROSPERITY within God's reasonable due time!

That's the recipe for success, usefulness, prosperity, and REAL AND LASTING HAPPINESS!

Getting the Cart Before the Horse

Very few people follow Jesus' formula. Nearly everyone seeks *first* the material prosperity. And people become so engrossed in the cares of this life, and the deceitfulness of riches — IF they succeed in acquiring them — that they never seem able to find much time for seeking the Kingdom of God — to be governed by God's laws.

Most ministers who *profess* to be ministers of Jesus Christ preach exactly the opposite of the Kingdom, or government, of God. They teach that God's laws are done away. They teach there are NO WORKS to Christianity. They pervert God's truth.

And most people, consequently, are in ignorance of the true formula for success, accomplishment, prosperity — and the happy, joyous life.

Most people seem to believe that HAPPINESS is something that comes from material possessions. Their chief concern in life, therefore, is to earn a better living — to seek dollars — to find happiness by GETTING material things.

In this chase for the elusive dollar, the large majority find the pursuit so difficult they become overcharged with the CARES of earning a living, trying to make ends meet; and this overwhelming majority never realize their goal. They remain either poor or in the worried middle class, and the happiness they seek becomes as elusive as the dollars. They slave away their lives — empty, worried, unhappy lives.

But a FEW of these who seek *first* the material riches of this world — and only a very few — do have the talents and qualities for material success and the accumulation of money. They pay the price, usually. They generally have ability, and they are the ones who study, prepare themselves, exercise vision, industry, perseverance, determination, and pay a heavy price for the material success they acquire.

Those who are prospered by God, because they sought *first* the Kingdom of God — that is, to diligently live under the laws of God's government — are not the only ones who prosper mate-

rially. The *few* successful ones who seek *first* and (usually *only*) the material riches also prosper in the world.

There are *two kinds of material prosperity* — that acquired by those who seek first and only material assets, and those who seek *first* God's Way of life.

David noticed this and became envious — until God chastened him and caused him to see his error.

"I was envious at the foolish, when I saw *the prosperity of the wicked*. . . . pride compasseth them about as a chain. . . . Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have *more* than heart could wish. They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression: they speak loftily. They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth. . . . Behold, these are *the ungodly who prosper in the world*; they increase in riches. . . . all the day long I have been plagued. . . . until I went into the sanctuary of God; *then understood I their end*. Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors" (Psalm 73).

And thus David repented of his envy of the *evil* rich, and came to see their miserable end.

Stop This Envy of the Rich!

In this world, a common pastime of the poor is to envy the rich — to grumble and complain, and hate the rich. What does God say about this?

"*Fret not thyself* because of him who prospereth in his way. . . . cease from anger, and forsake wrath," commands God (Psalm 37:7-8). "For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Eternal shall inherit the earth [not heaven]. For yet a little while, and *the wicked shall not be*" (verses 9-10).

Yes, what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? That kind of riches is false, soul-damning, and soon left behind.

But some of these worldly rich have been unjust — they and their big corporations have taken advantage of their position, and paid their laborers too little. Ought not the laboring man,

then, to organize and FIGHT BACK?

No, and even though the tactics of labor unionism have gained higher wages, employers have simply *raised prices*, so that today's highest wages of all time actually purchase little more than the lower wages of the pre-unionism era.

WHAT DOES GOD SAY ABOUT THIS?

"Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted. . . . Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields [or factories], which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped [worked for you] are entered into the ears of the Lord of Hosts. . . . BE PATIENT THEREFORE, BRETHREN, UNTO THE COMING OF THE LORD" (James 5:1-7).

God's instruction is *not* to organize in labor unions, which in themselves have brought on additional evils — but to BE PATIENT — and wait until God restores justice!

Source of Economic Ills

By seeking *first* only material acquisitions, the majority have failed to acquire them and worn away their lives in the vain pursuit, while the *FEW* have, even at cost of hard work, study, application, and perseverance, succeeded — *and neither has found happiness*, because material wealth is NOT THE SOURCE OF HAPPINESS!

But God has set laws in motion — laws of success, economically, which even the material-minded, if they apply them, gain wealth by practicing. (You can learn about these laws in our fully illustrated booklet, *The Seven Laws of Success*. Sent free upon your request.) The only difficulty is they have defeated the very purpose they sought by setting their hearts solely on material gain, instead of seeking *first* GOD'S WAYS, finding the true SOURCE of happiness first, and then becoming materially prosperous in a manner that would INCREASE a happiness already found.

But what has happened, economically, in America?

A few leaders, by practicing these

laws of material prosperity, built large industries which employed large numbers of men. True, it was their determined PURPOSE — their study, industry, vision, planning, determination, perseverance, fighting their way to the top in spite of all obstacles, which finally put them on top of the economic heap.

True, it was their industry and enterprise which created jobs for their employees. But, by the same token, this very fact put them in position to *take advantage* of their laborers. Granted that they were *entitled* to a far greater financial reward from the enterprise than those men who were willing to do only what they were told. BUT TOO MANY OF THESE WORLDLY SUCCESSFUL TOOK FOR THEMSELVES FAR MORE THAN THEIR FAIR SHARE OF THE PROCEEDS OF THEIR BUSINESS.

Result — as mass production developed in America, labor was held in meek submission, underpaid and underprivileged. Thus employers themselves created the fertile field for labor leaders — leaders who have preached to laborers the gospel of lying down on the job, giving less work and demanding more pay, creating friction between employer and employee — who OUGHT to be partners!

Those tycoons of big business who have thus taken selfish and unfair advantage of their position have *injured themselves*, as well as their employees and their country. They have brought down on their own heads the evils of a labor unionism which preaches and practices friction instead of happy cooperation, thus reducing production and profits for all.

Worse, they have limited and reduced the market for their own mass production. Since mass production is production *for* the masses, the vast employed class forms the big part of the mass market. By holding down *real* wages, they have limited the ability of wage earners to buy.

In the World Tomorrow

Now look at the changed picture when *all* men seek *first* the Kingdom — the way of life — of God.

Employers living *God's* way will love their employees as themselves — will be

as zealous for employees' welfare, prosperity, working conditions, as their own. Workers will put their hearts into their work, and find a new joy in producing perhaps twice as much as now.

Production will mount, prosperity will increase for all, the masses will have the money to supply a ready mar-

ket for a greatly expanded mass production.

Both employer and employee will enjoy greatly increased incomes. Society as a whole will be benefited beyond belief.

But, most important, we shall have found that inner *happiness*, and *joy*,

which will supply the dynamic spark that will produce this material abundance. And economic plenty and security will *add* to a joyful, abundant happiness, already found.

You can start traveling that road *now*. It's the only way to the *happiness* *all* desire. □