

AFFLUENCE AND DEPENDENCE UPON GOD

James D. Groves

It would appear that affluent people have less regard for religion than when conditions are not so wealthy. Human beings in their adversity and weakness have more tendency to rely upon the Lord. James 2:5 says: "Hearken, my beloved brethren; did not God chose them that are poor as to the world to be rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he promised to them that love him?" (ASV).

This points up an evident fact about Camelback and its location in this beautiful section. It would probably be easier to fill the building with guests and members if we were situated in a less affluent section of town, so the challenge to reach into our neighbors' hearts and homes is a great one indeed. We must use every opportunity to reach all segments of the population and beware of seeking only the wealthy and well dressed, while at the same time we must make all men welcome and show favoritism to none.

The Old Testament taught fair play and kindness to all regardless of their social position or wealth: "Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty; but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbor. (Lev. 19:15). James 2:2-5 warns about rejecting the poor man, saying also in this passage " ...do ye not make distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts." The Greatest One who has walked this sad earth lived the life of a poor man "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich" (2 Cor. 8:9). We will probably reach and convert more people of modest means than those of affluence.

Doubtlessly one of the reasons for a decline of religious interest has been the wealth of our times, but this too moves in cycles and we may yet witness a return to religion as men feel a need of the security found in Christ. Paul besought the Lord to remove his "thorn in the flesh" and the Lord said "...My grace is sufficient for thee: for my power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. 12:9).

Many have had the money to go on trips leaving God out of their plans; to seek advanced education which many times militates against Faith; to have the wealth that makes them feel above the need of the Almighty. Now trips are good and refreshing. Education everyone must have and one should seek to obtain all he or she can. Possession of enough money to enjoy life is good. But none of these things must come between a man and his God, or before his duties to His Maker. A dedicated Christian with wealth can do so much more good for Christ with his or her money than many, many, poor, but how rarely do we see people using the wealth God has bestowed upon them for His glory and the spreading of His Kingdom! If God has blessed us with this world's goods, money, securities, lands, houses, or whatever we possess of value, then let us be careful how we act as stewards of that with which we have been entrusted. Let us work to advance His work among all men, not the rich alone and not the poor alone, and let everyone beware lest affluence turns away their hearts from the Lord.~

Deceased

